

Research Article

Su Jok Therapy: A Bibliometric Analysis

Su Jok Terapi: Bibliyometrik Analiz

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Geliş tarihi/Date of receipt: 18/08/2025

Kabul tarihi/ Date of acceptance: 25/12/2025

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study was carried out using a bibliometric analysis method to examine the position and development process of Su Jok Therapy in the scientific literature, addressing the current lack of bibliometric studies in this field and guiding future clinical and experimental research.

Methods: The analysis was conducted by examining 25 studies searched with the keyword ‘su jok’ in the Scopus database using the VOSviewer programme.

Results: According to the results obtained, the majority of studies on Su Jok Therapy are in the field of medicine and health sciences, and a significant portion were produced in countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, and Russia. Collaboration networks, influential authors, leading journals and research trends in the field were identified through co-author analysis, citation analysis, keyword matches and institutional analysis.

Conclusion: The analyses revealed that studies on Su Jok Therapy have increased significantly in the last 15 years, mostly in the fields of medicine and health sciences, and are concentrated in countries such as Turkey and Indonesia. Based on the data obtained, it was determined that Su Jok Therapy is primarily used to alleviate symptoms such as pain management, nausea and vomiting, anxiety, and sleep problems.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Su Jok, VOSviewer

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışma, Su Jok Terapisinin bilimsel literatürdeki yerini ve gelişim sürecini incelemek, bu alanda mevcut bibliyometrik çalışma eksikliğini gidermek ve gelecekteki klinik ve deneysel araştırmalara rehberlik etmek amacıyla bibliyometrik analiz yöntemi kullanılarak yürütülmüştür.

Yöntem: Analiz, Scopus veri tabanında ‘su jok’ anahtar kelimesiyle aranan 25 çalışmanın VOSviewer programı kullanılarak incelenmesiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Elde edilen sonuçlara göre Su Jok Terapisi ile ilgili çalışmaların çoğunluğu tıp ve sağlık bilimleri alanında ve önemli bir kısmının Türkiye, Endonezya ve Rusya gibi ülkelerde üretildiği belirlenmiştir. İş birliği ağları, etkili yazarlar, önde gelen dergiler ve alandaki araştırma eğilimleri, ortak yazar analizi, atıf analizi, anahtar kelime eşleşmeleri ve kuramsal analiz yoluyla tespit edilmiştir.

Sonuç: Yapılan analizler sonucunda Su Jok Terapisi ile ilgili çalışmaların özellikle son 15 yılda arttığı, çoğunlukla tıp ve sağlık bilimleri alanında üretildiği, Türkiye ve Endonezya gibi ülkelerde yoğunlaştığı gözlemlenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler doğrultusunda Su Jok Terapisinin ağırlıklı olarak ağrı yönetimi, bulantı-kusma, anksiyete ve uyku sorunları gibi semptomların hafifletilmesi amacıyla kullanıldığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bibliyometrik Analiz, Su Jok, VOSviewer

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Atıf/Citation: Şimşekli D, Doğan C, Yağcı Karamanlı H. (2026). Su Jok Therapy: A Bibliometric Analysis. *Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 9 (2), 217-228. doi:10.54189/hbd.1768029



INTRODUCTION

Su Jok is a therapy method developed by Professor Park Jae Woo. When Su Jok Therapy is considered as a word, Su means "hand". Jok corresponds to the word "foot" (Ivanov, 2018; Woo, 2000). In Su Jok Therapy, there are body and organ reflections in the hand and foot areas. In cases such as diseases where the energy flow is disturbed, a painful point is detected in the relevant reflection area. A diagnostic rod, which is a metal rod without a pointed tip, is used to detect the painful point (Ivanov, 2018). The painful area is stimulated with massage, seed, magnet and moxa methods to balance the energy flow (Ivanov, 2018; Kahraman & Akyil, 2022). Seeds are one of the most preferred natural stimulants in Su Jok Therapy and contribute to energy balance by placing them on reflection points (Şimşek & Alpar, 2022). From a physiopathological perspective, Su Jok Therapy exerts its effects by modulating the body's energy balance through reflex points located on the hands and feet. Conceptually grounded in the Tri-Origin and Six Energy theories, the therapy proposes that the interaction of Homo, Hetero, and Neuto forces, along with the harmonious balance of six fundamental energies—Wind, Heat, Cold, Dryness, Humidity, and Darkness—regulates homeostasis and maintains systemic equilibrium. Disruptions in these energy flows are hypothesized to contribute to functional imbalances and physiological stress, whereas the targeted stimulation of reflex points restores energy homeostasis, triggers adaptive reflex responses, and supports both physical and psychological recovery. Thus, Su Jok Therapy can be understood as a holistic intervention that influences bodily functions through energy modulation, contributing to the maintenance of health and the prevention of dysfunction (Woo, 2008). Su Jok Therapy can be applied in acute and chronic diseases. It is particularly effective in symptom management. Su Jok Therapy is a very practical and accessible method (Ivanov, 2018).

