

EMERGENCIAS: results of readership opinion survey

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In 2007 the project EMERGER¹ was launched and many of its original goals have now been achieved. During these years there has been a succession of changes that have affected all levels of the organization and management of the journal EMERGENCIAS². This process has culminated recently with the publication of its first impact factor (IF)³, which has undoubtedly and amply rewarded the efforts of both the Editorial Board and the Spanish Society of Emergency Medicine (SEMES)¹⁻⁴. In addition, this also rewards all those researchers who published their work in the journal with qualified and quantified recognition.

These changes, together with a firm decision to maintain free access to the electronic version of the journal in Spanish and English, means that its visibility and number of visits from all over the world have grown exponentially⁵. Consequently, it is logical to assume that the number and possibly the type of our readers have changed or will change in the near future. Biomedical journals have many indirect forms of measuring the interest of their regular and potential readers, such as bibliometric and quality markers of their own and other quality journals in the country, language or specialty, to evaluate the evolution in the number of subscribers, in the amount of manuscripts submitted or the availability of reviewers, or the number of visits to or downloads from their websites⁶. But none of these can replace a direct survey for detailed reader opinion^{7,8}, and this is probably the best tool to gauge the interests of readers⁹.

In 2006, during the mandate of Dr. Moya Mir as Editor, readers rated the sections called "Reviews" and "Special Articles" as the best of the journal (7.8 out of 10), and many felt these sec-

tions should be expanded¹⁰. Now we have sounded our readers on their evaluation of each of the journal's sections, as well as on changes introduced in recent years under the project EMERGER. We developed a structured questionnaire with both closed and open questions that was made available online through the SEMES website from April 25 to July 31, 2011. The questionnaire was answered by 175 readers, 66% of them before publication of the journal's impact factor. Most (96.6%) of the respondents were members of SEMES (only 3.4% were subscribers) and 69.1% consulted all sections. As is clear from this and the data presented in Table 1, it is a sample of regular readers, and their responses suggest that the scientific and editorial quality and practical utility of the journal was satisfactory for the majority: two-thirds were satisfied or very satisfied and would not change anything, except for small additions. The most highly rated sections, coinciding with those that readers believed could be expanded, were "Reviews", as in 2006, and "Consensus Documents" (8.4 points and 65.7% respectively), while interest in "Original articles" has grown significantly (8 points, and 57.1% of respondents believed could be expanded) (Table 2). It should be noted that the sample did not only consist of regular readers of EMERGENCIAS; there were also those who sporadically browse the content and occasionally read a particular article (under-represented in the sample), as well as reader-investigators "hunting" for items of particular interest, usually through search engines, but not regular readers of the journal.

The comments made in response to the open questions contained many suggestions and re-

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Table 1. Some questions and the responses to the questionnaire given by readers of EMERGENCIAS

Question	Total Responses: 175 Percentage (n)
1. ¿How many issues do you read per year?	
1-2	1.2% (2)
3-4	23.4% (41)
5-6	75.4% (132)
2. What format do you normally read?	
The printed version	40% (70)
The electronic version	6.9% (12)
Both versions	53.1% (93)
3. Since 2007, how would you describe the changes in EMERGENCIAS?	
Little	5.7% (10)
Moderate	21.7% (38)
Evident	48.6% (85)
Very clear	24% (42)
4. Since 2007, how would you rate the changes in EMERGENCIAS?	
Very negative	1.7% (3)
Negative	0.6% (1)
Insignificant	3.4% (6)
Positive	60.6% (106)
Very positive	33.7% (59)
5. Do you like the current typographic presentation of EMERGENCIAS?	
Yes	95.4% (167)
No	4.6% (8)
6. Did you know that EMERGENCIAS has been included in WoS and JCR and that by mid-2011 it will have its own IF?	
Yes	89.1% (156)
No	10.9% (19)
7. How would you rate the inclusion of EMERGENCIAS in WoS and JCR?	
Very negative	0.6% (1)
Negative	0% (0)
Insignificant	0% (0)
Positive	16.5% (29)
Very positive	82.9% (145)
8. Do you think that the inclusion in WoS and JCR will improve the visibility and impact of articles published in EMERGENCIAS?	
Yes	97.7% (171)
No	2.3% (4)
9. How do you feel about the free availability of EMERGENCIAS' electronic version?	
Negative	4% (7)
Insignificant	4.6% (8)
Positive	91.4% (160)
10. How do you feel about the inclusion of the English version of the journal?	
Negative	4% (7)
Insignificant	7.4% (13)
Positive	88.6% (155)
11. Since 2007, have you submitted any work to EMERGENCIAS?	
Yes	62.9% (110)
No	37.1% (65)

WoS: Web of Science, JCR: Journal Citation Reports; IF: Impact Factor.

quests, which no doubt serve to inform the Editorial Board about reader demand for future editions of the journal, and this deserves a separate paragraph. For example, some of the most frequent suggestions were: to establish a monthly edition of EMERGENCIAS; to improve the presen-

tation (in terms of format, pictures, etc.); to increase the presence and weight of work authored by nursing professionals, and by pre-hospital emergency professionals (doctors, nurses and technicians); to create a specific section aimed at residents of Emergency Medicine; to diversify the number of authors and institutions who publish regularly; to improve the document manager and publication time; to facilitate or create a section under the tutelage of the Editorial Board containing advice to new writers on the proper development of a scientific manuscript; to publish more reviews, consensus documents and protocols for clinical practice; to split Letters to the Editor into two sections (one for comments or replies to scientific articles and another for case reports or studies on specific problems); to promote and enhance the publication of foreign authors and other specialty clinicians that provide alternative views; to include a section on a "problematic case or image" commented on by an expert in the field; and to consider the renewal of the different Review Committees and credit the reviewers.

Although it is impossible to address all these suggestions here, readers can be assured they will be debated by the editorial board and, as far as possible, adopted. It is even possible that some of these or other suggestions made (clinical cases, explanation of techniques, programs for upcoming conventions and scientific activities, forums, protocols, etc.) can be included in the SEMES and/or EMERGENCIAS websites. In any case, given the interest aroused among its regular readers, it is clear that our journal is far from exhausting its potential.

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Table 2. Evaluation of the different sections of EMERGENCIAS

Section	Evaluation (from 1 to 10) Arithmetic mean	Percentage of readers who would expand the section
Sections that publish articles deemed "citable" by JCR*		
Originals	8	57.1%
Brief Originals	7.8	48.6%
Clinical Notes	7.1	38.9%
Reviews and Consensus Documents	8.4	65.7%
Special Articles	7.7	42.3%
Sections that publish articles deemed "not citable" by JCR**		
Editorial	7	10.3%
Views	7.1	22.9%
Images	7.5	54.3%
Letters to the Editor	7	25.1%
Sections associated with articles published in EMERGENCIAS***		
"EMERGENCIAS en 5 minutos"	7.6	41.7%
Continuous Training Program	7.7	49.7%

** The articles published in these sections are taken into account in the denominator for calculating the impact factor, since Journal Citation Reports (JCR) considers these as important scientific papers. **The articles in these sections are not taken into account in the denominator for calculating the impact factor since JCR considers these articles as being of less scientific importance. ***These sections do not contain articles as such but comment on the articles published in other sections of the journal as an additional service to readers.