

The journal impact factor 2019

At the beginning of summer 2020, the names and rankings of the scientific journals with a *Journal Impact Factor* (JIF) for the year 2019 were released (*InCites Journal Citation Reports, Clarivate Analytics*). Presently, 12,827 journals have a JIF value. In the following, as regularly since 2015 [22–26], the current JIFs from dentistry are presented and compared to the scientific journals with the highest JIF. Furthermore, the Median Impact Factor (MIF) of the category Dentistry, Oral Surgery & Medicine is compared with that of other disciplines.

Included journals

In the calculation year 2019, 91 dental journals can adorn themselves with a JIF (Table 1). The *International Journal of Implant Dentistry* (rank 32) was included for the first time. The French *Révue de Stomatologie, de Chirurgie Maxillo-Faciale et de Chirurgie Orale* is now only represented under its English title *Journal of Stomatology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*.

The JIF values for 2019 cover a range from 0.111 (*Australasian Orthodontic Journal*) to 7.718 (*Periodontology 2000*). For a frame of reference, table 2 lists the 20 scientific journals with the highest JIF. It should be noted that only about 2 % of all scientific journals have a JIF of 10 or higher [10].

Rise and fall

Compared to the previous year, 41 journals have deteriorated in their ranking. Nevertheless, 57 of the 90 journal titles that allow a comparison show a higher JIF than in 2018.

The five periodicals with the strongest JIF or JIF rank changes up (improvement) and down (deterioration) are listed in tables 3 and 4. “Winners of the 2019 JIF year” are mainly the *Journal of Evidence-Based Dental Practice* and the *European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry*. “Losers of the year” are the *European Journal of Dental Education*, the *Australian Endodontic Journal*, and *Pediatric Dentistry*.

The renaming of the *Révue de Stomatologie, de Chirurgie Maxillo-Faciale et de Chirurgie Orale*, founded in 1874 and steeped in tradition, into *Journal of Stomatology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* in 2017 is an example of how a change of name and language may be accompanied by a noticeable increase in the JIF. While the JIF of the French-language journal fluctuated between 0.247 (2016) and 0.472 (2018), the JIF was already 0.962 in 2018 and 1.152 in 2019 after the language change (Table 5). The fact that the significantly higher JIF was accompanied by equally clear discontent in the French dental community is a different story.¹

Median Impact Factor

The Median Impact Factor (MIF) is the median value of all JIFs in a defined subject category. Dentistry increased its last year’s MIF from 1.565 to 1.766, the highest value in its history. At the same time, dentistry jumped 15 places up from 2018.

Nevertheless, our discipline has to accept that it remains within the (upper) fourth fifth compared to the other 235 subject categories (Table 6).

Place 145 means, however, that only four ranks up to the middle fifth are missing.

Dentistry is in the best scientific company with its ranking. This is revealed by looking at the disciplines whose MIF is lower. These include such “insignificant” fields as nuclear physics (MIF: 1.695, rank 154), ear, nose and throat medicine (MIF: 1.684, rank 157), general and internal medicine (MIF: 1.681, rank 158), sociology (MIF: 1.328, rank 199), veterinary medicine (MIF: 1.129, rank 218) and law (MIF: 1.031, rank 222) – but also the (besides philosophy, which is not included in the ranking) “mother of all sciences,” namely mathematics (MIF: 0.797, rank 229) – as well as applied mathematics (MIF: 1.172, rank 212), and logic (MIF: 0.674, rank 232). Against this background, the JIP-related performance of dentistry can be described as solid and respectable.

Incorrect application of the JIF

The fact that the JIF is not suitable for mapping the individual performance of an author was explained in detail in previous years [22–26]. Nonetheless, such erroneous attribution is still commonplace at many academic institutions.

