

**Report of the Editor/Co-editor**

**International Journal of Epidemiology**

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## Background

George Davey Smith and Shah Ebrahim have co-edited the IJE since January 2000 and since 2001, the content of the IJE has been their responsibility. Net income to IEA from journal activities increased by 7% this year (£117.7k in 2005, £137k in 2006, £146k in 2007 and £156k in 2008). The Biobank supplement produced a small profit for the IEA of £6k.

## Journal Statistics

The numbers of manuscripts submitted to the IJE rose during the early period of our editorship. In 2008 we received 954 manuscripts (an increase of 26% on 2007) and on current trends will probably get over 1000 manuscripts in 2009. (See Table 1).

**Table 1. Journal statistics by year of submission**

Year	Revising	Awaiting Publication	Published	Rejected	Withdrawn	Total
2000	19	0	127	426		572
2001	12	0	114	548	2	676
2002	7	0	128	497	5	637
2003	17	0	124	459	4	604
2004	9	0	113	548	1	671
2005	10	0	122	667	2	801
2006	3	1	110	670	1	785
2007	9	0	106	638	1	754
2008	35	53	72	793	1	954
2009	26	7	0	438	2	550*

\* Includes 77 papers with reviewers and is to **30 June 2009**

The most welcome statistic is the continued increase in impact factor for IJE from 4.045 in 2005, 4.517 in 2006, 5.151 in 2007 and 5.838 in 2009 improving our placing to 5<sup>th</sup> out of 105 journals in the field (see Table 2). We believe that this reflects our continued efforts to innovate, a growing recognition that IJE is a good place to publish important findings and our high rejection rate. Unlike other journals we have not reduced the number of publications accepted to increase our impact factor.

**Table 2: Impact factor and immediacy index for International Journal of Epidemiology 2000-8**

Year	Impact Factor	Ranking	Immediacy index	Ranking	No. citations
2000	1.892	22/87	0.255	28/87	5216
2001	1.899	22/88	1.022	4/88	5533
2002	2.368	13/90	1.204	2/90	5842
2003	3.289	7/89	1.376	4/89	6428
2004	3.735	7/93	1.962	2/93	7079
2005	4.045	6/99	1.791	2/99	7599
2006	4.517	7/98	2.200	2/98	8717
2007	5.151	7/100	1.528	4/100	9218
2008	5.838	5/105	2.060	2/105	11086

**Impact Factors.** The journal impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a particular year. The impact factor will help you evaluate a journal's relative importance, especially when you compare it to others in the same field. The impact factor is calculated by dividing the number of current citations to articles published in the two previous years by the total number of articles published in the two previous years.

The journal immediacy index is a measure of how quickly the "average article" in a journal is cited. The Immediacy Index will tell you how often articles published in a journal are cited within the same year. The Immediacy Index is calculated by dividing the number of citations to articles published in a given year by the number of articles published in that year.

Figure 1 shows our position relative to our major competitors, derived from <http://wos.mimas.ac.uk/jcrweb/>. We have now moved past the formerly top rated journals in epidemiology (Epidemiology, Am J Epidemiology). In comparison with the top 10 journals in the field, three of the journals with higher impact factors are review journals which always tend to do better in this respect. (Table 3).

