

The *MJA* in 2019: a long tradition and increasingly high and broad impact

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The *MJA* provides an important service to medicine and has a proud history of publishing high quality articles

Journals don't simply disseminate new knowledge about medical theory and practice. They also define the scope of medical concerns and articulate norms for physicians' professional and social roles.¹



In 2019, Australian investigators have an ever-expanding choice of excellent journals in which to publish their research. Authors want to know that their work will be widely read and cited, that it will influence policy and ultimately improve health. They may consider a specialty or international journal, but they often especially want to improve outcomes in local hospitals and practices. For this reason, a successful, high impact Australian general medical journal is vital.



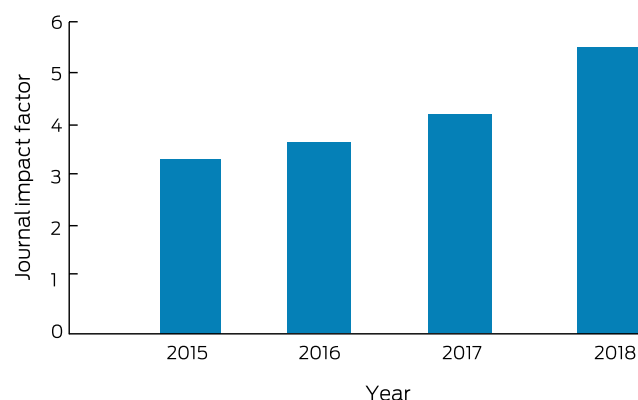
The *Medical Journal of Australia* (*MJA*) is Australia's leading peer-reviewed medical journal, and internationally ranks 16th among general medical journals by impact factor.² It is therefore very pleasing to announce that the Journal Impact Factor for the *MJA* in 2018 has increased, for the third consecutive year, to 5.332 (2018 Journal Impact Factor, Journal Citation Reports [Web of Science Group, 2019]), the Journal's highest impact factor ever (Box 1).



As editors, we are aware that the impact factor is a flawed and contentious metric. For example, the new figure is based on the number of citations in 2018 of articles published during 2016–2017, so it fails to capture the full distribu-

tion of citations for individual papers. Some articles cite strongly, others less so, even in the most prestigious journals. Other articles may take several years or even decades to register their full impact. However, no alternative metric has yet captured the attention of editors and potential authors, and the impact factor for many remains central to decisions about where to publish and to judgments by peers about the importance of articles. Notably, journals assigned an impact factor by Clarivate must all meet certain quality standards. While there may be good reasons for no assigned impact factor (eg, a relatively new medical journal) and other quality metrics exist, the lack of a published impact

1 Clarivate Journal Impact Factor for the *Medical Journal of Australia*, 2015–2018



factor is also one of the warning signals that a journal may be predatory.

Beyond the impact factor, other important measures of influence must be considered when choosing a journal for a submission. You might wish to know whether a journal is widely read in print and online. The *MJA* website receives more than 350 000 page views each month, and has a print circulation exceeding 30 000. It is read locally and in more than 200 countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, and its global reach is expanding. You may wonder whether your article will attract comments in social media, or whether your report will excite the attention of the popular press. In this respect, the *MJA* has been excelling, with each issue attracting interest from the general print and electronic media. Further, Altmetric data, which assess public impact in a manner complementary to traditional citation metrics (www.altmetric.com/about-altmetrics/what-are-altmetrics), are now available for all Wiley Online Library versions of *MJA* articles, allowing authors to see the immediate impact of their work themselves.

You will also want to be assured that your article will undergo unbiased and rigorous peer and editorial review so that readers can have confidence in your publication. To maintain the quality of our Journal, the *MJA* adheres to double-blind peer review, and the editors meet twice weekly to guarantee broad discussion of submissions, including expert statistical and study design input for original research. Just as important, we continue to strive to streamline our processes and improve our decision times. Above all, we actively offer to work with our authors to maximise the clarity, readability, and accuracy of their articles, each of which is vital for efficient knowledge transfer.

We would argue there are many good reasons for submitting your work to the *MJA* (Box 2). Throughout our long history, we have been proud to publish original research that contributed to the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology

2 Ten reasons to publish in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (MJA)

- A trusted evidence-based source publishing high quality articles for over 100 years
- 2018 Journal Impact Factor of 5.332 (2018 Journal Impact Factor, Journal Citation Reports [Web of Science Group, 2019]), the highest of any medical journal in Australia
- Media interest for each fortnightly issue, leading to opportunities for additional exposure in print and electronic media, as well as in *InSight+* (<https://insightplus.mja.com.au>) and *The Conversation*
- Highly regarded by prominent health professionals, health care leaders, administrators, politicians and health departments, influencing practice and policy across Australia
- Free access to all original research articles on the MJA website, at no cost to authors
- Highly downloaded and highly read, with over 350 000 page views each month
- A strong international reach, read in over 200 countries (47% Australia, 19% United States, 7% United Kingdom)
- Rigorous review process and editorial assistance to authors maximises accuracy, clarity, readability and credibility
- All research is published online early
- A top 20 global journal in its category

for the discovery of the link between *Helicobacter pylori* infection and gastritis and peptic ulcer,³ to the discovery of Q fever,⁴ to the identification of the link between folate deficiency and neural tube defects,⁵ to the recognition of the impact of maternal rubella on fetal development,^{6,7} and to high preventable medical error rates during hospital admissions,⁸ to mention just a few of the major advances published in our pages.

Our rising impact factor, increasing presence in social media, and consistently high levels of attention from online and traditional media illustrate the broad impact of the MJA. This is important for researchers seeking research grants — for example, in the new National Health and Medical Research Council investigator grant program, establishing the impact of one's research is critical. Our original research articles are all freely accessible on the MJA website (as are all articles on Indigenous Australian health); this strongly supports open science and is highly advantageous for authors who wish to be broadly read and cited. We now also offer (for a standard fee) the option of Gold Open Access for any article type (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/13265377/homepage/open-access>), but our policy remains that authors need not pay to publish in the MJA.

The MJA provides an important service to medicine and has a proud history of publishing high quality research, reviews and perspectives, as well as lessons from practice, updates on clinical

and research skills, medical education, and informative letters to the Editor for over 100 years. We welcome reports on clinical trials, guidelines and consensus statements, reviews and meta-analyses, and new series of relevance to clinical practice and research are planned. Importantly, we are always open to suggestions from our readers (and prospective readers) about what they would like to see in their Journal.

Our Journal standards are high, as are yours. It is an achievement in itself to have an original research article accepted for publication in the MJA (the Journal currently rejects 90% of original research articles submitted). We thank everyone who has submitted their work to us, and we especially thank our peer reviewers for the time and expertise they so generously donate to improving the quality of the work we publish. The MJA is also committed to training future medical editors; we hosted our first medical student elective in 2019, and have been working with the editors of the *Australian Medical Student Journal*.

Australia needs and deserves a great general medical journal. We at the MJA subscribe to the principles enunciated by Podolsky and colleagues¹ in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, cited at the head of this editorial. We too aim to help positively shape medical practice, behaviour and policy through the articles we publish, in Australia and globally. We look forward to welcoming your future submissions!

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