

1.475

No doubt, if you are reading this, you are trying to find out what this number represents. No, it is not the Richter scale recording of the latest California earthquake, nor is it my body surface area. The *Oncology Nursing Forum* (ONF) is the proud possessor of an impact factor of precisely 1.475. By some measures, the number might seem small; nevertheless, having it is a noteworthy achievement, and because everything really is relative, it can and should be viewed in a very positive light.

Impact factors are calculated by a company called Thomson Scientific. For years, this company has been producing a number of well-known citation indexes. It monitors the reference lists of a large number of biomedical and social science journals and tabulates the citations. Authors can look up their articles and keep track of who cites them. Using mathematical computations, Thomson Scientific calculates which journals get cited most frequently using a formula based on the number of citations and incidence of publication. Biomedical journals are in one database (Science Edition) and other related specialties, such as psychology and nursing, are in the Social Sciences Edition. The highest-ranked journal in the Science Edition is *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, with an impact factor of 49.794. The *New England Journal of Medicine* comes in third on that list at 44.016. The impact factor of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* is 15.171 (number 41 on the list).

Until recently, Thomson Scientific indexed very few nursing journals. ONF began the process of applying for inclusion approximately five years ago. Once it was

accepted, three years' worth of issues needed to be tabulated before an impact factor could be calculated. Some time after ONF was accepted, Thomson Scientific began to actively consider adding more nursing journals thanks, in large measure, to the efforts of Margaret Freda, PhD, RN, editor of MCN:

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The Journal of Maternal Child Nursing, working in collaboration with the Medical Library Association. The nursing list has grown from approximately 30 journals three years ago to a projected number of more than 80 journals in the foreseeable future.

Impact factors are used in a number of ways, including marketing products and selling journal subscriptions to medical libraries. For members of the Oncology Nursing Society, the relevance of impact factors is probably highest for those in academia, where many universities review publication in high-impact journals when making decisions about tenure and promotion.

Although our impact factor seems small, in comparison to other nursing journals, we are ranked very well. Of the 32 nursing journals

in the 2006 ranking, ONF has the fifth-highest ranking. Only journals such as *Nursing Research*, the *American Journal of Critical Care*, and *Nursing Economics* have higher numbers, and the highest-ranking nursing journal, with an impact factor of 2.058, is *Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care*.

Although ONF's impact factor is calculated based only on other journals in the Social Sciences Edition (i.e., no medical journals), we can compare our impact factor to those journals in the specialty. There are 127 journals in the oncology category, and 88 of those journals have impact factors lower than 4. On that list, our impact factor of 1.475 is ranked 103rd. I personally think that is quite reasonable considering the way in which all this figuring is accomplished.

In the coming years, we will be able to use our number as one measure of journal usage. We may have more competition with the inclusion of more nursing journals, but that situation could benefit us if ONF articles are cited in journals newly added to the Thomson Scientific list. Our efforts to highlight our literature and increase visibility of our articles and authors will also eventually be reflected in stronger numbers.

Whether one cares about impact factors or not, this achievement is an example of journal quality and reflects the high caliber of our authors, the dedication and contribution of our peer reviewers, and, as always, the hard work and diligence of the ONS Periodicals Publishing Team who prepared and monitored our Thomson Scientific application. Good for all of us!

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