

## EDITORIAL

# Rank nonsense?

JC Seidell<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Nutrition and Health, Free University Amsterdam

European Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2002) 56, 793–795. doi:10.1038/sj.ejcn.1601518

One way to assess the effectiveness of editorial policies and objectives and to track the standing of a scientific journal is by following time-trends of the statistics provided in the yearly Journal Citations Reports<sup>®</sup> Science Edition. This provides a systematic, objective way to determine the relative importance of a journal. We have looked at the statistics provided for *EJCN* for the last five years (Table 1).

All statistics show very favourable trends. In the last five years *EJCN* jumped up about 750 places in the ranking of all science journals and now is within the top 15% of all journals covered. The number of total citations as well as the impact factor and the immediacy factor doubled. Of the fifty journals covered within the category 'nutrition and dietetics' *EJCN* now ranks 11th. A closer look at the list reveals that not all the journals in this list are scientific peer reviewed journals that accept unsolicited manuscripts based on original nutrition research. If one excludes review journals (eg *Annual Review of Nutrition*, *Progress in Lipid Research*, *Critical Reviews of Food Sciences*, *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*) as well as the journals related specifically to

obesity (*International Journal of Obesity and Obesity Research*) *EJCN* now ranks fourth after the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, the *Journal of Nutrition*, and the *British Journal of Nutrition*.

The conclusion is that *EJCN* continues to grow as one of the top scientific nutrition journals. This is the result of increasing quantity and quality of submitted manuscripts. Scientists collectively determine the quality of scientific journals and the editors and publisher of *EJCN* are grateful for their important contribution. Further improvement to papers is accomplished by the comments of expert reviewers and we would also like to express our gratitude to them.

From 2000 to 2001 we experienced a rapid increase in submissions. To further improve on the process of peer review and publication, Nature Publishing Group recently introduced a web-based tool designed for manuscript submission, peer review and tracking. It requires no special software and has been developed for ease of use; authors just need to follow the instructions provided on the website. This new system, available at <http://mts-ejcn.nature.com> has several benefits:

1. For authors submitting articles there is the ease and flexibility of submission and faster turnaround by use of the internet for transmitting information that previously relied on express courier or the mail system. Moreover, authors can also track the progress of their manuscripts through the peer review process.
2. For reviewers, this system offers reliable web-based access to the relevant reviewer materials, including article and forms, while also making it easy to communicate comments back to the editor.

I would encourage you go to the journal's home page (<http://www.nature.com/ejcn>) in order to read more about submitting online.

As a follow-up to an editorial two years ago I have listed hereunder the papers that received the highest number of citations in the period 1996–2001.

**Table 1** Performance of *EJCN* in the ISI Journal Citations Reports<sup>®</sup> Science Edition

| Year | Rank among all journals | Rank among nutrition journals | Total number of citations | Impact factor* | Immediacy factor* |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1996 | 1624                    | 20 out of 45                  | 1717                      | 1.09           | 0.23              |
| 1997 | 1410                    | 18 out of 50                  | 2197                      | 1.26           | 0.26              |
| 1998 | 1089                    | 15 out of 50                  | 2370                      | 1.67           | 0.14              |
| 1999 | 1221                    | 15 out of 50                  | 2668                      | 1.67           | 0.21              |
| 2000 | 878                     | 11 out of 50                  | 3590                      | 2.17           | 0.51              |

\*The impact factor for 2000 is calculated as follows: 773 citations in 2000 to the 356 papers published in 1998 and 1999: impact factor=773/356=2.17

\*\*The immediacy factor for 2000 is calculated as follows: 96 citations in 2000 to 190 manuscripts published in 2000. Immediacy factor is: 96/190=0.505

\*Correspondence: J Seidell, Department of Nutrition and Health, Free University Amsterdam, de Boelelaan 1085, 1081 HV Amsterdam, the Netherlands.  
E-mail: [seidell@bio.vu.nl](mailto:seidell@bio.vu.nl)

Five most cited papers per year in the period 1996–2000 published in EJCN according to the ISI Web of Science (April 7th 2002).

## 1996

1. Serafini M, Ghiselli A & Ferro-Luzzi A (1996): *In vivo* antioxidant effect of green and black tea in man. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **50**, 28–32. (Citations: 115).\*
2. Black AE, Coward WA, Cole TJ & Prentice AM (1996): Human energy expenditure in affluent societies: an analysis of 574 doubly-labelled water measurements. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **50**, 72–92. (Citations: 95).\*
3. Hertog MGL & Hollman PCH (1996): Potential health effects of the dietary flavonol quercetin. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **50**, 63–71. (Citations: 66).
4. Lairon D (1996): Dietary fibres: effects on lipid metabolism and mechanisms of action. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **50**, 125–133. (Citations: 43).
5. Makrides M, Neumann MA & Gibson RA (1996): Effect of maternal docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) supplementation on breast milk composition. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **50**, 352–357. (Citations: 42).

