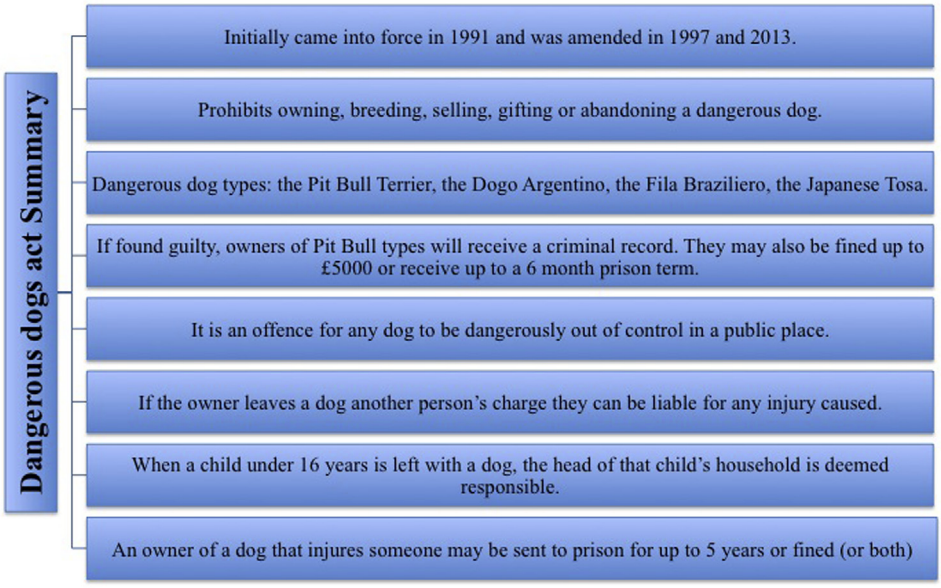

Figure 2 Summary of the Dangerous Dogs Act.

and disability. Awareness of the laws relating to dangerous dogs is necessitated. As plastic surgeons we should do our upmost to ensure that our patients are protected and in particular where children or vulnerable adults are concerned safeguarding issues must be addressed.

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N/A.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

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Over-analysis of minimal data gives misleading conclusions: Response to article by Benedetti-Pinto et al

Dear Sir,

Benedetti-Pinto et al. have raised an interesting and current topic and report observations of possible associations between average h-indices of the editorial boards of plastic surgery journals and the impact factors of their journals.[1] However, whilst their analysis was valid, their conclusions were badly overstated, in light of the severe limitations of the data.

The group set out to show whether a relationship exists between a journal's impact factor and the mean h-index of its editorial board members. Only five journals met the inclusion criteria, therefore data were extremely limited.

Their results showed four plastic surgery journals, all with similar impact factors (1.26—1.56) and a band of mean editorial board member h-indices, between 9.5 and 14, together with one journal (Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, PRS), which appears very much like a statistical outlier, (impact factor 3.5; mean editorial board member h-index of 15). The statistical analysis was a Spearman ranked correlation test, which included all five data points. However, if the PRS journal is excluded from the analysis, the reader can very easily see that the graph actually depicts four data points arranged horizontally, ie *no* variation of impact factor with editorial h-index. With the PRS data point excluded the correlation coefficient, *r*, drops from 0.7 to 0.4 and the *P*-value rises from 0.188 to 0.6 (SPSS Statistics, IBM, version 21; 2012).

The authors made the seemingly solid, but totally incorrect conclusion that the data demonstrated a strong positive relationship between journal impact factor and editorial board member h-index. They do not. In fact, this analysis very clearly provides no evidence of any relationship between average editorial member h-index and journal impact factor.

Several points are clear from this article: firstly, the study lacks validity, since the data were so limited, any analysis could not test for and demonstrate what it aimed to demonstrate. This would have been obvious from the outset. Secondly, a positive correlation was recorded where there was no correlation. Thirdly, very small data sets are subject to a lot of sampling error and statistical outliers will strongly affect any analysis. There was an obvious outlier in this data set, but the authors chose not to exclude it from their analysis. These facts suggest that, rather than avoiding invalid extrapolation from scant data, the authors had an *a priori* desire to demonstrate a positive correlation and so they found one, overriding the need to base conclusions upon sensible analysis of actual data.[2]

Do most authors submit to particular journals because of their editorial boards? I would argue not. More probably, they will submit because of a journal's focus, profile and very likely because the authors are aware of that journal, because they receive it through an association subscription. Also, a main feature in attracting submissions will be a journal's impact factor, as many authors would rather be published in high profile journals than low profile ones, so impact factors drive themselves. This highlights the problems faced by lower impact factor journals in raising their profile and the efforts required to achieve that profile. It also begs the question: why do we regard a journal's or author's quality by their impact factor or h-index? These indices are based upon output and citation counts only, with no heed to the relevance or value of the work done.[3,4]

The science of bibliometric analysis is relatively new, but is expanding rapidly. Work in this field related to plastic surgery is to be welcomed. However, it must be remembered that bibliometric indicators do not measure the quality of authors' published work or the quality of the journals in which they are published.

Conflict of interest statement

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Reply to the letter to the editor "Robotic-assisted Nipple Sparing Mastectomy: A feasibility study on cadaveric models" by Sarfati B. et al.

Dear Editor,

We read with interest the paper by Sarfati et al.[1] reporting a feasibility study on robotic nipple sparing mastectomy on cadaveric models. We acknowledge and we recognize in this report the resourcefulness and geniality of using the new robotic technology to perform one of the operation