Something to Crow About!

Every summer, I start becoming a bit uneasy. When I got the privilege of serving as editor-in-chief of *JNCCN*, I set some goals to measure my success. The metrics were pretty simple, and so was the plan to achieve at least one of them: by better focusing journal content, the number of submissions should rise. With more submissions, we could curate for better content. And publishing better content would raise the impact factor of the journal accordingly.

The impact factor report comes out in June or July, and for the weeks in advance of it, I start to worry. It's like waiting for your report card. Did I pass or fail? Honestly, I take this seriously! I'm proud of the journal and if I am not improving it, I should step aside.

If you are not familiar with the impact factor, let me fill you in. It was devised by Eugene Garfield, the founder of the Institute for Scientific Information, and the impact factor has been calculated annually for journals since 1975.¹ It is based on the volume of citations that articles in the journal generate, and many see it as roughly akin to the quality of the journal. The formula used to calculate the impact factor ("IF" in the formula) of a given journal is below²:

$$IF_y = \frac{\text{Citations}_y}{\text{Publications}_{y-1} + \text{Publications}_{y-2}}$$

where *y* represents the year being measured. So above, "*y*" represents 2020, and "*y*–1" and "*y*–2" are 2019 and 2018, respectively. It stands to reason that the more times an article is cited, the more impact it has. How they go about gathering these data, on the other hand, is beyond me. The method is proprietary, so it can't be verified. I suspect software that can sort through PubMed to build the database is involved. I can't imagine humans doing this!

All that aside, I am happy to report that the impact factor for *JNCCN* has risen—again! In fact, the impact factor has been climbing steadily over the last few years:

What a relief. My job here is secure . . . at least until next year! And in case you are wondering whether this was accompanied by an increase in submissions, rest assured it was. The following graph shows the rise in submitted manuscripts over the past few years. Of course, 2020 might be a bit amplified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With everyone stuck at home, they had more time to write up the data stashed on their desks!

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Editorial Board, who provide much guidance and wisdom, especially when it comes to unsolicited letters and commentaries. And I'll conclude with a special shout-out to our editorial staff at NCCN. Their work ethic and commitment to excellence is unwavering. They make the complicated backstory look easy, and we are all grateful to them for all they do!

References

1. Masic I. The most influential scientist in the development of medical informatics (17): Eugene Garfield. *Acta Inform Med* 2017; 25:145
2. Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. 2020 Journal Citation Reports. Web of Science (Science ed.). Thomson Reuters. 2020.

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