

Dear Marian,

We thank you for expeditiously addressing our appeal of the suppression of the 2020 impact factor, and for graciously reiterating your commitment to engaging with journals and publishers in a meaningful way. We welcome this important dialogue around the growth of *Body Image*. To that end, my Associate Editors and I would like to request concrete feedback on the metric or algorithm used to arrive at the determination of excessive self-citations.

Obviously, our intention at this stage is to avoid any repetition of the issue(s) which caused this impact factor suppression. However, in order for us to effectively do that, we need to more transparently understand the metric used to determine what constitutes excessive self-citations. Your prior email was helpful in many ways, although in some ways, it raised more questions than answers.

Ultimately, we are assuming that the decision to suppress the journal's most recent impact factor is based on some violation of normal or expected parameters. As is the case with any sanction installed after a violation of expected parameters, in order for this sanction to be corrective, the violation itself has to be made precisely and unequivocally clear so that the offending behaviors or practices can be altered. Without a clear explanation of *what* the expected parameters are, and *how* they were violated, the sanction appears punitive and offers little scope for correcting the offending violations. My Associate Editors, Editorial Board, and I are very open to any feedback around this critically important decision. We emphasize once again that we did not game the system to try to increase our impact factor (and we appreciate that Clarivate acknowledges that they do not assume motive when suppressing impact factors). This fact, however, leaves us in a bind. We don't know what we can do differently to self-correct a high number of journal self-citations when we do not elicit these self-citations. The only obvious way is to tell authors of articles that contain a lot of self-citations to reduce their number of journal self-citations, but we view this practice as unethical, as it is gaming the system in an opposite way (reducing self-citations so that our impact factor will be recorded).

As I'm sure you can appreciate, the decision to suppress the Body Image factor will have profound repercussions for our field, and we implore you to share more transparent information regarding the factors leading to this decision. We look forward to more transparent dialogue with you in determining exactly how to mitigate this in future.

Warmly,

Tracy Tylka, Stuart Murray, Viren Swami, Jessica Alleva, Rachel Calogero, Sarah Murnen, Jennifer Webb, Rachel Rodgers, Matthew Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Todd Jackson

From: Hollingsworth, Marian

Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 2:55 PM

To: Tylka, Tracy

Cc: Swami, Viren; Alleva, Jessica (PSYCHOLOGY); Rachel Calogero; Jennifer Webb; Rodgers, Rachel; Stuart Murray; Sarah Murnen; toddjackson; Rodney, Gail M. (ELS-NYC); Hollingsworth, Marian

Subject: RE: appeal of the suppression of Body Image from 2019 impact factor

Dear Tracy,

We have received and reviewed your appeal of the suppression of **Body Image** from the 2019 JCR.

The journal will remain suppressed from the 2019 data.

In response to the specific matter of your appeal, I must emphasize that our analysis is not intended to detect manipulation. Wholesale abuses of the scholarly citation network are considered failures according to our quality criteria for journals to be covered in our Web of Science resources. Journals found to manipulate citations are evaluated for removal from Web of Science. Please see:

<https://clarivate.com/webofsciencegroup/journal-evaluation-process-and-selection-criteria/>

1. “We are a niche discipline, and **Body Image** is the “main hub” (*importantly*, **Body Image** is the *only* specialty journal for research relating to the construct of body image). “