This practice, however, reveals another cardinal error which relates to the attribution of the respective JIF value to a journal. It has become a common practice that immediately after the publication of an article in a journal, the respective authors (whose number is in part hardly comprehensibly high) are

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¹ “La Revue de stomatologie de chirurgie maxillo-faciale et de chirurgie orale va passer, à partir du premier numéro de l’année 2017 (volume 118), à l’anglais exclusif.” With this memorable sentence – announced quasi ex cathedra – the upcoming name change was heralded in November 2016 [13]. One can easily imagine that this met with little enthusiasm in the country of Molière and Voltaire, as can be seen from a remark published in the following issue of the journal: “If this evolution is upsetting to some of you, we are sincerely sorry to hear it.” [17], as well as from the confession that “[i]t was not easy, however, for our established base of authors, who were somewhat disconcerted to find that articles were no longer accepted when submitted in French, for our loyal readership that was unaccustomed to reading papers written exclusively in English, or for the editorial team that had to adapt to the foreign language that English was for most of them.” [17].

JIF Rank 2019	Journal	JIF 2019	JIF 2018	JIF Rank 2018
1	Periodontology 2000	7.718	7.861	1
2	Journal of Clinical Periodontology	5.241	4.164	4
3	Journal of Dental Research	4.914	5.125	2
4	Dental Materials	4.495	4.440	3
5	Oral Oncology	3.979	3.730	6
6	International Endodontic Journal	3.801	3.331	7
7	Journal of Periodontology	3.742	2.768	14
8	Clinical Oral Implants Research	3.723	3.825	5
9	Clinical Implant Dentistry and Related Research	3.396	3.212	10
10	Journal of Dentistry	3.242	3.280	9
11	Journal of Endodontics	3.118	2.833	12
12	International Journal of Oral Science	3.047	2.750	15
13	Journal of Periodontal Research	2.926	2.613	18
14	Molecular Oral Microbiology	2.905	2.925	11
15	Clinical Oral Investigations	2.812	2.453	21
16	Journal of the American Dental Association	2.803	2.572	19
17	Journal of Prosthodontic Research	2.662	2.636	16
18	European Journal of Oral Implantology	2.619	2.513	20
19	Oral Diseases	2.613	2.625	17
20	Journal of Oral Pathology & Medicine	2.495	2.030	28
21	Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry	2.444	2.787	13
22	Journal of Evidence-Based Dental Practice	2.426	1.253	67
23	Journal of Adhesive Dentistry	2.379	1.875	34
24	International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Implants	2.320	1.734	40
25	Journal of Oral Rehabilitation	2.304	2.341	22
26	European Journal of Oral Sciences	2.220	1.810	37
27	Operative Dentistry	2.213	2.027	29
28	European Journal of Orthodontics	2.202	1.841	35
29	Journal of Prosthodontics – Implant, Esthetic, and Reconstructive Dentistry	2.187	2.172	25
30	Caries Research	2.186	2.326	23
31	Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology	2.135	2.278	24

Table 1 Journal Impact Factor (JIF) for the year 2019 for the 91 journals listed in the category Dentistry (including Oral Surgery and Medicine) with comparison to the JIF of the previous year (n = 91)

JIF Rank 2019	Journal	JIF 2019	JIF 2018	JIF Rank 2018
32	International Journal of Implant Dentistry	2.111	---	---
33	International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	2.068	1.961	30
34	International Dental Journal	2.038	1.628	45
35	International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry	1.993	2.057	26
36	American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics	1.960	1.911	32
37	Archives of Oral Biology	1.931	1.663	44
38	BMC Oral Health	1.911	2.048	27
39	Head & Face Medicine	1.882	1.492	53
40	Journal of Periodontal and Implant Science	1.847	1.472	55
41	Odontology	1.840	1.813	36
42	Progress in Orthodontics	1.822	1.381	62
43	Journal of Applied Oral Science	1.797	1.506	50
44	Dentomaxillofacial Radiology	1.796	1.525	49
45	Journal of Esthetic and Restorative Dentistry	1.786	1.716	41
46	Journal of Cranio-Maxillofacial Surgery	1.766	1.942	31
47	Journal of Public Health Dentistry	1.743	1.350	64
48	International Journal of Computerized Dentistry	1.714	1.208	71
49	Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	1.642	1.781	38
50	Brazilian Oral Research	1.633	1.773	39
51	Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology and Oral Radiology	1.601	1.690	43
52	Medicina Oral, Patología Oral y Cirugía Bucal	1.596	1.284	65
53	Pediatric Dentistry	1.594	3.312	8
54	Acta Odontologica Scandinavica	1.573	1.565	46
55	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinics of North America	1.554	0.935	79
56	Angle Orthodontist	1.549	1.880	33
57	Dental Traumatology	1.530	1.494	52
58	International Journal of Periodontics & Restorative Dentistry	1.513	1.228	69
59	Journal of Advanced Prosthodontics	1.504	1.360	63
60	European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry	1.500	0.870	82
61	International Journal of Prosthodontics	1.490	1.533	47
62	Quintessence International	1.460	1.392	61

