

## The strategy of ESR and Insights into Imaging regarding the application for an impact factor

Robert Hermans · Paul M. Parizel

Received: 9 September 2013 / Accepted: 11 September 2013 / Published online: 15 October 2013  
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In only a few short years, *Insights into Imaging* has become a widely respected and well-established journal in the field of radiology, mainly focussing on educational articles. From the onset, the objective of the European Society of Radiology (ESR) was to position *Insights into Imaging* next to *European Radiology* in a fashion similar to how *RadioGraphics* stands next to *Radiology*. This goal has been achieved. As a measure of the success of *Insights into Imaging*, we see that the number of submissions is steadily growing, the rejection rate is increasing, and the editor in chief and his colleagues have the freedom to choose high-quality papers. Most of all, the download and access rates have grown by a factor of more than 10 since the journal's foundation in 2010 (see Fig. 1). As *Insights into Imaging* is an open-access journal, its content is freely accessible to anyone and easily retrievable via PubMed, a widely used search engine for biomedical publications maintained by the US National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

As many of you have noted, *Insights into Imaging* is not yet included in the Web of Science database and therefore does not have an impact factor (IF). At this time, articles published in *Insights into Imaging* do not contribute to the h-index of the authors. All of us involved in publishing are increasingly receiving pressing questions by our colleagues. Why is the journal not listed in Web of Science? Why does our new journal not have an IF? Why does the publication not contribute to my h-index?

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R. Hermans, Editor in Chief, Insights into Imaging. P. M. Parizel, ESR Publications Committee chairperson

R. Hermans (✉)  
Department of Radiology, University Hospitals Leuven,  
Leuven, Belgium  
e-mail: editor@i3-journal.org

P. M. Parizel  
Department of Radiology, Antwerp University Hospital & University  
of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium

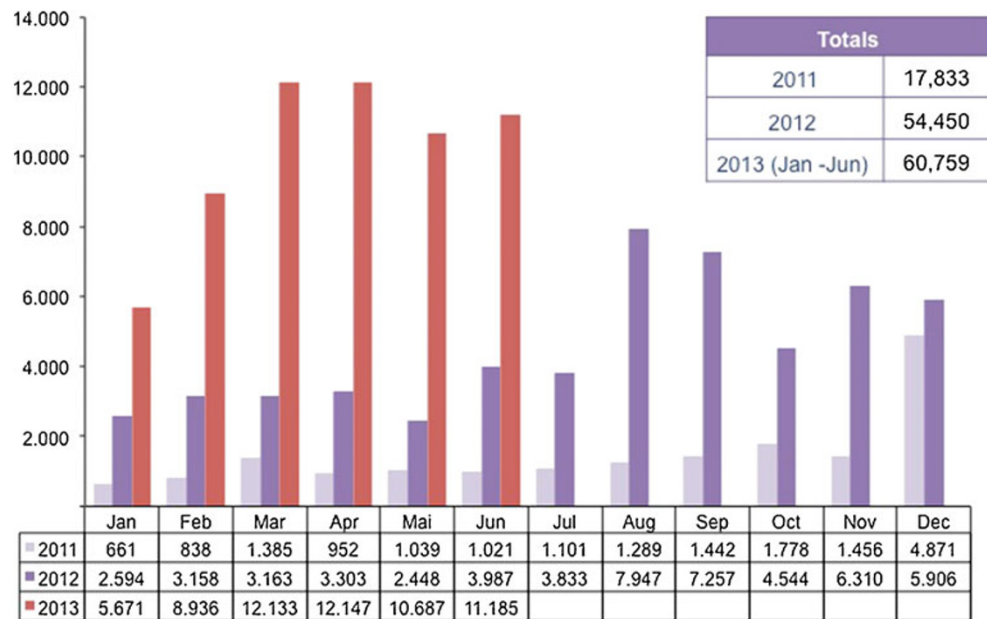
While these questions may appear simple and straightforward, they are not so easy to answer and require a profound understanding of the background and technicalities of the world of scientific publishing, in particular radiological publishing.

Radiology, or medical imaging if you prefer, is an 'over-published' field. This implies that there are many journals dedicated to imaging and, in the view of some, maybe even too many journals. Thomson Reuters, the company behind the Web of Science and the journal impact factors, is very critical about allowing new journals to be included in their index. Specifically, it has become very difficult to be included as a new journal if the expected IF is less than 1. Given the short lifespan of *Insights into Imaging*, it is to be expected that currently our IF is not sufficiently high to warrant inclusion in the Thomson Reuters' list and to receive an impact factor. Furthermore, after a negative decision, the journal would be forced into a 3-year waiting period before re-application is possible.

Together with the publisher, Springer Verlag, we have made several simulations based on the number of published articles in the volumes of *Insights into Imaging* and the number of citations of these articles. Based on these simulations, the editor in chief of *Insights into Imaging*, with support of the chairman of the ESR Publications Committee, has decided that the best strategy for our journal is *not* to apply for an Impact Factor at this point in time.

With the essential help of the editorial board and our dedicated reviewers, only well-written manuscripts containing state-of-the-art and relevant information are selected for publication. We anticipate this will lead—in combination with easy access to the journal content—to an increasing number of citations of articles published in *Insights into Imaging*, the essential numerator in the calculation of the impact factor. We believe this is the best strategy to ensure the most rapid inclusion of our journal into the Web of Science, allowing us to enter by the front door rather than trying to sneak in via a back door.

**Fig. 1** Full-text article accesses per year for *Insights into Imaging* at SpringerLink



(Source: MetaPress, SAP / Business Warehouse. Data for [www.springerlink.com](http://www.springerlink.com) and [link.springer.com](http://link.springer.com) combined.)

Scientific life takes many forms, and we acknowledge the Web of Science is an important habitat for scientific journals. However, ESR members should know that ‘*Insights into Imaging*’ is a healthy young journal; it is growing fast and has already excelled the goals that were set when the project was started a few years ago. The content of ‘*Insights into Imaging*’ is available to everybody and easily retrievable via Internet. Articles published in our journal are likely to be cited. The decision to wait with the IF application and inclusion in Web of Science is a strategic decision, which does not in any

way negatively reflect on the quality of the journal or on the quality of the papers published therein.

We hope that this editorial will answer some of your questions. You may rest assured that we have the best interests of ‘*Insights into Imaging*’ and the ESR at heart, and we look forward to your support and continued cooperation.

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