

## Importance Of Health Services And Quality In Maternal And Childcare In Ecuador: A Review Of The Literature

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### Abstract

Through this document, it was possible to analyze the main characteristics of the volume of scientific production related to the study of the variables the importance of health services and the quality of maternal and childcare. A bibliometric analysis was proposed to analyze details such as Year of Publication, Country of Origin of the publication, Area of Knowledge in which the published research is carried out and the Type of Publication most frequently used by the authors of each document published in high impact journals indexed in Scopus database

during the period between 2019 and 2023. Among the main findings, it was possible to determine that, for the execution of the different research methodologies, it was possible to report 284 scientific documents related to the study of the importance of health services and quality in maternal and childcare, from public institutions in Latin America and the world. The maximum number of publications in one year was 72 papers submitted in 2020, and the same number of publications in 2021. The country of origin of the institutions that reported the highest number of records in Scopus was the United States with 17 documents. The area of knowledge with the greatest influence at the time of executing the research projects that resulted in scientific publications was medicine, which contributed a great deal of theoretical material in a total of 280 publications. Finally, the type of publication most frequently used to report findings from the analysis of the aforementioned variables was the article, which represented 85% of the total scientific production.

Keywords: Health, project, medicine, maternal and child health.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Accessible and affordable health care is crucial to ensuring quality maternal and child care in Ecuador. One of the objectives of health services in the country is to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of prenatal care, promote humanized childbirth and provide adequate care for newborns. (Coube et al., 2023). However, the cost of healthcare can be a significant financial burden for families, with an estimated 800 million people worldwide spending at least 10% of their household income on healthcare. (Faija et al., 2023). In Ecuador, beneficiaries of the Social Security Institute (IESS) have access to medical, surgical, dental and other health benefits (Oliveira et al., 2023). Ensuring that health services are accessible and affordable for all families is essential to providing quality maternal and child care (Ramadan, Gutierrez, et al., 2023).

The availability of quality health services has a direct impact on maternal and infant mortality rates. In Ecuador, reducing maternal mortality is a priority, as approximately 529,000 women die each year from causes associated with pregnancy, childbirth or

postpartum complications (da Costa et al., 2023). Maternal deaths are often preventable, and access to qualified, quality maternal care plays a crucial role in preventing or treating complications (Muthee et al., 2023). Policy options to improve access to skilled and quality maternal care are essential to reducing maternal mortality rates (Cleghorn, 2023). By ensuring that women have access to timely and appropriate health services, the risk of maternal mortality can be significantly reduced and ultimately improve the well-being of mothers and children. Quality health services in maternal and child care also have long-term effects on the well-being of mothers and children. Comprehensive care during the postpartum period is vital for the health and development of both mother and newborn (Chacón et al., 2023). UNICEF Ecuador highlights the importance of providing comprehensive quality care to newborns and pregnant mothers (Mitchell et al., 2023). By ensuring that mothers receive adequate postnatal care and support, long-term health outcomes for both mother and child can be improved. Access to quality health services throughout the maternal and child care process is a key component to achieving universal health coverage (Tierney et al., 2023). By prioritizing the provision of quality health services, Ecuador can improve the overall well-being of mothers and children and contribute to healthier future generations.

The provision of quality health services in maternal and child care is of paramount importance. Accessible and affordable health care is crucial to ensure that all women and children have access to necessary medical services and treatment. In addition, the impact on maternal and infant mortality rates cannot be underestimated, as quality health care can significantly reduce these rates. In addition, the long-term effects on the well-being of mothers and children cannot be ignored, as proper medical care can lead to a healthier and happier life for both. It is imperative that governments and health systems prioritize improving quality health services in maternal and child care to ensure the well-being and survival of women and children in Ecuador.

## **2. General objective**

To analyze from a bibliometric approach, the characteristics in the volume of scientific production related to the importance of health services and quality in maternal and child care in Ecuador, registered in Scopus during the period 2019-2023 by Latin American and world institutions.

### 3. Methodology

This article uses a mixed-method approach that draws on quantitative and qualitative research techniques. On the one hand, a quantitative analysis of selected Scopus information is carried out from a bibliometric perspective on the scientific production related to the study of the meaning of health services and the quality of maternal and child care provided by Latin American and international institutions. On the other hand, qualitatively analyzed examples of some research works published in the area of study mentioned, from a bibliographic approach that allows to describe the position of various authors on the subject in question. It should be noted that the entire search was performed by means of Scopus, which allowed to establish the aforementioned referencing parameters, in **Figure 1**.

