

TSACO's Third Anniversary: where we were, where we are, and where we're going

Timothy Fabian

Time flies when you're having fun! It is hard to believe the inaugural publication of *Trauma Surgery & Acute Care Open* (TSACO) was 3 years ago. I assumed leadership as editor not quite knowing how things would go, or even what open access publishing was really all about. It certainly was not clear to me, or to the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma leadership, how this relatively new form of academic publishing would take hold, since our potential readership was accustomed to traditional subscription print publication. Crossing the chasm of authors being responsible for article publishing charges seemed daunting.

Let us first look at acceptance by investigators. Publication has progressed nicely during the past 3 years, with a 159% increase in submitted articles from 2016 to 2018, so it appears my early concerns regarding acceptance of open access has been largely alleviated. We are on solid ground.

When I have had the opportunity to promote the journal, there are two major advantages of open access that I emphasize: *rapid publication* and *extremely wide dissemination*. No subscription is required—anyone in the world with access to the internet can read the articles. That provides tremendous exposure for our authors' work. But have those purported advantages of open access actually panned out? Relative to the advantage of rapid publication, the average time from submission to publication is 5 weeks. That time interval includes peer review, author response to review, and article production. While we continue to strive for further reduction, I think the early endorsement of open access to minimize publication times has been justified.

Perhaps the most exciting accomplishment relates to the area of broad distribution and uptake of the articles published in TSACO. We have seen extraordinary growth in our usage (figure 2). Talk

about wide dissemination of research! The numbers are striking. Consider those numbers compared with distribution of subscription print journals—there is really no comparison. So beyond the advantage of rapid publication, the even more important theoretical advantage of open access for broad global distribution has been fulfilled and the numbers are growing figure 2.

TSACO is now tracking article influence through altmetrics, which accompany each article. Altmetric is a data analytics platform that enables users to track and assess the performance of online materials in traditional and online media and assigns a score to each publication in its database that quantitatively represents its level of exposure. Like an impact factor, an altmetrics score can be understood as a representation of a publication's influence,

but in contrast to a journal impact factor, it is a measure of an individual article's influence outside of traditional publications, focusing instead on new outlets and social media.

In 2018, TSACO achieved indexing on PubMed Central and Scopus. We are now working toward an impact factor and hope to add Web of Science to our growing list of indexing services in the next 2 years.

There have been a couple of significant editorial additions to the journal I would like to note. An important accomplishment in 2018 was the selection of TSACO as the official journal for the Fourth World Trauma Congress held in San Diego, California, last September. It was a stimulating international forum and there have been several excellent articles published from the meeting. Also in 2018, the journal added a Case of the Month series. Dr David Feliciano has led this endeavor, addressing the important area of vascular injuries focusing on diagnosis and surgical management. In the next year the editorial team plans for TSACO to make infographics a major component of the journal. Visual abstracts will be a significant tool for promoting our articles in social media.

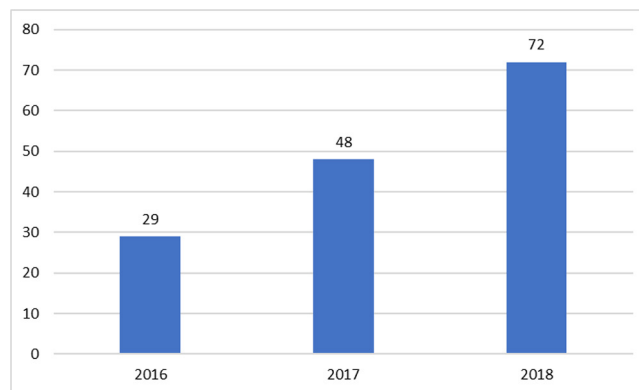


Figure 1 TSACO published papers, 2016-2018

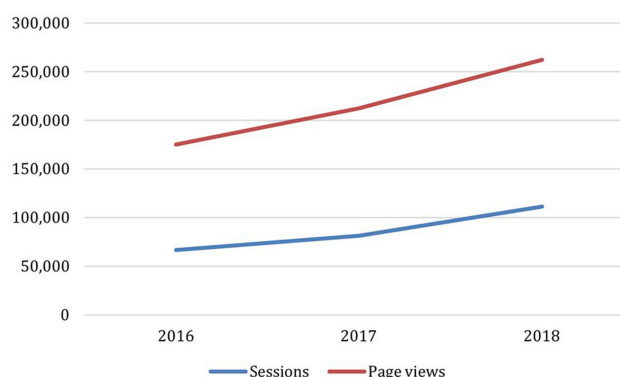


Figure 2 TSACO usage data, 2016-2018 (Google Analytics)

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