

## Editor's note

An academic scholarly journal cannot exist or excel these days in a printed-only format, based on the belief that everyone who has physically received the journal by post will cite articles from that edition for the duration of his or her academic career. The Internet has forever changed access to academic publications with various access and publishing models. It has also irrevocably altered the way in which we measure the importance of research and journals. In the past, librarians had to rely on basic "shelf statistics", by literally monitoring how many times journals had to be placed back on the shelves to obtain an indication of journal-level usage. This information played a critical role in determining which journals would be on that institution's subscription list. However, in the 1970s, the journal impact factor (JIF) was created by Thomson Reuters as a more accurate tool with which to assist librarians in the purchase of journals. Fundamentally, this index was never designed to measure the quality of scientific research. Despite its many deficiencies, this index is still widely used, at times obsessively, and is "abused" by authors and institutions to validate research output and importance.

The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment<sup>1</sup> is the first worldwide attempt to place science in the assessment of research. It provides a framework for researchers, funding agencies, institutions, publishers and organisations who supply metrics, to avoid using journal-based metrics, such as the JIF, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles when assessing an individual scientist's contributions, related academic achievements or funding decisions.

The JIF-debate aside, and without sugar-coating the fact the *SAJCN* is not yet included in the Web of Science [only journals that are included in the Web of Science (formerly called Thompson Reuter's ISI) have a JIF], the *SAJCN* has to ask itself an important question: how will the journal, after 26 years of growth, continue to attract the best (high-impact) South African and international authors and readers to it? Currently, it is an open-access, peer-reviewed, well loved, online, Department of Higher Education and Training accredited and Scopus indexed (SCImago Journal Rank 0.15),<sup>2</sup> as well as being ranked tenth of South African medical, peer-reviewed journals.<sup>3</sup> The *SAJCN*'s management board and editor remain committed to further building on our good and loyal relationships with our valued authors and readers, and above all, to ensuring that the entire publishing experience and post-publishing return on your investment in time and expertise is academically rewarding, pleasant and constructive, and also promotes your discipline, institution, country and continent.

The steps that will be gradually introduced with regard to publishing the *SAJCN* in 2014 include:

- Restructuring of the editorial board to separate scientific editorial functions from governance functions - the latter continuing to be the function of the three societies.
- Publishing *SAJCN* primarily as an electronic journal on an international, open-access platform ([www.cogentia.com](http://www.cogentia.com)) and on Taylor and Francis online ([www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)).
- State-of-the-art online publishing with search-engine optimisation and discoverability.
- Article-level metrics on a platform that measures citations and views.
- Altmetrics to measure article-level impact on social media (Facebook, Twitter and others).
- "E-pub" before print: Articles will be released online ahead of print with digital objective identifiers (DOIs).
- Gradually introducing author publishing charges for non-members late in 2014.
- Low-cost or subsidised (by ADSA, NSSA and SASPEN) APCs for members.
- Availability on two mobile platforms, namely Taylor and Francis's mobile platform, as well as Medpharm's commercial app, The Red Brick Library.
- A quarterly journal online, in print and in tablet form, to retain and optimise advertising potential.
- A new online peer-review system, i.e. Editorial Manager®.
- Plagiarism checking through CrossCheck®.

The *SAJCN* invites its reviewers, authors and readers to submit comments directly to Mrs Robyn Marias by e-mail at [toc@sajcn.co.za](mailto:toc@sajcn.co.za)

## References

1. The San Francisco declaration on research assessment. DORA [homepage on the Internet]. 2002. c2013. Available from: <http://am.ascb.org/dora/files/SFDeclarationFINAL.pdf>. Accessed: 29 November 2013.
2. South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition. The SCImago Journal and Country Rank [homepage on the Internet]. c2013. Available from: <http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=56235&tip=sid&clean=0>. Accessed: 29 November 2013.
3. [http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?area=2700&category=0&country=ZA&year=2012&order=sjr&min=0&min\\_type=cd](http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?area=2700&category=0&country=ZA&year=2012&order=sjr&min=0&min_type=cd). Accessed: 2 December 2013.