



Journal of Optometry

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EDITORIAL

Research in Optometry: A challenge and a chance

Investigación en optometría: un reto y una oportunidad

In the last years, the number of optometrists publishing research works in journals with high impact factor has increased significantly. However, this increase in the quantity of researchers in Optometry has not been accompanied by a growing number of scientific journals on Optometry. There is still the habit of sending scientific optometric manuscripts to high-factor Ophthalmology journals with the aim of obtaining a better recognition of the efforts performed by the researchers and achieving a more significant spreading of the scientific content. This facilitates the consolidation of a great amount of Ophthalmology journals, a growing number of journals in the field and subsequently a stagnation or even reduction of the impact factor of the limited number of scientific journals in Optometry^{1,2}. Optometry researchers need recognized journals where reporting the outcomes of their investigations. This is one of the aims of *Journal of Optometry*, the scientific peer-reviewed publication of the Spanish General Council of Optometrists.

Several European journals on vision and Ophthalmology are currently available. Each year they published a lot of articles that show the results of Optometric investigations, such as the developments of new tests for measuring visual acuity or contrast sensitivity, the validation of several diagnostic devices that are mainly used by optometrists, epidemiologic studies about refractive errors, the characterization of ocular aberrations in different types of populations, changes in binocular vision after some refractive surgery treatments, or the analysis of the outcomes with specific types of contact lenses. All this research is the result of our knowledge, with or without the input of other scientific areas. Therefore, it seems more coherent to fit all this scientific content in Optometry journals. The problem arises when attempting to find an Optometry journal in Europe with impact factor. American and Australian institutions are the most productive centers of optometric research and receive the highest average number of citations/year³. Furthermore, the highest impact

factor of Optometry journals corresponds to two journals from United States of America (USA) and New Zealand, respectively (*Optometry and Vision Science / Clinical and Experimental Optometry*)⁴. We are working hard from the *Journal of Optometry* in the attempt of developing a high quality journal on Optometry that may be a reference of the European Optometry. However, to achieve this aim raw material is needed, researches in Optometry.

The research is a challenge and a chance to show everyone the scientific potential of optometrists. It allows us to improve our clinical procedures and protocols, to implement functional therapies, to expand our knowledge. Research is the future of our profession; it will lead us to an even higher recognition and to a better professional position; it will lead us to a more optimized clinical practice. Research is the result of the power of our knowledge and also a source for new inspiration and advances. If we do our own research we are by definition the leaders in all of those efforts, from the bench to the chair side. Therefore, the development of Optometry research is a critical factor for the future of our profession. The support from governments and universities for Optometry research is crucial in the same manner that the research in other sciences is supported^{5,6}. Furthermore, we need our platform for reporting our research, more journals with impact factor in Optometry.

Optometrist researchers should contribute to Optometry journals in order to make them greater, to increase the impact factor of the current available journals, and to develop our profession. One excellent opportunity for this contribution to Optometry research and to show our great potential is the next Special Issue of *Journal of Optometry* (July-September 2012). This issue entitled "New technologies and diagnostic tools in Optometry" will provide an overview of recent researches about the development, validity, and clinical applicability evaluation of new technologies in the context of our profession. International leading scientists in the Optometry field will participate as Topical Editor (Stiris Plainis, Greece) and

Guest Editors (Alejandro Cerviño, Spain, and Hema Radhakrishnan, UK) in this important issue. Submission deadline for this issue is 31st March 2012.

There are still thousands of questions without answer in Optometry that represents our future and the advance of vision care. The luxury of getting to answer those questions makes for a great job and ultimately a great profession of Optometry.

The Optometry lives in its own research.

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