#### 3.1 Methodological design



Figure 1. Methodological design

Source: Authors.

##### 3.1.1 Phase 1: Data collection

Data collection was carried out from the Search tool on the Scopus website, where 264 publications were obtained from the choice of the following filters:

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(TITLE (*importance AND of AND health AND services*) OR TITLE (*the AND quality AND of AND maternal AND child AND care*))  
TITLE-ABS-KEY ( quality AND of AND service, AND public AND  
hospitals ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2022 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2021 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2020 ) OR LIMIT-TO (
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PUBYEAR , 2019 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2018 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2017 ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , 2017 ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , 2017 ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , 2020 ) "Brazil" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Mexico" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Chile" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Colombia" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Argentina" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Ecuador" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Peru" )

- Published documents whose study variables are related to the study of work performance in public educational entities.
- Works published in journals indexed in Scopus during the period 2020-2023.
- Limited to Spanish-speaking countries.
- Without distinction in areas of knowledge.
- Regardless of type of publication.

### **3.1.2 Phase 2: Construction of analysis material**

The information collected in Scopus during the previous phase is organized and subsequently classified by graphs, figures and tables as follows:

- Co-occurrence of Words.
- Year of publication.
- Country of origin of the publication.
- Area of knowledge.
- Type of Publication.

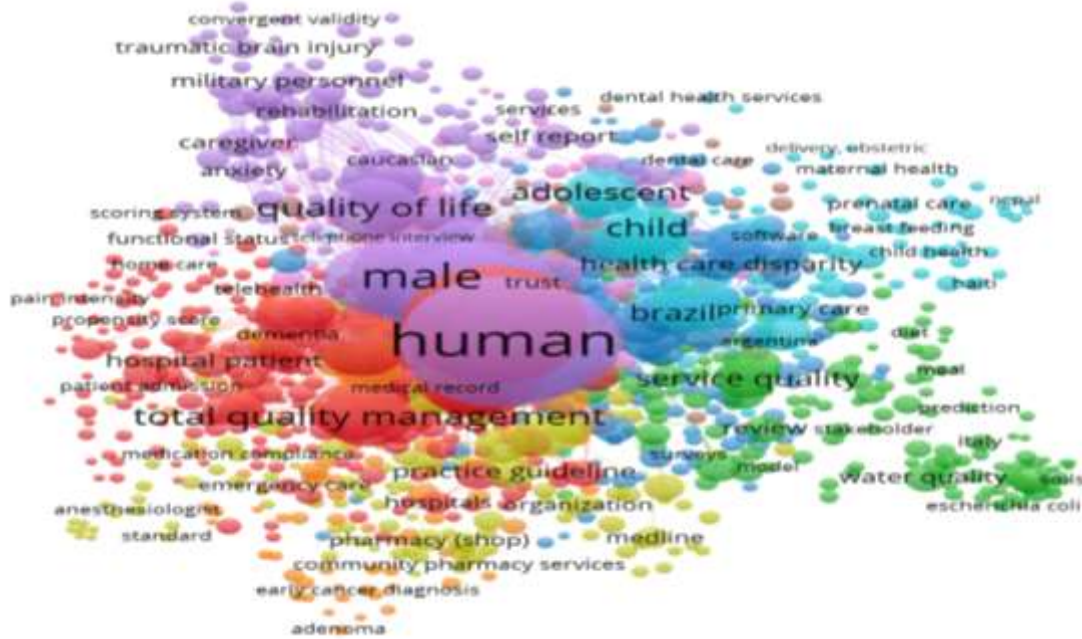
### **3.1.3 Phase 3: Drafting of conclusions and outcome document**

In this phase, we proceed with the analysis of the results previously yielded resulting in the determination of conclusions and, consequently, the obtaining of the final document.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Co-occurrence of words**

**Figure 2** shows the Co-occurrence of keywords found in the publications identified in the Scopus database



**Figure 2.** Co-occurrence of words

**Source:** Own elaboration (2023); based on data exported from Scopus.

The importance of health services in maternal and child care cannot be underestimated. Access to quality health care during pregnancy and childbirth is essential to ensure the well-being of mother and child. Health services provide essential prenatal care, promote humanized childbirth and ensure adequate care for newborns (Teixeira, 2023). Studies have shown that improvements in maternal and child health services have contributed to reductions in maternal and infant mortality rates. (Liang et al., 2023). The impact of maternal and neonatal death goes beyond the immediate health consequences, affecting families emotionally, economically and in terms of overall health. (Lin et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding the importance of health services in maternal and child care is vital to improving the overall well-being of communities.

