



Celebrating the Latest Release of the Journal Impact Factors: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

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Citation-based metrics are recognized measures of vitality and importance of scholarly journals, which facilitate distribution of information and influence scientific progress worldwide. The dynamic changes of such metrics reflect interest of the scientific community toward the most relevant quality items, which are indexed by global bibliographic databases such as Web of Science and Scopus. Various metrics are calculated annually by these reputable databases to help librarians, information scientists, and research managers distinguish the most influential periodicals and recommend them as targets for good quality research (1). Despite the availability of numerous traditional and alternative metrics, most journal editors and publishers alike follow and display on their websites only a few easily understandable and universally applicable indicators, with the 2-year Journal Impact Factor (JIF) still being the most popular one.

On June 19, 2015, Thomson Reuters® released much-awaited values of the JIF, total cites, and other bibliometric indices for 2014 (2). The JIF is helpful for comprehensive evaluation of scholarly journals all over the world despite its limitations and manipulations (3, 4). Unsurprisingly, this year's list of journals with the highest JIF is, again, topped by the *CA-Cancer J Clin* (115.84) and the *New Engl J Med* (55.873). These are the most influential and prestigious sources of evidence-based information, which attract attention of oncologists and medical scientists seeking groundbreaking research. We would like to congratulate editors of these two journals for their enduring success and superb editing! There is a lot to be learned from their success stories.

In the General & Internal Medicine subject category of the Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports® (JCR, Science Edition), there are 153 indexed journals. The *New Engl J Med* is the top one, which is followed by seven other big journals with JIFs above 10, ten with 10-5, 74 with 5-1, and 61 below 1. Median JIF in this category is 1.295 and the lowest JIF is 0.018 (2). Once again, these data confirm that distribution of JIF values is largely skewed by enormously high and low citations of individual journals.

In fact, top three journals in General & Internal Medicine, the *New Engl J Med*, *The Lancet*, and *JAMA* attracted approximately half of the total cites received by the whole subject category. One may conclude that publishing high-impact journals is profitable since citations and related metrics are increasingly becoming hard currencies for modern-day editors and publishers. Also, these journals are highly selective toward quality research articles and reviews, which boost their citation records further and make them more influential scientifically.

This year a total of 102 journals represent Korea in the JCR, 173 - China, 234 - Japan, and 2,894 - the US (2). These numbers the US indirectly reflect research productivity and positively position Korea among the most competitive and economically developed countries. Of the 102 Korean journals, 30 are members of the Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors (KAMJE). The highest JIF of these 30 journals is 3.446 and the lowest is 0.38. Compared to previous year, this year 13 journals increased their JIF, 7 retained the same values, and 6 decreased. Four journals received their first JIF in 2014. The *J Korean Med Sci* slightly increased its JIF from 1.253 to 1.266 and total cites from 3431 to 3710. Overall, dynamics of citation metrics of KAMJE journals points to their growth and increased influence, which is a result of concerted efforts of our devoted authors, reviewers, editors, publishers, and readers. We feel a special thank must also go to all consultants and international experts, who guided Korean medical editors all these years and recommended essential amendments in all editorial proceedings.

Getting indexed by Web of Science and accumulating citations from journals already listed by this prestigious global database is an arduous and time-consuming process. There are no short-cuts and easy solutions in the process of boosting citation metrics. Korean editors responsible for the development of their journals have to be skilled to promote their authors, expose their papers to a wider audience, and attract relevant citations. Loosing potential citers and gaming the system by stacking citations, boosting self-cites, and conspicuous unethical

measures are equally dangerous for indexing status of a journal. We strongly believe that indexing in Web of Science, listing and retaining positions in the JCR are dependent on upgraded editorial policy and enforced publishing ethics. The JIF is an important citation metric of the journal development; but it is not the only one. Experts advise to comprehensively analyze several metrics calculated by different databases, and to display journal h-index and other Scopus-based metrics alongside the JIF (5, 6).

Journal editors should also realize that the survival and growth of their brainchild is multidirectional and compounded by factors beyond the global databases and related citation circles. In particular, Korean editors and researchers should resist attempts by their institutions or government to use the JIF as a proxy of the quality and priority of their articles (7). Research managers and policy makers, in turn, should prioritize and invest more in local archives, repositories, and bibliographic databases such as the KoreaMed (<http://koreamed.org>), KoreaMed Synapse (<http://synapse.koreamed.org>), Korean Medical Citation Index (KoMCI at <http://www.komci.org>), and the Korea Citation Index (KCI, <https://www.kci.go.kr/kciportal/main.kci>). Primary interests of Korean medical journals relate to local health and medical science issues, which should be properly represented at Korean bibliographic and citation databases in the first place.

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