Editorial

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Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine continues to shine brightly in the constellation of laboratory medicine

The journal impact factor (IF) is a relatively simple metric, calculated according to the overall number of citations in a given year (i.e. 2017) for articles published in one scientific journal during the previous 2 years (i.e. 2015 and 2016), divided by the overall number of articles published by that same journal in the previous 2 years (i.e. 2015 and 2016) [1]. The aggregate IF for a given subject category can be estimated similarly to the journal IF, and hence considering the overall number of citations for articles published by all journals comprised within the same subject category divided by the overall number of articles published by these journals [2].

Albeit the use of the IF for rating journal prestige remains disputed, as it carries both advantages and drawbacks as discussed elsewhere [3, 4], it cannot be negated that the vast majority of scientists around the world are still influenced by this metric when deciding the most suitable journal for submitting their works, as success in publishing in high IF journals will have an impact on scientific reputation, grants assignment and career progression [5]. It is thus predictable that the influence of the IF will remain resilient for many years to come, mirroring the perceived importance of a journal within and even outside its specific subject category. To put it simple, journals with a higher IF are (and predictably will be) recognized as being more influential than those with a lower IF.

The recent publication of the 2017 Journal Citation Reports (JCR) by Clarivate Analytics has represented another step forward for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM). With a new IF of 3.556, CCLM confirms his prominent position in the subject category of “Medical Laboratory Technology”, being ranked 7th out of the 30 scientific journals included in this group. Notably, the IF of CCLM has further increased by 3.6% over that of the previous year but, even more impressively, it has also increased by over 88% during the past 10 years (Figure 1). Although both the aggregate IF of the “Medical Laboratory Technology” subject category (r=0.790; p<0.001) and the IF of CCLM (r=0.942; p<0.001) have displayed a highly significant linear increase over time, the progression of CCLM is more pronounced compared to that of its scientific category (Figure 1). This is clearly emphasized by the fact that the IF of CCLM was ~14% lower than the aggregate IF of the “Medical Laboratory Technology” subject category in 2008, whilst it has now become ~44% higher in 2017.

This important achievement for CCLM is indeed paralleled by a comparable success of the “Medical Laboratory Technology” subject category. Figure 2, which summarizes the progression of the aggregate IF trend of “Geriatrics and gerontology”, “Medical Laboratory Technology”, “Medicine, general and internal”, “Medicine, research and experimental”, “Radiology, Medical Imaging” and “Surgery” during the past 10 years, clearly shows that “Medical Laboratory Technology” has gradually increased its prominence, displaying a steady enhancement, with

Figure 1: Progression of journal impact factor (IF) for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM) and of the aggregate IF of the “Medical Laboratory Technology” during the past 10 years.
an overall 12.5% increase compared to the year 2008 that is only second to the category “Surgery” (Figure 2), thus strengthening the important concept that laboratory medicine is a core of science and medicine [6].

Albeit we are still struggling to safeguard the praise-worthiness of our journal from predatory publishers [7], it cannot be denied that the efforts devoted to make CCLM a distinguished journal in the constellation of laboratory medicine are increasingly being rewarded. In particular, we would like to emphasize that we are navigating between Scylla (the search for a valuable IF) and Charybdis (the mission to publish interesting and useful papers for the broader readership of the journal and, in particular, for laboratory professionals). In the accomplishment of this goal, we must really thank all the associate editors, the editorial board members, our reviewers, our contributors, our readers and, last but not least, all the editorial staff of the journal for making it possible to reach this further exceptional achievement.

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References


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