

The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: A 17-year perspective

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In 1998, when I took over the reins as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* (JACI), my vision was to increase its impact factor (IF) from approximately 3.7 to more than 10. The IF has been widely acknowledged as the definitive metric that reflects the quality and stature of a scientific journal. The higher the journal's IF, the higher its quality and the greater the influence of its content. Authors publishing in high-impact journals are more likely to achieve faculty promotions and grant support for their research. The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) has long recognized the importance of expanding allergy-immunology faculty in medical schools and increased funding to sustain allergy-immunology research. Attaining the threshold of 10 would place the JACI in the top tier of subspecialty journals and highlight the importance of research in the allergy-clinical immunology field relative to research in other subspecialties.

My original goal was accomplished in 2009 and has been surpassed since then (Fig 1). Several factors have contributed to the improved IF of the JACI. The world of publishing, as well as research, in allergy-immunology has undergone a remarkable technologic revolution that allowed the JACI to introduce innovations that would disseminate its content more rapidly and increased its visibility globally (see Table E1 in this article's Online Repository at www.jacionline.org). Most notably, during the first term of my editorship, we were still receiving paper copies of manuscripts, and out of necessity, the journal office continued its tradition of maintaining key editors at a single geographic location. The introduction of an electronic manuscript submission system by our publisher, Elsevier, in 2002 allowed the JACI to move to a virtual office and involve worldwide leaders in the field of allergy-immunology in the evaluation of manuscripts submitted to the JACI.

Foremost, however, is that our editors and reviewers were committed to advancing the quality of articles in the JACI by being more selective and timely in recommending or declining manuscripts for publication. These efforts resulted in a significant reduction in the overall time from submission to decision to less than 4 weeks. Portable peer review and manuscript cascades from other top journals have also successfully reduced the time for

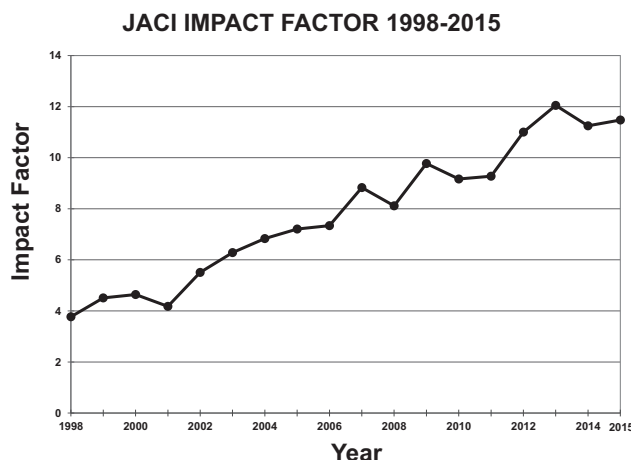


FIG 1. The JACI citation IF from 1998-2015.

review of submitted manuscripts. In parallel, the increased competitiveness of our authors to obtain research funding also improved the quality of articles submitted to the JACI. This resulted in a positive feedback loop in which the improved quality of articles led to greater interest in journal content and increased citation of the JACI among the scientific and medical literature. The improved content of original research in the JACI is supported by the observation that a higher proportion of highly cited articles in the JACI have come from original articles as opposed to review articles (see Table E2 in this article's Online Repository at www.jacionline.org).

To fuel the growth of the JACI, we also introduced new features (see Table E1) geared to increase readership and make it more attractive for authors to submit their best work. The strategy involved the creation of a "wow factor" that included the development of free color illustrations and content that could be easily translated into PowerPoint presentations, as well as electronic transmission and social media distribution. These tools were used to create synergy with other educational arms of the AAAAI, including the Annual Meeting Program. Partnerships in publication were also established with funding agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health, major allergy societies, and constituencies throughout the world, including lay organizations, which supported investigations into various allergic and immune-mediated disease conditions. More importantly, the increasing number of submissions to the JACI allowed us to give birth to another important family member. Starting publication in 2013, the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* further expands our field and provides additional publishing opportunities for our authors. During the past 17 years,

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TABLE I. Performance of Thomson Reuters allergy categories in the JACI in 2014

