

Phlebology papers publication at a turning

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Phlebologists (whatever is the meaning of this word) wanting to share their experiences, or ideas, or methods, have plenty opportunities to choose a journal where to satisfy the need of their scientific dissemination. To have an idea of the number of journals available, it is possible to enter the website of the International Union of Phlebology (UIP) at www.uip-phlebology.org, opening the “Journals” menu page, to find a list of 71 affiliates journals, while are still missing many open access magazines and minor publications, the final amount probably doubling the initial count number. Naturally, not all the journals publishing a veins pathology subjects are “true” Phlebology journals, but this is due to the nature of the Phlebology field of action, that involves dermatology, haematology, vascular surgery, diagnostic imaging, lymphology, vulnology, and all the other aspects concerned in the venous hypertension condition, so that many speciality journals can be involved. By the way 81 societies of all over the world are linked to the Union (see the cited menu page), often with their own journals.

Even selecting “true” Phlebology journals, (those that prevalently publish venous pathology papers exclusively or at least regularly in dedicated sections) the list remains abundant (20 could be near to the truth). If every issue produces 4 numbers per year (a downward limit, for an example), and every number offers 5-6 articles, we can calculate that the phlebology literature production will be of about 400-500 papers per year, not considering what is written in non-specific journals.

At the sunset of my career, I have the impression that most of my colleagues rarely engage with medical articles but prefer to get medical updating by participating to congresses. Important literature in fact, is generally written in English, is not always freely available on the web, is often written in difficult language for not English natives and, most of all, it is not always completely reliable. In this contest the abstract content assumes a paramount

importance. Moreover, if so many give up the lecture, I can imagine how few are going to write.

Some question arises spontaneously: Who will read all this material? Are the scientific contents always valid? What is the real mechanism pushing this process?

Probably medium Is more Important than content. The diffusion of open access journals extended the possibility to become Editors, Co- Editors, Board members, and to be published rapidly with limited reviewers slowdowns, earning fresh money, but lowering the quality. In facts following this tendency, several traditional journals have created a parallel channel of open access diffusion; and lastly, a new shortcut issue has been treacherously produced: the preprint (a version of a scientific paper that precedes formal peer review and publication in a peer-reviewed journal).

While developing these thoughts I casually fell on a curious paper titled: The 100 most-cited articles on chronic venous disease: a bibliometric analysis, by Jun H and Hwang W, in the Journal of International Medical Research (1).

There I could learn that The Journal of Vascular Surgery had the most citations(36), followed by British Journal of surgery with 13 citations, Dermatologic surgery (10) and European Journal of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery (9), Phlebology (6), Journal of vascular and interventional radiology (3), Circulation (3), Angiology (3). We can appreciate here the opposite situation compared to what was previously considered: There are “elite” journals issuing important papers with long running citation through the years, written by established experts, mostly based on traditional subscription regimen.

The lecture of the Jun and Hwang paper shows that subjects concerning varicose veins active treatments (65) are more cited (with 30 articles on Endovenous

thermal ablation (ETA) , 14 on nonthermal ablation (NTA), 12 on surgery, 9 recurrence) than articles about epidemiology (11), symptoms (14), pathogenesis (5). Interestingly Duplex based diagnostic advances did not produce attention, despite the role that this investigation had on large development of the less aggressive treatments. Conservative treatments are not included at all.

Concerning the Authors, Proebstle TM and Ruckley CV had the highest score of citation (7). The most cited article is Evans CJ, Fowkes FGR, Ruckley CV, Lee AJ. Prevalence of varicose veins and chronic venous insufficiency in men and women in the general population: Edinburgh Vein Study *J Epidemiol Community Health* 1999; 53(3): 149–153 doi: [10.1136/jech.53.3.149](https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.53.3.149), with a 403 score but with a citation rate (determined by dividing the citation number by the number of years since publication) of 20,2; despite being at third place of the total citation score (387) Gloviczki P, Comerota AJ, Dalsing MC, et al. The care of patients with varicose veins and associated chronic venous diseases: clinical practice guidelines of the Society for Vascular Surgery and the American Venous Forum. *J Vasc Surg* 2011; 53: 2S–48S doi: [10.1016/j.jvs.2011.01.079](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvs.2011.01.079) has the highest citation rate (48,4).

USA (30) and UK (24) are the most represented countries, Italy being counted 4 times; in three of these cases

foam sclerotherapy, at the beginning of the innovation, was the subject and the same Authors group was involved (Tessari, Frullini, Cavezzi) all the times.

Database research was filtered to select only English literature which may be a limit of the research even if it is universally recognized that nowadays this is the language of science. Furthermore, citation is not the exclusive indication of importance, being more the interpretation of a general momentary tendency based on financial advantages or simplification or even adaptation to a fashion.

In conclusion, while traditional subscription regimen journals (reader pays for reading) still continue their publication activity, open access regimen (the writer pays for the reader) is gaining full improvement. In fact, even traditional journals tend to have a parallel open access availability. In this situation the readers' laziness is less important than the Authors' interest and the papers plethora move to the second line.

Is a new way of scientific communication being conceived? May AI help in this direction? I am afraid I will not arrive to see it.

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