

Editorial

Breaking Barriers

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The *International Archives of Otorhinolaryngology* celebrates 18 years of existence and continuous publication. Publication of the journal by Thieme Publishers from Germany will boost the international reach and improve the editorial quality. Thus, we took the opportunity to reflect on the current situation of ear, nose, and throat (ENT) publications.

In recent years, the research committees of most universities and funding agencies worldwide have required researchers and professors to publish works in journals with high scientific impact. The impact of a publication is based on the number of citations by peers in journals with high citation indices. Agencies perform periodic surveys of journals, assessing the standard of the editorial board, qualified peer reviews, periodicity of publications, number of original articles, citations in other journals, and indexing in scientific libraries, among other requirements. To meet the standards of such assessments, members of the medical scientific community submit their publications to journals that best meet these requirements.

Certain fields, such as health sciences, implement a major division of research, called “clinical” and “experimental.” The demands positively affect some aspects, such as in searching for journals with a qualified editorial boards that only publish articles that are thoroughly revised and present an actual contribution to science. Meanwhile, the same demands negatively affect many countries, mainly by significantly decreasing the access of health professionals who are outside the scientific community and who work directly with the population and practically implement scientific discoveries. This is because the vast majority of those who work to promote the aim of all health sciences—namely, to improve the welfare of the people—are distant from these experimental and less practical publications.

As such, otorhinolaryngology, a surgical specialty, has become extremely prejudiced against other areas. In this field, experimental studies are not the vocation of experts, and their journal articles have low impact, based on the majority of works in the area. Except for a few journals of experimental audiology, all other journals from the specialty have an impact factor below 2.5, according to Thomson Reuters.

Research programs of universities and funding agencies should evaluate professors by comparing them with their peers. Comparisons with other areas are unfair because of the impact factor of journals outside the ENT scope.

This situation has led to the “escape” of those who used to publish in ENT journals to other journals outside their specialty, such as anatomy, general science, and medicine. Moreover, authors employed by universities focus their publications in experimental areas, hampering the clinical and surgical areas by delaying their development. A critical concern is that otolaryngologists, audiologists, and speech pathologists in common practice do not have access to important articles in these journals.

This scenario is changing as search engines and open access journals provide alternative approaches. These trends should increase and progress, and should change the current panorama of the “dictatorship of the impact factor.”

We congratulate the editorial board, namely, Editor-in-Chief Professor Geraldo Jotz, Co-Editor Dr. Aline Bittencourt, and the Associate Editors of the *International Archives of Otorhinolaryngology*, for the quality of articles of both the practical and experimental thrusts. Reading this journal is both informative and pleasant. Congratulations on the new partnership with Thieme!

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