Table 1 (Continuation) Journal Impact Factor (JIF) for the year 2019 for the 91 journals listed in the category Dentistry (including Oral Surgery and Medicine) with comparison to the JIF of the previous year (n = 91)

JIF Rank 2019	Journal	JIF 2019	JIF 2018	JIF Rank 2018
63	Orthodontics & Craniofacial Research	1.455	0.946	78
64	Implant Dentistry	1.452	1.214	70
65	Journal of Oral Implantology	1.424	1.062	76
66	Australian Dental Journal	1.401	1.282	66
67	Dental Materials Journal	1.359	1.424	60
68	Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal	1.347	1.471	56
69	Gerodontology	1.339	1.460	57
70	Korean Journal of Orthodontics	1.326	1.476	54
71	Journal of Dental Education	1.322	1.506	50
72	British Dental Journal	1.306	1.438	59
73	Journal of Orofacial Orthopedics – Fortschritte der Kieferorthopädie	1.286	0.927	80
74	Journal of Oral Facial Pain & Headache	1.260	1.443	58
75	International Journal of Dental Hygiene	1.229	1.233	68
76	Journal of Oral Science	1.200	1.104	74
76	Journal of the Canadian Dental Association	1.200	0.759	84
78	Cranio – The Journal of Craniomandibular Practice	1.173	1.144	73
79	Journal of Stomatology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (bis Dezember 2016: Revue de Stomatologie, de Chirurgie Maxillo-Faciale et de Chirurgie Orale)	1.152	0.962	77
80	Australian Endodontic Journal	1.120	1.714	42
81	British Journal of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery	1.061	1.164	72
82	European Journal of Dental Education	1.050	1.531	48
83	Journal of Dental Sciences	1.034	0.798	83
84	American Journal of Dentistry	0.957	0.720	86
85	Oral Health & Preventive Dentistry	0.920	0.902	81
86	Journal of Clinical Pediatric Dentistry	0.798	0.731	85
87	Community Dental Health	0.679	1.079	75
88	Seminars in Orthodontics	0.625	0.465	89
89	Oral Radiology	0.540	0.681	87
90	Implantologie	0.123	0.074	91
91	Australasian Orthodontic Journal (bis Dezember 2017: Australian Orthodontic Journal)	0.113	0.269	90

Table 1 (Continuation) Journal Impact Factor (JIF) for the year 2019 for the 91 journals listed in the category Dentistry (including Oral Surgery and Medicine) with comparison to the JIF of the previous year (n = 91)

JIF Rank 2019	Journal	JIF 2019
1	CA-A Cancer Journal for Clinicians	292.278
2	New England Journal of Medicine	74.699
3	Nature Reviews Materials	71.189
4	Nature Reviews Drug Discovery	64.797
5	Lancet	60.392
6	WHO Technical Support Series	59.000
7	Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology	55.470
8	Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology	53.276
9	Nature Reviews Cancer	53.030
10	Chemical Reviews	52.758
11	Nature Energy	46.495
12	Journal of the American Medical Association	45.540
13	Reviews of Modern Physics	45.037
14	Chemical Society Reviews	42.846
15	Nature	42.778
16	Science	41.845
17	Nature Reviews Disease Primers	40.689
18	World Psychiatry	40.595
19	Nature Reviews Immunology	40.358
20	Nature Materials	38.663

Table 2 The 20 scientific journals with the highest Journal Impact Factor (JIF) in 2019 (n = 12,828). Note: In the official ranking list of *InCites Journal Citation Reports*, rank 18 is – most probably by mistake – occupied twice by the same journal (World Psychiatry), so that the counting continues there with rank 20, leaving out rank 19. For this reason, rank 20 in table 3 corresponds to rank 21 in the official ranking.

