

Welcome to the Journal of Optometry

Welcome to the Journal of Optometry. It's a great pleasure to present the first issue of the Journal of Optometry, the new peer-reviewed journal of the Spanish Council of Optometrists.

This project, supported by the Spanish Council of Optometrists, has been embraced by a huge team of researchers from all around the world and aims to become within the next few years a reference in the field of scientific publication in Optometry, Visual Sciences and all related areas. In order to do so, the journal should be distinguished from the very beginning by the number of citations its published articles receive from other authors, which is directly related to the quality of the published material. And this is evident after just a quick inspection of the contents of this first issue, from the letters to editor to the original articles.

At a first glance, one could ask why a new scientific journal in the field of Visual Science and Optometry, why now and why from Spain. In fact all three questions are related to each other and so do the corresponding answers. Nowadays, in Europe, with the changes in academic careers imposed by the also known Bologna Declaration regarding the European Higher Education Area^(1,2), many countries where Optometry was a first-course have moved on to a more consolidated structure reinforcing not only to the purely clinical aspect of the optometric profession but also the research activity. This has provided an ideal culture for the grow-up of different post-graduate programs and several optometrists are now involved in Master Degrees and PhD programs in Spanish universities and overseas. However the answer is not self-limited to the growing reality of Optometry in Spain and in general in the European countries, but it is also driven by international trends. During the past decades the optometrist has become a valuable element in eye research either as independent activity or in multidisciplinary research teams across the World. Despite the increased number of researchers, the number of scientific publications listed in international databases, and particularly those in the optometric field, has remained stable for the last 10-20 years. Moreover, most of the existing journals are confined to specific areas in Vision Science (Optometry, Ophthalmology, Visual Optics, Contact Lens and Ocular Surface for example). It is the multidisciplinary character of current research where optometrists are involved that drove us to widen the scope of the journal to all fields where an optometrist or visual scientist could make contributions to the scientific knowledge.

In order to get a closer view of the actual impact of optometric research, we shall analyze journal impact factors and citation indexes⁽³⁾. In *figure 1* we show some statistics regarding the publication activity from 2000 to 2007 for two

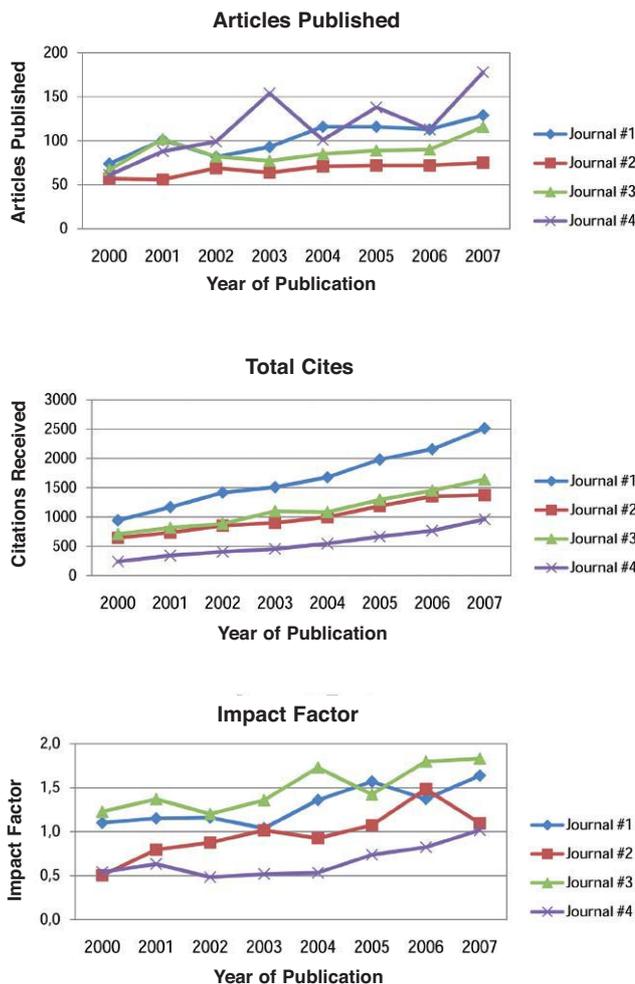


FIGURE 1 Number of articles published, citations received and impact factor according to Journal Citation Report-ISI Web of Science for 4 example journals in the field of Optometry and Ophthalmology from 2000 to 2007.

journals in the field of Optometry and another two in the field of Ophthalmology that had a similar number of articles published by the year 2000. From this picture it is evident that even when journals have increased their rate of publication by about 1.3 to 1.5-fold, they have increased dramatically the number of citations received by their articles by 2.5 to 5-fold during this time. This is a remarkable indicator of the growing scientific attention paid to these example journals. In fact, the number of citations received is now considered the standard to evaluate the impact of any publication and metrics have been created to quantify this issue, being one example the h-index^(4,5). Furthermore, the path of evolution followed by these four journals is representative of the evolution of the Impact Factor (mean and median values) for the whole area where these journals are classified along with another 41 journals, as reported in the Journal Citation Report 2007 (*Figure 2*).