

Why publish in the Netherlands Journal of Medicine?

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There are a number of reasons to evaluate the first year of the renewed Netherlands Journal of Medicine. As our readership knows, important changes to the journal took place in 2002.

Firstly, the editorial board moved from Utrecht to Nijmegen, and at the same time it was decided to search for another, perhaps more flexible, publisher.

Such changes may have had a negative influence on the citation index of the journal. For instance, we could not start with the first renewed issue until March 2002.

Another disadvantage was that the publisher had to develop a complete electronic edition. The publisher has succeeded in this task and from now on the journal is available on the Internet with an attractive website (www.njmonline.nl).

There are some other editorial points to make. In the December 2002 issue of this journal, we mentioned that all submissions in all categories should include an abstract.¹ Further, it was agreed that the editors would be selective in publishing abstracts and supplements on official journal pages, because this has a negative influence on the impact factor, as determined by the journal of citation reports.

Table 1 shows the increase in the impact factor over the last four years as well as the rise of the journal on the list, from place 58 out of 107 to place 40 out of 112 journals, in the subject category medicine, general and internal. To be honest, we have to give our predecessors the credit for this spectacular advance. We hope that in this first, difficult year we have maintained this position and that the coming years will show a further increase.

The fact that the journal is again easily accessible on the net will hopefully contribute to a further improvement in the position of our journal.

Finally, we as editors would like to offer the following as food for thought. We are worried about the relatively low number of original articles submitted to us. We do, of course, appreciate that your most important and revolutionary work should be submitted to the top five to ten journals.

Table 1

YEAR	IMPACT FACTOR	JOURNALS IN CATEGORY MEDICINE GENERAL AND INTERNAL	PLACE NJM
1998	0.429	107	58
1999	0.681	110	45
2000	0.721	105	44
2001	0.925	112	40

But when your work is not suitable for the highest-ranked international journals, why go for an international journal in the subtop? Why not choose the Netherlands Journal of Medicine instead?

We are aware of the academic pressure to publish in journals with the highest possible impact. But should we also prefer the Scandinavian-based 'Journal of Internal Medicine' (formerly Acta Medica Scandinavia) or the Medical Journal of Australia purely for the higher impact factor and the higher chance of citation while your Dutch colleagues, and in particular the next generation of internists, are not aware of your contribution?

A last point of concern is the time between submission and the moment of acceptance: for 2002 this period amounted to an average of 98 days, which we consider much too long. Therefore, we need your support as potential referees to shorten the reviewing time. The next responsibility is for the authors; they should resubmit their revised versions more rapidly. Even for minor revisions, some authors take as long as three months.

After this mixture of good and less good news, the editors will work together with you to further improve your and 'our' journal.

Reference

1. Meer JWM van der, Smits P, Stalenhoef AFH, Thien Th. Abstract! Neth J Med 2002;60:8:418.