

Recommendations for Using Metrics

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In this video, I provide recommendations for using metrics appropriately and with caution.

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About Journals

When consulting journal impact and ranking, it is important to compare journals that are from the same research fields, to pay attention to the journal content, ask yourself: is the content multi-disciplinary or specialised? What's the proportion of reviews and original research paper? And what is publication frequency?

Journal impacts and rankings are dependent on the database they are drawn out. Do use reliable tools and those mentioned in the previous video, to compare results and to ensure that any journals you seek information is from a legitimate publisher.

Journal impact factors don't replace the quality assessment of papers.

A specialised reputable journal may not be included in a journal ranking because of its nature to be specialised.

Opt for a journal that is open access to make your research discoverable.

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About high and low citation counts

Consult several databases because there isn't one single source that provides 100% complete data about who cites who. What makes a high or low number of citation count depends on the publication year, the document type and the discipline associated with its source.

Open access articles tend to be more cited because there's no paywall preventing access to read them online. And if the topic of an article is controversial, it is likely to attract more readers and so more citations to respond to it. The article listed on this slide, Sex Differences in Human Neonatal Social Perception, is a controversial paper because it claims that men and women are born different from an experiment that many scientists considered flawed. And so the responses generated negative citations. However, these citations are merged as one under citation counts.

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Further readings

In conclusion, any metrics must not be used as a proxy for quality and their interpretation must be investigated. I invite you to consult the following documents for further exploration on the subject:

- The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) signed by the University of Oxford and advocating research assessment on its own merits and the responsible use of research metrics.
- The Metric Tide: Report of the Independent Review of the Role of Metrics in Research Assessment and Management.
- The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics.
- The Bodleian LibGuide on bibliometrics and citation tracking.

