

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 Bolonia 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

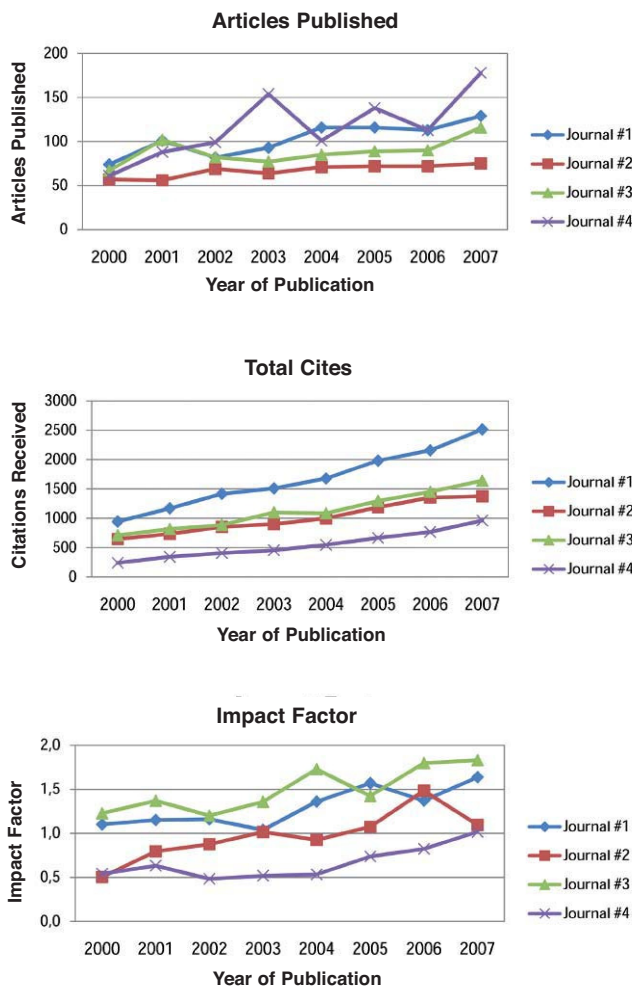


FIGURE 1 Number of articles published, citations received and impact factor according to Journal Citation Report-ISI Web of Science for 4 example journals in the field of Optometry and Ophthalmology from 2000 to 2007.

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*).

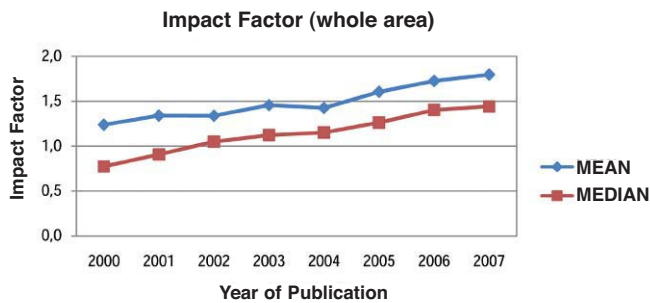


FIGURE 2
Mean and median value for the impact factor of the area of Ophthalmology and Optics where Optometry journals are indexed in Journal Citation Report-ISI Web of Knowledge.

With all this in mind, it is evident that there is an increase in the research and publication of scientific material within the area of Visual Sciences, and Optometry is a good example of this trend. There is also need for more scientific journals where those reports can be published, covering all areas where optometrists are involved and, above all, to allow the authors to retain the copyright of their own work and to provide this material free of charge to everybody. The Journal of Optometry has all these features in one publication. With the strong support of the Spanish Council of Optometry and all its over 15.000 members, Spain is currently a good culture to start this new publication.

The Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editor-in-Chief have been working hard for the last year in an effort to bring together into this project relevant researchers from all areas within the scope of the journal, resulting in one of the best Editorial Boards possible. The journal has been modelled with attention to editing style, citation reference, ethical concerns regarding research procedures, and tracking of the manuscript and peer-review process. The Journal of Optometry has its own Editorial Manager website which is important for authors to be able to submit and follow the reviewing course of their manuscripts, as well as for the Editorial Board and reviewers to be able to blindly track the reviewing process in the most reliable and efficient way.

We hope that all those efforts are reflected in this first issue, but we will keep alert to new trends in the field of research reporting in order to dynamically adapt the Journal of Optometry to the times to come.

We are also proud to present one of the most exciting features of the Journal of Optometry: the open-access to published material without any restrictions from anywhere in the world. Indeed, this is a mandatory issue that couples two important aspects of scientific reporting, rapid publication of research results and immediate access to scientific contents for the audience. In fact, our goals are first to allow authors to see their research results published in an efficient way, fully accessible to everyone interested, and secondly, and perhaps even more important, to allow clinicians and researchers to access the highest quality scientific information just a click away. This is a tremendously interesting tool in health sciences as the ease of access to the information can make a great difference in the clinical setting. This tool is com-

plemented with the possibility of uploading videos and colour images to be fully accessible via internet (www.journalofoptometry.org) at no cost for the authors.

In this first issue, we present a set of original manuscripts coming from different parts of the world and covering different research topics. We particularly thank the support and trust of these top-level researchers for submitting such high quality manuscripts to the Journal of Optometry, even when this journal is not yet part of the reference database. This brings us to another important point, the recognition of the scientific quality of the Journal of Optometry by independent institutions with global impact, such as the National Library of Medicine (Pubmed) or Thomson Scientific (ISI Web of Science). Everything in this project has been meticulously created in order to get into those databases as soon as possible. We cannot possibly know how soon this will come, but one thing we know: the better the work is done from the very beginning, the sooner those entities will recognize this effort. This work includes creating a set of "Instructions to Authors" in agreement with international guidelines, and a very thorough peer-review process, not an easy task, beautifully supported by our Editorial Board and anonymous reviewers.

Every person in the Journal of Optometry is committed to bring this exciting and challenging project to the place we aim for, i.e. being part of a recognized international database and deserving the trust of authors all around the world that may find the latest information in visual science research. In order to achieve these goals, we welcome high quality scientific contributions from anyone developing his/her research activity in the fields within the scope of the Journal of Optometry. We warrant a rapid peer-review process, carried out by the highest level scientists and, in case of acceptance, we assure authors quick publication and spread of their work, being fully accessible from any part of the world, including line art, figures, photographs and movies in full colour at no charge, with just one click.

...lights on, the Journal of Optometry has just taken off!!!

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