

# Relevance of the clinical impact factor

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We daily face clinical cases of different proportions. To manage each one of these cases, it is paramount that the best clinical decision be made. Should there be a better option in comparison to others, it is necessary to understand it before offering it to the patient.

Systematic literature reviews have recently gained ground as an alternative to summarize the results of a number of studies. They are conducted by means of strategies that allow these results to be analyzed and considered under a specific standpoint. The primary objective would be, after an accurate selection of appropriate articles, to allow a combination of results and reach a consensus regarding the effect of a given protocol or problem. Once the puzzle of selected articles is complete, it is possible to conduct a meta-analysis and, thus, recognize differences between groups, based on whether a given procedure will be recommended or not. Should it be impossible to solve the puzzle, this means clinical trials are not enough to answer the initial clinical question.

We often find inconclusive studies or a number of studies on the same topic yielding conflicting results. The most common reason for such disparity is the conduction of studies using different methods and insufficient samples to identify the real benefits of relevant clinical events. In addition, care should be taken with control groups, which might result in failure or put clinical relevance at risk.

In 2009, Mjör answered the editor of *The Journal of Adhesive Dentistry* and raised this question, calling attention to the need for a clinical impact factor. The latter stands for a result representing an important aspect of dental research and refers to the impact a given publication might have over clinical practice.

Nevertheless, it seems we are a long way away the reality of going to the dental office to identify problems that are relevant to our patients' health. The combination between basic research and clinical practice is undeniable. The clinical application of a research, along with its relevance and true innovative factor, must be the primary reasons why one should conduct an investigation of which real value and clinical impact justify the efforts and provide meaning to its development.

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