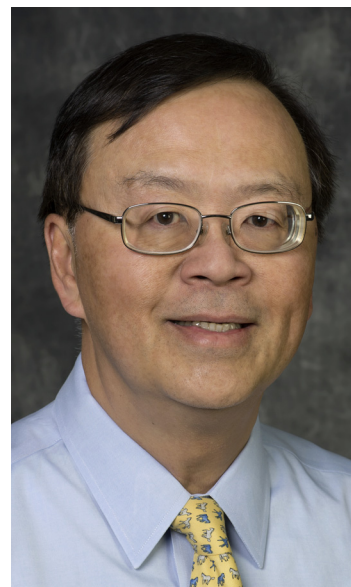
Journal name	IF (2014)	Immediacy index (2014)	No. of articles (2014)	Total citations in 2014
JACI	11.476	3.044	316	38,706
<i>Allergy</i>	6.028	1.963	190	13,418
<i>Clinical Reviews in Allergy and Immunology</i>	5.463	0.926	54	1,925
<i>Clinical and Experimental Allergy</i>	4.769	1.213	136	10,303
<i>Current Opinion in Allergy Clinical Immunology</i>	3.574	0.952	83	2,667
<i>Pediatric Allergy and Immunology</i>	3.397	0.854	89	3,335
<i>Allergy and Asthma Proceedings</i>	3.061	1.827	75	1,632
<i>International Archives of Allergy and Immunology</i>	2.673	0.426	101	4,978
<i>Annals of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology</i>	2.599	0.812	165	5,669
<i>Immunology and Allergy Clinics of North America</i>	1.818	0.400	55	1,149
<i>Journal of Asthma</i>	1.802	0.414	145	2,819

our editorial team has successfully populated each issue of the JACI with interesting novel articles with a balance among those that delineated the mechanisms underlying different disease conditions and those that enhanced patient care.

These innovations have reinforced the JACI as the go-to source for novel and important findings in the fields of allergy, asthma, and clinical immunology. By all metrics, the JACI has progressively evolved in quality and impact. Using IF and the immediacy index, the JACI stands well above its competition in allergy-clinical immunology (Table I). The immediacy index is particularly important because it is a measure of how rapidly articles are read by other authors and cited within 1 year. Importantly, the JACI now ranks in the top tier of most highly cited subspecialty journals (see Table E3 in this article's Online Repository at www.jacionline.org). In 2009, during its 80th anniversary, the JACI was named among the 100 most influential journals of the past century. The reference list contains the 10 most cited articles in the past 2 years.¹⁻¹⁰ Interestingly, immunotherapy has continued to be highly cited throughout the past 17 years, reflecting its importance in allergy practice. However, there has been a remarkable expansion of highly cited subjects to include food allergy, atopic dermatitis, and upper airway disease. During the past 5 years, use of “-omics” technology and big data to probe mechanisms of disease and the increasing role of biomarkers and use of biologicals for disease prevention and treatment have become more common. This shift reflects the changing and expanding scope of our specialty.

As I close the door on this chapter of my career, I am reminded that I could not have succeeded had I walked this road alone. First and foremost, I would like to thank my wonderful wife Susan, who has always been by my side to encourage me and share in life's triumphs, among which being JACI Editor-in-Chief will be one of my greatest legacies (Fig 2). My department chairman, Dr Erwin Gelfand, was also notable for his encouragement in taking on this daunting task. National Jewish Health and its executive officials should be commended for agreeing to house the JACI editorial offices despite the ever-increasing pressure on space.

The other JACI editors deserve special acknowledgement as major contributors to its success. I would particularly like to thank my 2 deputy editors, Drs Stanley Szefer (1998-present) and Harold Nelson (1998-2007), for their dedication and enthusiasm, which were instrumental in guiding me through the minefield of being Editor-in-Chief of the JACI. The dedication and strong work ethic of our associate editors have been critical to our success. These include Cezmi A. Akdis, MD; Andrea J. Apter,

**FIG 2.** Donald Y. M. Leung, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief, the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 1998-2015.

