The Right Stand by ASM regarding Journal Impact Factors

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We wish to applaud the team of ASM Editors for taking the right step toward applying a fair scientific publication policy at the Journals’ Board meeting during ASM Microbe 2016 (1). Several researchers have acknowledged that “impact factor” (IF) has always been an artificial measure of the value of research findings reported in a scientific publication, but their voices have not been heard or their arguments have not been given fair consideration. The impact of scientific findings should not be judged by where the paper was published, rather by scientific advances and immediate or anticipated societal impact.

There are so many highly significant scientific research findings that are published by relevant journals which do not enjoy a “high IF” rating; however, these same manuscripts are returned by, in many case, the editorial staff, without any appropriate consideration. The authors are not given any justifiable reason except for a very generic statement that the research will be suitable for another specialized journal. Clearly our scientific community has been brain-washed by the consideration of “IF” for making an assessment of the importance, value, and worthiness of research findings, and continued communication from ASM will be needed to rewash prejudiced brains of people and committees making such assessments. We believe IF is a business gimmick that publishers use to benefit their organization and not the scientist. “High IF” does not equate to “high-impact” research. We hope that other journals will follow a similar policy. Please accept our congratulations for taking the first bold step.

REFERENCE