



The journal impact factor today

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When I began my term as Editor-in-Chief at *Jornal de Pediatria*, in 2002, I pledged, together with the newly appointed Editorial Board, to keep the journal's quality level and broaden its scope, increasing the visibility of articles and making it a truly international publication.¹

Eighteen months later, in the second half of 2003, the first stage of internationalization was completed when *Jornal de Pediatria* was accepted for coverage by Index Medicus/MEDLINE.² As a result, *Jornal de Pediatria* became part of the National Library of Medicine's most important bibliographic database and freely available through PubMed (www.pubmed.org).

We have been recently notified that *Jornal de Pediatria* will also soon be covered by Thomson Scientific (ISI). This is a major step towards our goal – from the moment our journal's impact factor begins to be measured, we will be evaluated in terms of the journal's weight within the context of the international pediatrics scene. This achievement was accomplished through hard work on the part of the Editorial Board, the Boards of Directors of the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics and the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics Foundation, in addition to the tireless contribution of reviewers, authors and readers.

Thomson Corporation is the company in charge of managing the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), which every year publishes the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), a reference publication for the evaluation of the impact of scientific publications.

The impact factor is defined as the ratio between the number of citations during any given year to articles published in a journal in the two previous years and the total number of articles (original articles and reviews) published by the same journal in the corresponding two-year period. It is an indicator of the significance of articles published in a journal. Although highly criticized, especially when used to evaluate an individual investigator's scientific production (author

impact), the impact factor has been widely used to rank scientific journals internationally.³

Editors have employed various strategies to increase the impact factor of their publications. Some have decreased the number of original papers published, publishing them as letters to the editor instead, as a means of decreasing the denominator in the formula used to calculate the impact factor. Others encourage self-citation as a means of increasing the numerator. In both cases, an increase in the impact factor has been recorded.^{4,5}

Despite its critics, the impact factor is unquestionably one of the main measures associated with the quality of scientific publications; there is no doubt that high impact journals, such as *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and *The Lancet*, have a high reputation in the scientific community.

In the near future, knowing the impact factor for *Jornal de Pediatria* will help us evaluate the significance of the Brazilian scientific production for the international scene.

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