MD, MSc; Pedro Avila, MD; Bruce Bochner, MD; Joshua A. Boyce, MD; David Broide, MD; Robert K. Bush, MD; William Busse, MD; James Crapo, MD; Fred Finkelman, MD; Anthony Frew, MD, FRCP; Erwin Gelfand, MD; Qutayba Hamid, MD, PhD; Gary Larsen, MD; Dennis K. Ledford, MD; Deborah Meyers, PhD; Luigi D. Notarangelo, MD; David B. Peden, MD, MS; Harald Renz, MD; Lanny Rosenwasser, MD; Marc E. Rothenberg, MD; Hirohisa Saito, MD, PhD; William T. Shearer, MD, PhD; Scott Sicherer, MD; Donata Vercelli, MD; Erika Von Mutius, MD, MSc; and Vernon M. Chinchilli, PhD. With their guidance, it has been possible to select the most important and relevant manuscripts in our field each month. Special acknowledgement should be made of Drs William Shearer and Scott Sicherer, whose hard work and commitment fueled the expansion of clinical immunology and food allergy in our journal. The systematic evaluation of more than 25,000 submitted manuscripts to extract the top 5,000 articles would not have been possible were it not for the support of our editorial board members and the thousands of reviewers and authors who have made the JACI a truly outstanding and authoritative publication.

Most of the JACI's editors, editorial board members, and other supporters have been instrumental in contributing to the establishment of the Leung-JACI AAAAI Research Fund. Of these extraordinary individuals, Dr Raif Geha, my mentor in allergy-immunology, and Drs Kari Nadeau, Dennis Ledford, and Bill Shearer have truly carried the torch in fundraising for this important initiative. This new AAAAI Foundation Research Fund will increase the visibility of the JACI and its efforts to help support new research in our field. More importantly, it will contribute to the career development of young allergy-clinical immunology faculty. Therefore I sincerely hope that this important resource can continue to grow through additional donations to this fund at <http://www.aaaai.org/global/ARTrust/leung-fund.aspx>.

The success of the JACI has relied heavily on its strong infrastructure. I was blessed with 3 exceptional managing editors, Nancy Hopper (1998-2007), George Woodward (2007-2013), and Justin Byrne (2013-present), who have been truly outstanding communicators and embraced publishing technology as it has been introduced over the past 17 years. During this period, our editorial assistants (most recently Dawn Angel, Gretchen Leech, John Galati, Rebecca Horan, Craig Reinhold, and Mattie Gorman, and in earlier years, Ruth McCammon, Cami Lind, and Jason Igo) have played the unheralded but critical role of efficiently processing manuscripts and effectively monitoring their progress through the review process by seamlessly interacting with the many investigators, editors, and reviewers on whom the JACI relies for fair but rigorous reviews. The JACI's editors owe a great deal of gratitude to the artistry of our longtime medical illustrator, Boyd Jacobson, who has worked on figures and covers from 1998 until present. The variety of visually appealing JACI covers over the years has been a key factor in its growth.

I would also like to thank Dr Thomas Casale, as well as Kay Whalen and Roberta Slivensky, for facilitating our communications with the AAAAI Executive Committee. Finally, our publishers from Elsevier, Terrie DuHadway and Cheryl Smart, need special mention for implementation of the journal innovations through their resourcefulness and expertise in publishing knowledge. Laura Dinkins-White, at Elsevier's Philadelphia office, has been our journal production manager since 2010. She gracefully handles all production aspects from the time an article is accepted, including assignment of copyeditors, typesetting, galley proofs, corrections, and production scheduling.

My congratulations and best wishes to the new JACI Co-Editors-in-Chief Drs Cezmi Akdis and Zuhair Ballas. Naming a new co-editor-in-chief from Europe represents a historic first for the JACI, and it reflects our increasing international appeal. Working with Drs Akdis and Ballas during this transitional period has assured me that not only will the JACI continue to be the leading journal in our field, but it will continue

to publish cutting-edge clinical and translational research of interest to a wider audience of researchers and physicians. This will undoubtedly be facilitated by embracing the newer forms of electronic communication and social media that make information available more rapidly and enhance the understanding of increasingly complex information that challenges the reader. The field has moved beyond simple description to a conclusive understanding of the mechanisms involved in allergic disease. These will translate into new definitive interventions in the prevention and treatment of the diseases we face within our clinics. Undoubtedly, we will see a marked acceleration in the speed with which discoveries move from the laboratory bench to the bedside.

As I complete my editorship for the JACI in December 2015, I am grateful for the privilege to have served in this capacity for the past 17 years. Speaking on behalf of the JACI editorial team, we are proud that the JACI has provided clinical and laboratory scientists an effective tool for disseminating knowledge about cutting-edge research in allergy, asthma, and clinical immunology. We thank the AAAAI Board of Directors for entrusting us with the establishment of this great resource for our field.

