



# “Literatures review” or “literature review”?

Jun Liu<sup>1,2</sup>, Xingshun Qi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Economics and Management, Beihang University, Beijing, China; <sup>2</sup>Meta-Analysis Interest Group, Department of Gastroenterology, General Hospital of Northern Theater Command, Shenyang, China

Correspondence to: Xingshun Qi, MD. Meta-Analysis Interest Group, Department of Gastroenterology, General Hospital of Northern Theater Command, No. 83 Wenhua Road, Shenyang 110840, China. Email: xingshunqi@126.com.

Received: 17 May 2023; Accepted: 01 March 2024; Published online: 28 April 2024.

doi: 10.21037/amj-23-83

View this article at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21037/amj-23-83>

As known, the word “literature” is an uncountable noun (1), which has been widely used for medical writing to express the source of relevant evidence. However, its plurality, “literatures”, can be observed in 12,452 papers by using the search item “literatures [title/abstract]” in the PubMed database, which is the most commonly used for the retrieval of medical research in English language, until May 17, 2023. In details, it is mainly used in some phrases, such as “review of literatures” and “literatures review” used in the titles and “previous literatures” and “relevant literatures” used in the abstracts. Generally, there is an increasing trend in the frequency of “literatures” used over years. Notably, approximately four-fifths (9,926/12,452) of all relevant papers were published in English-language journals.

Such an unexpected phenomenon seems to be only a writing mistake attributed to the authors’ carelessness, but its high frequency also suggests that editing and production processes may not be rigorous from the editors’ and publisher’ sides. Indeed, such fundamental mistakes in term of language are readily found among the scientific publications. In the future, the management strategy regarding how to decrease and even avoid similar mistakes before the printed publication should be established. First, when a paper is submitted, in-house editors should detect the presence of obvious language mistakes probably by means of artificial intelligence. If there are a lot of obvious language mistakes, this paper should be returned to the authors for further revisions. If the quality of language remains poor and causes difficulty in interpretation, an immediate rejection without peer review should be considered. Second, when a paper enters into the outside review stage, in-house editors should remind peer-reviewers to check its language. If the language is of poor quality,

a positive decision should not be recommended from our perspectives. If it is very difficult to understand the major findings and implications of a paper in the setting of multiple language mistakes, a “reject” decision should be given. Third, editor(s)-in-chief and in-house editors should be responsible for evaluating whether the quality of language in a paper is eligible for its publication. If the language was not sufficiently improved after one or more revisions, this paper would be rejected.

On the other hand, at present, only the “Impact Factor” (2) and “CiteScore” (3) have been predominantly accepted for assessing the quality of a peer-reviewed journal. However, the two existing metrics primarily aim to quantify the average frequency of citations without any assessment of language quality. From our perspectives, the inspection of fundamental mistakes in published papers should also be incorporated into a hierarchy of the journal’s quality. Undoubtedly, a journal with numerous fundamental mistakes may be placed in the list of early-warning journals, and even removed from the list of science citation index journals.

## Acknowledgments

*Funding:* None.

## Footnote

*Provenance and Peer Review:* This article was a standard submission to the journal. The article has undergone external peer review.

*Peer Review File:* Available at <https://amj.amegroups.com/>

[article/view/10.21037/amj-23-83/prf](https://doi.org/10.21037/amj-23-83/prf)

*Conflicts of Interest:* Both authors have completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at <https://amj.amegroups.com/article/view/10.21037/amj-23-83/coif>). X.Q. serves as an Editor-in-Chief of *AME Medical Journal*. The other author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

*Ethical Statement:* The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

*Open Access Statement:* This is an Open Access article distributed in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), which permits the non-commercial replication and distribution of the article

doi: 10.21037/amj-23-83

**Cite this article as:** Liu J, Qi X. “Literatures review” or “literature review”? *AME Med J* 2025;10:10.

with the strict proviso that no changes or edits are made and the original work is properly cited (including links to both the formal publication through the relevant DOI and the license). See: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

## References

1. Cambridge Dictionary. Literature. Available online: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/literature>
2. Clarivate™. Journal Citation Reports: Annual Impact Factor. Available online: [https://support.clarivate.com/ScientificandAcademicResearch/s/article/Journal-Citation-Reports-Annual-Impact-Factor?language=en\\_US](https://support.clarivate.com/ScientificandAcademicResearch/s/article/Journal-Citation-Reports-Annual-Impact-Factor?language=en_US)
3. CiteScore™ metrics you can verify and trust. Available online: <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/metrics/citescore>