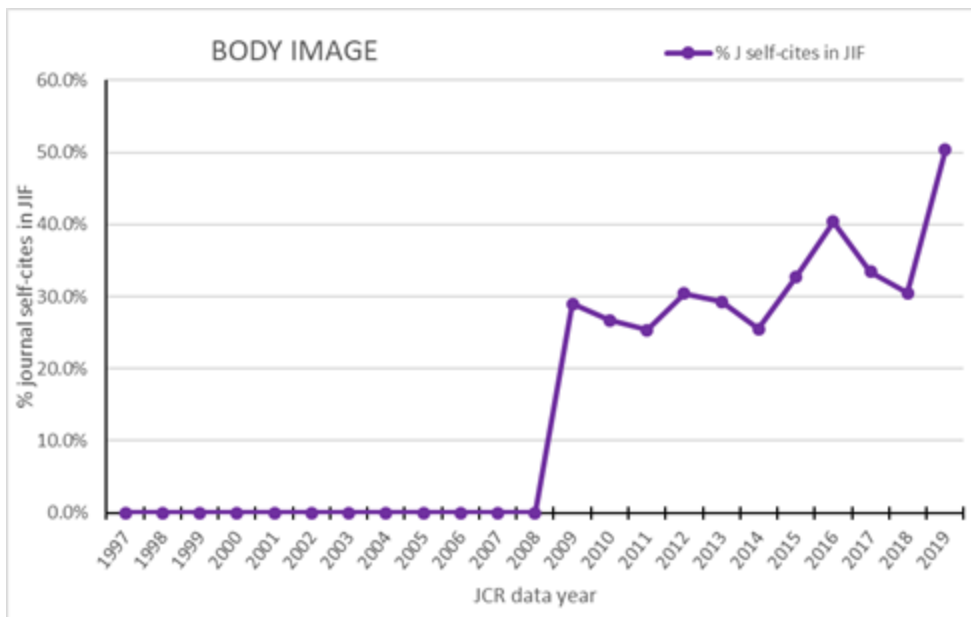
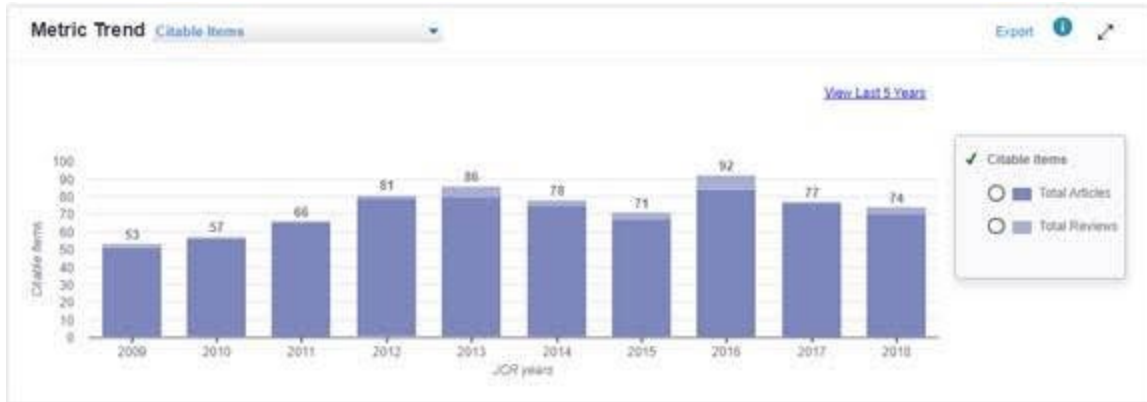
- To create a list of authors publishing in topics of particular relevance to **Body Image**, we identified authors who published repeatedly in 2019 content of **Body Image** and viewed their current and historic publication records from 2004 (from the launch of **Body Image**) to 2019
- Excluding Meeting abstracts, there were over 630 published scholarly works. 120 (18%) in **Body Image**, the remaining 82% in 440 distinct journals, or books. This indicates that, while **Body Image** may be the only specialized journal with a scope restricted to research relating to the construct of body image, there are other titles that publish related research.

“Self-citations therefore amount to a *small percentage* of our total number of cited references.”

- Self citations amount to a significant percentage of both out-going and incoming self citations. We identified 320 cited references in 2019 content in **Body Image** that reference 2018 or 2017 content also in **Body Image**.
 - 320 Journal self-citations represent 43.8% of 730 citations to any content published in 2018 or 2017.
 - 320 Journal self-citations represent 50.4% of all 635 citations from any content indexed in Web of Science core collections in 2019

2. “We have had a dramatic increase in submissions of high-quality work, which has led to more articles being published.”

91 citable items in 2019 is not dissimilar from prior trend line, very similar to the rise in items from 2014-2015 to 2016.