**Table 3a. Rank order and impact factor of the top ten titles among 105 public health journals**

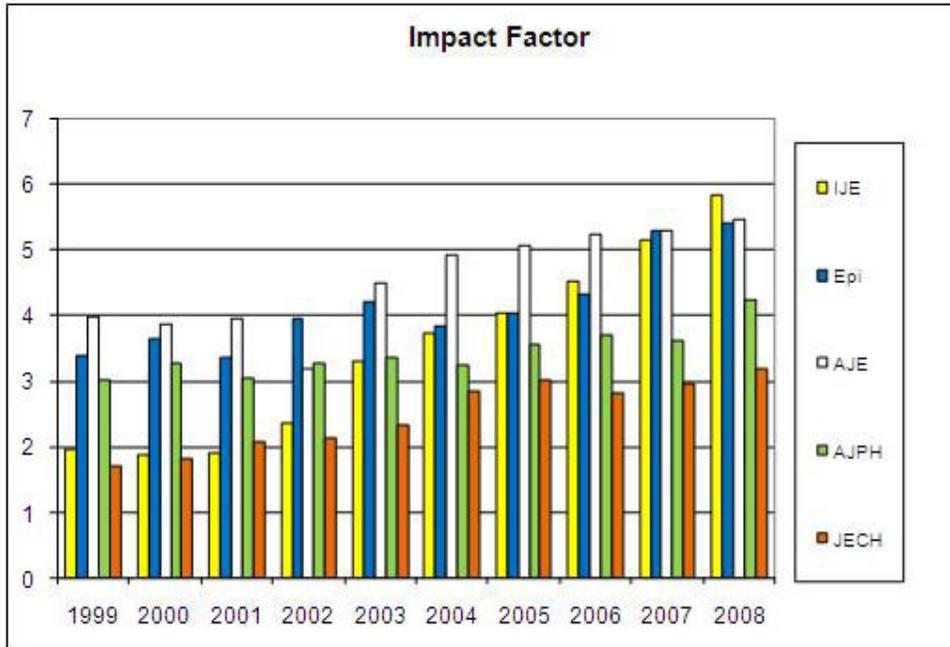
Rank order of journal	Impact factor
1. Epidemiol Rev	12.130
2. Environ Health Perspectives	6.123
3. Annual Reviews of Public Health	6.045
4. WHO Tech Rep Ser	5.923
5. International J Epidemiol	5.838
6 American Journal of Epidemiol	5.454
7. Epidemiology	5.406
8. Cancer Epidem Biomarkers	4.770
9. Tobacco Control	4.438
10. American Journal of Public Health	4.241

As impact factors continue to be a cause for controversy, we have examined some alternative measures. In supplementary table 3a, data on the percentage of published material receiving zero citations, and the highest citation paper we published in 2005-7. Comparisons with Lancet, Am J Epidemiol and Epidemiology show that we do better than either in publishing material that is cited at least once between 2005-2007. Our highest cited paper each year indicates that we did not do as well as Am J Epidemiol and Epidemiology in 2007 that has dramatically reduced the number of papers it publishes

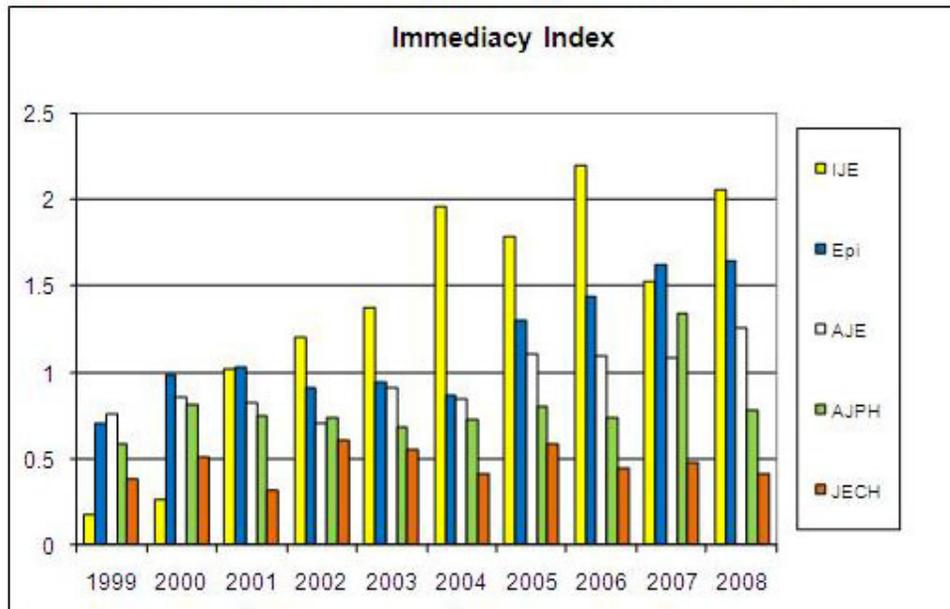
Table 3b: Percentage of material published in Lancet, American Journal of Epidemiology and International Journal of Epidemiology receiving zero citations (total number of articles) and the highest number of citations (**in bold**) for a single article, 2005-2007. Source: Web of Science, accessed 20 July 2009.

