

New study explores disparities between researchers who publish in high-and low-impact journals

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A new study surveying authors from a range of countries investigates the crucial differences between authors who publish in high- and low-impact factor medical journals. This original research shows that the growth of open access hasn't significantly changed the publishing landscape as regards impact factor.

The authors, Carlos Eduardo Paiva et al, from Brazil, collected responses from 269 participants who had published in 30 journals which they grouped according to low and high impact factor. The survey evaluated the personal characteristics of the researchers, their perceptions of the barriers to the development of research, the process of manuscript writing and journal publication and work-life balance, career satisfaction and motivation.

The main indicator for the increased likelihood of publishing in a higher impact factor journal was living in a country where English is the official language, which was associated with an almost threefold greater chance of publication. This factor was more relevant than being located in a wealthy country. However, living in a country with a higher per capita gross domestic product was still associated with a greater chance of being published in a high-impact journal.

So inequalities in language, geography and finances still seem to pose the biggest problems for researchers who want to publish in high impact

factor journals. The majority of the responders from both groups also complained about difficulties caused by a lack of time in which to do their research, with the chance of publishing in a high-impact journal increasing gradually as the researcher dedicated more time to research.

Other variables increasing the chance of publishing in a high-impact factor [journal](#) were having more than five graduate students under supervision and never using text editing services , pointing again to the importance of having English as a first language as a marker of successful publication. The results of the survey also suggest that an intense mentoring activity such as tutoring junior researchers was extremely significant and is more relevant than occupying a high ranking position in an academic institution.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the researchers who published in high impact journals received more frequent funding from the government, industry and non-governmental awards and funds, whereas one's own financial resources were the key source for the authors who published in low-impact journals.

However, when questioned regarding their preference between being very well financially compensated or being considered leaders in their areas, the majority of the participants of both groups declared that they would prefer to be a leader. Despite this, one of the most interesting outcomes of the study was that researchers who published in high-impact journals considered themselves significantly more satisfied with their present work situation than the researchers who published in low-impact journals.

Dr Raphael Araujo (Barretos Cancer Hospital, Sao Paulo), one of the co-authors, reported that "The results showed that scholars that successfully publish medical research in high-impact journals have distinct profiles pertaining to the actual amount of time dedicated to research, their

scientific writing and English language abilities, and the availability of financial resources."

This study presents original results which provide a key insight into the motivations and current situation for researchers publishing in a range of low- and high-impact factor journals. It's clear that high-quality research needs a lot of time as well as financial support and these factors, along with linguistic issues, remain the biggest barriers to publication in high [impact factor](#) journals.

More information: Carlos Eduardo Paiva et al, What are the personal and professional characteristics that distinguish the researchers who publish in high- and low-impact journals? A multi-national web-based survey, *ecancermedicalsecience* (2017). [DOI: 10.3332/ecancer.2017.718](https://doi.org/10.3332/ecancer.2017.718)

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