3. “We published many more reviews in 2019 than other years (i.e., systematic reviews, meta-analyses, review articles for a special series published in the December 2019 issue).” - This is not supported in the citation data. Review articles in **Body Image** had fewer average JIF citations and a lower rate of journal self-citation.
4. “Unlike many other journals, we welcome and regularly publish articles containing body image scale adaptations (e.g., translations, modifications to fit another group such as children and athletes, etc.)”
 - Working from 2019 items that mention the Body Appreciation Scale and tracking citations from these items to prior BAS (or Functional Appreciation Scale) items in 2018 or 2017 showed that less than 10% of the 2019 journal self-citation activity is due to this collection of materials. Citation to the articles on Body Appreciate Scale and Functional Appreciation scale was dominated by journal self-citations

While we are sensitive to the great importance of individual journals to their authors, readers and community, we must be confident that the metrics we publish can demonstrate that importance. Suppression from the JCR and evaluation of coverage in Web of Science are

independent decisions. We continue listing **Body Image** in Web of Science, ensuring its continued availability to the global community of users.

We will continue to develop and evolve our process of journal analysis. In the preparation of the 2020 data, we hope to engage with the publishers and editors of journals in advance of the JCR first release. While we will still suppress journals according to our own assessment, the input we've received has added valuable types of information that allow us to apply additional editorial discretion to the numerical review.

Best regards,
Marian

Marian Hollingsworth
Director, Editorial Relations

From: Tylka, Tracy
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:09 AM
To: Hollingsworth, Marian
Cc: Swami, Viren; Alleva, Jessica (PSYCHOLOGY); Rachel Calogero; Jennifer Webb; Rodgers, Rachel; Stuart Murray; Sarah Murnen; toddjackson; Rodney, Gail M. (ELS-NYC); Hollingsworth, Marian
Subject: RE: appeal of the suppression of Body Image from 2019 impact factor

Dear Marian,

We thank you for your message and attention to our case. We look forward to hearing the outcome of the review.

Warmly,
Tracy

Associate Editors:
Jessica Alleva
Rachel Calogero
Matthew Fuller-Tyszkiewicz
Todd Jackson
Sarah Murnen
Stuart Murray
Rachel Rodgers
Viren Swami
Jennifer Webb

From: Hollingsworth, Marian

Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:23 PM

To: Tylka, Tracy

Cc: Swami, Viren; Alleva, Jessica (PSYCHOLOGY); Rachel Calogero; Jennifer Webb; Rodgers, Rachel; Stuart Murray; Sarah Murnen; toddjackson; Rodney, Gail M. (ELS-NYC); Hollingsworth, Marian

Subject: RE: appeal of the suppression of *Body Image* from 2019 impact factor

Dear Dr. Tylka,

I am well and hope the same is true for you and the editors of *Body Image*.

Thank you for your detailed response concerning the suppression of *Body Image* in the latest JCR. We will review the information below and come back to you as soon as possible.

With best regards,
Marian

Marian Hollingsworth

Director, Editorial Relations

From: Tylka, Tracy

Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 12:45 PM

To: Hollingsworth, Marian

Cc: Swami, Viren; Alleva, Jessica (PSYCHOLOGY); Rachel Calogero; Jennifer Webb; Rodgers, Rachel; Stuart Murray; Sarah Murnen; toddjackson; Rodney, Gail M. (ELS-NYC); Hollingsworth, Marian

Subject: appeal of the suppression of *Body Image* from 2019 impact factor

Dear Ms. Hollingsworth,

I hope this email finds you and your family healthy and well during this challenging time.

I am the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Body Image*, which has been suppressed by Clarivate from receiving a 2019 Impact Factor. I received your contact information from Gail Rodney, the Senior Publisher of Cognitive Science (Psychology) at Elsevier, which publishes *Body Image*. She gave us her support in contacting you and appealing Clarivate's decision.

The purpose of this email is to introduce ourselves, provide context for the increase in *Body Image*'s self-citations for 2019, and state our intention (and case) for an appeal.

When we (my Associate Editors and I) heard of Clarivate's decision, we were stunned and very confused. We share Clarivate's view that any attempt to 'game' the system is unethical, but we completely reject any suggestion that we have engaged in gaming the journal's impact factor. We uphold scientific integrity and ethics from submission to publication.

We have reflected on reasons why we have (a) a high percentage of self-citations and (b) experienced an increase in self-citations in 2019. According to Clarivate's July 7 statement on Twitter, "We acknowledge that in exceptional circumstances there may be compelling editorial reasons for an atypical level of journal self-citation which fulfills a genuine scholarly purpose." We believe that this statement applies to Body Image for the following reasons:

1. We are a niche discipline, and Body Image is the "main hub" (**importantly**, Body Image is the **only** specialty journal for research relating to the construct of body image).

