Circulation Research Impact Factor Sets New Record

Eduardo Marbán

On behalf of all the Editors, I would like to share the good news that our impact factor for the year 2000 stands at 9.193, an all-time high for Circulation Research. The Figure shows a trend analysis plot; the impact factor has increased progressively over the last decade, and now is roughly twice what it was just a decade ago.

What is the impact factor? The formula is as follows:

\[
\frac{\text{# of citations in 2000 to any items published in the journal in 1998 or 1999}}{\text{# of original articles published in the journal in 1998 or 1999}}
\]

The intent, therefore, is to provide a metric for the number of times an article is cited, on average, in the first 1 to 2 years after it appears. However, close scrutiny of the formula reveals that the factor might be artificially inflated in journals that routinely publish abstracts. Citations to abstracts are counted in the numerator, but not in the denominator. Our journal has not published any abstracts in recent history. Thus, the impact factor for Circulation Research is particularly notable given its lack of artificial inflation by the publication of meeting abstracts.

Inspection of the equation also reveals that the impact factor lags behind any editorial initiatives by almost 2 years. Thus, the data that have just been released arise predominantly from citations to articles published under Steve Vatner’s editorship. As I took over in July 1999, the current numbers reflect only on the first 6 months of the current editorial team.

While gratified by the excellent performance, the Editors feel that the impact factor is overly emphasized in ranking journals and in the academic promotions process. We aspire to be judged on the quality of what we publish, something which cannot be reduced to any simple metric. Nevertheless, we recognize that the impact factor, imperfect as it may be, is here to stay, and we would rather see it rise than remain static.

The next full report on the journal’s performance will appear early in 2002. In the meantime, as always, the Editors welcome your feedback at circulation.research@circresearch.com.

Key Words: impact factor • citations • scientific publishing

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