



Letter to the Editor

The significance of journal metrics for oral oncology

Dear Sir,

In response to an editorial from May 2008, 'The real impact of oral oncology',¹ wherein you highlighted the improved rate of download of citations from your journal, we would like to draw your attention to some recent work carried by us on the theme of bibliometrics in oncology. Using the web service PubReMiner™ we identified the 10 journals which published most prolifically on oral cancer in 2007. We then determined their respective impact factors (IF), eigenfactors (EF), and citation rates using the 2007 edition of Thomson Scientific's Journal Citation Report (JCR) (Table 1). The 10 most prolific journals produced a total of 495 articles relating to oral cancer in 2007. The median IF for these journals was just 1.4; they had a median eigenfactor of 0.011, and their median citation rate was just 3526. To put these figures in context, the top 10 publishing journals in breast cancer in 2007 were responsible for a combined total of 1890 publications, had a median IF of 4.68, a median EF of 0.041 and a median citation rate of 10,164. Of course, breast cancer is associated with greater disease burden, and so it is not surprising that it receives greater attention. Furthermore, none of the aforementioned measures of journal quality are without their pitfalls. These caveats notwithstanding however, the apparently low impact of titles publishing in oral oncology should represent an area of concern for those involved in oral cancer research, particularly given the increasing emphasis which is placed upon journal metrics when it comes to evaluation of an institution's research performance and subsequent eligibility for funding.

Table 1

Top 10 most frequently publishing Journals in Oral Cancer, 2007.

Journal	No. publications	IF	EF	Citations
Oral Oncol	144	2.569	0.00944	2879
Oral Surg Oral Med Oral Pathol Oral Radiol Endod	58	1.592	0.01237	7973
J Oral Maxillofac Surg	51	1.37	0.01459	7018
Brit J Oral Maxillofac Surg	46	0.834	0.00425	1910
Int J Oral Maxillofac Surg	43	1.225	0.00785	3074
J Oral Pathol Med	43	1.711	0.0054	2644
Anticancer Res	31	1.414	0.03075	11,304
Eur Arch Otorhinolaryngol	27	0.648	0.0043	1415
Oncol Rep	26	1.597	0.01884	3978
Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg	26	1.339	0.01887	6417

IF = impact factor, EF = eigenfactor.

Conflict of interest

None of the authors has any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work.

Reference

1. Scully C. The real impact of oral oncology. *Oral Oncol* 2008;**44**(5):423–4.

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