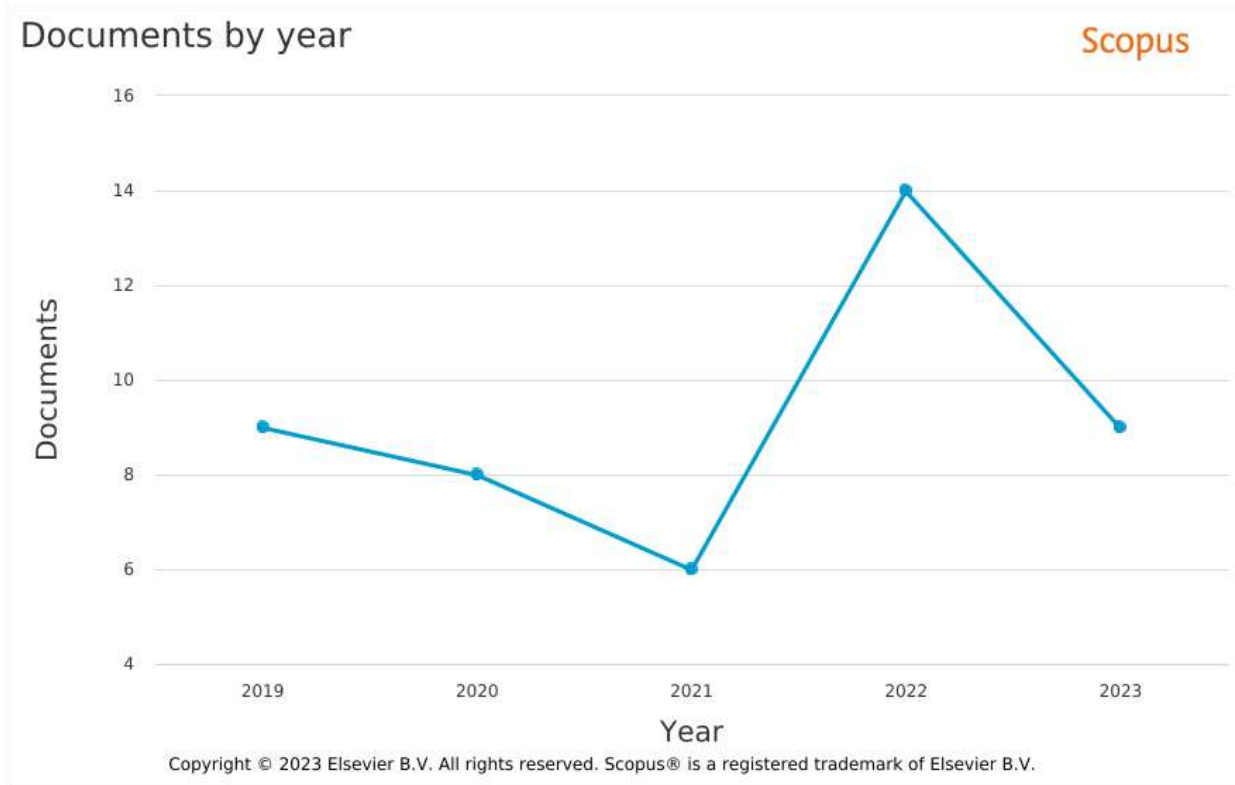
The impact of quality on maternal and child health cannot be underestimated. Quality health care services play an important role in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and improving

health outcomes. Quality care includes factors such as qualified health care providers, access to essential medicines and equipment, and the provision of appropriate and timely interventions. UNICEF Ecuador highlights the importance of providing comprehensive and quality care to pregnant mothers and newborns (OlarTE et al., 2023). Studies have shown that hypertension is one of the leading causes of maternal death in Latin America and the Caribbean (Liu, 2023). Therefore, ensuring quality health services in maternal and child care is essential to prevent adverse health outcomes and promote maternal and child well-being.