Journal	2005	2006	2007
Lancet	39% (1699) <b>1158cites</b>	44 % ( 1857) <b>528 cites</b>	48 % (1711) <b>213 cites</b>
American Journal of Epidemiology	66 % (950 ) <b>161 cites</b>	78% (1355) <b>70 cites</b>	64% (1007) <b>54 cites</b>
International Journal of Epidemiology	17% (325) <b>104cites</b>	13% (268) <b>88cites</b>	23% (243) <b>33 cites</b>
Epidemiology	72% (556) <b>128 cites</b>	18% (144) <b>39 cites</b>	20% (129) <b>51 cites</b>

**Figure 1: Impact factors for a range of epidemiology journals, 1999-2008**



**Figure 2: Immediacy index for a range of epidemiology journals, 1999-2008**



Reviewing the top cited papers from 2004, it is apparent that citations to the work we publish continue to accrue over a long time period. However, some papers not appearing in the top 10 last year have come into the list (Kawachi: Health by Association; Wendel-Vos Meta-analysis of physical activity and stroke) in 2009 (Table 4).

**Table 4. Top 10 cited 2004 published articles**

Cites by 2009	Cites by 2008	First Author	Title	
106	87	Davey Smith, Ebrahim S	Mendelian randomization: prospects, potentials, and limitations	Vol. 33 (1) p.30
102	81	Szreter, S,	Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health	Vol 33 (4) p.650
67	-	Kawachi I.	Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health - Commentary: Reconciling the three accounts of social capital	Vol 33 (4) p.682
56	42	Yuyun, MF	Microalbuminuria independently predicts all-cause and cardiovascular mortality in a British population: The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer in Norfolk (EPIC-Norfolk) population study	Vol 33 (1) p.189
51	38	Park HS	The metabolic syndrome and associated lifestyle factors among South Korean adults	Vol 33 (2) p.328
50	39	Borrell LN	Neighbourhood characteristics and mortality in the atherosclerosis risk in communities study	Vol 33 (2) P. 298
42	35	Kuh D	Childhood cognitive ability and deaths up until middle age: a post-war birth cohort study	Vol 33 (2) P.408
42	34	Leung, MW	Community based participatory research: a promising approach for increasing epidemiology's relevance in the 21st century	Vol 33 (3) p.499
42	32	Raso, G	Multiple parasite infections and their relationship to self-reported morbidity in a community of rural Cote d'Ivoire	Vol 33 (5) p.1092
41	-	Wendel-Vos, GCW	Physical activity and stroke. A meta-analysis of observational data	Vol 33 (4) p.787

Source: Web of Knowledge accessed 18.6.09

Among our top cited articles from 2000-2009 it is apparent that commissioned material is making a major contribution to our citations (Table 5). While two-thirds of the papers contributing citations to the 2008 impact factor were submitted articles, cohort profiles and commentaries made substantial contributions.

**Table 5. Top 10 Cited Articles 2000-2009**

Article	Citations
1. Davey Smith G, Ebrahim S'Mendelian randomization': can genetic epidemiology contribute to understanding environmental determinants of disease? 32 (1): 1-22 2003	287
2. Barker DJP, Eriksson JG, Forsen T, et al.Fetal origins of adult disease: strength of effects and biological basis 31 (6): 1235-1239 DEC 2002	259
3. Ben-Shlomo Y, Kuh DA life course approach to chronic disease epidemiology: conceptual models, empirical challenges and interdisciplinary perspectives 31: 285-9	209
4. Botterweck AAM, Schouten LJ, Volovics A, et al.Trends in incidence of adenocarcinoma of the oesophagus and gastric cardia in ten European countries 29 (4): 645-654 2000	191
5. Robinson KA, Dickersin KDevelopment of a highly sensitive search strategy for the retrieval of reports of controlled trials using PubMed 31 (1): 150-153 2002	183
6. Vartiainen E, Jousilahti P, Alfthan G, et al.Cardiovascular risk factor changes in Finland, 1972-1997 29 (1): 49-56 2000	167
7. Krieger NTheories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: an ecosocial perspective 30 (4): 668-677 2001	158
8. Elbourne DR, Altman DG, Giggins JPT, Curtin F, Worthington HV, Vail A Meta-analyses involving cross-over trials: methodological issues 31(1) 140-149. 2002	152
9. Harding JE The nutritional basis of the fetal origins of adult disease 30: 15-23 2001	149
10. Mackenbach, JP; Bos, V; Andersen, O, et al. Widening socioeconomic inequalities in mortality in six Western European countries 32 (5) 830-837. 2003	142