The increasing interest in alternative and complementary medicine practices in global health approaches has led to a significant increase in the number of studies examining the effects of Su Jok Therapy. Recognised in 2000 by the Russian Ministry of Health as a reflexotherapy method, Su Jok Therapy is widely used in Indonesia and India (Safonov & Naprienko, 2017; Kahraman & Akyil, 2022). In our country, clinical nursing studies utilizing Su Jok Therapy have reported positive effects on pain, anxiety, and recovery quality after lumbar disc surgery (Çoban, 2024), symptom burden and comfort level in hemodialysis patients (Doğan, 2024), pain, fatigue, insomnia, nausea, and vomiting in patients with gastrointestinal system cancers (Güneş & Karabulutlu, 2024), migraine pain (Kahraman & Akyil, 2022), and postoperative pain following cesarean section (Şimşek & Alpar, 2022).

In this direction, bibliometric analysis method was used to evaluate the approaches in the scientific literature on the place of Su Jok Therapy in the management of acute and chronic diseases. The fact that there is no previous bibliometric study on this subject in the literature makes this research the first analysis in the field; it is also expected to make significant contributions to the identification of trends and research foci in the literature.

Bibliometric analysis is a method that enables the examination of scientific publications published on a specific subject with quantitative data. Through this analysis, publication density, trends, most influential authors, institutions, countries, keywords and prominent journals in a research field can be systematically determined. In this respect, bibliometric analysis is a guiding tool for researchers to understand the current situation in the literature and to develop new areas of study. In addition, this method can be used to visually present and comprehensively evaluate the changes in scientific interest over time, research collaborations and information flows (Donthu et al., 2021; Passas, 2024). Therefore, in this study, bibliometric analysis was performed on su jok with VOSviewer.

METHODS

Research Design

This study was designed as a bibliometric analysis to examine the characteristics and distribution of scientific publications related to Su Jok.

Data Source and Search Strategy

The data used in this study were retrieved from the Scopus database. The literature search was conducted on May 5, 2025. The keyword “su jok” was searched by selecting the “All fields” option. The search yielded a total of 25 documents.

Eligibility and Selection of Documents

All documents retrieved from Scopus using the specified search strategy were included in the bibliometric analysis. The retrieved documents were evaluated according to publication year, document type, subject area, and country or region.

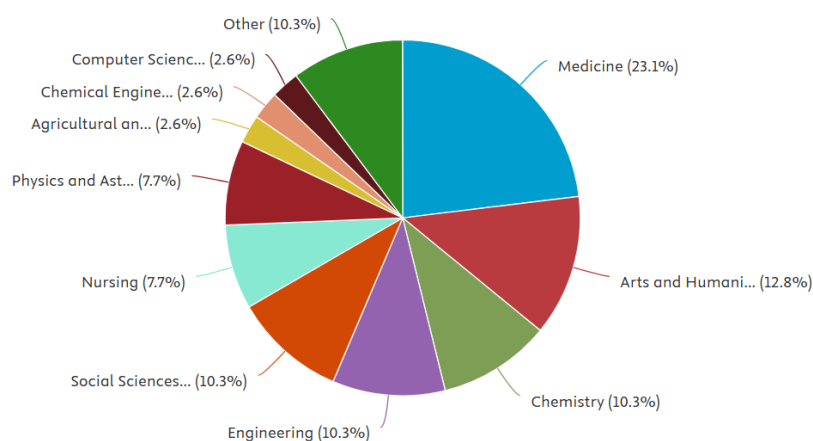
Data Collection

Bibliographic data of the documents identified through the Scopus search were obtained on May 5, 2025. Information regarding publication year, document type, subject area, and country or region was extracted for analysis.

