What is the Index Medicus for the Eastern Mediterranean Region?

The Index Medicus for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (IMEMR), one of the major projects of the Virtual Health Sciences Library (VHSL), was initiated in response to a pressing need to index health and biomedical journals from the Region. The vast majority of these journals are not currently indexed internationally or abstracts provided. Mapping regional health and biomedical literature will increase its exposure at national, regional and global levels. The Index Medicus is a unique tool for indexing, abstracting, recording, archiving and sharing regional health knowledge.

History of the Index Medicus

The Index Medicus was launched in 1987 by the Regional Office. All articles published in regional health science journals since 1970 were indexed retrospectively, a process which continued until 1997, by which time all articles had been indexed. In 1999, the Index was published in five printed volumes. It is the sole source of such information in the world.

Currently, the Index includes more than 180 000 bibliographic citations from more than 645 health and biomedical journals published in 20 countries of the Region: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, occupied Palestinian territory, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The aims of the Index Medicus are to:

map and archive health literature produced in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (who is publishing what in which countries and/or journals)

fill the gap of the near absence of health and biomedical journals published in the Region from international indexing and abstracting services

assist authors and researchers in networking and developing communities of practice to gain visibility at the national, regional and international levels

encourage local publishing of health and biomedical sciences literature

create an environment which encourages improvements in quality, increases competition and creates aspiration for better information products.

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