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Editorial: Nurses and publications – the impact of the impact factor

Over the past decades, the sheer volume of written work produced on nursing and by nurses has grown exponentially. In the almost 150 years since *Notes on Nursing* (Nightingale 1860), nursing has produced voluminous tracts of literature. There are now literally thousands of publications devoted to the practice and scholarship of nursing.

As contributors to the body of literature, we observe that it was not all that long ago that nurses began to be urged to publish. For a (seemingly) brief period, it did not matter where you published, as long as you published. Then there was the pressure to target double-blind peer reviewed journals. The goal posts have moved again and currently, for most of us, the pressure is to target our publications efforts toward the higher impact journals, or journals with an impact factor (IF).

The IF is a means of ranking journals based on citations, and so is considered to be a measure of the standing and influence of a particular journal. Though there are other measures, IF is the longest standing measure of journal quality and is a figure derived from the ratio of citations of a journal in one year to papers published by that journal over the previous two years (http://www.thomsonreuters.com/business_units/scientific/free/essays/impactfactor/; retrieved 14 April 2009). For example, the impact factor for a journal reported in 2008 refers to the number of citations in 2007 to papers published in 2005–2006. It should be noted – and often is by its detractors – that the IF is quite meaningless in terms of the impact of the contents of a journal on practice and, of course, it only refers to the journal as a whole and tells us nothing about the quality of any single piece that is published in a journal.

Impact Factor is not the only measure; there are rivals including the Eigenfactor (<http://www.eigenfactor.org>; retrieved 24 April 2009) and the Scimago journal rank indicator (<http://www.scimagojr.com>). What the IF may lack in meaning, it makes up for in simplicity. Any effort to explain in simple terms – as done above for the IF – the means by which Eigenfactors and Scimago rank indexes are calculated requires considerable leaps in imagination, if not of faith, and some more complex mathematics than are required to calculate an IF. For these reasons, the IF remains the ‘gold standard’ and most cited measure in this area.

A cursory glance at websites providing a range of indicators demonstrates that, in terms of ranking journals, they all provide more or less the same ranking measures. This includes the H-index which is a popular way for academics to rank themselves relative to their peers – in addition to total citations. The H (or Hirsch) index for journals means the same thing as an individual’s H-index (http://www.stuenpuntoos.be/WG_Papers/Scientist_19_22_8.pdf; retrieved 24 April 2009).

An H-Index indicates the number of papers that have been cited a certain number of times, for example, an H-index of 10 means that a journal has 10 papers that have been cited in a given period – often five years. The H-index, which does not really rank journals any differently from other indicators, has the beauty of relative simplicity and also meaning – within the confines of the citation paradigm – in that it is insensitive to very highly cited papers and does not penalise for low or uncited papers. However, it should be noted that for all of the above the ‘bottom line’ is citations, and the more the better.

The above measures are all internationally recognised. There are also some local ranking measures in place in some countries. Australia for example, has the recently developed ERA (Excellence in Research Australia) journal ranking lists, which provides discipline specific tiered rankings of journals (<http://www.arc.gov.au/era/indicators.htm>; retrieved 24th April 2009). There may or may not be concordance between the ranking scores of the international and local ranking measures.

Thus, the IF (and to a lesser extent, the other measures described above) are of obvious interest to publishers, librarians, academics and those engaged in related activities. However, as a judge of academic quality, these measures have been subject to criticism for several reasons. The IF has been around longest, and so, as expected, has been subject to the most critique. Criticisms have been widespread, and include the ease with which it can be manipulated and misused (Amin & Made 2000, The PLoS Medicine Editors 2006). Furthermore, though the primary purpose of the IF is as a means of ranking journals, the uses to which the IF are applied are broader and, the literature suggests that in many contexts, they are used as a means of judging academic performance and considered in relation to individuals, and decisions around employment, tenure and promotion (Kovner & Brewer 2006). Thus, there is the pressure for academics to target high IF journals. The IF focuses on the peer reviewed journals, therefore it effectively privileges particular forms of writing, and particular types of literature, and thereby, has the potential to influence the nature of writing we do. Johnstone (2007: 35) comments that the focus on IF is such that nurses everywhere are

being encouraged to ‘abandon altogether other modes of publishing, including books and book chapters’, because they are seen as being of little value in today’s IF driven world.

In scanning the highest IF journals in nursing, we see a collection of truly international and mostly generic nursing journals. These journals generally aim to publish papers that are relevant to an international audience (Watson *et al.* 2007). An academic paper can only be published once, therefore nurse researchers and scholars can be presented with a dilemma: to aim for a higher IF journal, that will be seeking work of interest to an international audience, or to sacrifice the IF to aim for a particular local or specialist audience, that may mean targeting a journal with a wide circulation to a relevant readership, but a negligible (or no) IF.

Kovner and Brewer (2006) have highlighted some of the difficulties researchers have in making choices about where to publish research papers. They draw attention to the tensions between wanting to reach a specific desired target audience, and wanting

also to meet publishing requirements of tenure committees, funding bodies and the academic community. These latter bodies judge the quality of a publication record, in large part by the IF of the journals in which publications appear (Johnstone 2007).

