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Time to Publication in Ophthalmology Journals: A Comprehensive Bibliometric Analysis

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Introduction

- A bibliometric analysis is a measurement of the influence of a publication on the scientific community.[1]
- Journals must balance timely publication with maintaining integrity of the peer-review process.
- Bibliometrics is an understudied topic in ophthalmology and a better understanding of the field can facilitate increased research quality and uptake.[2]
- The purpose of this study is to determine factors that predict the time from manuscript submission to acceptance in peer-reviewed ophthalmology journals. This can function as a centralized source of estimates for journal publication timelines.

Methods

- A list of ophthalmology journals was obtained from the 2019 Web of Science Journal Citation Report. Journal characteristics, such as five-year impact factor, open-access and multi-institutional status, and number of authors per article, were collected.
- The dates of submission, acceptance, electronic and print publication for all articles published in ophthalmology journals in 2019 were collected.
- Research productivity by country was determined.

Results

- In total, 56 journals and 8835 research articles were included. Of these articles, 3591 (40.6%) were open access and 4837 (54.7%) were multi-institutional.
- In 2019, most publications came from USA (n=1973), China (n=1069) and Germany (n=602).
- Overall, the median days from submission to acceptance was 128 (range: 71-222), acceptance to e-publication was 30 (range: 2-199) and acceptance to print publication was 146 (range: 27-448).

Results

- A reduced mean number of days from submission to electronic publication was associated with an increased journal five-year impact factor (p=0.026), more authors (p=0.028), and publishing in a hybrid relative to an open-access only journal (p=0.021).

Table 1 – Duration from Manuscript Submission to Acceptance, E-Publication, and Print Publication for the Top 15 Ophthalmology Journals (by 5-year Impact Factor)

Journal	5-Year IF	Submission to Acceptance	Submission to E-Publication	Submission to Print Publication
Ocular Surface	9.241	120(95)	130(98)	N/A
Ophthalmology	8.339	101.5(83.5)	115.5(85.25)	267.5(90.75)
JAMA Ophthalmology	6.109	N/A	N/A	N/A
American Journal of Ophthalmology	4.451	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eye and Vision	3.883	134(69)	155(80)	N/A
Retina	3.769	N/A	N/A	N/A
Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science	3.659	123.5(87.75)	N/A	153(98)
British Journal of Ophthalmology	3.402	105(63)	133(76)	409(73)
Acta Ophthalmologica	3.181	142.5(102.5)	196.5(118.5)	369(120)
Experimental Eye Research	3.135	121.5(78)	125(79.75)	N/A
Journal of Refractive Surgery	3.125	124(77.5)	167(69.5)	157(70.5)
Ophthalmic and Physiological Optics	3.106	104(64.5)	140(81.5)	154(77.5)
Clinical and Experimental Ophthalmology	3.092	126(89)	139(83)	303(100.5)
Journal of Cataract and Refractive Surgery	2.875	95.5(80.75)	200(92.25)	N/A
Eye	2.732	179(134)	231(153)	N/A

The median number of days and interquartile range of all articles published in each journal in 2019 are presented, when available. N/A = not available; IF = Impact Factor

Discussion

- Journals with a higher 5-year impact factor have a decreased time from acceptance to E-publication, likely due to increased editorial resources and a large pool of peer-reviewers.
- Authors must balance the faster time to publication found in higher impact journals with the increased acceptance rate found in lower impact journals when submitting manuscripts.
- Journals can increase manuscript publication speed by declining articles early in the peer review process to allow timely submission to another journal, provide meaningful reviews, and send for re-reviews as needed.

Conclusion

- There is a wide variation in the time from submission to acceptance and publication across ophthalmology journals.
- Authors can expect a shorter time to publication when publishing in high-impact journals.
- Reducing the time from acceptance to electronic publication is a reasonable first step for journals to improve article exposure and citation volume.

References/Disclosure

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