A review of the literature on health services and quality in maternal and child care in Ecuador provides valuable information on the current state of health care delivery and its impact on maternal and child health outcomes. Social dynamics and bioethics play an important role in shaping maternal health practices and policies (Kotha et al., 2023). Understanding these dynamics and their implications is crucial to developing effective strategies to improve maternal and child health in Ecuador. The literature review also highlights the high maternal mortality rate in the region, with approximately 529,000 women dying from causes associated with pregnancy, childbirth or puerperium (Marx et al., 2022). By exploring the existing literature, policymakers and healthcare providers can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in maternal and child care in Ecuador, ultimately leading to the development of targeted interventions and policies to improve health services and quality in this critical area.

This literature review highlights the importance of health services being one of the most used words and quality in maternal and child care as the second word of co-occurrence. It emphasizes the need to understand the importance of health services in ensuring the well-being of mothers and children. It also recognizes the impact that quality care can have on improving health outcomes for this vulnerable population. The review also provides an overview of the existing literature on health services and quality in maternal and child care in Ecuador, shedding light on the current state of health in the country. Overall, this review serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, health care providers, and researchers in their efforts to improve maternal and child health in Ecuador.

#### 4.2. Distribution of scientific production by year of publication



**Figure 3** shows how scientific production is distributed according to the year of publication

**Figure 3.** Distribution of scientific production by year of publication.  
**Source:** Own elaboration (2023); based on data exported from Scopus

The distribution of scientific production on the quality of health service has shown certain trends over the years. Research in this field has been steadily increasing, reflecting the growing importance and interest in improving the quality of health services. World Bank Global Report Highlights Essential Role of Quality Health Service Delivery in Achieving Universal Health Coverage (Han et al., 2022). Bibliometric and thematic analyses of scientific production have also been carried out, providing information on specific areas of focus within the field of quality of health services. (Lasim et al., 2022). These trends in scientific publications indicate



a growing recognition of the importance of the quality of health services and a commitment to addressing related problems.

Several factors influence the distribution of scientific production on the quality of health service. One such factor is the operational characteristics of the health system itself. Different health systems may prioritize certain aspects of quality, leading to variations in research focus and outcome. (Canute et al., 2022). In addition, the availability of funding and resources for research in this area can impact the distribution of scientific production. Limited funding may result in fewer studies being conducted or published on the quality of health services. In addition, the research priorities and interests of individual researchers and institutions also play a role in shaping the distribution of scientific output. (Canute et al., 2022; Coube et al., 2023). These factors collectively contribute to the diversity and scope of research on the quality of health services.

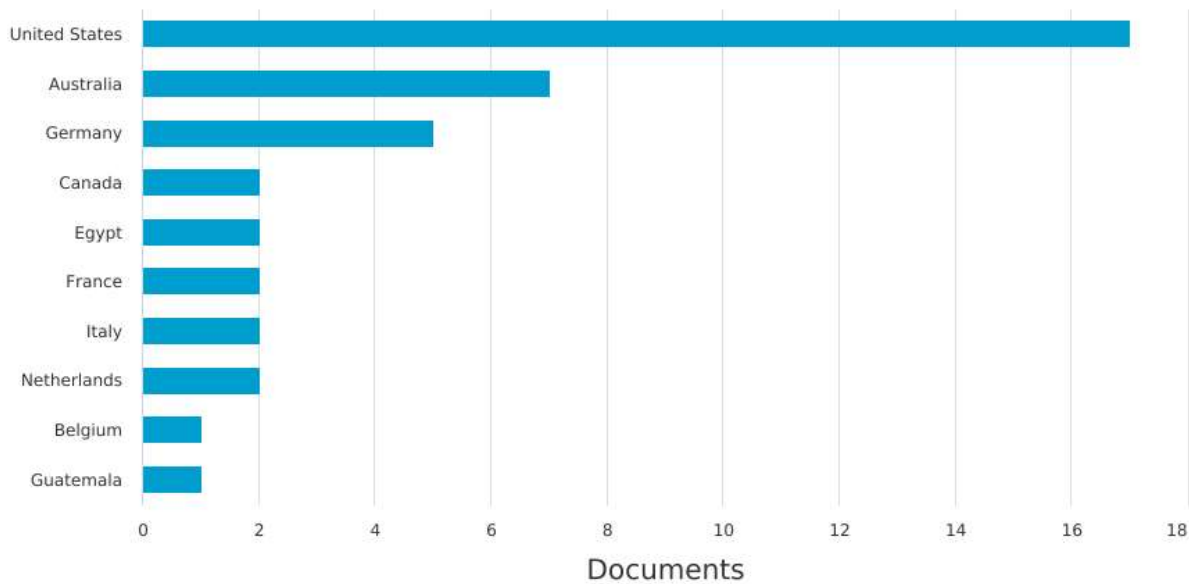
The distribution of scientific production on the quality of health services has important implications for health systems and the overall improvement of the quality of health services. A study published in *Biosciences* highlights the need to consider both the quantity and quality of scientific production in health sciences (Marx et al., 2022). The availability of a substantial body of research on the quality of health services enables policymakers, health professionals, and researchers to gain valuable insights into best practices, identify areas for improvement, and make evidence-based decisions. In addition, the dissemination of research results through scientific publications facilitates knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders, which fosters continuous improvement in the quality of health services. (Ghaffar et al., 2021). Therefore, the distribution of scientific production in this field plays a crucial role in driving positive changes and advances in health systems worldwide.