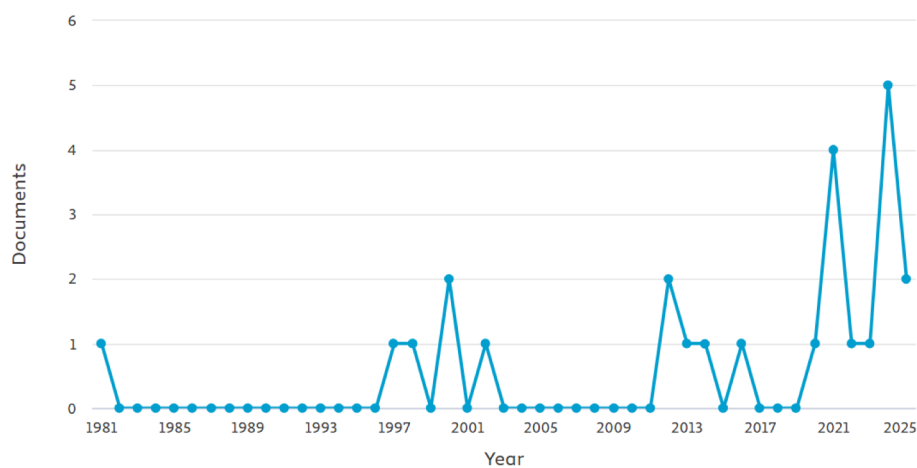
Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed through the programme named VOSviewer 1.6.20. On 05.05.2025, 25 results were obtained in the research conducted by selecting ‘All fields’ with the keyword ‘su jok’. Information about the fields of the studies reached is given in Figure 1. According to the years, it was determined that the oldest study was conducted in 1981 and the newest study was conducted in 2025. The distribution graph of the studies according to years is given in Figure 2. It was seen that 15 of the studies were articles, 5 were conference papers, 2 were books, 2 were book chapters and 1 was a review (Figure 3). In the analysis, it was seen that 6 studies were conducted in Turkey, 4 studies in Indonesia and 4 studies in Russia (Figure 4). The searches were made through Scopus.

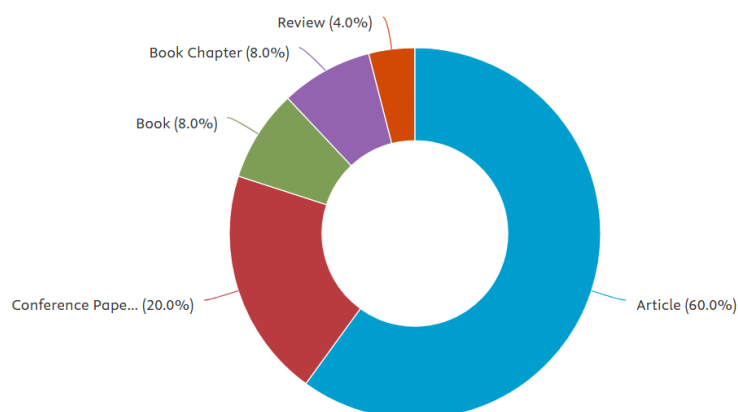
Documents by subject area

**Figure 1.** Distribution of Accessed Studies by Field

Documents by year

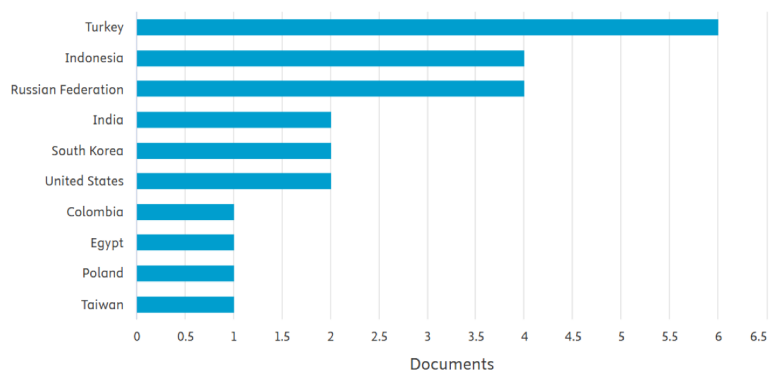
**Figure 2.** Distribution of Documents Accessed by Years

Documents by type

**Figure 3.** Type of Documents Accessed

Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

**Figure 4.** Countries or Regions Where the Studies were Conducted

It was observed that 23.1% (n=9) of the studies were conducted in medicine, 12.8% (n=5) in arts and humanities, 10.3% in social sciences (n=4) and engineering sciences (n=4) and 7.7% (n=3) in nursing.