There are several considerations to be taken into account when selecting a target journal. In addition to IF, these considerations include: the purpose of the paper; the intended audience; journal accessibility; circulation; internationality etc. Some journals are disseminated as part of the benefits of membership of particular professional organisations, and therefore simply appear in the mailboxes of members. Journals disseminated in this way likely reach an entirely different audience to those journals which have to be actively sought through personal subscription, electronic database, or library, and which may be difficult to access for some nurses. If we consider the purposes of publication – if it is truly to disseminate information as widely as possible, then journal impact factor is only one of the issues to be taken into consideration

when selecting a target journal for any particular piece of work.

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Objective The research assessed nursing faculty awareness and knowledge of the journal impact factor (JIF) and its impact on their publication choices. **Methods** A qualitative cross-sectional questionnaire was developed using Fluid Survey and distributed electronically to nursing faculty and instructors at three post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan. Data were collected on place and status of employment, knowledge and awareness of JIFs, and criteria used to choose journals for publication. **CONCLUSION** CONTINUE READING. View PDF. For example, the impact factor for a journal reported in 2008 refers to the number of citations in 2007 to papers published in [2005] [2006]. It should be noted -and often is by its detractors -that the IF is quite meaningless in terms of the impact of the contents of a journal on practice and, of course, it only refers to the journal as a whole and tells us nothing about the quality of any single piece that is published in a journal. These latter bodies judge the quality of a publication record, in large part by the IF of the journals in which publications appear (Johnstone 2007). There are several considerations to be taken into account when selecting a target journal. Nursing Journals of OMICS publications are Open Access with high impact factors creating a platform to share and gain the knowledge in Nursing. Nursing focusses on providing medical and personal assistance to the individuals, families, and communities affected physically or psychologically. Nursing research deals with evidence supporting nursing practices. Traditionally, nurses used to work under the supervision of physicians. In the current changing scenario, the specialty of nursing has diversified to include nurse practitioners, nurse case managers, Intensive care unit registered nurses, Home care registered nurse, and Travel registered nurses, who specialize in certain fields of medicine and are allowed to practice independently. The definition of impact factor is the number of citations, the articles published in that journal during the last two preceding years, in the given year and divide this by the total number of citable items, which published in that journal in the previous two years. On the other hand, along with the impact factor, it is important to know about the functional impact factor. Well, we all know that watch the numbers and higher will win. But the impact factor works beyond this and shows that numbers are not absolute. In other words, we can say that the higher the impact factor, the higher the rank Here is the latest Impact Factor List of 2019 provided by the Journal Citation Report (JCR). It contains over 12000 Journals. JCR was earlier published as Science Citation Index, and now it is published by Clarivate Analytics, a Web of Science Group. **Impact Factor Calculations.** $IF\ 2018 = \frac{\text{Citation in 2017} + \text{Citations in 2016}}{\text{Papers Published in 2017} + \text{Papers Published in 2016}}$. Rank. Full Journal Title. Total Cites. Journal Impact Factor. Eigenfactor Score. 1.

The impact factor (IF) or journal impact factor (JIF) of an academic journal is a scientometric index calculated by Clarivate that reflects the yearly average number of citations of articles published in the last two years in a given journal. It is frequently used as a proxy for the relative importance of a journal within its field; journals with higher impact factor values are often deemed to be more important, or carry more intrinsic prestige in their respective fields, than those with lower values. Nursing and Health Sciences Impact Factor Prediction System is now online. You can start share your valuable insights with the community. Impact Factor Prediction System. Predict Check All Preditons. Note that 2020 Impact Factor are reported in 2021; they cannot be calculated until all of the 2020 publications have been processed by the indexing agency. New journals, which are indexed from their first published issue, will receive an impact factor after two years of indexing; in this case, the citations to the year prior to Volume 1, and the number of articles published in the year prior to Volume 1, are known zero values. Journals that are indexed starting with a volume other than the first volume will not get an impact factor until they have been indexed for three years. Relative impact factors are often a better guide to the importance of a journal than raw numbers. Journal Citation Reports allow you to compare the impact factors of different journals in the same subject area. For example the Economic History Review has an impact factor of 1.051. At first glance, it would appear that this journal is relatively unimportant. Far more illuminating is the journal's relatively high impact factor compared with other journals in the history of the social sciences. Economic History Review ranks first out of 15 journals in the Thomson/ISI's list of journals in the subdiscipline. Example: Impact Factor in 2015 = Citations in 2014 and 2013/number of published items in 2014 and 2013. View chapter Purchase book. Read full chapter. Impact Factors and Nursing Journals. JCR publishes two editions each year, a Science and a Social Science edition, and Nursing is a subject. category within both. The two lists overlap consider-ably, but a few journals in the Social Science edition are not in the Science edition, and vice versa. Impact factors have been calculated for nursing journals for several decades. For individual nursing journals, analysis of the historical data showed that IFs increased between 2004 and 2009 for 31 of the 33 journals (94%) that were listed in JCR in those years, and the median 2004 to 2009 increase was 0.43. This increase is consistent with trends toward higher IFs observed in other health care journals.17,18. N u r s O u t l o o k 5 9 (2 0 1 1) 1 8 e 2 8. The journal impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a particular year. According to Care and Degner (2005), impact factors "give an indication of citation rates for articles published in any particular journal. The higher the impact factor, the more likely an article published in that journal is to be cited." The second survey of 100 publications included US nursing and health care journals but only two foreign nursing journals in 1982. The third survey on 130 journals included US and foreign nursing journals and US health care journals in 1986. The 1991 survey was limited to US nursing journals because of the increasing numbers and the difficulty in obtaining information on health care and foreign journals.