

## Editorial

# Impact factor and future directions for the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*

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### Abstract

Impact factor (IF) is a concept dating back over half a century, created to evaluate the impact of a journal within a particular scientific field. In spite of limitations, IF remains a widely used metric for journals to establish the average number of citations for articles published in a journal. The *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* (IJPM) recently received an IF of 5.1, the first IF for the journal. We believe that this is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our authors, reviewers, publishers and editorial board. The IJPM is the official research journal of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, and while psychiatry is the primary discipline of the journal, the current multidisciplinary approach will continue into the future. The journal has a strong Irish and international readership; while the journal will continue to publish research with an Irish focus, the editorial team are aware of the importance of ongoing global contributions to ensure the journal maintains high-quality publications of an international standard. This is an exciting time to be involved in mental health research, and the journal will continue to publish cutting edge themes with the goal of improving mental healthcare in Ireland and beyond.

**Keywords:** Impact factor; research; mental illness; psychiatry

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### Impact factor

Impact factor (IF) is a concept dating back over half a century which uses citations as a measure of the impact of a journal within its particular field (Garfield, 2006). In spite of limitations, IF remains the most widely used metric for journals to establish the average number of citations for articles published in a journal (Sharma et al., 2014). *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* (IJPM) has recently been awarded an IF for the first time. The IF of 5.1 has occurred in the context of efforts by authors, reviewers and a dedicated editorial board who are committed to publishing quality and impactful research in the journal.

The IF awarded to the IJPM was undoubtedly contributed to by high citations in several of the themed issues published in the journal over the last few years. In particular, the COVID-19-themed issues in the IJPM (as well as in other journals) have been highly cited, which has likely contributed to relatively higher IFs in the short term. Hence, it is possible that the impact factor of IJPM will decrease in the coming years as the influence of these COVID-19-related publications becomes less prominent.

The IJPM has also published well-cited themed issues in several other areas over the last few years including autism spectrum disorders, public mental health, psychiatric anthropology and physical health in mental illness. The journal has been very fortunate to have prominent guest editors involved in these issues

which has helped to attract high-quality and influential articles. It is anticipated that the journal will continue to publish themed issues allowing experts in particular areas to solicit articles and contribute to the reviewing and editing of issues on cutting edge themes.

In the development of the journal, our publishing company, Cambridge University Press, has provided expert guidance since our collaboration with them began in 2013. We also have a dedicated editorial administrative team based in the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland who have allowed for the delivery of innovations and developments in the journal.

### Future directions for the journal

As we look into the future, it is important to consider directions for the journal, and how we might continue efforts to contribute new knowledge which can benefit mental health services in Ireland and internationally. The journal is committed to quality and rigorous peer review with high ethical standards, essential for ensuring academic quality in all journals. By ensuring high standards in peer review, readers can be more confident about the findings reported in the journal. We are committed to developing the editorial board, taking account of equality, diversity and inclusion principles. The journal also strives to be author and reader friendly, achieving timely peer review and publication to ensure that research is rapidly available to clinicians, researchers and policymakers. We aim to increase visibility of our publications by encouraging authors to disseminate their work,

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delivering press releases when appropriate, and through further dissemination on social media platforms.

As the official research journal of the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland, the IJPM plays a key role in Irish psychiatric training and research, although articles in the journal also embrace a multidisciplinary approach. The IJPM has often been viewed as a publishing destination for early career research among Irish psychiatric trainees and among academics in other mental health disciplines. The journal will continue to fulfil this role, while also aiming to attract high-level research from both Irish and international researchers.

While the IJPM is based on Ireland, it does not have an exclusive focus on Ireland. The editorial board has an international base which has substantially helped in the development of the journal. Furthermore in order to deliver best care one must look towards international best practice, acknowledging that we work in an international environment where the delivery of successful new initiatives can be rapidly shared. With this in mind, the IJPM will always have an international focus; however as a journal based in Ireland, with a large Irish readership, the journal certainly welcomes articles which can have significant influence on Irish mental health services, and we will continue to support Irish based research and innovation.

As ever, the IJPM advocates for delivering high-quality clinical care and improving mental health services. We are committed to keeping the field of mental health vibrant and relevant by publishing research on novel and important topics. Such topics include research on biological, psychological and social determinants of mental illness with the aim of delivering better care including novel medications, psychosocial interventions and service innovations. We recently published a themed issue on public mental health, which remains an interest for the journal, along with other aspects of prevention and early intervention such as infant mental health. There are many areas where mental health services need to improve – physical health in mental illness, transdiagnostic early intervention, dual diagnosis, multidisciplinary evidence-based care for minority and disadvantaged communities, to name a few. Improving our knowledge of mental healthcare delivery in populations such as youth and student mental health, indigenous and Traveller populations and in perinatal mental health is also important. The journal will continue to advocate for publishing on these and other themes by soliciting articles in key areas and publishing themed issues where possible.

This is an exciting time to be involved in mental health research and IJPM is looking forward to new discoveries in the decades ahead.

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**Ethical standard.** The author asserts that all procedures contributing to this work comply with the ethical standards of the relevant national and institutional committee on human experimentation with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008.

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