Distribution of the documents accessed according to years It was determined that the first document on Su Jok was in 1981, followed by a stagnant period and an increase in the number of studies in this sense in 2009 (Figure 2).

Ethical Considerations

This study was based exclusively on bibliographic data obtained from the Scopus database and did not involve human participants, personal data, or experimental procedures. Therefore, ethics committee approval and informed consent were not applicable.

RESULTS

Countries or regions where the studies were conducted. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that 25 studies were conducted and these studies were mostly conducted in the field of medicine. Other analysis results related to the studies are given below.

Co-Authorship Authors

For the co-author analysis, an analysis was made by including authors with at least one publication. In the co-author analysis, Bedoya-Munoz Lennis Jazmin, Correa-Morales Juan Esteban, Cuellar Valencia Laura, Giraldo-Moreno Sara, Guadrrama Santiago, Leon Marta Ximena, Mantilla Manosalva Nidia, Mendoza Montenegro Fernan Alejandro and Iriarte-Arztizabal Marria Fernanda have 8 links each (TLS = 8). This shows that these authors are in a central position in terms of collaboration in the literature. The analysis revealed that Sevgi Gür, İlhan Öztekin and Seher Deniz Öztekin were the three most prolific authors with two publications each (Figure 5).

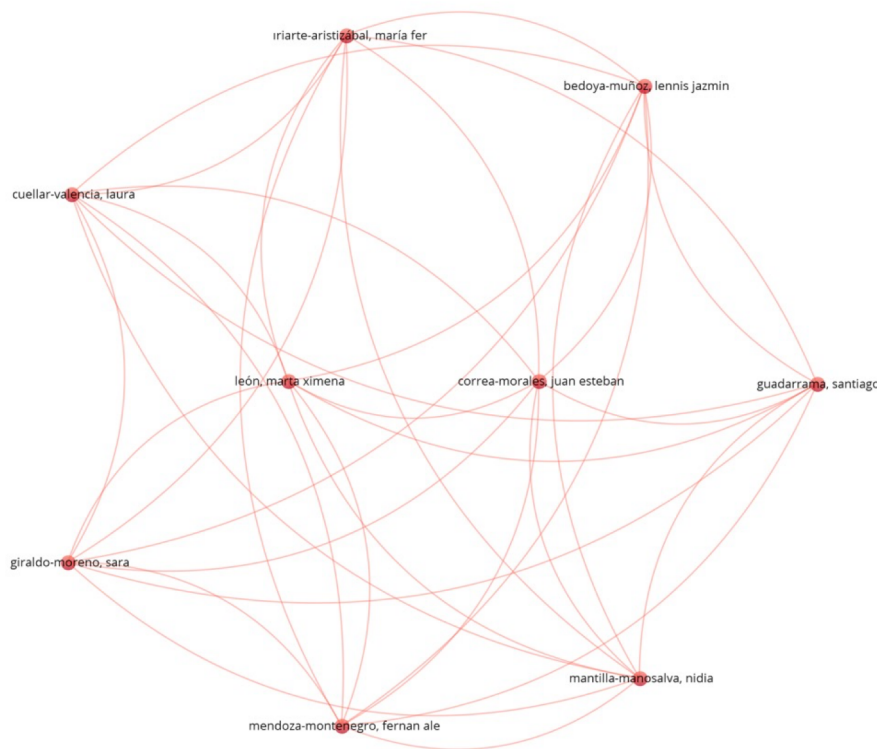


Figure 5. Co-authorship Authors

Citation of Authors

For the author citation analysis, it is seen that Woo J.W ranks first with 5 citations in the analysis made by including authors with at least one publication and authors with at least one citation (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Citation of Authors

Source Citation Analysis

When the sources of citations are analysed, it is seen that the journal Complement Ther Clin Pract received the highest number of citations (7 citations), followed by J Perianesth Nurs with 7 citations and Korean J Anesthesiol with 6 citations (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Source Citation Analysis

Country Citation Analysis

It was observed that studies on su jok were conducted in 5 different countries. Turkey ranks first with four studies, followed by Indonesia with 2 studies and South Korea, Colombia and the US with 1 study each (Figure 8).