The distribution of scientific production by year of publication on the quality of health services is an important area of study that provides valuable information on trends and factors influencing the quality of health services. Analysis of scientific publications in this field helps identify emerging trends and areas of interest, enabling policymakers and health professionals to make informed decisions and implement effective strategies to improve the quality of health

## Documents by country or territory

Scopus

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



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services. In addition, understanding the factors that influence the distribution of scientific output can help address any bias or gaps in research, ensuring a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of the quality of health services. Ultimately, the implications of the distribution of scientific output on the quality of health services are far-reaching, with the potential to drive improvements in healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

### 4.3. Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.

**Figure 4** shows how scientific production is distributed according to the nationality of the authors

**Figure 4.** Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.

**Source:** Own elaboration (2023); based on data provided by Scopus.

The distribution of scientific production varies between countries, with some nations leading the way in producing research in the field of health sciences. According to a study by Carvajal-Tapia et al. (2019), the United States, Germany, Australia and Canada are the four countries with the highest levels of scientific production in health sciences, contributing 77.57% of the total number of publications. (Haskins et al., 2020). This highlights the significant

contributions made by these countries in advancing knowledge and understanding in the field of health.

Several factors influence the scientific production of countries. For example, the quality of care in maternal health services plays a crucial role. Studies such as the one conducted by Cabañas Duarte (2010) evaluate the quality of care in maternal health services based on the perception of users. Similarly, Moreno Zegbe (2018) aims to identify and prioritize problems in maternal health services in Mexico. These studies emphasize the importance of ensuring the provision of high-quality health services to promote the well-being of mothers and children.

The impact of scientific production in the field of health, particularly in maternal and child care, is significant for global health outcomes. Initiatives such as the Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health Initiative of the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) aim to address the health needs of mothers and children around the world (Merkel and Hess, 2020). In addition, the difference in maternal mortality figures between developed and developing countries is a significant global health inequity. (Al-Abri et al., 2020). By focusing on scientific research and improving the quality of health services, countries can contribute to reducing these disparities and improving maternal and child health outcomes.

The distribution of scientific production by country of origin plays a crucial role in shaping global health outcomes, particularly in the area of maternal and child care. Leading countries in scientific research have a significant influence on the development and implementation of health and quality services in this area. Factors such as funding, infrastructure and collaboration opportunities have a great impact on a country's scientific output. The impact of scientific production on global health cannot be underestimated, as it drives advances in medical knowledge, innovative treatments and evidence-based practices. By understanding the distribution of scientific output, we can identify areas for improvement and work to ensure that all countries have access to high-quality health services for mothers and children.

