

Editor's note/Guest editorial

SAJCN readers will see that we have “gone all out” in the previous edition to showcase that the SAJCN is *accredited with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)* or that *it is on the South African journal list of approved journals that are accredited for research subsidy*. Or, that the journal is *approved or accredited to measure the research output of public higher education institutions*. Previously “SAPSE-accredited”.

However prestigious we may perceive other indices, like Medline, ISI, etc.; DHET-accreditation remains pivotal. Nevertheless, a scholarly journal needs more than just DHET accreditation, or, does it? ASSAf has been instrumental in providing the roadmap for DHET in terms of setting standards to evaluate the quality of journals in the country. The SAJCN readers will be pleased to know that the SAJCN has been evaluated, approved and has also been recommended by ASSAf for inclusion in the South African SciELO index. In this regard, ASSAf's leadership and vision have been pioneering in many respects.

In terms of subsidy, DHET pays the full subsidy amount to the public higher education institution (not faculty, department or author), if an original research paper is accepted for publication in a journal that appears on the South African list of accredited journals. Although a public higher education institution would first look at whether it will accrue the subsidy for a published manuscript and the impact factor of a journal, increasingly it is becoming the practice to consider other, additional and softer, measures of “prestige” for promotion and rating its researchers.

Whether the journal impact factor (JIF), defined as the number of citations over 2 years/number of citeable articles of the journal, weighs more than the average number of citations an article receives (the h-index), has recently been under a lot of scrutiny and intense debate. Just like the 20/80 ratio rule in marketing (where 80% revenue comes from 20% of clients) a smaller percentage of good, high-impact papers account for the bigger part of a journal's impact factor. The ratio varies from journal to journal, but the rule in scholarly journals is probably 30/70-40/60. This means that 60-70% of papers will never receive as many citations as the top 30-40% papers.

The public higher education institutions do put a lot of pressure on their staff to publish so that they get the subsidy. How the subsidy is

used is an entirely different matter. How much a faculty, department and author can “earn” in terms of DHET-subsidy (for the public higher education institution) has always been an important source of revenue. And, as much as the pressure is on the staff to publish (or perish), it is still interesting that the direct reward is not necessarily received by the person who did the research. The percentage of the subsidy that is received by the author(s) varies considerably (personal communication with authors).

We have provided, in the June and this issue, a list of indices where the SAJCN abstracts have mainly been indexed for many, many years. Indexing is important as it features the abstract with a super-optimised, XML-tagged, search function. The SAJCN's policy has always been (wherever possible) to keep the full text of the published manuscript (PDF) on its primary publishing platform (www.sajcn.co.za) in order to consolidate online traffic for more accurate viewer statistics. The SAJCN is soon moving to a new primary publishing platform (Taylor and Francis instead of OJS) by the end of 2014, in which all full text articles (including the abstracts) will be hosted (www.tandonline.com). Unfortunately, SciELO Brazil/South Africa (just another excellent index (like Scopus, SABINET, AJOL, Embase, AIM) and not a fully-fledged, publishing platform (like the Taylor and Francis platform)) insists to host a journal or society's intellectual property as full text PDFs. Since this would detract from the SAJCN's objective to maximise and consolidate views for more accurate statistics, the SAJCN has recently declined to be indexed in SciELO.

It is, in conclusion, important to note that the SAJCN has an h-index of 9 (Scopus, www.scimagojr.com). By definition, and this is very index-specific, a manuscript that has been published in SAJCN could, on average, get 9 citations when using the Scopus-index. The actual number of citations (used to calculate the h-index) will be determined by the quality and relevance of the paper and is, of course also a very good indication of the rigour of the peer review system and how search-optimised a journal is in the international scholarly publishing world.

Douw Greeff

Director

Medpharm Publications (Pty) Ltd