The Growth of Food-Diet-Nutrition Literature in PubMed

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Since its launching in 1966, the number of citations added in MEDLINE/PubMed grows larger each year, as the number of articles published grows.

As shown in Figure 1 on the left, for many subjects in PubMed, the growth of citations on particular subjects (e.g. heart) shares a similar trend with that of all citations. Food-diet-nutrition (FDN) subjects, however, are exceptions.

As shown in Figures 2 & 3 on the right, the numbers of articles on FDN subjects remained steadily low up until about 1990 but grew sharply after around 1990.

Why is this important?

We have written extensively about the problems of searching for FDN subjects in PubMed:


We see this as being connected to the pattern we have found in the rapid growth of publications on FDN subjects since around 1990. We think that the poor treatment of FDN subjects in PubMed shows that NLM has not fully recognized the magnitude of the subject.