

Editorial

From index to impact factor

從索引至影響指數

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Editor-in-Chief

Since 2004, the Hong Kong Journal of Emergency Medicine (HKJEM) has been officially indexed by EMBASE/Excerpta Medica. Four years have elapsed and I am pleased to announce that the HKJEM has been evaluated by Thomson Reuters and will be officially indexed in Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) starting with the first issue of 2008. The Science Citation Index Expanded provides access to current and retrospective bibliographic information, author abstracts, and cited references found in approximately 5,900 of the world's leading scholarly science and technical journals covering more than 150 disciplines.

The Scientific division of Thomson Reuters provides integrated information solutions with brands like ISI Web of Knowledge and Web of Science. The impact factor, devised by Eugene Garfield, the founder of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), now part of

Thomson Reuters, are computed each year by Thomson Scientific for those journals it indexes; the factors and indices are published in Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Some related values, calculated and published by the same organisation as well, are the immediacy index, the cited half-life and the aggregate impact factor for a subject category.

The impact factor is one simple descriptive quantitative tool for evaluating the performance of journals rather than individual articles or individual scientists. It is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a given period of time. The impact factor for a journal is calculated based on a three-year period, and can be considered to be the average number of times published articles that are cited up to two years after publication. In concrete terms, the impact factor 2010 for a journal would be calculated as:

$$\text{Impact factor 2010} = \frac{\text{No. of times articles published in 2008-09 cited in indexed journals during 2010}}{\text{No. of articles, reviews, proceedings or notes published in 2008-09}}$$

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As the impact factor is calculated using the citations in one year to articles published in the journal in the previous two years, there can be a delay of up to four years before the first impact factor for our Journal appears. The time line runs as follows:

Step 1:

2008 source articles published in HKJEM and indexed in SCIE

Step 2:

2009 source articles published in HKJEM and indexed in SCIE

Step 3:

2010 citations counted in HKJEM 2008 & 2009

Step 4:

2011 impact factor for HKJEM first published

We now have a new target of attaining high impact factors, starting with the first evaluation. It should be noted that the impact factor may be affected by: -

1. The quality of articles published
2. Types of articles published, e.g. randomised controlled trials, reviews
3. Accessibility of the journal and its articles
 - A. Volume and scope of distribution of the journal
 - B. Awareness and popularity of the journal
 - C. Website accessibility and download of journal articles
 - D. Price of the journal

It is generally considered that the higher the impact factor, the "better" the journal. As a result, journals with high impact factor are often preferentially acquired in institutions where subscription funds are limited; researchers are keen to submit their work to journals with high impact factor; the editors of journals with high impact factor are flooded with manuscripts; some funding agencies expect their professionals to publish in journals above a certain impact factor; and human resources officers tend to look for recruits with publications in high impact factor journals.

It is natural and indisputable that there is a tendency to submit manuscripts to overseas and high impact factor journals. However, I must stress that the Hong Kong Journal of Emergency Medicine is our own journal, and all fellows and trainees of the College are urged to lend support to its growth. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all fellows and trainees to do their best to carry out high quality studies and to submit good quality articles to the HKJEM. This is the best way to improve the quality and reputation of our Journal.

With the concerted efforts of our fellows and trainees, I feel confident that this mission can be achieved in the near future.