

EDITOR'S PAGE

Spinal Cord: Series and Cases launched

JJ Wyndaele

Antwerp, Belgium

E-mail: wyndaelejj@skynet.be



As announced before, ISCOS starts this month officially with its new second journal *Spinal Cord: Series and Cases*. This is an online only publication.

Why did we decide to develop a new journal in a time when many of us are contacted weekly and often several times in one week to announce the creation of new journals, to propose to send in manuscripts to these journals, and to become reviewer or member of their editorial board?

There may be several reasons for this explosion in scientific publishing. Research has developed tremendously in areas of the world that missed such activity a decade ago. The search for a journal which accepts one's paper has become much more intensive due to the importance institutions place on the bibliography to judge individual academics and decide on renewing contracts or giving promotions or grants. One needs to routinely submit a list of publications accepted after peer review. The pressure is high. Another reason may be the search for funds by organisations. It is not rare that the budgets of scientific societies depend substantially on the profit from a journal. The publishing houses have a direct interest in this too.

How this intense activity in the publishing world will develop further remains to be seen. Academic libraries are complaining strongly about how much it costs to buy the journals requested by their academics. It is not rare that half of the total yearly budget of a faculty has to be spent on this.

So it may seem strange that *Spinal Cord: Series and Cases* is launched now. But our experience in the last 5 years has shown that continuing with a classical way of scientific publication was not advisable for ISCOS. A journal is still judged upon by the Impact Factor it receives. Researchers, for the same reason as depicted above, try to get their results published in journals with the highest Impact Factor. Although many will agree that Impact Factor is far from being reliable to determine the value of a journal in a specific field, it still is brought forward very often.

In search of a higher Impact Factor, one is almost obliged to be very restrictive in accepting manuscripts. One will choose only these manuscripts that are very well written, on a 'hot' topic, from well established groups. These articles have the greatest chance to be referred to by peers in the 2 years following publication.

ISCOS is a special scientific society with members and activities all around the world. When you look at our list of contributors you can easily notice that many come from developing countries. Members from emerging research units and spinal injury centres make without any doubt nice observations and evaluate specific items of care. But many of the reports, when written down, will not be of such quality that they can pass the selection process of an international journal which, for decades, has been accepted as top of its field. The same goes for case reports, preliminary studies and studies in small series. As space in journals is restricted, because of price, many journals stopped accepting such contributions.

That is exactly why we created *Spinal Cord: Series and Cases*- not because we want to publish second rank papers, but because of the journal's distinct and important role. It creates a new forum specifically developed for these types of papers. So you are all encouraged to submit case reports, small series studies to the new journal. This can be done through the same *Spinal Cord* Nature Publishing Group (NPG) website. The editorial structure remains unchanged for the moment, but will become separate from the main journal in the future with its own editor and editorial board. I am happy that we made this step so that ISCOS can fulfill its role of supporting SCI management around the world.

In this issue there are again very interesting articles. Enjoy reading these contributions!

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