

## Two Weeks of “COVID-19” Search on PubMed.gov

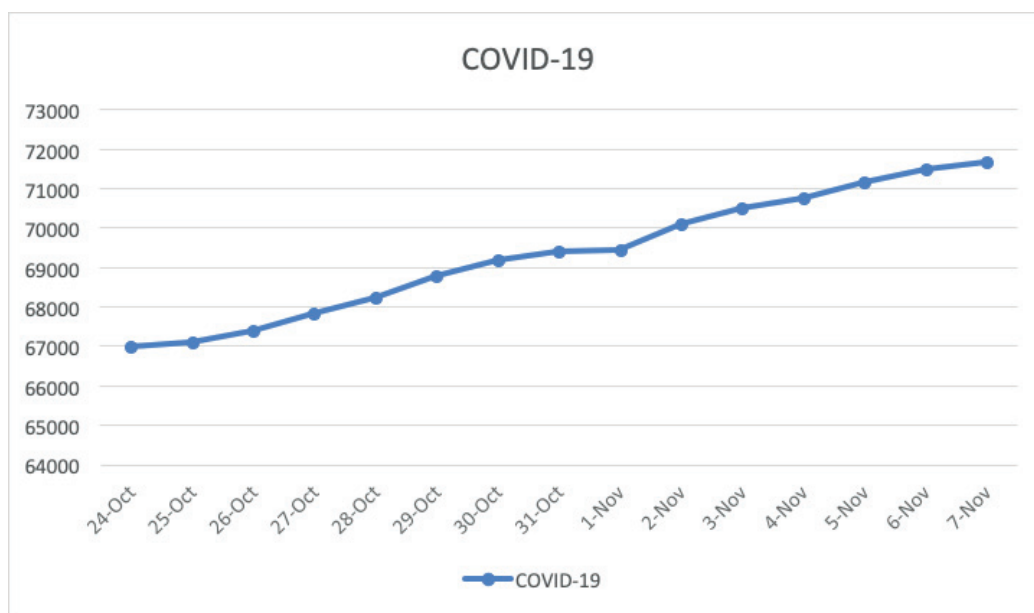
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To the Editor,

I am reading Chan’s article with great interest (1). Since World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, the scientific world has seen a rapidly increasing amount of literature like no other pandemic before. A search for “COVID-19” in early April yielded roughly 3500 hits. The same search on August 22<sup>nd</sup> already yielded 42,693 entries (2). The daily average at that moment was roughly 181 articles per day. The same search on October 24<sup>th</sup> showed 66,988 entries. By November 7<sup>th</sup>, there were 71,682 entries. (Figure 1) The daily average increase in number of articles is 335, an amount that will probably exceed the ability of the fastest and most enthusiastic reader. For comparison purpose, the

daily average of article produced for “HIV” was only 54. There are articles that analyzed the publishing pattern already, with some casting doubt on the scientific merits of some articles (1,3). Data that is difficult to track would be the actual number of submission (which must be even higher) and peer review duration (which is getting longer). Back in April, our paper on isolated meningoencephalitis (4) was accepted within 48 hours of submission and “rejection” was unheard of till late May. Lately, some submission has taken well over 4 weeks before revision is suggested. The type of literature has also changed. The first round was mostly case report and observational series. Nowadays, papers on pathophysiology, treatment and large-scale review paper begin to appear. This is the first pandemic in the



**Figure 1.** Number of COVID-19 “hits” on PubMed from Oct 24 – Nov 7, 2020.

**Table 1.** Daily publication average for COVID-19 and others from Oct 24 to Nov 7, 2020.

	COVID-19	COVID-19 or MERS or SARS	HIV
Oct 24, 2020	66988	85811	370876
Nov 7, 2020	71682	90961	371631
Daily Average	335	368	54

so call “information age”, it will be interesting to follow the development in the literature world and learn how does its “lead” our fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

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