“credited” with the current JIF of that journal. As a rule, this numerical value is not corrected later, so that the value once assigned (which is wrong without exception, since it comes from a previous year) remains unchanged.

Example: Authors whose article was published between January and June 2019 will add the JIF of 2017 to their article; authors whose article was published between July and December 2018 will claim the then current JIF of 2018 for themselves (Fig. 1). Yet, in both cases these assignments should only be considered temporary. The correct value is not released before the middle of the following year when the figures for the previous year are published (i.e. in June 2020 the JIF values for 2019; Fig. 1). This results in a delay of 6 to 18 months between the publication of the article and the release of the JIF for the publication year in question.

“The performance of a researcher should certainly not be measured by the number of articles, nor by the impact factor of the journal in which [the article] is published.”

Magdalena Skipper, editor-in-chief of the journal *Nature* [20]



Figure 1 The calculation of the JIF using the example of the year 2019 is based on the following question: How many citable articles published in a defined journal in 2017 and 2018 were cited in journals in 2019 that are recorded in the Science Citation Index Expanded (n > 9200 in the year 2020)? The time delay between the publication of the JIF values of a defined year (in the early summer of the following year) and the year in question means that, as a rule, the JIF of the previous year (or the year before) is always given. This temporarily assigned JIF must be corrected after publication of the correct JIF values in the following year; if this is not done, the assignment remains incorrect.

(Tab. 1–7, Fig. 1; J. C. Türp)

Rank according to extent of change	Journal	JIF change 2018 → 2019
1	Journal of Evidence-Based Dental Practice	+1,173
2	Journal of Clinical Periodontology	+1,077
3	Journal of Periodontology	+0,974
4	European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry	+0,630
5	Oral and Maxillofacial Clinics of North America	+0,619
...		
87	Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry	-0,343
88	European Journal of Dental Education	-0,481
89	Orthodontics & Craniofacial Research	-0,509
90	Australian Endodontic Journal	-0,594
91	Pediatric Dentistry	-1,718

Table 3 Comparison of the years 2018 and 2019: The five journals with the strongest increase (plus values; change ranks 1 to 5) and the strongest decrease in their JIF (minus values; change ranks 87 to 91).

Criticism on the JIF

Criticism of the JIF from the scientific community continued unabated in the year under review. Koelblinger et al. [11] argued that a journal with a large number of citable articles is a strong predictor of relatively stable, i.e. only slightly fluctuating, JIF values over time. Specifically for dental journals, Valderrama et al. [28] found that systematic reviews and a higher annual average of published papers had the potential to increase the JIF, while articles that publish clinical trial results had no effect on a JIF. Not unexpectedly, dental journals with a high JIF therefore tend to publish more systematic reviews (or meta-analyses: quantitative systematic reviews) [27]. Further comments on the JIF can be found in Table 7.

Neumann [19] and Brembs [5] summarize some arguments against the JIF that are worth thinking about:

1. The majority of articles published in high-impact journals are cited below average; “their high impact factors are rather achieved by a few citation blockbusters” [19].
2. Many very influential study articles are cited frequently only after the two-year window relevant for the calculation of the JIF.
3. Publication in a journal with a high JIF does not mean that it has high scientific value. Really new findings are more likely to be published in journals with low JIFs [30].
4. There is evidence that the methodological quality of scientific studies does not increase with increasing rank of the journal. Rather, some data indicate that, on average, the highest ranking journals often struggle to surpass the average reliability level set by the other journals [3].

Rank according to extent of change	Journal	Rank change 2018 → 2019
1	Journal of Evidence-Based Dental Practice	+45
2	International Journal of Computerized Dentistry	+23
3	European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry	+22
4	Progress in Orthodontics	+20
5	Journal of Public Health Dentistry	+17
...		
87	Journal of Dental Education	-21
88	Angle Orthodontist	-23
89	European Journal of Dental Education	-34
90	Australian Endodontic Journal	-38
91	Pediatric Dentistry	-45

Table 4 Comparison of the years 2018 and 2019: The five journals with the strongest increase (plus values; change ranks 1 to 5) or decrease in their JIF rank (minus values; change ranks 87 to 91).

