

EDITORIAL

International circulation of *Revista Española de Sanidad Penitenciaria* (Spanish Journal on Prison Health): From Medline to Web of Science

In the last two months, the Spanish Journal on Prison Health (RESP in Spanish) has retroactively upgraded its indexing within the Medline database. It specifically appears starting with no.1, from volume no.9 (2007). Currently —enquiry carried out the 25/2/2005— there is a total number of 108 works listed in the best biomedical bibliography information system in the world. What does being indexed in Medline imply for a scientific journal? Regarding visibility, the presence in Medline involves being positioned at the information platform most globally used by basic and clinical researchers and professionals in the medical science field ¹. In addition to this, it provides prestige, acquired after overcoming the strict selective process of this database, currently under close surveillance by the National Library of Medicine and supported by the renowned National Institutes of Health. It also entails being part of the select club which gathers the most relevant scientific literature produced and published around the world, related to the different disciplines which constitute the Biomedical field and, in a broader sense, Health Sciences. In conclusion, it constitutes having achieved international confirmation of a scientific journal's maturity as a broadcast media, along with validation of published research.

Having obtained visibility and reached international scientific acceptance, are there goals yet to be achieved by a scientific journal? The answer is yes, due to the fact that in the scientific field, once the work circulates, it is the scientific community who attributes recognition, mainly through citation. We are facing the moment in time when the prestigious Web of Science (WoS), Impact Factor (IF) and Journal Citation Reports (JCR) databases come into play. This is due to the fact that, along with other factors we will mention, these databases provide the possibility of examining the impact and scientific repercussion reached by published works through the number and average of bibliographic citations they appear in. This fact makes these databases preferential objects of desire for scientific journals. In time, the bibliometric indicators provided by WoS and

JCR have turned out to be essential tools in order to assess research performance of institutions, journals and scientists. Publishing in a WoS indexed journal has become an inherent value of quality positively taken into account by several evaluation systems. As far as the particular situation in Spain is concerned, these evaluation systems are represented by two key assessment institutions: the National Scientific Activity Evaluation Commission (CNEAI)²⁻³ since 1990, and the National Quality and Accreditation Evaluation Agency (ANECA) ⁴ since 2002. Being in charge of assessing and appointing scientist's performance regarding research, both institutions have set up the following guideline as their main assessment precept: "*collaboration in journals of acclaimed prestige will be preferably valued, considering these to be those which appear in relevant positions within the Subject Category Listing of the Journal Citation Reports which figure in both the Social Science Citation Index and the Science Citation Index of Web of Science – Web of Knowledge (WoS-WoK)*"

This practice, which is not exclusive of our country but is currently globally spread, has caused journals included in WoS to be in a head-start position to attract the best pieces of research and those of major scientific relevance, regarding both to their research brief and method quality. As a consequence of this, it has become essential for a journal's validity to enter the WoS database. The problem lies within the fact that it is a desire shared by thousands of journals in the world; in such a way that many apply for it (more than 2000 are assessed each year) but few achieve it (150-200) ⁵. Having reached this situation, it would be convenient to organize the structure, relevance and requirements of admission to these databases, not only aiming at reporting the Spanish Penal Healthcare scientific community, but also at taking into consideration the legitimate aspirations of its journal to one day become part of this select scientific club.

The previously known as ISI (Insitute for Scientific Information, Philapelphia) database was an institution set up by Eugene Garfield in the late 50s and acquired by the preeminent Thomson multinational

communication corporation in 1992, changing its name to WoS – Thomson Scientific⁶. Its most influential tool is Web of Science, which provides access to the following databases:

Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI - Expanded), specialized in Biomedicine, Science and Technology. It gathers international literature published from 1989 until now concerning several scientific disciplines in this field. SCI is the multidisciplinary database par excellence for English-speaking countries. It currently indexes around 8500 journals.

Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), it includes literature specialized in Social Science (Education, Law, Psychology, Political Science, Sociology, Urbanism, Public Health, Library and Information Science...) since 1956. Since 1992 it also includes a summary of each piece of work, in 60% of the references. It currently indexes around 3000 journals.