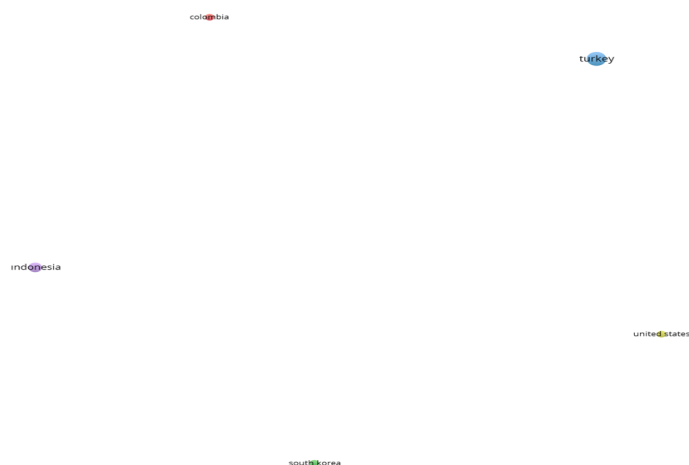


Figure 8. Country Citation Analysis

Institutional Citation Analysis

When the institutions where the studies were conducted were examined, it was determined that most of the studies were carried out at Universitas Gadjah Mada (Yogyakarta, Indonesia) and Novosibirsk State Technical University (Novosibirsk, Russian Federation) (n=3) (Figure 9).

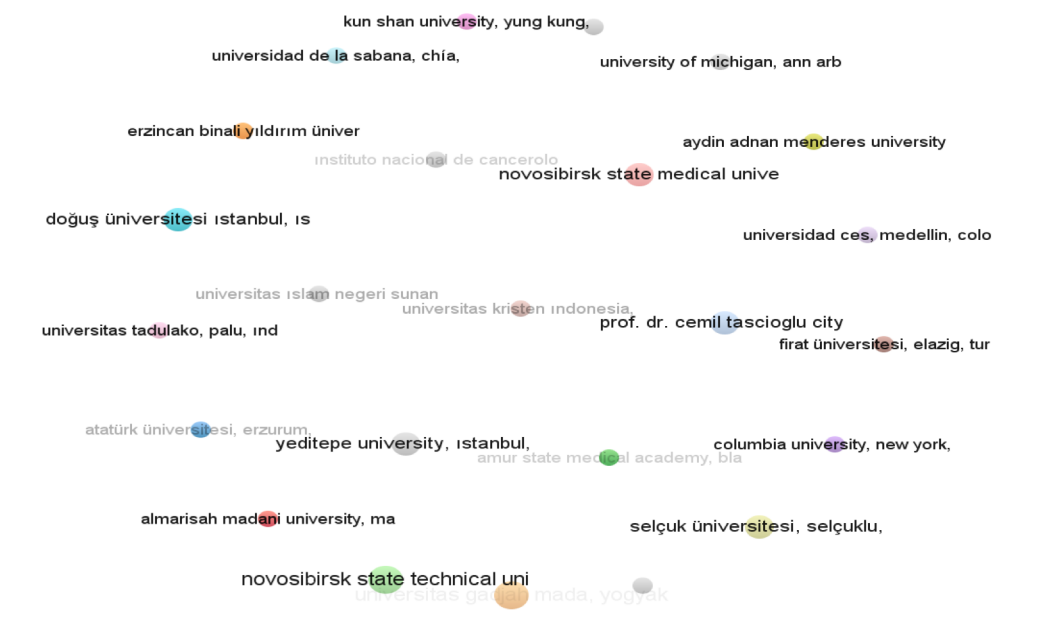


Figure 9. Institution Citation Analysis

Keyword Analysis

In the keyword analysis, Su Jok was the most frequently used keyword, while the other words identified were pain, acupressure, posop nausea and vomiting and thyroidectomy (Figure 10).

