

Journal Metrics

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It seems not very long ago when I was writing to you about the first issue of *Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance* (AMHP). A whole year has passed and AMHP is moving along nicely as the 'new' Blue Journal. A few things have changed, though, besides the cover of the journal. I would like to address some of those changes in this editorial.

Occasionally, we are asked questions about the journal's metrics. What is the Impact Factor? What is the acceptance rate? These questions are asked by authors and prospective authors but also by individuals who have some role in reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes. Gauging the scholarly impact of the journal can be important to a range of individuals, but just how can that kind of assessment take place in a meaningful way using metrics?

Let me start with Impact Factor. Impact factors have been calculated annually since 1975 and they are indexed in the Journal Citation Reports. Impact factors are often used as an indicator of a journal's importance in its field—the higher the number the better. Currently, AMHP does not have an impact factor and this fact can be unsettling. However, we do not have a choice. This is because the 'new' Blue Journal is only a year old. The impact factor of a journal is: *the average number of citations received per paper published in that journal during the two preceding years*. Hence, after this year is over, an impact factor can be—and will be—calculated for AMHP. Once calculated, impact factors are then published in the subsequent year.

Based on history, I don't expect AMHP's impact factor to be that much different than *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine's* impact factor (0.88 in 2014), although it is currently on an increasing trend. This impact factor is close to the median for all scientific journals. We changed the name and cover, and hope to attract more human performance manuscripts, but the content of the journal has not dramatically changed. The standards for publication in the Blue Journal also have not changed. We aim to publish only high quality research.

We should use caution when using impact factors as a means of assessing a journal's quality. The impact factor can change dramatically for reasons that have nothing to do with quality. Self-citations can inflate impact factors as can editorials written that 'highlight' current or recent articles in the journal. One article cited many times can drive impact factor up—even if the reason for the citations is that other authors failed to replicate the findings! Well cited Review Articles can also increase the impact factor. Another way to move impact factors up is by publishing more citable articles in the beginning of a year, giving them more time to be cited. At AMHP we do not intentionally employ any of these tactics.

Another metric that exists for journals is acceptance rate. These can vary greatly. The most highly competitive journals accept only a small percentage of the manuscripts submitted. Other journals are quite liberal in terms of the number of manuscripts they accept. During the last year, AMHP's acceptance rate for peer-reviewed articles was 49.8% (down from 55.6% the previous year). There is no set percentage we aim for. Each manuscript submitted to AMHP is given careful consideration and a thorough review. If the scientific integrity of the manuscript is deemed to meet AMHP's standards and the topic is one that we think our readers will be interested in, then we publish it. The editorial system—including peer-review—is not perfect. However, it is a time proven system that mostly works and it has worked well for AMHP, in my opinion.

I hope you enjoy *Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance* for the coming year. Please consider submitting your work to us or serving as a reviewer for the journal. You can email us with any questions or comments you may have at: AMHPjournal@asma.org.

Very best wishes for the New Year!

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