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3. Kaplan A, Ledford D, Ashby M, Canvin J, Zazzali JL, Conner E, et al. Omalizumab in patients with symptomatic chronic idiopathic/spontaneous urticaria despite standard combination therapy. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;132:101-9.
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9. Chu DK, Llop-Guevara A, Walker TD, Flader K, Goncharova S, Boudreau JE, et al. IL-33, but not thymic stromal lymphopoietin or IL-25, is central to mite and peanut allergic sensitization. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:187-200.e8.
10. Sicherer SH, Sampson HA. Food allergy: epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, and treatment. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2014;133:291-307.e5.

TABLE E1. JACI innovations from 1998-2015

Create a “Wow” factor

- Create stunning color journal covers that can be downloaded for lecture presentations and draw attention to content
- Theme issues featuring several invited clinical and mechanistic reviews centered on a unique theme
- Provide free professional color illustrations for reviews and key articles
- Identify original articles and case reports that support the theme
- Encourage editorials for key articles
- YouTube Channel: shows JACI video interviews between authors and editors related to journal themes

Reduce time to decision and publication

- Shepherding the *Journal* into the electronic age through an ever-expanding digital platform for manuscript submission, peer review, and archiving of JACI text and historic data
- Rapid publication (2 weeks) available for high-impact studies
- Portable peer review and manuscript cascades from top journals
- Collaborate with National Institutes of Health networks to publish multicenter clinical studies
- Editorial office staff monitor duration of time for each step in the manuscript review process (reviews have averaged <4 weeks for the past 17 years)

Create digested content to promote readability

- Editor's Choice: highlights and summarizes articles from each issue that the editors believe are the most important research each month
- Annotation of Table of Contents
- Articles begin with abstracts and end with key messages box
- Journal blogs: discussions and summaries of key articles by a medical writer, also linked through social media
- Podcasts led by editors and New Allergists Assembly
- Introduction of News Beyond our Pages feature
- JACI primers to introduce nonallergist/immunologists to the field
- Advances: annual series bringing the “best of JACI” and other journals in high-interest topics, such as asthma, food allergy, immunodeficiency, and atopic dermatitis

Increase visibility of articles

- Push social media, including Facebook posts, tweeting of JACI article summaries: allow users to easily read JACI content on all mobile devices including their smart phones or tablets, either with Internet service or offline
- Work with the AAAAI and authors on news releases
- Share table of contents with other journals
- Create a collaboration and synergy with the AAAAI staff that has expanded the reach of the allergy/immunology specialty
- Communicate content directly with disease-oriented lay organizations
- Incorporate easily downloadable PowerPoint slides for lecture presentations
- Collaborate with annual meeting programming: year in review workshops, reviewer forums and educational sessions, editor forums, and JACI staff meeting in which readers and authors can meet the staff and get questions answered

Expand the scope of allergy and immunology readership

- Increase the scope of articles to encourage submission of more studies in clinical immunology; gastroenterology; ear, nose, and throat medicine; and respiratory medicine, including studies of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Establish bridges to subspecialty networks from article exchange programs
- Increase public awareness of the allergy-immunology specialty, its cutting-edge research and interventions, and extensive resources offered by the AAAAI
- Build and lead a dynamic international editorial board that has powered the JACI's growth and status
- Offer CMEs for manuscript reviews, maintenance of certification, and review articles
- Introduce new JACI Journal family member *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*

TABLE E2. Top 10 cited articles in 1998, 2013, 2014

1998 Top 10 cited articles

1. Bousquet J, Lockey R, Malling HJ, Alvarez-Cuesta E, Canonica GW, Chapman MD, et al. Allergen immunotherapy: therapeutic vaccines for allergic diseases. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1998;102:558-62.
(691 cites: review article)
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(361 cites: original article)
3. Durham SR, Till SJ. Immunologic changes associated with allergen immunotherapy. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1998;102:157-64.
(317 cites: review article)
4. Nel AE, Diaz-Sanchez D, Ng D, Hiura T, Saxon A. Enhancement of allergic inflammation by the interaction between diesel exhaust particles and the immune system. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1998;102:539-54.
(307 cites: review article)
5. Tariq SM, Matthews SM, Hakim EA, Stevens M, Arshad SH, Hide DW. The prevalence of and risk factors for atopy in early childhood: a whole population birth cohort study. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1998;101:587-93.
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(242 cites: original Article)
8. Simons FER, Roberts JR, Gu X, Simons KJ. Epinephrine absorption in children with a history of anaphylaxis. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1998;101:33-7.
(241 cites: original article)
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(228 cites: review article)
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(223 cites: original article)

