Thomson Reuters Releases 2014 Impact Factors for Journals

The 2014 impact factors for journals were just released. Supporters of the Journal of Neurophysiology may be disappointed by the fact that the impact factor for 2014 decreased to 2.887 from 3.045. While the numerical change is not large, the fact that the IF decreased to below 3.0 may have a negative psychological effect on some.

If it is only one measure of a journal’s performance, and other indices for the Journal remain extremely strong. Moreover, there is compelling evidence to suggest that initiatives introduced over the past year are improving our performance, such that the IF will renege in subsequent years.

Perhaps the best sign for the future is our growing submission stream. Submissions in January-May, 2015 were over 45% higher than for the same period last year.

Provided below are more perspectives on IF, other measures of the journal’s performance, and indicators that our IF will renege in the future.

IF: A Limited Snapshot of Performance

If reflects citations of articles in a journal over a very short time period. The 2014 IF was calculated as A/B, where:

- A=the number of times that all items published in the Journal in 2012 and 2013 were cited by indexed publications during 2014
- B=the total number of “citable items” published by the Journal in 2012 and 2013. Citable items exclude editorial content.

The average paper published in the Journal of Neurophysiology is cited more over time than immediately after publication. This is reflected in our five-year IF of 3.31, and the fact that our “cited-half-life” is >10 years. In other words, more than half of Journal of Neurophysiology manuscripts cited in 2014 were published over a decade ago.

Journal of Neurophysiology manuscripts have a long-term impact on the literature, but this is not reflected in the IF calculation.

Indicators of a Future Resurgence in IF

With the many initiatives and changes launched over the past year, there is good reason to believe that a resurgence in our IF will occur in the coming years.

The most promising indicator is a sharp rise in submissions, which started last September. A higher submission rate is usually correlated with an increased IF.

As indicated in the graph below, total submissions in 2014 were 20% higher than in 2013. Submissions in January-May, 2015 were 43% higher than over the same period in 2014. Based on submissions thus far in 2015, we predict ~1200 submissions this year, which is the highest submission rate in over five years.

With the introduction of Calls for Manuscripts, we are receiving more high-profile manuscripts, which are showcased in our Colleagues. Amongst these manuscripts are many more reviews than the Journal has traditionally published. Inclusion of these reviews should aid in boosting our IF.

Thanks to feedback from over 500 readers who submitted responses to a recent survey, we are also planning new initiatives for the future; we are optimistic that they will also aid in securing high-profile manuscripts for the Journal. Our July Newsletter will discuss the findings of the survey in detail, but we were delighted to learn that overall, readers are supportive of the recent changes in the Journal.

The graph below shows responses to our survey question: “Overall, how are our current initiatives working?”

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