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## Journal articles boosting impact factor

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A few years ago the *BMJ* reported on a journal asking authors to cite recent articles from the same journal in order to boost the journal's impact factor (IF).<sup>1</sup> Actually, the IF can be boosted in a more efficient way, and without seeking the cooperation of authors.

The recent edition of Thomson Reuters *Journal Citation Reports* announced an increase in the IF of *Cortex* from 4.058 in 2009 to an impressive 7.251 in 2010. A detailed analysis of the citation records indicates that, of the 1646 citations received in 2010 by *Cortex* articles originally published in 2008 and 2009, 821 (50%) are due to just four *Cortex* papers. These four papers

are not about "cognition and of the relationship between the nervous system and mental processes" (the scope of the journal, according to [www.cortexjournal.net/](http://www.cortexjournal.net/)) but about recent *Cortex* papers—their citation rate, nationality of authors, etc. If one disregards these four articles, the amended IF of *Cortex* for 2010 is just 3.7, less than it was in 2009.

1 Smith R. Journal accused of manipulating impact factor. *BMJ* 1997;314:461.

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