Year	Title	JIF
2019	JSOMS	1.152
2018		0.962
2018	RSCMCO	0.472
2017		0.411
2016		0.247
2015		0.248
2014		0.305
2013		0.298
2012		0.388
2011		0.250
2010	0.261	
2009	0.349	

Table 5 Development of the JIF of the *Révue de Stomatologie, de Chirurgie Maxillo-Faciale et de Chirurgie Orale / Journal of Stomatology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* (RSCMCO / JSOMS) between 2009 and 2019

MIF Rank 2019	Category	MIF 2019	MIF 2018	MIF Rank 2018
1	Cell Biology	3.673	3.485	3
2	Green & Sustainable Science & Technology	3.610	2.811	17
3	Cell & Tissue Engineering	3.532	3.575	1
4	Allergy	3.497	3.560	2
5	Nanoscience & Nanotechnology	3.384	2.843	15
6	Materials Science, Biomaterials	3.358	3.176	5
7	Immunology	3.348	3.197	4
8	Onkology	3.297	3.041	7
9	Energy & Fuels	3.294	3.012	9
10	Gastroenterology & Hepatology	3.250	3.033	10
...				
143	Public Administration	1.781	1.864	122
144	Computer Science, Cybernetics	1.768	1.681	143
145	Dentistry, Oral Surgery & Medicine	1.766	1.565	160
146	Pediatrics	1.765	1.689	142
147	Gerontology	1.759	1.713	138
...				
236	Psychology, Psychoanalysis	0.416	0.515	235

Table 6 The Median Impact Factor (MIF) of selected specialty categories (n = 236) for 2019. 2018 MIF numbers differ from the originally reported MIF values because of the addition of the *Journal of Clinical Pediatric Dentistry* with its JIF (0.731) at a time after the publication of the *InCites Journal Citations Reports* of 2018. This change not only increased the number of JIF journals from 90 to 91, but also lowered the MIF from the original 1.596 to 1.565, moving dentistry from rank 154 to rank 160.

Alternatives to the JIF

Those who believe that the JIF is “without alternative” fail to recognize that many other metrics are available. Forty-five alternatives were recently summarized by Mech et al. [16], including the following:

- Integrated Impact Indicator (I3) [14, 29]
- h-index (Hirsch index, Hirsch number) [15, 31];
- hw-index [2];
- hg-index [6];
- g-index [1, 6];
- e-index [1, 7];
- m-Quotient [2, 6, 8];
- L-index [12];
- A-index [2, 21];
- AR-index [2, 6, 8];
- M-index [2].

Mech et al. [16] prefer the I3 index because it does not have most of the disadvantages of JIF.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest as defined by the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

Quote	Source
“It is also to be noted that the journal’s IF does not reflect the quality of the author’s individual work but rather reflects the journal’s overall quality.”	Kaldas et al. (2020) [10]
“The JIF is an unreliable, biased, and inherently flawed method of measuring the quality, accessibility, and value of a research journal.”	Nestor et al. (2020) [18]
“An author should not be enamoured just by the impact factor of a journal because all that glitters is not gold. The JIF does not entirely reflect on the quality of a journal.”	Jawad (2020) [9]
“JIF has many disadvantages and is applied beyond its original intent.”	Mech (2020) [16]
“‘Impactitis’ is a disease that is probably transmitted through practiced key figure fetishism. Especially in journals with high JIF, peer review has little to do with insight or intellectual depth, but rather with the novelty value for the journal or whether the quantity of experiments is sufficient for the level of the journal.”	Brembs (2019) [4]

Table 7 Critical statements about the JIF

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**JENS C. TÜRP, DDS, DR MED DENT
PROFESSOR**

Department of Oral Health & Medicine
University Center for Dental Medicine
Mattenstrasse 40
CH-4058 Basel, Switzerland
jens.tuerp@unibas.ch