Source: Web of Knowledge accessed 18.6.09

Overall, editorially commissioned material made up a third of the relevant citations (Table 6a). The top 20 papers contributing to the 2008 impact factor are shown in Table 6b.

**Table 6a: Citations and contribution to 2008 impact factor of articles by type**

Article type, 2005	Number	Cites	% of 2008 IF
Articles	296	938	63.1
Commentaries	175	168	11.3
Reviews	11	144	9.7
Cohort profiles	24	147	9.9
Editorials	37	57	3.8
Other material	22	33	2.2

**Table 6b: Top 20 papers contributing to 2008 Impact Factor**

Cites	Title
37	Cohort profile: 1958 British Birth Cohort (National Child Development Study)
33	The emerging epidemic of obesity in developing countries
29	Insight into the CRP-coronary event association using Mendelian randomization
24	Evidence of bias in estimates of influenza vaccine effectiveness in seniors
24	A systematic review of empirical research on self-reported racism and health
22	What aspects of body fat are particularly hazardous and how do we measure them?
21	The burden of malaria mortality among African children in the year 2000
21	Cohort profile: The Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study (MoBa)
20	Food environments and obesity - neighbourhood or nation?
19	Fibrinogen and coronary heart disease: test of causality by 'Mendelian randomization'
18	Cohort profile: 1946 National Birth Cohort
18	Estimating the causes of 4 million neonatal deaths in the year 2000
16	Trends and disparities in socioeconomic and behavioural characteristics, life expectancy
16	Prevalence of resistance to nevirapine in mothers and children metanalysis
14	Functional status is a confounder of the association of influenza vaccine and risk of all cause mortality in seniors
14	The epidemiology of chronic syndromes that are frequently unexplained: do they have common associated factors?
14	A comparison of two dietary instruments for evaluating the fat-breast cancer relationship
14	Commentary: The power of the unrelenting impact factor - Is it a force for good or harm?
13	Cohort profile: The Southampton Women's Survey
13	Dietary patterns and cardiovascular disease mortality in Japan: a prospective cohort study

Our high rejection rate has stabilised at 85-86% reflecting our efforts to improve quality. As table 7 demonstrates rejection rates for the IJE increased substantially (from 68% to 83%) from 1999 to 2001.

**Table 7. Rejection Rates, International Journal of Epidemiology, 2000-2009**

Year	Rejected/Submitted	Percent
2000	422/546	77.3%
2001	548/664	82.5%
2002	497/625	79.5%
2003	459/583	78.7%
2004	548/659	83.2%
2005	667/790	84.4%
2006	670/786	85.2%
2007	634/745	85.1%
2008	793/918	86.3%
2009*	438/442	99.1%

\* to 30<sup>th</sup> June Excludes from the denominator papers being reviewed, revised or withdrawn

As shown in Table 8, the improvement in the mean time taken to notify authors of a decision has been maintained and is now about as efficient as it is likely to be possible to achieve without paying reviewers to turn manuscripts around within two weeks.

**Table 8. Mean time (days) taken to notify authors of a decision, International Journal of Epidemiology, 2000-2009**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*
No review.	28	26	22	18	18	18	18	18	14	14
Peer review: receipt to decision letter	83	72	75	81	79	79	68	83	78	73

\* up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009

The continent of origin of the first author of papers submitted is shown in table 9. The pattern of submissions has not shown much change with the exception of an increase in papers from Latin America, reflecting the special issue of August 2008. As in previous reports, the caveat must be given that the table is based on the country of the first author, and not where the work was carried out. The first author may be from Europe or North America, but the study may have been carried out in a developing country.