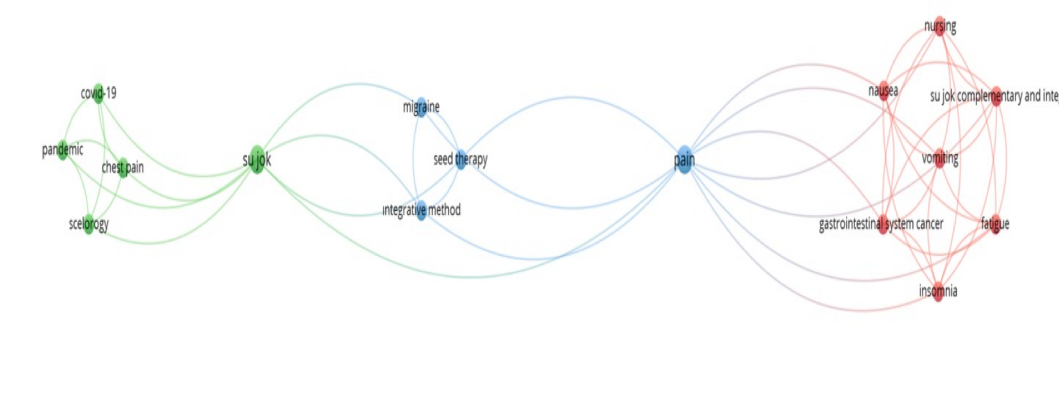


Figure 10. Keyword Analysis

Bibliographic Coupling of Documents

Looking at the bibliographic matching status of the texts, it was found that the most matched work was Gür (2025), followed by Gür (2024) and Güneş (2024) (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Bibliographic Match Analysis of Texts

Co-Citation of Co-Authors

According to the author citation analysis, Woo J. W. stands out as the most co-cited author with a total of 5 citations. This is followed by Woo P.J. and Yagil Z. with 4 citations. This situation shows that the relevant authors are frequently co-cited as the main reference sources in the literature. The co-citation network map obtained as a result of the analysis also reveals the strong relationships of these authors with other authors (Figure 12).

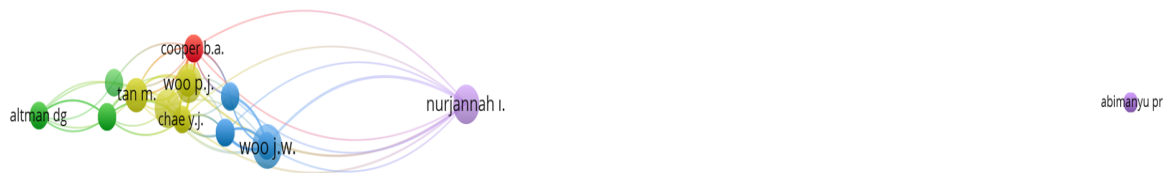


Figure 12. Author Co-citation Analysis

DISCUSSION

Although the oldest study on su jok in the literature was conducted in 1981, it was observed that a limited number of studies are still available in the literature today. As a result of the search in the Scopus database, it was observed that most of the studies were conducted in the field of medicine and Turkey ranked first among the countries where studies were conducted.

After the literature review, no bibliometric analysis on su jok therapy was found. The studies in the literature were analysed in terms of general approach.

In a study conducted in Israel, Su Jok Therapy was reported to be a method to support palliative care by increasing the patient's tolerance to symptoms such as fatigue and weakness caused by chemotherapy in cancer patients (Yagil, 2019). In three different studies conducted in Turkey, Su Jok Therapy was reported to be an effective application for pain (Şimşek & Alpar, 2022; Kahraman & Akyil, 2022; Güneş & Karabulutlu, 2024). In a study conducted in Turkey, it was found that su jok application was effective on pain, anxiety and quality of recovery after lumbar disc surgery. In three different studies conducted in Turkey, it was reported that su jok treatment was an effective application for pain (Çoban, 2024). In a study conducted by Gür et al. in Turkey, it was stated that su jok treatment decreased the severity and number of nausea-vomiting and antiemetic use in patients undergoing thyroidectomy (Gür et al., 2025). In a study conducted with patients with heel spurs in Cuba (Huber et al., 2016) and a study conducted with two patients with heel pain Su Jok Therapy was found to reduce pain complaints. In Indonesia, Su Jok Therapy has been reported to reduce pain in individuals with pain complaints (Nurjannah & Hariyadi, 2021). In a case study in Indonesia, a COVID patient was treated with su jok at home and found to be beneficial for chest pain (Nurjannah, 2020). Again, according to the results of a study conducted in Indonesia, Su Jok Therapy reduced the severity of physical symptoms in patients with hypertension (Rositasari et al., 2024). In a study conducted in Cuba, it was reported that Su Jok Therapy contributed to pain control in the treatment of cervicalgia (Cruz et al., 2018). According to the results of a study, Su Jok Therapy is effective in reducing pain and blood pressure in patients with hypertension (Suryana et al., 2024). In another study with elderly people with hypertension, su jok therapy was shown to reduce headaches (Trilia & Suzanna, 2022). In another study with elderly people with hypertension, su jok therapy has been shown to reduce headache. According to a study conducted in Germany, Su Jok Therapy applied to diabetic patients can reduce glucose and HbA1C values (Yagil & Pathak, 2021). Su Jok Therapy applied to stroke patients contributed to the improvement of their psychological status by increasing their adaptation to daily life (Molchanova & Drobyshev, 2021). Su Jok Therapy has been reported to have a positive effect on anxiety in patients with acute myocardial infarction (Jayanti et al., 2024). While Su Jok Therapy applied in the 1st stage of labour in pregnant women reduces pain (Iskandar & Rika Asmara, 2022), Su Jok Therapy was found to be moderately effective to reduce pain after cesarean section (Şimşek & Alpar, 2022).

