COMMENT

Letters to the editor

Send your letters to the Editor, *British Dental Journal*, 64 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8YS. Email bdj@bda.org.
Priority will be given to letters less than 500 words long. Authors must sign the letter, which may be edited for reasons of space.

Scientific research

Author-level Altmetrics?

Sir, author-level metrics reflect the publication performance as well as the academic standing of an individual. They are particularly useful when devising promotion or hiring strategies as well as facilitating grants and funding opportunities.[1] Based on historic knowledge, the author-level metrics commonly known to us are the *i-10* index, *h* index and *g* index; however, there are certain limitations to their use. Based on citation counts, they measure only the scientific impact of a publication. Secondly, it may take several years for a publication to be cited, thus the influence of a researcher may be underestimated.[2]

Altmetrics has emerged as a practical alternative although it is an article-level metric that provides no information regarding the social or the scientific impact of a researcher.[3] Therefore, if these measures of impact are to complement the traditional bibliometrics, we propose that there should be an author-level Altmetrics that would reflect the real-time existence of a researcher since the records on the database are updated daily.

To capture the online attention around scholarly content, various tools are available; namely, the Altmetric Explorer and Plum Analytics amongst many others. Similarly, different journals have their preferences regarding subscriptions to these tools.[2] Altmetric Explorer is the most used database for this purpose and has a specific algorithm where each source carries a different weightage, based on which it calculates an aggregated score.[4] The same algorithm may be utilised in calculating the author-level Altmetrics; however, in doing so, there are some concerns. Firstly, the database will pick records of those publishers only that subscribe to this database, thereby creating disparity among researchers. Secondly, there are various domains to search through the explorer; namely, the author's name, affiliation and/or ORCID id, which might pose a few problems. There may be more than one individual having a similar name, thereby leading to the problem of name disambiguity.[4] Likewise, the researcher's profile may not always be updated in terms of the author's affiliation and ORCID id, resulting in overciting the information.

This letter is intended to draw the attention of readers to the need for having an author-level Altmetrics. We suggest that there should be a universal author-level Altmetrics not subject to any of these limitations and that may be made available on the individual's Google Scholar profile alongside other metrics ensuring easy availability of the resource.

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Paediatric dentistry

Latex pacifiers

Sir, natural rubber latex contains proteins which, after repeated contact, can lead to sensitisation or clinical allergy type 1. Studies in Denmark have shown a clear relation between the use of natural rubber latex and the prevalence of natural rubber latex allergy. After implementation of national guidelines to reduce exposure to natural rubber latex, the prevalence of sensitisation and allergy decreased substantially.[1]

We have noticed that lately, natural rubber latex pacifiers are becoming popular. The parents who buy these pacifiers do so because they consider them environmentally friendly and free of chemicals such as PVC and phthalates. However, it can be assumed that frequent sucking on a pacifier of natural rubber latex will increase the prevalence of natural rubber latex sensitisation and allergy.

In addition, these natural rubber latex pacifiers more often have a conventional form, unlike the so-called orthodontic pacifiers designed with a flattened nipple to simulate mothers' nipple anatomy. Conventionally designed pacifiers appear to be associated with an increased prevalence of malocclusion in primary dentition compared to the orthodontic type of pacifier.[2]

We believe that general dental practitioners and paediatric dentists should discuss these potential risks with parents of babies.

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Diversity and inclusion

Marital extraction

Sir, on a lighter note and in response to your correspondence about inappropriate and questionable comments made by a 'macho' man undergoing dental treatment by a female dentist, I recall an incident, nearly 40 years ago, that caused some amusement at the time but on reflection could now be viewed as 'sexism'.[1,2]

I was a lecturer in oral surgery at the time and my husband was a mature but junior