#### **4.4. Distribution of scientific production by area of knowledge**



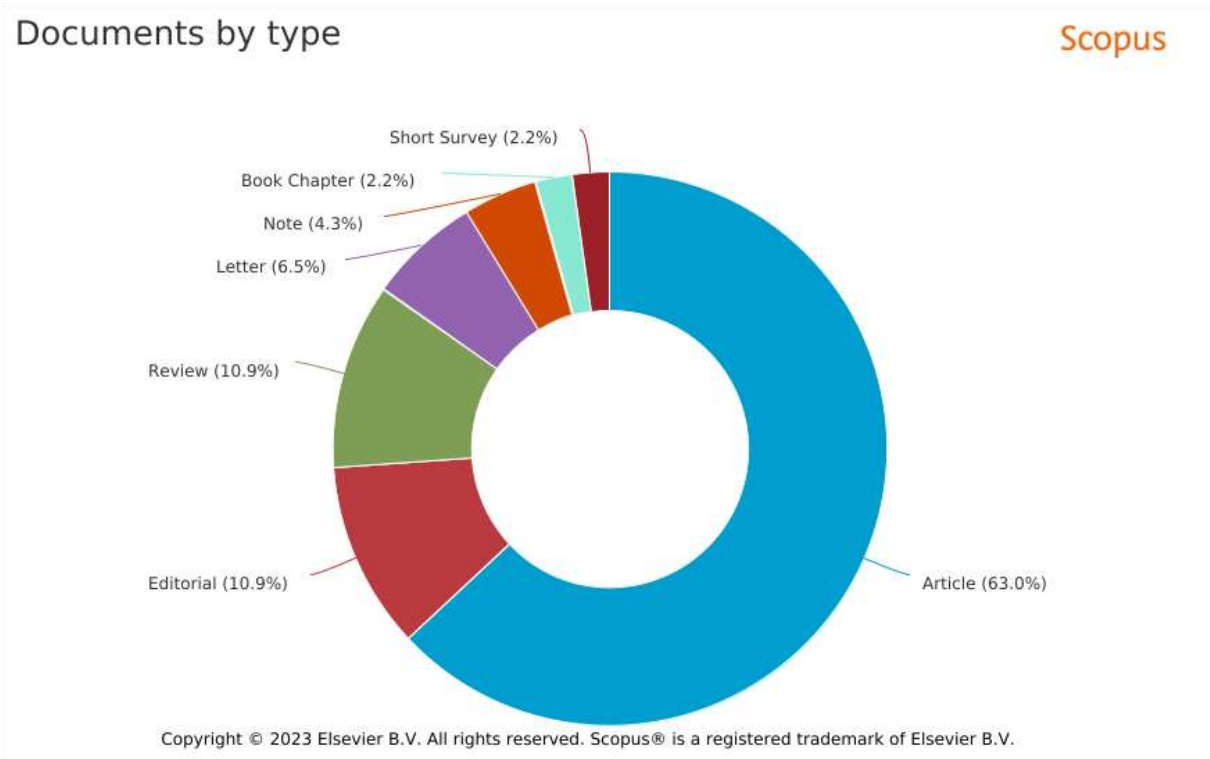
Regarding maternal care, there has been a focus on improving the quality of services provided to pregnant women in Ecuador. Studies have examined challenges and opportunities in maternal care, including the need for increased access to antenatal care, skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care. (da Costa Dantas et al., 2023). Efforts have been made to address these issues and ensure that pregnant women receive the care necessary for a safe and healthy pregnancy. The distribution of scientific production in this area reflects the ongoing commitment to improve maternal care in Ecuador (Teixeira, 2023).

Similarly, the quality of child care has been the subject of research and scientific attention in Ecuador. Efforts have been made to improve the overall well-being and development of children, with particular attention to early childhood interventions and comprehensive care (Olarte et al., 2023). Studies have examined the impact of several factors on child health and development, including access to health care services, nutrition, and early education. The distribution of scientific production in this area highlights the importance attached to providing quality care to children in Ecuador.

The distribution of scientific production by area of knowledge reveals the importance of health services and the quality of maternal and child care in Ecuador. Research in these areas highlights the importance of accessible, high-quality health services for the well-being of mothers and children. By focusing on improving the quality of maternal and child care, Ecuador can ensure better health outcomes for its population. Continued research and investment in these areas will contribute to the overall development and progress of the country's health system.

