

Perspectives

A NEW LEVEL OF DISTINCTION

Recently, the *Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry* achieved a level of credibility and distinction that few journals in dentistry ever attain. After years of hard work, dedication, and support by the staff of Wiley-Blackwell, the editorial team, and the large array of supporting Editorial Advisory Board members and reviewers, the *Journal* recently was awarded its first “impact factor.” For those in academia, the value and literary distinction this recognition connotes is well known. However, many readers and authors, particularly in the clinical arena, may neither be familiar with this notable metric nor appreciate its importance in underscoring the level of excellence that it represents.

According to a treatise published in 1994 by The Institute for Scientific Information (currently Thomson Reuters), the impact factor was invented in the 1960s to determine the citation frequency of a journal.¹ Subsequently, Thomson Reuters began publishing this information annually in Journal Citation Reports. Amazingly, Thomson Reuters currently processes approximately 12 million

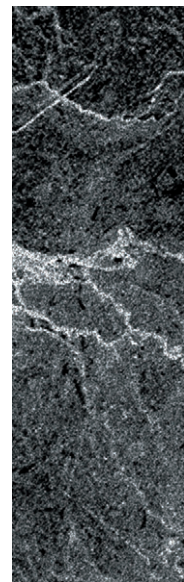
references per year in the determination of respective impact factors. Only the most prestigious journals have been accepted for review and are recognized with an impact factor. In fact, out of almost 1,400 dental publications, only 64 to date have achieved the distinction of having been awarded an impact factor.

What is the impact factor? Basically, it is a measure of the frequency with which an article (of which there are many types) in a journal has been cited over a given period of time. Typically, the impact factor is determined annually, although it can be calculated for longer periods of time as well. A typical annual impact factor is determined by dividing the number of articles or features cited from a given journal (numerator) by the number of citable publications published in that journal the previous 2 years (denominator).

Our first impact factor is 0.8, allowing us to debut at number 57 out of 64 journals with an impact factor. By comparison, the median impact factor for all journals in our category (dentistry) is 1.4. Clearly, there is room for growth.

But as this author was told, “it is not so much where you are on the totem pole, but rather the fact that you ARE on the totem pole!” Nevertheless, we intend to consider strategies for improving our impact factor ranking and will continue to focus on accepting only the best quality submissions in order to improve this vital number.

Generally, the most highly cited publications contributing to the impact factor are articles and reviews. But for journals such as the *Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry*, other document types such as our Commentaries, Ask the Experts, Perspectives, and Critical Appraisal features are also considered “citable,” and are therefore included in the equation. The fact that we do include many Commentaries and features does not help us in the calculation of the impact factor because, although these are considered citable publications, they typically are not cited as frequently as are more weighty papers. However, we



are, nonetheless, committed to continuing these very valuable features. The *Journal* is dedicated to publishing articles and features that are relevant to both the practitioner and the academic. To that end, we have elected to eliminate the Talking with Patients and Masters of Esthetic Dentistry features that are less likely to positively influence the scientific literature.

Journals that include more review articles often receive higher impact factors than those that do not. Review articles are more frequently cited because they often serve as a “conduit” to many more papers previously published in the literature. For that reason, we are also actively recruiting more review articles and articles with comprehensive bibliographies. We also want to include more review articles because they serve as excellent overviews for clinicians and academicians alike on a given topic. According to Thomson Reuters, each year the most cited journals are those that are exclusively review journals. Regardless, the *Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry* is committed to also publishing high-quality clinical and research papers as well as continuing many of its high-quality features in order to optimize its value to both practicing dentists and academicians alike.

What does the impact factor mean to the *Journal*? First and foremost, as noted previously, it means that the *Journal* has attained a level of distinction that is clearly shared by a very select few in dentistry. As a result, the *Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry* has become the only peer-reviewed journal in esthetic dentistry to have achieved this distinction. Because of this additional recognition, an almost immediate increase in institutional subscriptions was observed. Also owing to this recognition, the *Journal* has been inundated with high-quality submissions. In fact, the growth in the number of submissions was so significant after being awarded an impact factor, that we were compelled to implement a temporary moratorium on papers based on in vitro research. *It is very important to note that we have now taken steps to achieve a more rapid submission-to-publication schedule with the introduction of an innovative online feature called Early View. Starting in 2011, the Journal will begin publishing papers online shortly after acceptance in advance of print, which will be a tremendous benefit for authors.*

Coupled with a rejection rate of approximately 80%, the *Journal* is poised to achieve even greater heights of distinction in the future by highlighting only the very best quality in publication excellence. It

should be noted that regardless of the current rejection rate and number of research papers being submitted to the *Journal*, we are always receptive to the submission of high-quality clinical papers that are well illustrated. For a journal devoted largely to the art and science of dental esthetics, excellent clinical papers continue to be the “life blood” of the *Journal*.

In summary, after 22 years of growth and improvement, the *Journal* has reached a point of recognition and influence that few journals in dentistry ever achieve. Dental publications and journals characterized by gorgeous color images on glossy pages come and go. New competing journals of this type will no doubt continue to emerge. But few journals of this type have endured the test of time, and even fewer ever receive an impact factor. Because of the hard work of many and the support of a devoted readership and numerous prestigious dental organizations, the *Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry* has attained a new level of distinction. For this support, we are infinitely grateful. Owing to this achievement, in my opinion, the *Journal* has assumed the enviable position of being the pre-eminent peer-reviewed publication in the area of esthetic dentistry. It is my intent to maintain this level of excellence, so that the *Journal*

can continue to be a leading contributor to the body of knowledge shared by top practitioners and academics alike in the fields of esthetic and restorative dentistry.

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REFERENCE

1. Garfield E. The impact factor. *Current Contents*® 1994;(25):3-7.

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