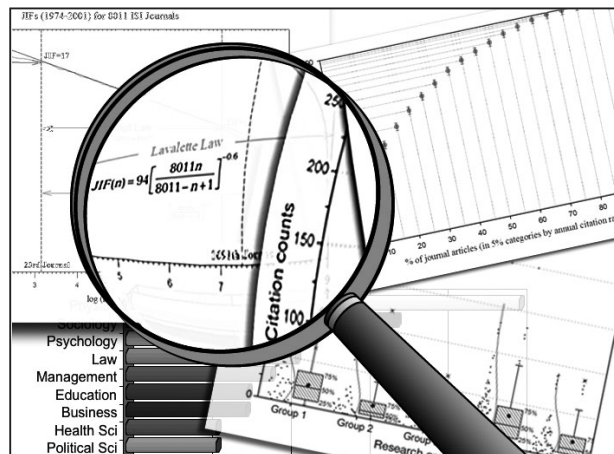

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The use and misuse of bibliometric indices in evaluating scholarly performance

Editors:

Howard I. Browman, Konstantinos I. Stergiou



THEME SECTIONS of Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics (ESEP) provide a forum for the interdisciplinary discussion of specific, current topics in the field.

This first Theme Section of ESEP considers how quantifying the relative performance of individual scholars, groups of scholars, departments, institutions, provinces/states/regions and countries has become an integral part of decision-making over research policy, funding allocations, awarding of grants, faculty hirings, promotions and tenures. Bibliometric indices (based mainly upon citation counts), such as the h-index and the journal impact factor, are heavily relied upon in

such assessments. There is a growing consensus, and a deep concern, that these indices—more-and-more often used as a replacement for the informed judgement of peers—are misunderstood and are, therefore, often misinterpreted and misused. The articles in this ESEP Theme Section present a range of perspectives on these issues. Alternative approaches, tools and metrics are presented that will hopefully lead to a more balanced role for these instruments.

We are pleased to make all articles of this first Theme Section of ESEP available online with Open Access.

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Nordbunte 23 (+3, 5, 28, 30), 21385 Oldendorf/Luhe, Germany
Tel: (+49) (0)4132 7127, Fax: (+49) (0)4132 8883
Email: ir@int-res.com, Internet: www.int-res.com

