

EDITORIAL

Apologies for Past Mistakes and Promises for A New Start for the APJCP in 2014

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Apologies in Advance

After we learned of the new Impact Factor for the APJCP in June 2013, the Chief Editors wrote a short editorial 'New APJCP Impact Factor for 2012 is 1.271 - Time to Make a Major Effort to Break Through the 2.0 Barrier' (Moore et al., 2013). In addition to explaining the necessity for a 50% increase in formatting charges, we made an appeal to the authors using the APJCP to cite recent articles from its pages in a cooperative effort to maintain and hopefully increase the Impact Factor (IF). We are well aware that the IF is one element in a journal's ability to attract good quality papers and hence contributes to long-term survival (Sonuga-Barke, 2012; van der Wall, 2012), and assume that it is influential in choice of the APJCP. However, we feel that our emphasis should be on allowing as many papers as possible to be published, while taking into account that universities will instruct researchers to publish only in journals with an IF above a certain level. It is thus a question of balance, with the submitting authors themselves playing a major role.

However, looking at the papers that were published in the last six issues of 2013 we must admit to having largely failed in our aims. Very few authors actually complied with our request, and the vast majority of papers included zero APJCP references from the years 2011 and 2012, so that we are very likely faced with the opposite of our hopes - a decrease in the IF, perhaps below the crucially important figure of 1.0 which will make it difficult for many scientists to select the APJCP for publication of their work. If that is the actual case we must apologise. We do not understand how an author can choose a journal in which there are no relevant papers worthy of citation. As Chief Editors we must try to be consistent and give some advantage to those who actually do contribute to maintaining our IF.

Promises for a New Start in 2014

There will be a number of changes in 2014. Publication will be twice a month so that a total of 24 issues are envisaged. New criteria for acceptance will be strictly applied. A greater focus will be placed on research with direct relevance to cancer control programs. Systematic

reviews will continue to be given some priority, given their importance for overall conclusions from research findings (Royle et al., 2013). Similarly, literature reviews will continue to be welcomed, especially those focusing on areas within cancer control programs for the Asian-Pacific, like cancer registration (Moore, 2013a). The APJCP has made a major contribution in this area, publishing almost one third of the total relevant papers over the period from 2008-2013 (Moore, 2013b). Future reviews from the editorial board will focus on cancer screening, tobacco control, interventions for lifestyle improvement and guidelines for optimal clinical treatment for Asian-Pacific populations.

Our main aim is to provide a forum for up-to-date research results from the Asian-Pacific and these are totally dependent on knowledge of the recent literature. Papers with less than 20% of the citations after 2009 or examples with only minimal referencing will therefore be automatically returned to the authors. Where possible, the Asian literature should be emphasised as most relevant to cancer control in our region.

Very specialist papers without any references from the APJCP may not be within the scope of the journal. If we have not published in the area previously, despite over 2,000 papers in the last two years, then it is unlikely that the theme is of major importance for cancer control. The editorial board hope that all authors will be diligent in finding relevant references if they wish to utilize the APJCP and show that their work will be of interest to our audience.

We should bear in mind that the distribution of citations to individual articles in a journal is known to be skewed and is often driven by a few highly cited papers (Seglen, 1997; Weale et al., 2004; Falagas et al., 2013). Therefore, articles published in a low-IF journal can still be oft-cited, and, conversely, articles appearing in high-IF journals can receive few or no citations. However, we must stress that the number of likely citations will not be a factor in decisions of acceptability for publication in the APJCP. Our editorial policy will not be to publish fewer articles (to lower the IF denominator) (Chew et al., 2007) but rather to give weight to the need for complementary measures, with the active support of contributing scientists.

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We believe that it is in all our interests to cooperate in maintaining quality and our overall impact, not just our IF, by giving credit where it is due to research published in Asian journals, not just the APJCP, as long as they are freely accessible through PubMed. We promise to be more proactive in future to help all authors share in the long term aim of the APJCP to contribute to cancer control in the Asian-Pacific region and across the world.

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