

## EDITORIAL

# Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention and Challenges Facing in its 18th Year of Publishing

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As the APJCP steps in its 18th year of serving cancer scientists in Asia and Pacific region, the need to look back and examine past strategies is a must. After going through lows of losing Expanded Science Citation status (Moore, 2015) and reaching to the verge of losing PubMed listing (Mosavi Jarrahi, 2016), the journal is now in a stable situation to plan for its future.

The journal citation performance based on online portals (Scopus, 2016; SCImago, 2007; Scopus 2017) is in an acceptable state; in 2015, APJCP's H-index ranked 47 among 322 cancer-related journals worldwide. This figure was higher than the median H-index for all cancer-related journals (median 27). The APJCP's SCImago Journal Rank or SJR (defined as the average number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the documents published in the selected journal in the three previous years) for 2015 was 0.85. This figure was close to the median figure reported for journals published in Western Europe (median of 0.85) and lower than the median SJR for journals of the same category in the region of North America (median of 1.07). In 2015, the Source Normalized Impact per Publication indicator (SNIP- calculated as the number of citations given in the present year to publications in the past three years divided by the total number of publications in the past three years) for APJCP was 0.87. This is slightly higher than the median for all cancer-related journals that was 0.79. The Impact Per Publication (IPP) was 2.06 for APJCP while this indicator's median for all cancer-related journals was 2.04. APJCP performed very poorly when it came to the percent of publication with no citation (27.02%) and self-citation (36.2%).

Since, November 2016 when the new editorial team took the full responsibility of the journal, many steps have been taken and now the journal is in a stable situation (it has been publishing timely, efficient editorial management system calibrated, funding and financial sources established, and a new team of editorials and staffs is in placed). Despite the steps taken, still, there are many challenges facing APJCP. At the current state of the journal, the editorial team has prioritized three goals to address the achieve;

1) to claim the Journals' indexing status in the

Expanded Science Citation Index

2) to develop a strong and sustainable peer review infrastructure

3) to address the journal's wide scope

The journal lost its listing in SCI Expanded in 2014 and the main reasons were stated as *a high number of self-citations, large increase in volume, a requirement from the journal to cite other articles in the same journal, and lack of a timely publication*. The new editorial team has addressed all these concerns; the self-citation has dropped from 57% in 2014 to 36.2% in 2015 and we expect this drop to continue even less than 20% in 2016 (no report for 2016 is available yet), the volume has decreased and kept in less than 50 article per issue, the journal policy of "cite other articles in the same journal" is no longer in effect, and the timely publication and uploading of the metadata to indexing databases has been achieved. Application for journal reinstatement in the SCI Expanded has been filed and an assessment of the journal performance is scheduled for the third quarter of 2017.

The journal's peer review standard set by the new editorial team states that a manuscript is accepted if it has recommendations for acceptance from at least two independent reviewers. Such a standard has caused a delay in the review process (the initial goal was to have a decision on a submitted manuscript in 45 days of submission). While the journal has kept with its standard of two reviewers' recommendations, the delay in reviewing, in average, has passed the goal of 45 days bringing another challenge to the new editorial team. Although many different factors contribute to this delay, the involving of young scientists through a program of "Critical Appraisal Internship- CAI" offered by the journal's scientific team has shown initial sign in shortening the independent review process.

The journal, traditionally, has published in almost all areas of cancer sciences and specialties from stem cell and molecular aspect to quality of life and end of life issues. During last 17 years, the wide spectrum of scope, practically, brought more demand for publishing and causing the large increase in the number of articles per issue (this contributed to the journal's being dropped from Expanded SCI indexing (Moore, 2014)). At present,

and as usual to the journal's past, the new editorial team receives a large number of submissions in a very wide spectrum of cancer science. While one solution to this problem is to organize the journal into more sections and keep the journal intact as usual (continue facing huge number submissions), there is another alternative that is more robust and that is to manage the scope into four areas of cancer sciences; 1) cancer biology, 2) treatment and clinical aspect, 3) epidemiology and prevention, and 4) carcinogens and environmental hazards. The strategy on how to address the scope's issue is still in a decision-making state and more consultancies, and content analyses are needed to come to a solid decision.

As the journal passes to achieve the goals set in those priorities, there will be delays in processing and the editorial team asks from its readers and authors and reviewers for help and understanding.

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