Impact Factor 1.112 for Interactive CardioVascular and Thoracic Surgery: a well-deserved recognition for all contributors

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Interactive CardioVascular and Thoracic Surgery (ICVTS: www.ICVTS.org) has been allocated a 2012 Impact Factor (IF) of 1.112. This is a very adequate reward for all contributors who have entrusted their work to ICVTS, the editorial team, the sponsoring European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (EACTS, www.eacts.org) and the publishers. It is worthy of note that ICVTS was founded as a spin-off from the very successful European Journal of Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (www.ejcts.org) in order to create very early on (in comparison with the established scientific press), a free-access experimental communication platform taking advantage of new media, including videos and sound, the worldwide web as well as online discussions [1]. Indeed, a non-conventional approach for making available new ideas, work-in-progress reports, brief communications, negative results, proposals for bail-out procedures, case reports, state-of-the-art papers and the very successful Best BETs introduced by Dunning et al. [2] etc., to a broader public. In general, this became possible from the very beginning by the free-access concept, but more specifically through CTSNet (www.ctsnet.org), the cardiothoracic surgeons’ network with >30,000 members worldwide at the time ICVTS started. CTSNet was an initiative of Bob Replogle who convinced the leadership of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (www.sts.org), the American Association for Thoracic Surgery (www.aats.org) and EACTS to sponsor this global enterprise [3]. But it was the Editor-in-Chief of CTSNet, the late Tom Ferguson, who made the decision to include ICVTS in the very exclusive journal section of CTSNet [4], alongside such prestigious journals as the Annals of Thoracic Surgery (Editor-in-Chief: L.H. Edmunds), the Journal of...

ICVTS quite rapidly gained a growing number of readers, as measured by downloads in comparison with the already well-established EJCTS [4] on one side, and the very interesting discussion section on the other [5]. However, it should not be forgotten that many authors were less than pleased to be invited by the Editor-in-Chief of EJCTS to re-submit their work to ICVTS for potential publication. So, the fact that the first IF ever for ICVTS is 1.112 (IF 2012 is based on citations of the publications in 2011 and 2010) demonstrates that many of the decisions made for ICVTS were correct, and acknowledges the efforts made by all contributors. It should be remembered that there are many journals which have been publishing scientific work for decades without ever reaching such an IF level.

If ICVTS is successful now despite its non-conventional concept, it may also be due to its non-conventional concept [6]. Traditionally, IF-geared scientific journals focus on the publication of manuscripts with a good prospect of citation, which are, in order of magnitude, guidelines, reviews and original studies. There is a preference for original studies which provide the experimental background, the mechanism and the long-term clinical outcome of a new treatment, which is in addition cost-effective: indeed, a so called ‘contradictio in adjectio’ (a contradiction in itself, because if it is new, there cannot be any long-term outcome, and if additional efforts are required, it is rarely cheaper). Moreover, a frequently cited guideline can be purely opinion based in the absence of evidence-based data and, therefore, without relevant scientific content at all. The same holds true for polls, which are by definition based on opinions.

Table 1 summarizes the most frequently downloaded papers in 2012 which were published in ICVTS during the year 2012. It is most reassuring to see that this short list holds Best BETs, Institutional Reports, Follow-up papers and ESCVS papers, which are obviously not the most sought for publications by other journals. It appears that the articles are downloaded for their relevance to readers rather than for strategic reasons, and that is what ultimately remains important. Read on at www.icvts.org and comment!

REFERENCES