Art and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), covering several fields within the Humanities area (Art, Architecture, History, Language and Literature, Music, Philosophy, Religion...) since 1975. It includes summaries of the articles since the year 2000 and currently indexes almost 1700 journals.

Index Chemicus (IC) is a database specialized in Chemistry literature dating from 1993 up until 2009.

Current Chemical Reactions (CCR-Expanded) indexes Chemistry research dated since 1986 until 2009, including data from the *Institute National de la Propriété Industrielle* dating from 1840.

Conference Proceedings Citation Index helps researchers to access bibliography from the most important lectures and symposiums in the world from 1990 until 2009. It gathers editing in Science and Social Science. This resource offers a complete access to conference proceedings and its impact on global research beyond the information provided in journals.

Book Citation Index, connects since 2003 a series of books to powerful tools, offering researchers the opportunity to identify and access the most relevant books in a fast and simple way. As its core asset, Book Citation makes it possible to examine the citation network among scientific research books and assess their contribution to different specific disciplines.

Along with the already mentioned databases, we find the independent **Journal Citation Reports (JCR)** database, which offers data and bibliometric indicators concerning journals containing the work pieces included in the previous databases and therefore deserves a special mention. The JCR, also available through WoS, gather interesting data regarding not only specific characteristics about the journals inclu-

ded in the SCI and SSCI, but also their repercussion indicators, thus becoming a global reference concerning the impact of these publications in the scientific community. As far as the four indicators provided by the JCR (total number of citations, IF, immediacy index, cited half life) are concerned, the use of IF as a means to compare quality and prestige of journals is widely accepted among researchers, particularly in the Biomedical field as well as in Spain, where scientific journals have shown an increasing interest in this indicators. Prove of this is the large publications concerning bibliometric indicators regarding medical scientific activity in our country⁷⁻⁹. Additionally, every journal included in the JCR is catalogued under one to five different categories within a particular theme classification called "Subject Category", which makes it possible to compare the impact and position of each journal in relation to the rest in the ranking, regarding the same discipline. Consequently, the JCR provide guidance when subscribing to journals (with wider impact) and supply the opportunity of picking out interrelated journals of different disciplines and, of course, locating the most prestigious and adequate journals to which a researcher might aim his original work. Finally, as an additional asset, the JCR can be used to assess both journals and their researchers CVs, as far as their scientific activity, evaluated through their publications in impact journals, is concerned.

Taking all this into consideration, the RESP's interest regarding its future admission application for the WoS is to examine the extremely rigorous selection process it applies to the journals it indexes demanding a series of schedule, accuracy and scientific edition regulation requirements which other databases rarely achieve. Due to this, Thomson Scientific databases have reached a high assessment potential for scientists and scientific journals, institutions and policies, introducing a prominent awareness towards quality as far as conclusively published research is concerned. The selection criteria which in theory attest this quality and enable Thomson Scientific to cover the core of relevant scientific research production globally can be organized in four groups¹⁰:

Reaching scientific journal publishing standards: Regarding this issue, WoS demands consistency and punctuality in publications, rigorous observance of international scientific publication regulations (quality of the abstracts and key-words, institutional affiliation, accuracy regarding bibliographic references); along with a regular and accredited editing process and an assessment system in pairs, both external and anonymous as well as transparent

and clearly defined.

Theme coverage: Thomson Scientific specifically values the intention of the journal to accept and publish original pieces of basic and applied research concerning a specific scientific area which might be of interest for the database. This might be so due to the emergent and innovative character of a particular subject or the fact that the journal represents a solid scientific community whose contributions are of scientific relevance in their specialty.

International representation: As far as this subject is concerned, WoS demands the journal to be supported by a solvent organization and to rely upon an editing team (scientific committee more specifically) integrated by renowned researchers. Furthermore, this demand affects the researchers whose work is published by the journal, and even the audience it is aimed at, in such a way that it must be an international community, not a merely local one. This can be assessed through the presence of the journal in both libraries and, in particular, international databases concerning its specialty. Finally, international representation is also evaluated through examination of the scientific literature citations which appear in the published articles, thus determining whether or not they match cutting-edge lines of research.