**Table 9. Continent of Origin of Papers (determined by corresponding author)**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*
<b>Europe</b>	296 (44.1%)	378 (47.2%)	369 (47.0%)	363 (48.1%)	392 (41.1%)	243 (44.1%)
<b>North America</b>	139 (20.7%)	182 (22.7%)	208 (26.5%)	168 (22.2%)	214 (22.4%)	107 (19.4%)
<b>Asia</b>	127 (18.9%)	127 (15.9%)	123 (15.7%)	111 (14.7%)	159 (16.7%)	131 (23.7%)
<b>Africa</b>	22 (3.3%)	25 (3.1%)	17 (2.2%)	13 (1.7%)	20 (2%)	15 (3%)
<b>Australasia</b>	54 (8.1%)	60 (7.5%)	43 (5.5%)	62 (8.2%)	71 (7.4%)	33 (6%)
<b>Central &amp; South America</b>	33 (4.9%)	29 (3.6%)	25 (3.2%)	37 (4.9%)	98 (10.3%)	21 (4%)
<b>All Countries</b>	<b>671</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>801</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>785</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>754</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>954</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>550</b> <b>(100%)</b>

\* to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009

We have also examined the pattern of outright rejections and rejection after review by country. Numbers have been aggregated from 2007 to June 2009 to produce more stable estimates. Overall 70% of papers are rejected without review and a further 10% after peer review. Latin American papers show rather more rejected following peer review but this reflects an excess of submissions for the special issue for the region. are small but it would appear that for developing country regions we are rejecting outright rather more often than for developed countries in 2008 and 2009. This probably reflects the increasing quality of papers we are now receiving from Europe and North America. However, following review we are rejecting a higher proportion of European and North American papers than developing country origin papers (see Table 10). Papers from Asia, Africa, Australasia and Middle East are more likely to be rejected outright but less likely to be rejected after review than expected.

**Table 10: Outcome of papers submitted by continent of origin (determined by country of corresponding author), 2007- June 2009**

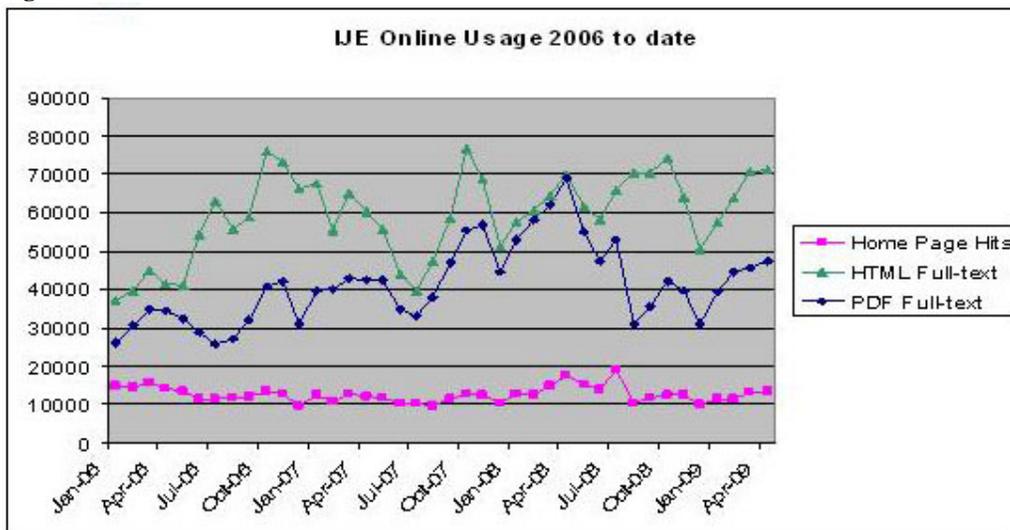
	Outright Rejections		Rejected after review
	N	% (N) of area submissions	N (%)
Europe	678	68%	(999) 111 (11 %)
North America	350	72%	(489) 48 (10 %)
Asia & Middle East	327	82%	(401) 34 (8 %)
Africa	37	77%	(48) 4 (8 %)
Australasia	128	77%	(166) 9 (5%)
Central & Southern America	111	71%	(156) 23 (15 %)
Overall	1631	71%	(2259) 229 (10%)

Chi-square, 12.4, dof 5, p=0.029

### Web use and citations

We have examined the use of web-based material. Web downloads of pdf files and full text downloads have continued to increase during 2007. Combined downloads reached an average of 112,000 a month in 2008.

