

# “So, Is Your Journal Listed on PubMed?”

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The most common question we receive from potential readers, reviewers, and authors is: “Is the *SIUJ* listed in PubMed?” The follow-up question is: “What is your impact factor?”

Indexing and impact factors have become the currency of medical publishing. For authors to get academic credit for their work, the publication needs to be visible on international platforms like PubMed, PubMed Central, MEDLINE, SCOPUS, and Web of Science. The impact factor provides the quality stamp that ensures that the effort is worthwhile. Although there are several means to determine the legitimacy of a journal, one of the easiest for the reader and the researcher is to search for the journal in PubMed. So where does that leave fledgling journals that are not yet indexed and do not yet have an impact factor?

Indexing is a complicated process. A medical journal must apply for indexing and archiving in the United States National Library of Medicine (NLM, through either MEDLINE or PubMed Central), which then makes the journal content identifiable through PubMed, the search interface for the NLM[1-3]. Most readers would probably be surprised to learn that only a small fraction of journals are accepted into the club of indexed journals on their first attempt. Most in fact have to resubmit their portfolio, and they cannot do this for at least 2 years after a failed application. It is critical for the publisher to have its proverbial ducks lined up and to have robust content before submitting. Criteria include number of published articles, scope and rigour of scientific content, editorial quality, and production quality. The journal must demonstrate that its practices adhere to various publication and editorial policies. The journal must offer a worthy contribution to the field of biomedicine, ideally covering an area of research and/or geographic location that is relatively under-represented in the scientific literature. Journals must generally have at least 2 years of published content before applying

for indexing, and they must maintain established publishing schedules to demonstrate sustainability.

The impact factor follows indexing more automatically. An indexed journal will generate an impact factor 2 to 3 years after indexing based on the number of citations per published manuscript. The time from launching a journal to acquiring an impact factor is therefore usually at least 4 to 5 years.

Many urologists and specialists in affiliated fields have demonstrated open disdain for unlisted journals, along the lines of “I don’t have time for you” and “why would I submit to a journal that is not indexed?” These comments come from prominent and less prominent members of our community, and anywhere along the spectrum from early career researchers to the most senior researchers. We are all busy and have to pick and choose the opportunities to which we can dedicate time. Journals like the *SIUJ* are dependent on a certain altruistic desire to give back and support a new concept.

Reviewers will be less deterred by indexing and impact factor than authors. Our biggest obstacle with peer review is that many potential reviewers do not recognize the journal and discount it as yet another junk journal asking for something in the daily deluge of emails. Time, exposure, and indexing will help us overcome this obstacle.

So why invest time in the *SIUJ*? The health of our Journal is contingent on a grassroots effort by those who are convinced of the mission of the Journal and want to contribute to its growth and future success. We are grateful that many members of the SIU are loyal to the cause. We are also grateful that many other urologists and contributors from around the world recognize the value in our intent to provide open access content that reflects the global practice of urology at no cost to readers or authors—and that they are keen to promote this endeavour. We have seen remarkable investment

from many individuals and networks. The Australians probably top the list of contributors, especially on a per capita basis (just like they do in so many sporting events!), but we have received also high-quality input from many other countries including India, Pakistan, and countries in Africa and the Middle East.

We do not have an established parent journal on whose shoulders we can stand, which has been such a successful model for many other medical journals. Indexing will not come until 2023 at the earliest, and our

first impact factor in 2025 or later will undoubtedly be modest, but we have an opportunity to build something unique in the field, something global, diverse, and inclusive. We welcome the input of those who support the concept now—and will welcome those who need indexing and impact factor later. Indexing is a priority for the *SIUJ*, so that we can increase the reach of our articles and better serve the needs of our authors. It requires careful planning but also continued support from our authors and reviewers who are willing to take the risk on a new journal.

## References

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