#### **4.5. Type of publication**

In the following graph, you will observe the distribution of the bibliographic finding according to the type of publication made by each of the authors found in Scopus



**Figure 6.** Type of publication.

**Fountain:** Own elaboration (2023); based on data provided by Scopus

Maternal health services in Ecuador play a crucial role in ensuring the well-being of pregnant women and their newborns. UNICEF Ecuador highlights the importance of providing comprehensive quality care to newborns and pregnant mothers (Liu, 2023). However, despite the increase in access to childbirth care by health personnel, there is still a stationary trend in the maternal mortality ratio in Ecuador (Kotha et al., 2023). Efforts are being made to expand the availability of quality maternal and neonatal care to the community, with the aim of improving the quality and comprehensiveness of antenatal care and promoting humanized delivery. (Meyers et al., 2019). Focusing on improving the quality of maternal health services is critical to preventing maternal deaths and providing optimal care for both mothers and newborns (Chacón et al., 2023; Mitchell et al., 2023).

Child health services in Ecuador are equally important in ensuring the well-being and proper development of children. The

Ecuadorian health system consists of public and private sectors, with the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) responsible for the public sector. (Olarte et al., 2023). UNICEF Ecuador is dedicated to ensuring that newborns and pregnant mothers receive comprehensive quality care (Lambar and Thomas, 2019; Merkel and Hess, 2020). However, maternal and child health indicators are deteriorating, particularly in Africa and Asia. (Oliveira et al., 2023; Ramadan, Muthee, et al., 2023). The Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador has implemented measures to measure the quality of maternal and child care through the Health Intelligence system (Chacón et al., 2023). By focusing on improving the quality of child health services, Ecuador can address the challenges and ensure the well-being of its children.

The impact of quality health services on maternal and child care in Ecuador cannot be underestimated. In 2020, there were approximately 800 preventable deaths each day related to pregnancy and childbirth worldwide. (Ghaffar et al., 2021). By providing quality health services, such as access to antenatal care, skilled birth attendants and postnatal care, the risks and complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth can be significantly reduced. Quality health services also play a crucial role in promoting early childhood development and ensuring children's overall well-being. Therefore, it is imperative that Ecuador prioritizes the provision of quality health services in maternal and child care to improve health outcomes and promote a healthier future for its population.

The importance of health services and quality in maternal and child care in Ecuador cannot be overstated. Maternal health services play a crucial role in ensuring safe pregnancies and deliveries, while child health services are essential for children's well-being and development. The impact of quality health services in these areas is significant, as it can lead to better health outcomes, reduced maternal and infant mortality rates, and overall better health for mothers and children in Ecuador. It is imperative that government and healthcare providers prioritize and invest in these services to ensure that all mothers and children receive the care they deserve.

## **5. Conclusions**

Access to quality antenatal care is crucial to ensuring the health and well-being of both mothers and their unborn children in Ecuador. Improving access to antenatal care can help detect and prevent complications during pregnancy, reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, and promote positive birth outcomes. Studies have shown that access to quality, skilled care during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum is essential to improving maternal and child health outcomes. Universal access to health services is necessary to prevent women from suffering life-threatening complications and the lives of their children. By providing comprehensive prenatal care, Ecuador can work to reduce maternal deaths and ensure the overall health and safety of pregnant women.

Adequate postnatal care and support are equally important in maternal and child care in Ecuador. Postnatal care services play a critical role in the continuum of care for mothers, newborns and children, and are essential to promoting optimal health outcomes. Health promotion during the postnatal period, including good nutrition, screening and breastfeeding support, is crucial for the well-being of mothers and babies. In addition, providing postnatal care services can help identify and address any potential health issues or complications that may arise after delivery, ensuring timely and appropriate management of these conditions. By prioritizing postnatal care, Ecuador can improve the overall health and development of both mothers and their children.

Vaccinations and preventive care of children are of paramount importance in maternal and child care in Ecuador. Ensuring that children receive timely and appropriate vaccinations is crucial to protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce child mortality rates. Integrating immunization services into maternal health services can help ensure that vaccines are readily available and accessible to both mothers and midwives. By prioritizing vaccines and preventive care for children, Ecuador can contribute significantly to reducing infant morbidity and mortality rates, promoting children's overall health and well-being. It is essential that the health system in Ecuador recognizes the importance of preventive care and vaccination services in the overall health and development of children.



In conclusion, the importance of health services in maternal and child care in Ecuador cannot be overstated. Access to quality antenatal care is crucial to ensuring the health and well-being of both mother and baby. Proper postnatal care and support are essential to promote proper recovery and address any potential complications. In addition, vaccines and preventive care play a vital role in protecting children from preventable diseases. By prioritizing these aspects of health care, Ecuador can significantly improve overall health outcomes for mothers and children in the country.

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