

Dear officials of Clarivate,

It is with great pleasure to introduce that we are the group of Practitioners of Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine community in Republic of Korea. We have recently learned the suppression of FSI Genetics (FSIG) from 2019 Journal Citations Report.

It is believed that the company has painstakingly considered various circumstances according to the guidelines that you have determined to reach the decision of suppression of FSIG. However, we are concerned such decision is very likely to cause other aftereffects. As you may recognize, FSIG is a very significant journal in our area of discipline. The suppression can result in serious side effects not only for the journal itself, but also for our on-going and future research endeavors. Given the specificity of our field, we face this issue as rather serious and complicated; which had led us to share our thoughts and perceptions through this letter.

Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine are extremely distinctive fields, specialized in both science and medicine, and relevant professionals possess distinct social roles. It is known to be a highly specialized, which takes a crucial part in society. This particular discipline is area that requires the convergence of not only scientific and medical knowledge, but also comprehensive understanding of social science and humanities. Because of this specificity, the number of professionals in the pertinent field is extremely limited compared to other scientific fields, and the practical uses of conducted researches are very explicit. We would also like to highlight that the field of Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine are committed and largely contributing not only to secure legal and scientific evidence in countless of criminal cases, but also in various other parts, such as paternity testing and missing person identification.

The field of Genetics, the scientific research area in a spotlight, has gone through a dramatic, rapid development in recent years. Forensic Genetics, in particular, has also made rapid progress and notable achievements over the past 30 years. The separation of FSIG from FSI and its remarkable expansion reflects the current research and development trends in this discipline. We cannot emphasize enough that the FSIG journal has been at the forefront of the development of forensic science, and the outstanding publications have resulted in continuous escalation in Impact Factor.

The need and interest for forensic science is increasing world-wide. Such inclination can be observed not only in the field of forensic genetics but also in other fields of forensic science. We admit that there can be downside from this rapid progress. Perhaps, the self-citation that Clarivate has pointed, can take a part in this unexpected downside. We believe Clarivate understands the significance and various meanings of IF better than we do. And also what it means for the journals to have high IF, and how the preferences of scholars will change depending on such numbers.

It is understood that you raise concerns regarding self-citation and how the board of Clarivate may view this incident. We, indeed, believe that it is something that journal needs to properly address regarding this in order for FSIG to further prosper. Also, it is unreasonable to devalue general policy and guidelines only stressing the specificity and exceptional circumstances, especially knowing this is the discipline which must consider legal utility or procedure along with expansion of knowledge in research field. However, we must say we are disappointed in Clarivate's decision. Here are the following remarks we would like to address: First of all, regarding the self-citation matter, it can be attributable to complex factors such as 1) the rapid development of biological genetics in recent years, 2) increasing importance of forensic genetics due to the expansion of social institutions such as Criminal DNA databases, 3) lack of variety of publishing journals in this discipline, and 4) probable claims that top-tier journals may face. Since the forensics field is fundamentally different from other research areas that have been studied for a longer period of time, it would be difficult to apply the conventional standards and judgements as they are.

We are also concerned that the Clarivate's following decision is very likely to cause several substantial aftereffects. The most important consequence is that these actions will not just simply result in suppression of the journal, but will lead to the possibility of this very discipline being undervalued. We fear that the consequences may instigate the denial of rapid progress and development of the forensic genetics field. If our discipline is undervalued not only as in academic roles but also as in social roles, including our dedication for constructing Criminal DNA Database, it may lead to critical social disputes. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the implications of this decision are not limited to the FSIG journals or forensic genetics. We are

concerned that forensic science and forensic medicine, as a whole, will be underappreciated and face various social side effects. As mentioned earlier, because forensic genetics is an integrated academic field that takes crucial part in our society, the Clarivate's decision concerning FSIG journal holds significant meaning that will impact in various area.

There are also other prominent journals in this relevant discipline. Some of those journals also have shown increase in IF. Nevertheless, this should not underrate the value of actively publishing journal despite the above concerns. We clearly acknowledge, to some extent, the significance of the issues Clarivate has pointed out in regards to FSIG. However, we strongly believe our esteemed Editorial Board members, whom desperately believe in the needs of this journal and social acknowledgement of the discipline, are more than capable of resolving this issue in a respected manner.

The meaning Impact Factor of the journal is not just reputed based on the number of citations, but also holds many other implicated aspects. And different journals would present different characteristics depending on the nature of discipline. The measures taken on academic journal is not only meant for journal itself, but may reflect upon the entire related discipline. For such reason, we hope Clarivate can reconsider and seek for positive resolution. In addition, we hope these efforts will be the stepping stone of fundamental improvement for the journal to be published more progressively in the future.

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