



Editorial

Impact Factor 2.106 reached by the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery on its 20th anniversary in 2007

The European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery (EJCTS) is a story of success, and all readers, authors, reviewers, editors, publishers, and their respective collaborators, deserve recognition for their outstanding contributions. As a matter of fact, the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery was founded by the European Association for Cardio-thoracic Surgery in 1987. Professor Hans Borst acted as founding editor, at that time in Hannover, and Professor Marko Turina in Zurich succeeded him in 1993, whereas the current editor was appointed in the year 2000.

There are various ways to measure the performance of a scientific journal. The number of submissions (Fig. 1) tells something about the popularity of a specific journal for the authors, which in turn depends on various factors like the speed of assessment (72 days in 2007). Typically, the first original article published in EJCTS in 2005 [1] was submitted 6 months earlier, whereas the corresponding time periods were 10 months in 2006 [2], and 3 months in 2007 [3] with only 1 month for on-line availability, a major improvement of editorial handling time, including all revisions and reassessments, as well as publishing time.

Other factors to assess the performance of a scientific journal include the print run (now >5500), the geographical distribution, and, of course, the potential impact on the scientific community. The Impact Factor, which for a given year is defined as the number of citations during the two previous years divided by the number of papers published

during that same period, is widely used for this purpose. The Impact Factors reached by the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery over the last 20 years are depicted in Fig. 2, and the recent increase to 2.106 is certainly a major step forward.

Although, a quality driven selection process of the papers to be published, and therefore an increasing rate of manuscript rejection (Fig. 3) are recognized as drivers for

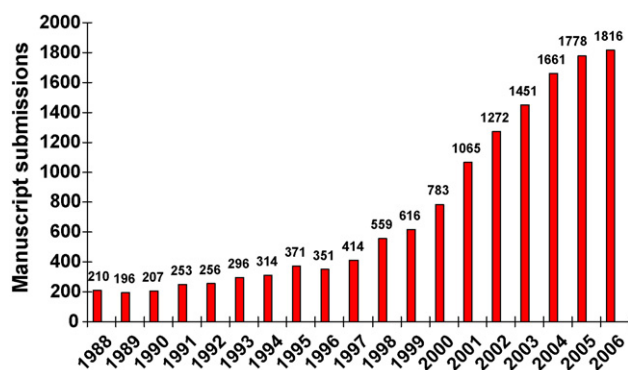


Fig. 1. Number of submissions to the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery from 1988 to 2006.

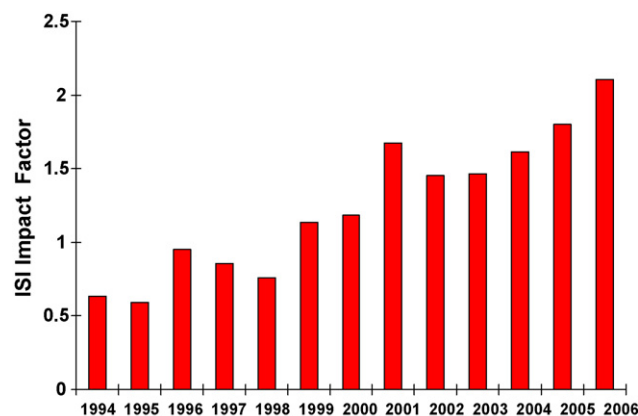


Fig. 2. Impact Factors achieved by the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery for the work published in 1994 to 2006.

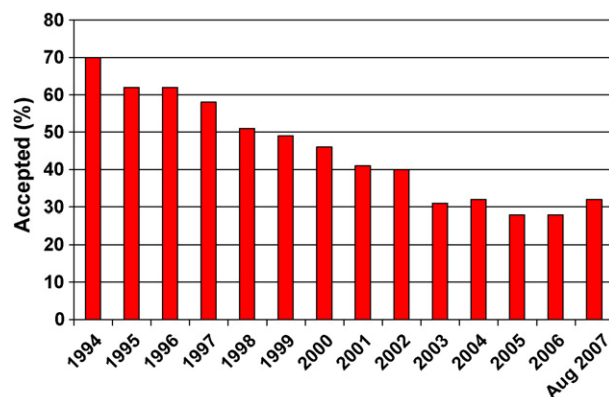


Fig. 3. Rate of acceptance for the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery from 1994 to 2007.

an increasing Impact Factor, it has to be mentioned here that the Impact Factor is not necessarily a measure of quality. As a matter of fact the Impact Factor is also positively influenced by repeated citation of a publication which is given as an example for poor methodology. Likewise, papers linked to some sort of scandal may receive disproportionate attention/citation. Of course there are other means than paper to make something known, and the publications in the European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery are in fact available on the web at www.ejcts.org several weeks before the printed edition is shipped [3].

An even faster channel with immediate publication on the Internet at acceptance and consecutive print has been launched by the European Association for Cardio-thoracic Surgery in 2002: Interactive Cardio-Vascular and Thoracic Surgery (ICVTS: 4) which can be found at www.icvts.org. With its virtual conferencing concept, the publications on ICVTS are open for discussion on the Internet for at least 28 days prior to their transfer together with the corresponding comments to the archive section and print [5]. In June 2007, Interactive Cardio-Vascular and Thoracic Surgery was also included in PubMed and MedLine [6]. This listing includes the back content and therefore all previous ICVTS publications can be found through PubMed searches.

Although publishing on paper has a proven track record, there is increasing evidence that publishing on paper is no longer a necessity for success and the work by Gregory Perelman from St. Petersburg may illustrate this [7]. In the year 2002, the Poincaré conjecture, an unsolved problem in topology, also called rubber sheet geometry, was named for the 1 million dollar Millennium prize, and in November 2002 Gregory Perelman made the first of three web-publications providing the solutions to the Poincaré conjecture. By the year 2006, the mathematical community had caught up, and the International Mathematical Union announced its intention to award the Fields Medal, the equivalent of a Nobel Prize for mathematics, to Gregory Perelman for his work solving the Poincaré conjecture. In August 2006 Gregory Perelman declined the Fields Medal and in December 2006

his work made the cover of Science [7] with the title: Breakthrough of the year – the Poincaré conjecture solved! Obviously, the world is changing, even if the ultimate recognition comes in print . . .

For issues that are not printed yet, go to www.ejcts.org and www.icvts.org!

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