

Clinician's exposure to basic science articles has significantly declined

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Breaking up may not be that hard to do after all. A new report appearing in *The FASEB Journal* suggests that the once close relationship between basic science and clinical medicine appears to be on the rocks, as the number of basic science research articles appearing in medical specialty journals has fallen dramatically over the past 20 years.

"Since advances in science represent the future of medicine, the top [medical journals](#) need to ensure that doctors are exposed to the latest basic scientific research," said Warren L. Lee, M.D., Ph.D., a researcher involved in the study from the Interdepartmental Division of Critical Care and the Department of Medicine at the University of Toronto and Keenan Research Centre for Biomedical Science at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada.

To reach their conclusions, Lee and colleagues devised an automated search of all the articles published in the top medical journals of eight different specialties over the last 20 years to identify which articles pertained to basic scientific research. The number of articles found was compared to the total number of all types of articles appearing in those same journals. They found that the proportion of articles dealing with [basic science research](#) - that is, research dealing with the mechanisms of disease - has fallen dramatically over the last 20 years, resulting in a significant decrease in the exposure that doctors have to basic science research over time.

"This is an interesting report, but it should not be interpreted to mean

that clinicians are not well educated or qualified," said Thoru Pederson, Ph.D., Editor-in-Chief of *The FASEB Journal*. "Rather, at a time when translational science is at the fore of public conversation, this report should be a starting point for a more meaningful discussion about the critical relationship between medical care and [biomedical research](#)."

More information: B. E. Steinberg et al. Is basic science disappearing from medicine? The decline of biomedical research in the medical literature, *The FASEB Journal* (2015). [DOI: 10.1096/fj.15-281758](https://doi.org/10.1096/fj.15-281758)

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