

Big hits in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine*

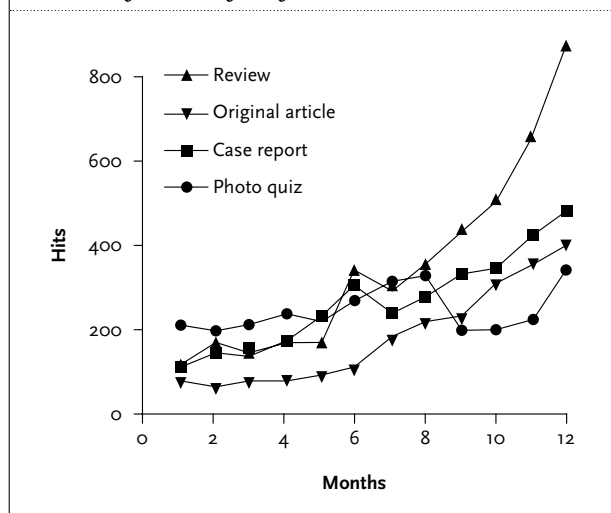
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For some years now articles in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* are indexed in PubMed and easily accessible via the publisher's website. This important step has made contributions in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* much more visible for a worldwide readership and greatly contributes to the standing of the Journal. It may be speculated that a considerable part of the increase in the impact factor of the Journal that we have witnessed in recent years is due to this situation.¹ For journals the impact factor is an important measure of how relevant their published papers are for the medical scientific community. In addition, the number of 'hits' on the Journal's website, leading to the download of the paper, is another and maybe equally significant factor.

Over the last 12 months about 50,000 hits were counted on the website of *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine*. When we analyse the number of hits in the last year immediately after their publication in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine*, a number of interesting conclusions can be drawn. First, and not surprisingly, the cumulative number of hits escalates over time as an increasing number of people discover and download the article (*figure 1*). However, this is not true for all papers as in particular photo quizzes enjoy an immediate attention that remains quite stable over time. Best-viewed articles in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* are reviews and editorials. *Table 1* reports on the mean number of hits of each of the sections in the Journal and provides a similar picture. The four reviews that were the biggest hits for the Journal in

Figure 1. Number of hits over one year after publication of articles in the *Netherlands Journal of Medicine* for each of the journal sections

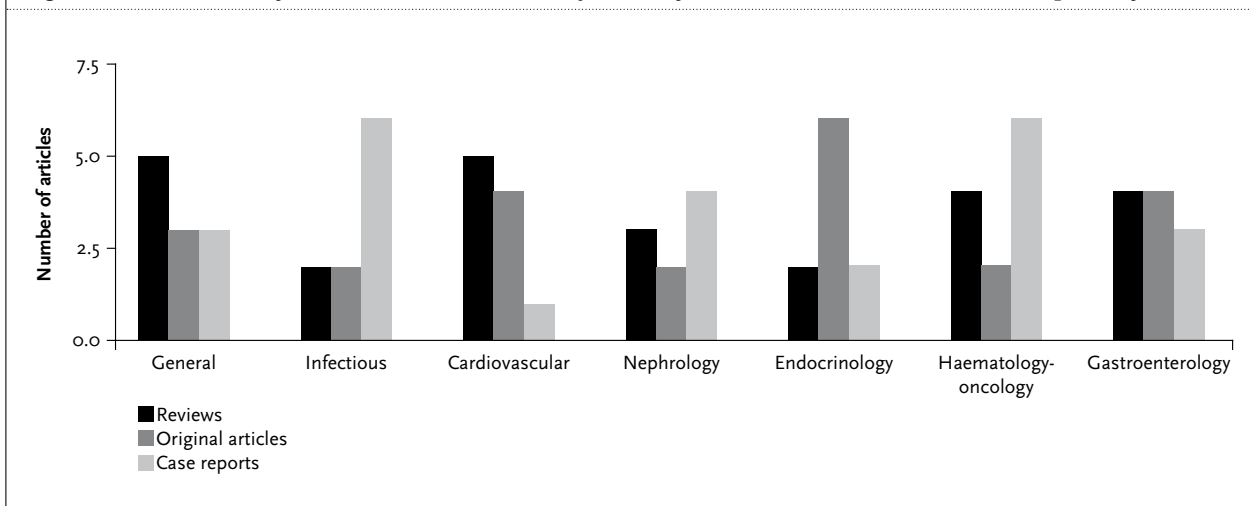


the last three years were all downloaded more than 1000 times in the first year after publication.²⁻⁵ Original articles are also frequently downloaded but here the variation is somewhat higher. The most viewed papers in the last year had about 600 hits.⁶⁻⁸ The number of downloads for case reports is about the same but relatively quite high for this type of article.⁹ The winning papers in this category had 550 hits or more.^{10,11} Photo quizzes have a rather stable download rate of about 400 but some of them are very popular with more than 700 downloads.¹²⁻¹⁴

Table 1. Mean number of hits per year for each section of the *Netherlands Journal of Medicine*, with maximum and minimum per category

	Editorials n=11	Reviews n=17	Original articles n=20	Case reports n=27	Photo quizzes n=22
Mean (\pm SD) number of hits/year	529 (\pm 129)	789 (\pm 103)	402 (\pm 221)	445 (\pm 187)	415 (\pm 87)
Maximum	941	1034	604	578	785
Minimum	179	134	175	144	235

Figure 2. Distribution of articles in the Netherlands Journal of Medicine over the various subdisciplines of medicine



It is also interesting to analyse which subdiscipline of medicine the articles in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* come from. *Figure 2* shows the origin of the papers for each of the article categories. In general, the most important areas of medicine are all covered in the various journal sections. Relatively speaking, cardiovascular medicine seems somewhat underrepresented in case reports, whereas infectious diseases and haematology/oncology are slightly overrepresented; however, the numbers are relatively small. When further analysing the relationship between the subdisciplines and the number of hits, there is no significant difference between the number of downloads and the subdiscipline of the paper, although there seems to be a trend that papers in general medicine or cardiovascular medicine are somewhat more frequently downloaded.

It would be interesting to establish a relationship between the number of downloads on the website and the number of 'official' citations an article receives. We are in the process of analysing that relationship as it may represent a new and easy to establish measure of the impact a specific paper may have. We hope that we will be able to report on this in one of the next issues of *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine*.

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