In the light of these analysed studies, it is seen that the studies involving Su Jok Therapy were mainly conducted in countries such as Türkiye and Indonesia, most of the studies were conducted for pain management, and most of the studies were in the field of medicine and health sciences. These findings are consistent with the results of our bibliometric analysis. In addition, it was observed that the number of studies increased as the years progressed.

Limitations

In this study, only Scopus database was used for bibliometric analysis. Since only one study was found in the preliminary search of the Web of Science database, this database was not included in the analysis. This situation led to the exclusion of some publications that could be included in different databases. In addition, only the keyword 'su jok' was searched; studies published in different languages, synonyms or related concepts were excluded. Although the bibliometric analysis method used is successful in revealing quantitative relationships between publications, it does not evaluate important factors such as qualitative content, method quality and clinical effects. For these reasons, it should be taken into consideration that the findings obtained do not reflect the entire literature on Su Jok therapy.

CONCLUSION

This study analysed scientific publications on Su Jok Therapy using bibliometric methodology to reveal trends, prominent themes and research collaborations in the field. As a result of the analyses, it was observed that studies on Su Jok Therapy have increased especially in the last 15 years, mostly produced in the field of medicine and health sciences, and concentrated in countries such as Turkey and Indonesia. In line with the data obtained, Su Jok Therapy was mainly used for pain management, alleviation of symptoms such as nausea-vomiting, anxiety, and sleep problems.

Co-author, source and institutional analyses revealed the existence of collaborative networks in the literature and the central role of some authors. Keyword analyses showed that Su Jok Therapy is considered within the framework of reflexology, acupressure and complementary medicine. Citation analyses revealed that certain journals and authors are influential sources of information in the field.

Considering the lack of bibliometric analyses on Su Jok Therapy in the literature, it can be said that this study makes an original contribution. The research findings point to gaps and potential research areas that can be addressed in future studies on Su Jok Therapy. In this context, it is recommended to increase interdisciplinary and multicentre studies evaluating the effects of Su Jok Therapy. In addition, randomised controlled studies are needed to determine its effectiveness for different health problems.

Araştırmanın Etik Yönü/Ethics Comittee Approval: Since this study is a bibliometric analysis, ethics committee approval is not required.

Hakem/Peer-review: The external referees are independent.

Yazar Katkısı/Author Contributions: Study Conception: DŞ, CD, HYK; Study Design: DŞ, CD, HYK; Data collection and/or Processing: DŞ, CD, HYK; Statistical Analysis and/or Data Interpretation: DŞ; Literature Review: DŞ; Manuscript Preparation: DŞ, CD, HYK; Critical Review: DŞ, CD, HYK.

Çıkar Çatışması/Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Finansal Destek/Financial Disclosure: The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Yapay Zeka Kullanım Beyanı/AI Usage Statement: ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used only for English language editing and improving the readability of the manuscript. The authors reviewed and approved all revisions and take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

Yazar Notu/Author Note: The summary of this study was submitted as an oral presentation to be presented at the 3rd International Internal Medicine Nursing Congress to be held at İzmir Sabancı Cultural Palace on 19-21 November 2025.

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