Scientific visibility and impact. Logically, one of the most influential criteria as far as the assessment process is concerned is the analysis of scientific impact through the total number of citations it appears in. The fact of a journal not being included in WoS does not imply its impact cannot be measured. This can be directly done by recording the number of citations such journals receive in journals published by WoS. In a more indirect way, the impact of a journal can be evaluated through the impact of international publications (work published by WoS) of their editing committee members and usual contributors. Despite the limits of this assessment tools are not too clear it becomes evident that the strict screening carried out by WoS through information provided by its own databases grants exclusiveness and reputation to the journals which achieve admission.

Nevertheless, and despite the transparency of WoS selection processes, several surveys have reported various slants, among which it is in the interest of this work to point out those related to coverage. Notwithstanding the fact that WoS is a multidisciplinary database, its scientific literature coverage depicts a more than evident geographical inclination towards publications in English from English speaking countries, especially the US and UK. In addition to this, a remarkable disciplinary and concerning research

aims slant offers a better coverage of basic disciplines at the expense of applied disciplines and those with an approach to more local issues. This penalizes coverage of journals with an applied orientation and, in general, Social Science journals¹¹.

Thomson Scientific is well aware of these limitations and, at the same time, is subject to the pressure of products of rival organizations such as Scopus (<http://www.info.scopus.com>) and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.es>). These circumstances certainly offer an opportunity to journals, such as the Spanish ones, which after being traditionally disregarded by this database have experienced visible signs of improvement and international representation. As a matter of fact, the number of Spanish publications featured in WoS has experienced spectacular growth in the last three years, increasing from half a hundred up to 200 late in 2012, 73 of which were featured in the SCI, 57 in the SSCI and 67 in the A&HCI. Ultimately, this brings justice to the increasing influence of Spanish science in the international scope.

Once the current situation has been described, it is the RESP's point of view that its aspirations to take advantage of the open opportunity to achieve admission in WoS must be valued and taken into consideration, due to some facts revealing reasonable and moderately optimistic results. The first of these factors is RESP's strong presence in Medline, which entails amply reaching WoS's requirements concerning **publication standards**. In addition to this, demands related to **theme coverage** and **international representation** indicate suitable results according to a recent report depicting the extent of international representation of Spanish published research. Assessed through citation behavior and the journals taken into consideration, it makes it possible to assert that, generally speaking, the match between intellectual references used by RESP's usual contributors and their international counterpart is adequate¹². Without any doubt, it will improve in time due to the correct open access policy put into practice by RESP, along with the English version containing its research work.

It is in this direction in which it is necessary to continue working not only in order to start believing in the possibility of RESP becoming the main expression media for Spanish and Spanish speaking research regarding Penal Healthcare, but also to access and compete within the strict and difficult setting of Europe and the English speaking countries, where there is still no solid presence of any scientific research journal concerning Penal Healthcare. Both the *Journal of Prison Health* and the *Journal of Prison Jail Health* resumed their edition in 1981 and 1993

respectively, while the *International Journal of Prisoner Health* (London: Taylor&Francis), born in 2005 and still active in theory, featured its last contributions in 2005. Meanwhile, the *New England Journal on Prison Law* is clearly specialized in Prison Law, along with the *Prison Journal*, the only journal related to the penal field featured in WoS and whose coverage is clearly oriented towards Penal Science and Criminology (JCR Subject Category: Criminology and Penology).

As far as our point of view is concerned, and taking into account the previously mentioned study on international representation and impact of Spanish scientific research concerning Penal Healthcare, one of the main problems for a solid establishment of a scientifically relevant international reference journal is the competition with high and medium impact JCR journals which cover the specialties and subjects at which Penal Healthcare journals are aimed. Despite the experiences, research population or samples being related to the Penal field, the subject covered by the studies (infectious disease, addiction disorders and drug consumption, hepatic problems, psychiatric and psychological disorders, general medical practice, etc) can be featured in journals concerning these specialties. In the meantime, if these journals prove to be attractive due to their high IF within their classification, it becomes evident that authors will be acquainted with them, and will aim their best pieces of research at them. Consequently, this work will be object of more citations, not only due to its quality but also to the wide spread effect provided by the prestige of the journal it is featured in (the so-called "Nature effect" "Science effect").

