

Annals Impact Factor 1.67. Welcome to the IF club: achievement and challenges

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Despite its criticisms and short-comings, the Impact Factor (IF), defined as the number of papers that a journal has published that are cited in published papers divided by the total number of citable papers (i.e. excluding editorials and letters to the editor) over a two year period,¹ remains an important marker of a journal's academic relevance. Like ratings of television shows, a higher rating is better than a lower rating. Therefore, the assignment of an Impact Factor should be a matter of joy for all those persons who helped with the "birth" of the Annals of Hepatology and nurtured it during its "infancy and childhood" as well as its diverse readership, from trainees, to clinicians and academic researchers. Congratulations are also due to its Editor-in-Chief and to the Editorial Board, for their hard work and continuous effort to create a good quality international hepatology journal in the English language, from within a the Spanish speaking world. The given promising IF rank testifies that the idea Dr. Nahum Méndez-Sánchez had 8 years ago has been a winning one. Looking back and scrolling through the first issue of January 2002, a surprisingly long journey has been travelled in a relatively short time. It was clear from the start what the mission of this ambitious new enterprise was after Nahum wrote in his introductory editorial "*We will work very hard to make a very good journal*". The success is certainly due to the daily hard work of the editor, but the supporting help of the editorial board and the various reviewers cannot be ignored. The discussions we had during this time of how to improve and expand the journal were always

intended to enhance the impact of the growing and thriving journal. First, Annals became the official journal of the Mexican Association of Hepatology (under the presidency of Nahum Méndez-Sánchez) and soon thereafter, the Annals became as the official publication of the Latin-American Association for the Study of the Liver reflecting its importance for the region. Although still very important to the region, we proudly note that the Annals is now a true international journal with manuscripts submitted, published (and rejected) from Canada, the United States, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. The composition of our Editorial Board also reflects the international nature of the Annals as we have members who belong to major universities from around the globe. In an era of academic globalization and collaboration, this can only strengthen hepatology in our region.

Returning to the topic of the IF, the IF assignment is not only the official recognition of accomplishment but also the turnaround point for the future. Although the Annals is now established in the expanding universe of journals dealing with "Gastroenterology & Hepatology", it would be a big mistake to consider the IF as the end game of the publishing process rather than the beginning of a new life dedicated to making the Annals relevant to all of its readers. The Annals must still grow and become more and more competitive among the 65 journals in the field but it must also still publish papers that will educate and help those who practice hepatology outside of academia, as well as continue to explore hepatology's new frontiers. To maintain the quality of the Annals, and to improve it, is a mandatory task for the first and only hepatology journal originating from Latin America This can only be accomplished by further stream-lining the editorial process to make it more effective, attracting better quality clinical and translational papers and by continuing to publish superior quality review articles. A multitasking and multidisciplinary Editorial

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Board will greatly help in the further expansion since it is expected that the assignment of the IF (and a decent one at that) will further increase the submission rate. The challenge is great but we are confident that Dr. Nahum Méndez-Sánchez will be again successful in accomplishing this mission.

Good luck Nahum and many thanks from the international liver scientific and clinical communities!

REFERENCES

1. Anonymous. Impact Factor. <http://en.wikiped.org> (accessed October 03, 2010).