



EDITORIAL

Contact lens citation metrics – The Spanish connection



Métricas de citación de lentes de contacto – la conexión española

Nathan Efron

School of Optometry and Vision Science, Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove, Australia

To eye care practitioners, citation metrics may seem to be a somewhat esoteric and irrelevant concept, far removed from the realities or real world, day-to-day clinical practice. However, quantitative analysis of the published literature is becoming increasingly important, and a beautiful example of this is presented in this issue of the *Journal of Optometry*. My former PhD student, Genís Cardona, has teamed up with Joan Sanz to undertake a thorough and telling analysis of current worldwide publishing trends in the contact lens field. When held in the mirror, this work reflects the growing contributions from Spanish researchers to the field.

The reason why analyses such as this are so important is that they provide a barometer of the current state of research in a field (in this case, contact lenses), highlighting sub-areas of current interest as well as the drivers behind these works, in terms of authors, institutions, countries and journals. And let's not forget that although these analyses relate to published research, all ideas that lead to research begin in the clinic, perhaps with anecdotal observations, that are picked up by clinical or laboratory researchers who systematically search for the true answers by conducting peer-assessed scientific studies.

As an example of how the data generated by Cardona and Sanz can be used, we can assess the relevance of papers published in this special contact lens issue of *Journal of Optometry* by asking the extent to which the subject matter

of these papers is aligned to topics of current interest in the field. The simple answer is "highly relevant", because subject matter in all of the eight papers in this issue (excluding the Cardona/Sanz work) can be matched to one or more of the ten subject category word clusters identified by Cardona and Sanz.

The Cardona/Sanz analysis also provides a snapshot of the standing of Spanish contributions to the contact lens field. I am acutely aware of the growing literature being generated by Spanish clinicians and researchers, with the emergence of strong research departments that have traditionally arisen out of physics departments (as has largely been the case in the rest of the world). Spaniards should be proud that their country ranks 5 in terms of current contact lens publications, with the University of Valladolid ranking as the 7th most prominent institution in the world.

But Spanish optometry cannot afford to rest on these laurels. No Spanish researchers made the list of the top 9 contributors in the contact lens field, and this journal was not ranked among the top six. However, if the quality of papers from Spanish authors in this issue is any indication of current and future contributions to the field (and I am sure it is), then it is likely that this journal, and Spanish authors and institutions, will hold prominent positions in international ranking tables if such citation analyses are repeated in the next few years.

E-mail address: n.efron@qut.edu.au

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