Lastly, we will finish this work by analyzing impact, for it has become the most influential criterion, by means of listing the number of citations, for the WoS assessment processes. In order to do so, we have checked the number of citations received by RESP during the period 2000-2013. It has been object to 51 international citations, featured in 23 different journals included in WoS.

These 51 international citations have been referenced to 31 articles written in RESP, from which the most cited have received 3 citations [Marco A. 2002 RESP 4(1): 4-9; Fisker N 2001 RESP 3(1): 40-48]. Meanwhile, concerning citing journals, despite being international JCR journals, a national effect is produced, due to the fact that 45% of these journals are Spanish. This balance, still scarce, needs to be improved, while the evolution of citations per year, with a prominent growth in 2011, indicates an encouraging tendency on the rise (Fig. 1).

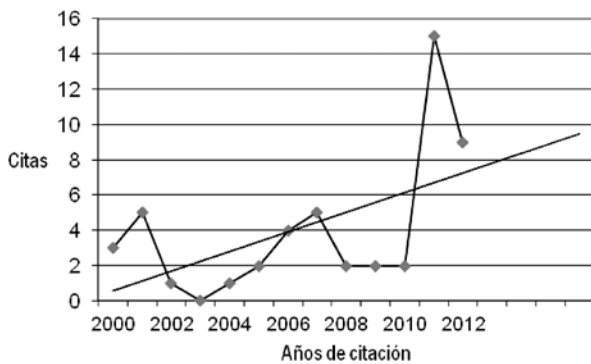
Journals citing RESP between 200-2013.

Citing Journals	Citations
Enfermedades Infecciosas y Microbiología Clínica	7
European Journal of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases	5
Revista Española de Salud Pública (RESP)	5
Medicina Clínica	4
Revista de Neurología	4
International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease	3
Aids and Behavior	2
Aids Care-Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of Aids/HIV	2
Aids Research and Human Retroviruses	2
Criminal Behavior and Mental Health	2
Gaceta Sanitaria	2
Vaccine	2
Addiction	1
Current Opinion on HIV and Aids	1
Emergencias	1
International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology	1
International Journal of STD & Aids	1
Journal of Research in Medical Sciences	1
Journal of Theoretical Biology	1
Lancet	1
Latin American Journal of Pharmacy	1
Revista Chilena de Infectología	1
Terapia Psicológica	1
Total	51

This improvement in citation data does not depend directly on RESP, but can be enhanced through several measures in order to stimulate it, among which the already mentioned steps taken towards increasing visibility (Medline indexing, open access and English version, adequate positioning in Google Scholar) are included. They can experience further improvement through inclusion in repositories such as Redalyc (<http://www.redalyc.org/>) and Dialnet (www.dialnet.unirioja.es). Further improvements might be achieved through encouraging activities aimed at granting that part or the complete future work of the most prestigious and cited in WoS RESP contributors is published in RESP. As a consequence of this, or by means of recommending authors to include citations aimed at works previously published in RESP in their JCR journal publications, an effect of citation sweeping would take place. This last measure could be interpreted as a behavior or recommendation not to be confessed, but never to be considered unethical.

Otherwise, publishing controversial articles, or investing in commissioning “state of the issue” articles to renowned specialists concerning a certain research theme covered by a journal, the so-called “Reviews”, have proven to be a profitable investment due to the fact that, as it widely proven in time, these work pieces receive a large number of citations.

Fig. 1 Evolution per year of citations received by RESP.



R Ruiz-Pérez*; **E Delgado López-Cózar***

*Universidad de Granada.

Departamento de Información y Documentación.
Granada. Spain. Grupo de investigación EC3:
Evaluación de la Ciencia y de la Comunicación
Científica (<http://ec3.ugr.es/>)

Correspondencia: Rafael Ruiz-Pérez (r Ruiz@ugr.es)

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