With body image research becoming increasingly prevalent, and with only one major outlet for this specialty research, it is understandable that many papers in the field of body image would cite other work relating to body image. These papers inevitably pass through the bottleneck of all body image research - Body Image.

In comparison, another relatedly niche field is eating disorders. Eating disorder researchers can submit their work to at least 6 journals that are specific to eating disorders as well as several other journals that focus on eating behaviors (e.g., Appetite, Eating Behaviors). Having many multiple journals in the same field minimizes the extent to which relevant references come from one journal. The self-citation metric would be much more relevant to generic journals in broad research areas (and even niche journals that have other journals within their niche area), but it doesn't really work for specialty journals like Body Image.

For Body Image, to reach 30% self-citations in the IF numerator, we only need to cite approximately 2 recent (e.g., 2017, 2018) Body Image articles, on average, within each 2019 article. To reach 40% self-citations, we only need to cite approximately 3 recent Body Image articles, on average, within each article. To reach 50% self-citations, we only need to cite approximately 4 recent Body Image articles, on average, within each article. Our reference lists typically contain 40-60 references. Self-citations therefore amount to a **small percentage** of our total number of cited references.

2. We have had a **dramatic increase** in submissions of high-quality work, which has led to more articles being published.

Last year saw a record number of article submissions and acceptances. For the last two years, we have seen an increase in submissions by 100 or more per year (we are now averaging about 60 submissions a month). Body Image does not have page limits, so we can increase our number of publications as needed to house the superior articles that

are accepted. In 2018, we had 75 articles that were accepted. ***In 2019, we had 92 articles accepted.*** In 2020, we are already at 76 acceptances, with 5 months left.

With many more Body Image articles published in 2019, there are more opportunities for self-citations of recent (in this case, 2017 and 2018) articles than years prior, when the number of articles published was lower. Unless all other journals that cite Body Image articles have a similar increase in accepted articles, the self-citation component of the numerator is going to increase, raising the percentage of self-citations.

3. We published many more reviews in 2019 than other years (i.e., systematic reviews, meta-analyses, review articles for a special series published in the December 2019 issue).

Reviews, due to their comprehensive nature of a current topic, will contain many citations to recent (as well as not so recent) work. Again, because Body Image is the main hub of body image research, we will be citing much recent work from our journal.

4. Unlike many other journals, we welcome and regularly publish articles containing body image scale adaptations (e.g., translations, modifications to fit another group such as children and athletes, etc.).

If a scale was originally published in Body Image, it follows that many subsequent scale adaptation studies will also be published in the journal. To take one example, there has been an upsurge in scale translations of the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2) published in Body Image. These adaptation papers mention other scale adaptations of the BAS-2, and thus they tend to contain more self-citations.

We view publishing scale adaptations as a clear strength of our journal. This way, these scales can be used to conduct body image research in diverse groups around the world.

Our stance, as always, has been ***to not let the politics around impact factors influence the science we publish in Body Image, or the science used to support it*** (i.e., the references). Ultimately, creative control of the references used to support authors' work must belong to authors themselves. ***We re-commit to never gratuitously asking authors to refer to Body Image articles in their work.***

When we have suggested the inclusion of omitted references to authors, these suggestions have always been specific references that are relevant to a given point that often needs a citing reference. Our suggestions have not been exclusive to the timespan that the IF is calculated on (in this case, only articles with 2017, 2018 dates). Our suggestions are not contingent on accepting an article for publication, nor have they only included Body Image articles. When the article is nearing the end of the review process, we may remind authors to check to ensure that no recent research (from any journal) has been published since the review process began and

integrate relevant work when applicable and appropriate. We consider these practices to be wholly within the guidelines of good science and editing.

In sum, we believe that our self-citation percentage is likely a reflection of Body Image being the only specialty journal in a rapidly growing research area. Suppressing our IF will needlessly stifle this growth, and therefore we take the appeal very seriously. This doesn't just affect 2019, but it affects the future of the journal, and hence the future of the field.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Warmly,

Tracy Tylka (Editor-in-Chief)

Associate Editors:

Jessica Alleva

Rachel Calogero

Matthew Fuller-Tyszkiewicz

Todd Jackson

Sarah Murnen

Rachel Rodgers

Viren Swami

Jennifer Webb