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Five years by the numbers: What an independent bibliometric study tells us about the Journal of the Foot & Ankle

In this issue, a group from Duke University School of Medicine, led by Julieta Brué and senior author Cesar de Cesar Netto, publishes the first bibliometric analysis of the Journal of the Foot & Ankle (JFA) since its 2020 reformulation⁽¹⁾. An outside team choosing to examine our journal's output in such detail is itself a form of recognition, and the picture it draws is one we are glad to share with our readers, authors, and reviewers.

Between January 2020 and December 2025, JFA published 334 peer-reviewed research articles, averaging 56 per year and rising to 73 in 2025 alone – a trajectory of sustained, accelerating growth. Original articles accounted for nearly 70% of that output, and the share of systematic reviews and other higher-evidence document types has been increasing, a shift that reflects the growing methodological maturity of the manuscripts we receive. More than a thousand unique authors, a mean of 5.2 per article, have contributed to this body of work, evidence of the collaborative culture our specialty has built around the journal.

Geographically, the study confirms what our editorial board has long understood: JFA is a Brazilian-anchored but genuinely Ibero-American journal. Brazil accounts for 55.4% of articles, with meaningful contributions from Argentina, the United States, Spain, Chile, Mexico, Portugal, and Colombia. International collaboration, present in 10.5% of articles and reaching 14.3% in some years, shows this regional identity is not insular – it is a platform from which our authors engage the wider foot and ankle community. The authors note, and we find it worth underlining, that only 2.62% of editorial board seats across major international foot and ankle journals are held by researchers from Latin America and the Caribbean. Against that backdrop, a journal with fully regional editorial governance, authorship reach across a dozen countries, and a leadership ranking spanning Brazil, the United States, Argentina, and South Africa is not a peripheral outlet. It is infrastructure for our specialty.

The citation analysis – 272 accumulated citations and a journal h-index of 6 – is, understandably, the most modest of these findings, and we present it as exactly what it is: the early footprint of a young, not-yet-indexed journal. Indexation status, more than study quality itself, is among the strongest predictors of citation accrual, and citation lag in medical publishing typically runs six to eight years; more than half of the articles counted here were published in 2024 or later, so the clock on most of our recent output has barely started. The data show the raw material for growth: rising volume, rising rigor, and a Diamond Open Access model that removes cost as a barrier to publishing and reading alike – a model few regional journals sustain and one that has become a defining part of our identity.

We are highlighting this study now because 2026 is the year JFA is pursuing indexation in SciELO. Bibliometric self-knowledge is a precondition for that process, not a substitute for it, and this independent analysis gives the journal, its editorial board, and the evaluating committees a transparent, reproducible



account of five years of production, authorship, geographic reach, and citation behavior – exactly the evidence a journal is asked to produce when it applies.

We are grateful to Brué, Micicoi, Rodrigues, Umrethiya, Rachayont, Pozzessere, and de Cesar Netto for undertaking this work rigorously and for choosing to publish it with us. None of the numbers above are the achievement of an editorial

office alone – they belong to the surgeons and researchers who have trusted JFA with their work, to our unpaid reviewers, and to the ABTPé and FLAMeCIPP communities that sustain its Diamond Open Access mission. As we move toward SciELO indexation, our commitment remains the one this study describes: a journal that lowers barriers, preserves regional research leadership, and continues to raise the evidentiary bar of what it publishes.

Reference

1. Brué J, Micicoi L, Rodrigues V, Umrethiya V, Rachayont K, Pozzessere E, de Cesar Netto C. Five-year bibliometric analysis of the Journal of the Foot & Ankle (2020-2025). J Foot Ankle. 2026;20(2):e2132.