

EDITORIAL

SOME CURRENT ASPECTS ON PUBLICATION, CITATION AND IMPACT
FACTOR FOR JOURNAL OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE

The discussion about open access to scientific publication has been going on for some time now. Scientific research results achieved through public support or via various scientific funds and produced in university departments or other official institutions should be easy to access by the whole scientific community. With the ease of accessibility on the Internet, the notion that scientific results must be made available for public examination has gained momentum; it belongs to the very idea of the development of science, the argument goes.

Various official bodies such as research grant boards, professional organisations and university libraries have focused interest on this matter, especially in recent years, and recommendations have been adopted. In the fall of 2003, a number of European research organisations adopted the so-called Berlin declaration about open access to results from research. In USA, the National Institute of Health has recently declared as its policy that results from officially financed research should be freely available to everybody. In practice, however, there are various inherent problems to be solved, such as the cost of publication, including quality control, publication and distribution, copyright transfer etc.

Some journals are owned by a publisher; other journals are owned by a professional society or foundation, as is *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, which is owned by the Foundation for Rehabilitation Information, a non-profit professional-based foundation, which has contracted a publisher, Taylor & Francis, to handle the publication matters. Journals solely published electronically have also been created with full open access for anybody, i.e. without any subscription. In most of those cases, however, the income is secured by charging the authors a publication fee. In the future there may well be hybrids between the different models for publication. The scientific community is advised to follow the discussion and development in these matters.

At present, our publisher, with our endorsement, is making arrangements for a more liberal approach to open access to submitted as well as published material. The copyright rests with the owner of the journal, although the publisher administers the copyright. Authors can now also choose to sign a “licence to publish” and will thereby keep the copyright themselves.

When a manuscript has been submitted, the author will have the right to post such a “preprint” (i.e. a version of the article created prior to peer review) on his/her own website, or the institution’s intranet, or within the institutional repository but only if marked with an acknowledgement that it is a preprint of an article submitted for consideration in *Journal of*

Rehabilitation Medicine. After publication this preprint version can be maintained but now with the acknowledgement that the final and definite form has been published, when and where.

According to present rules, it is not until after an embargo period of 12 months that an electronic file of the accepted (and printed) paper is made freely accessible on the internet. Anyhow, this will increase the availability of papers for the scientific community considerably. Also, the already existing routine of making the fulltext of the final, but not yet printed, version available online via the Publisher’s prEview service is conducive to the dissemination of an article. Such preview articles may be cited by their DOI number as soon as they are uploaded on the internet. This is valid for researchers working at an institution (university etc), where there is a subscription to the journal, and for people with a personal subscription. All these arrangements will increase the possibility for other researchers to get quick access to new findings and cite them.

With the increasing use of various databases and the possibility to get online access to the papers before they go into print it may be of interest to compare the recorded number of times a paper has been visited online with the number of citations of that paper in other published papers during a relevant period. The time of the increasing possibilities for access to an electronic version is still too short for any more systematic and scientifically based analysis. Some information is, however, available for publications in *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine* during 2003 and 2004. There may be a myth that review papers are more often cited than other types of articles, but the number of hits is much larger than for original scientific reports. Papers which are cited quite often and in relation to the number of hits on the internet seems to be those either with a methodological approach including aspects on ICF or within an area with a high level of current interest. In the present issue an example of that type of paper is published as a review by Jette and Haley on measurement technique for rehabilitation outcomes measurements. The authors there critically comment the current use of outcome measurements and describe the use of items response theory methods combined with computer adaptive testing methodology. It is based on a lecture at an International symposium “Measurement and evaluation of outcomes in rehabilitation”, arranged by *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine* in September 2004 in Stockholm.

The impact factor, which is based on the number of citations of a paper in other journals, is often used in allocation of resources. It is, however, important to remember that the quality of a particular paper should not be rated according to the impact

factor of that journal, as the relationship is rather weak between the quality of a paper and the impact factor of the journal. The impact factor covers also only a very short period of the "life" of a paper. In clinical disciplines, the "life" of a paper can be rather long, as also seen in the recordings of the cited half-life. Papers in our journal (*Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine* having changed in name from *Scandinavian Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, SJRM) have by definition at present a rather short cited half-life for its published articles, but its predecessor SJRM had a long time.

For 2004, based on publications during 2002 and 2003, the impact factor for *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine* is 1.600, which when compared with the impact factor for 2003 of 1.068 is a marked increase. For comparison, *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* had only a slightly higher impact factor, 1.656 for 2004, whereas the impact factors for *Disability and Rehabilitation*, *American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* and *Clinical Rehabilitation* were lower, 1.144, 1.121 and 1.115, respectively. We know, however, that impact factors for rather small journals can vary from year to year depending on the published material that particular year. We have, however, already noted that papers on ICF and on mild traumatic brain injury published in supplements but also in ordinary issues during 2004 and 2005 have so far received

considerable interest both with respect to hits on the internet and citation rates.

During the present year, we have increased the size of the journal by approximately 30%, by increasing the number of pages in each issue, due to the steadily increasing inflow of papers submitted to the journal. Still, we had also to reject a good many manuscripts, which after revision may be of worth publishing and are dealing with important areas of rehabilitation. Our rejection rate being in the order of around 70% is thus very high. For several practical and economic reasons it will take time until we can increase the size of the journal still more. But on the other hand the quality of the papers published will be high.

The high quality of the journal could not be maintained without the invaluable help of our reviewers within and outside the Editorial Board. We are very grateful to all reviewers who give their valuable time and advice and also enhance the quality of the manuscripts and hence of the journal as such. The names of the reviewers during this year can be found at the back of this issue. We hope for a fruitful future for our journal being a meeting place for scientists and authors from all over the world, although based in Sweden and Europe.

Gunnar Grimby, Editor-in-Chief
Göteborg and Uppsala, October 2005