

Report: International collaboration between researchers results in greater recognition

March 9 2011

U.S. researchers who collaborate with international scientists are more likely to have their work cited than peers who do not utilize overseas expertise, according to a new study released this week by Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. U.S. collaborators with international scientists are also more likely to receive greater recognition and produce work with greater impact.

The study, "International Stem Cell Collaboration: How Disparate Policies Between the United States and the United Kingdom Impact Research," was authored by Kirstin Matthews, a fellow in science and technology policy at the Baker Institute. The findings were published this week in the open-access online journal [PLoS ONE](#).

For their first-of-its-kind study, Matthews and co-investigators analyzed data in the biosciences area -- specifically papers on stem cell research -- published in 2008 by U.S. and U.K. scientists. The goal was to see if scientists from these two countries that have vibrant biomedical research programs gained anything from collaborating with peers in other countries.

"What we found was striking and significant," Matthews said. "When U.S. stem cell [researchers](#) engage and use expertise from their international peers, they receive more citations for their work in others' work."

U.S.-independent articles averaged 15.0 citations, while international

publications listing a U.S. scientist as the corresponding author averaged 20.3 citations. A similar trend was seen with U.K.-independent publications (10.1) compared with international publications (13.8).

While the citation rate was slightly increased for international papers on which a U.S. scientist was a secondary author, this difference was not found to be statistically significant, indicating that it is not as beneficial for U.S. authors to be secondary contributors.

"These figures suggest that scientists in both the U.K. and U.S. produce higher-impact [stem cell research](#) when collaborating with foreign counterparts," Matthews said. "But U.S. scientists find a more dramatic increase in citation rates when they are corresponding authors."

A literature search of 2008 publications on stem cells generated 3,176 articles that listed at least one U.S. scientist as an author and a total of 616 papers that listed at least one U.K. scientist as an author. While U.S. researchers published more than five times more often than U.K. researchers in absolute numbers, the publication rates per million inhabitants were very similar -- 10.2 articles per million individuals for the U.S. and 10.0 articles per million individuals for the U.K.

Overall the U.K. collaborates the most with U.S. researchers. For the U.S. the top three collaborators were Germany, Japan and the U.K.

Matthews' research team included Rice University senior Jingyuan Luo, who is a biochemistry and policy studies major, a Marshall Scholar and co-author on the paper.

"The Baker Institute and Rice University really stress the importance of undergraduate participation in research," Luo said. "I gained invaluable experience conducting this project, and it has helped me better define my career goals in science policy."

Provided by Rice University

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