2013 Top 10 cited articles

1. Burks AW, Calderon MA, Casale T, Cox L, Demoly P, Jutel M, et al. Update on allergy immunotherapy: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology/European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology/PRACTALL consensus report. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:1288-96, e3.
(103 cites: original article)
2. Barnes PJ. Corticosteroid resistance in patients with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:636-45.
(95 cites: review article)
3. Kaplan A, Ledford D, Ashby M, Canvin J, Zazzali JL, Conner E, et al. Omalizumab in patients with symptomatic chronic idiopathic/spontaneous urticaria despite standard combination therapy. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;132:101-9.
(87 cites: original article)
4. Lucendo AJ, Arias Á, González-Cervera J, Yagüe-Compadre JL, Guagnozzi D, Angueira T, et al. Empiric 6-food elimination diet induced and maintained prolonged remission in patients with adult eosinophilic esophagitis: a prospective study on the food cause of the disease. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:797-804.
(74 cites: original article)
5. Fleischer DM, Burks AW, Vickery BP, Scurlock AM, Wood RA, Jones SM, et al. Sublingual immunotherapy for peanut allergy: A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled multicenter trial. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:119-27, e7.
(69 cites: original article)
6. Akdis CA, Bachert C, Cingi C, Dykewicz MS, Hellings PW, Naclerio RM, et al. Endotypes and phenotypes of chronic rhinosinusitis: a PRACTALL document of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:1479-90.
(67 cites: original article)
7. Van De Veen W, Stanic B, Yaman G, Wawrzyniak M, Söllner S, Akdis DG, et al. IgG4 production is confined to human IL-10-producing regulatory B cells that suppress antigen-specific immune responses. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2013;131:1204-12.
(66 cites: original article)
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(66 cites: original article)
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(61 cites: review article)

(Continued)

TABLE E2. (Continued)

2014 Top 10 cited articles

1. Sicherer SH, Sampson HA. Food allergy: epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, and treatment. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2014;133:291-307, e5. (92 cites: review article)
2. Akdis M, Akdis CA. Mechanisms of allergen-specific immunotherapy: multiple suppressor factors at work in immune tolerance to allergens. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2014;133:621-31. (48 cites: review article)
3. Vickery BP, Scurlock AM, Kulis M, Steele PH, Kamilaris J, Berglund JP, et al. Sustained unresponsiveness to peanut in subjects who have completed peanut oral immunotherapy. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2014;133:468-75, e6. (42 cites: original article)
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TABLE E3. Performance of Thomson Reuters allergy categories in the JACI in 2014

Journal name	Society name	IF (2014)	Immediacy index (2014)
<i>Gastroenterology</i>	American Gastroenterological Association	16.716	5.669
<i>American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine</i>	American Thoracic Society (ATS)	12.996	3.056
<i>JACI</i>	AAAAI	11.476	3.044
<i>Blood</i>	American Society of Hematology	10.452	2.415
<i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U S A</i>	National Academy of Sciences	9.674	1.967
<i>Thorax</i>	British Thoracic Society	8.290	2.473
<i>Arthritis and Rheumatism</i>	American College of Rheumatology	7.764	N/A
<i>Chest</i>	American College of Chest Physicians	7.483	1.771
<i>Journal of Investigative Dermatology</i>	Society for Investigative Dermatology	7.216	2.184
<i>Allergy</i>	European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI)	6.028	1.963
<i>Pediatrics</i>	American Academy of Pediatrics	5.473	0.892
<i>Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology</i>	American Academy of Dermatology	4.449	1.103
<i>Journal of Immunology</i>	American Association of Immunologists	4.922	0.959
<i>Clinical and Experimental Allergy</i>	British Society for Allergy & Clinical Immunology	4.769	1.213
<i>American Journal of Respiratory Cell and Molecular Biology</i>	American Thoracic Society	3.985	1.091
<i>Rhinology</i>	International Rhinologic Society	3.761	0.529
<i>Clinical Immunology</i>	Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies	3.672	0.558
<i>Pediatric Allergy and Immunology</i>	EAACI	3.397	0.854
<i>Journal of Clinical Immunology</i>	Clinical Immunology Society	3.184	0.664
<i>Allergy and Asthma Proceedings</i>	Regional, State, and Local Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Societies	3.061	1.827
<i>Annals of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology</i>	American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology	2.599	0.812