

The future impact of the SAJR

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The SAJR is improving its profile and horizons all the time as we want to be indexed so that we can be available online, i.e. on Pubmed, and we will therefore have an impact factor (IF).

The IF is an American invention, started in the 1950s by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.^{1,2} The IF is often used to assess the quality of a journal or article. The IF of a journal is determined by the number of times a particular journal is cited over a given period – usually a 3-year period.²

Although the IF has created controversy in many circles, one has to bear in mind that in some countries it is used to evaluate grant applications, staff promotions, job applications, and bonuses.^{3,4}

The controversies are largely based on inherent biases in the system which include English language preference; review articles (being more citable than case reports, so if a journal does not publish case reports it automatically becomes more citable, e.g. the *American Journal of Radiology*); free journals – for obvious reasons; longer articles; and of course the poor yield of citations from regional journals with highly specialised topics, for example *Antarctic Science*.^{1,5}

Basic science journals usually carry a high impact factor (*Nature* has an IF of 27.0740), whereas the clinical journals less so. At present the IF of *Radiology* is 3.899, the *AJNR* 1.556, *Paediatric Radiology* 0.8, and the *SAMJ* 0.794.⁵

Once a journal applies to be included in the ISI database, there are a few criteria that are scrutinised. These include: (i) regularity of publication; (ii) profile of the editorial team; (iii) whether the journal is peer-reviewed; and (iv) the relevance and topicality of the contents.¹

So by applying to be indexed we do leave ourselves vulnerable to a flawed system – but a system that is used relatively often, and that has international recognition.

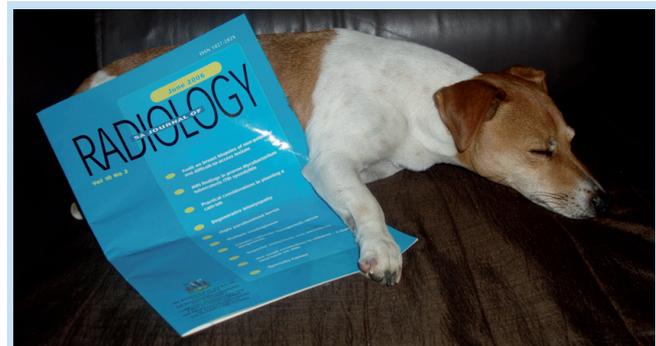
It is important that the IF does not become all-consuming, and that the IF of a journal or the IF of an individual's research be approached with caution, and not be the sole criterion in assessing the quality of a journal or a researcher.

This issue of the SAJR includes an original article from Dr Steven Braude and the Lambert group of the MRC/UCT Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine, who have concluded that plain radiographs alone are not ideal or accurate enough to identify age cheats in sport. Dr Vicci du Plessis, a radiology registrar from Petermaritzburg, together with Professor Savvas Andronikou, has just completed a pilot study investigating criteria used

when selecting radiology registrars for the teaching circuit. Their preliminary findings are that academic credentials and work experience are key criteria for the selection of radiology registrars in South Africa, and that a marked racial misrepresentation still prevails (this should silence the ever-sceptic critics – and not only in Sydney!). Professor Vinay Sharma of the Johannesburg Hospital Radiation Oncology Unit compared barium and gastrograffin swallows for use in radiation therapy planning in patients with carcinoma of the oesophagus, and found barium to be more cost effective. Dr Humza Carim, a first-year radiology registrar from Johannesburg, together with the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital Interventional Radiology Department, has described our experiences with bronchial artery embolisation for massive haemoptysis. There is also a case report with a review of the literature from Professor Sheldon Wiebe, a paediatric radiologist from Saskatoon University, Saskatchewan, Canada. He describes the radiographic and prenatal ultrasound features of perinatal lethal hypophosphatasia and its differentiation from osteogenesis imperfecta type II.

This broad spectrum of submissions, as well as international submissions, bodes very well for the future of the SAJR.

We have a second guest editor for this issue, Professor Merryll Vorster, the previous Head of Psychiatry, with extensive legal and ethics experience, and who is now the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand. Thank you kindly!



Do not let sleeping dogs lie!!

1. Nayak BK. The enigma of Impact Factor. *Indian J Ophthalmol* 2006; 54:225-226.
2. Impact Factor of Journals in Alphabetical Order. www.bioscience.org/services/impact15.htm-64k (last accessed 1 May 2007).
3. Martyn C. The malign influence of impact factors. *J R Soc Med* 2005; 98:556.
4. Ha TC, Tan SB, Soo KC. The journal impact factor: too much of an impact? *Ann Acad Med Singapore* 2006; 35: 911-916.
5. Journal Impact Factors. www.sciencegateway.org/impact/-5k (last accessed 1 May 2007).

Hello from the Faculty of Health Sciences, Wits!

Professor Merryll Vorster, Vice-Dean

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Health Sciences is leading the way with its plans to improve the registrar success rates in the MMed. Apart from the Research Techniques course offered within the Department of Radiology, the Faculty is planning two comprehensive courses on protocol preparation, ethics, research methodology, data

analysis, report writing AND editing. The courses will be held at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital and the Faculty and should start in about August. They will be offered as a set or as individual courses. Radiology registrars should keep an eye open for the notices!

During November we host our Annual Health Graduates Re-Union and the seminar this year (Saturday 10 November 2007) is on IMAGING. Seems Radiology is becoming a leader in Research in this Faculty!