**Figure 3: Pdf and HTML full text downloads from web in 2006-2008**



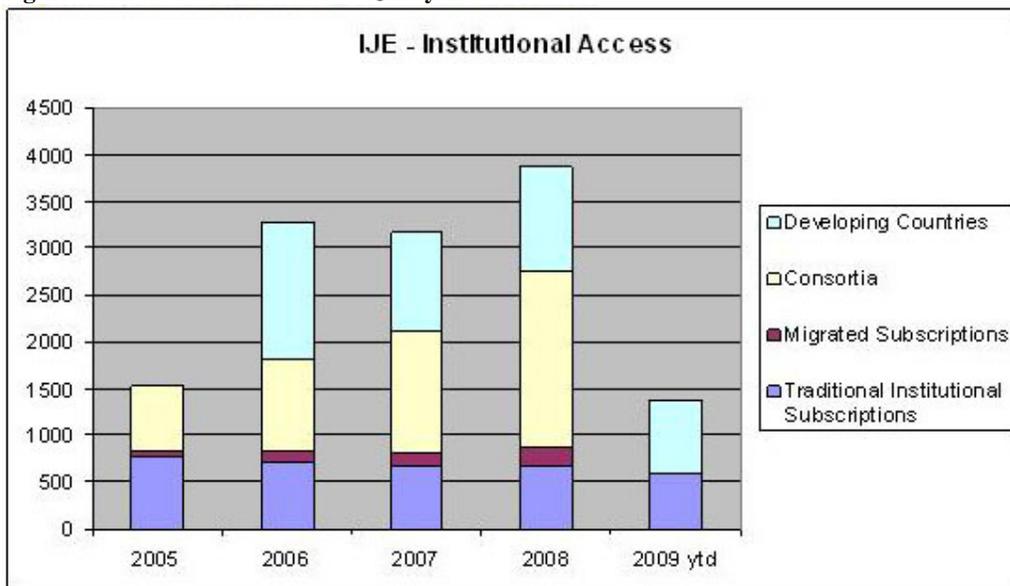
## Work Load

Barbara Coatesworth, Editorial Assistant, has continued to provide an exceptional level of commitment to the work of the journal. Workload is not directly proportional to the number of manuscripts received although these are increasing this year. Directly commissioned educational articles, reviews, commentaries and editorials – which increase the readability of the journal – contribute a substantial workload. Production of special issues and supplements is also a major workload. In these cases, authors have to be nurtured into producing work of high quality and Barbara has managed this process extremely well with virtually no commissioned work being lost.

## IEA Membership and IJE circulation

It is gratifying that OUP's strategy of consortia/multisite package subscriptions for libraries is producing greater access and growth in access over 2007 levels. Free online access for 57 of the world's poorest countries is free and in a further 64 countries greatly reduced rates are available. The consortia arrangements are ensuring that access to IJE is increasing in spite of libraries reducing their subscriptions, a practice occurring across all journals. These trends are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Institutes with access to IJE by mode of access



## The future

The profile and standing of the journal continues to improve. Shah Ebrahim and George Davey Smith will be based largely in New Delhi, India for the coming year. Balancing the editorial work between Bristol and New Delhi has worked well with some editorial meetings held using Skype and some during visits to Bristol. Using the new resources for the New Delhi editorial office we have taken on an important supplement issue for UNICEF on child health which we expect will be an important source reference for evidence based health services. We request that our funding be increased in line with inflation for the coming year.

*Shah Ebrahim & George Davey Smith*  
*August 2009*