## 1997

1. Coudray C, Bellanger J, Castiglia Delavaud C, Remesy C, Vermorel M & Rayssiguier Y (1997): Effects of soluble or partly soluble dietary fibres supplementation on absorption and balance of calcium, magnesium, iron and zinc in healthy young men. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **51**, 375–380. (Citations: 50).
2. Cummings JH, Roberfroid MB, Andersson H, Barth C, Ferro-Luzzi A, Ghos Y *et al* (1997): A new look at dietary carbohydrate: chemistry, physiology and health. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **51**, 417–423. (Citations: 38).
3. Carbonneau MA, Leger CL, Monnier L, Bonnet C, Michel F, Fouret G, Dedieu F & Descomps B (1997): Supplementation of wine phenolic compounds increases the antioxidant capacity and vitamin E of low-density lipoprotein without changing the lipoprotein Cu<sup>2+</sup>-oxidizability: possible explanation by phenolic location. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **51**, 682–690. (Citations: 38).
4. Black AE, Bingham SA, Johansson G & Coward WA (1997): Validation of dietary intakes of protein and energy against 24 hour N and DWL energy expenditure in middle-aged women, retired men and post-obese subjects: comparison with validation against presumed energy requirements. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **51**, 405–413. (Citations: 32).

\*Ranks as 'highly cited paper' in clinical medicine according to ISI Essential Science Indicators (January 2002) which indicates that they belong to the top 1% of papers in the field of clinical medicine.

5. Hirvonen T, Mannisto S, Roos E & Pietinen P (1997): Increasing prevalence of underreporting does not necessarily distort dietary surveys. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **51**, 297–301. (Citations: 31).

## 1998

1. Weststrate JA & Meijer GW (1998): Plant sterol-enriched margarines and reduction of plasma total- and LDL-cholesterol concentrations in normocholesterolaemic and mildly hypercholesterolaemic subjects. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **52**, 334–343. (Citations: 112).\*
2. van het Hof KH, Kivits GAA, Weststrate JA & Tijburg LBM (1998): Bioavailability of catechins from tea: the effect of milk. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **52**, 356–359. (Citations: 40).
3. Dedekere EAM, Korver O, Verschuren PM & Katan MB (1998): Health aspects of fish and n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids from plant and marine origin. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **52**, 749–753. (Citations: 38).
4. Law MR & Morris JK (1998): By how much does fruit and vegetable consumption reduce the risk of ischaemic heart disease? *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **52**, 549–556. (Citations: 33).
5. Spanhaak S, Havenaar R & Schaafsma G (1998): The effect of consumption of milk fermented by *Lactobacillus casei* strain Shirota on the intestinal microflora and immune parameters in humans. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **52**, 899–907. (Citations: 32).

## 1999

1. Hendriks HFJ, Weststrate JA, van Vliet T & Meijer GW (1999): Spreads enriched with three different levels of vegetable oil sterols and the degree of cholesterol lowering in normocholesterolaemic and mildly hypercholesterolaemic subjects. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **53**, 319–327. (Citations: 48).\*
2. Richelle M, Tavazzi I, Enslin M & Offord EA (1999): Plasma kinetics in man of epicatechin from black chocolate. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **53**, 22–26. (Citations: 39).\*
3. Hulshof KFAM, van Erp-Baart MA, Anttolainen M, Becker W, Church SM, Couet C *et al* (1999): Intake of fatty acids in western Europe with emphasis on trans fatty acids: the TRANSFAIR study. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **53**, 143–157. (Citations: 24).
4. Stoll BA (1999): Western nutrition and the insulin resistance syndrome: a link to breast cancer. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **53**, 83–87. (Citations: 22).
5. McAnlis GT, McEneny J, Pearce J & Young IS (1999): Absorption and antioxidant effects of quercetin from onions in man. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **53**, 92–96. (Citations: 17).

## 2000

1. Leenen R, Roodenburg AJC, Tijburg LBM & Wiseman SA (2000): A single dose of tea with or without milk increases plasma antioxidant activity in humans. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **54**, 87–92. (Citations: 19).\*

2. Arunachalam K, Gill HS & Chandra RK (2000): Enhancement of natural immune function by dietary consumption of *Bifidobacterium lactis* (HN109). *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **54**, 263–267. (Citations: 18)\*
3. Hallikainen MA, Sarkkinen ES, Gylling H, Erkkila AT & Uusitupa MIJ (2000): Comparison of the effects of plant sterol ester and plant stanol ester-enriched margarines in lowering serum cholesterol concentrations in hypercholesterolaemic subjects on a low-fat diet. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **54**, 715–725. (Citations: 12).
4. Monteiro CA, D'A Benicio MH, Conde WL & Popkin BM (2000): Shifting obesity trends in Brazil. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **54**, 342–346. (Citations: 12).
5. Martorell R, Khan LK, Hughes ML & Grummer-Strawn LM (2000): Obesity in women from developing countries. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **54**, 247–252. (Citations: 11).