Finding Influential journals:

Journal Citation Reports (powered by Web of Science)

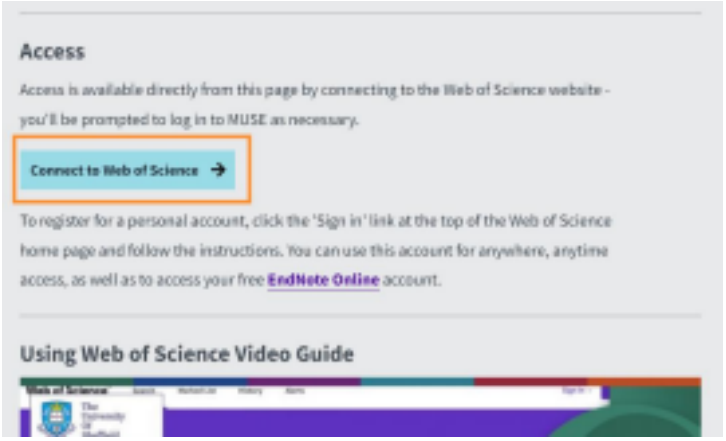
Journal Citation Reports uses citation data from Web of Science to help users compare academic journals. It is the source of the Journal Impact Factor metric and can be used to find the impact factor of any journal that has one, as well as a range of other citation metrics.

You can use it to look up citation data on individual journals, or view lists of journals in a particular subject area ranked according to various different metrics. This can help you to identify the highly-cited journals in your subject area.

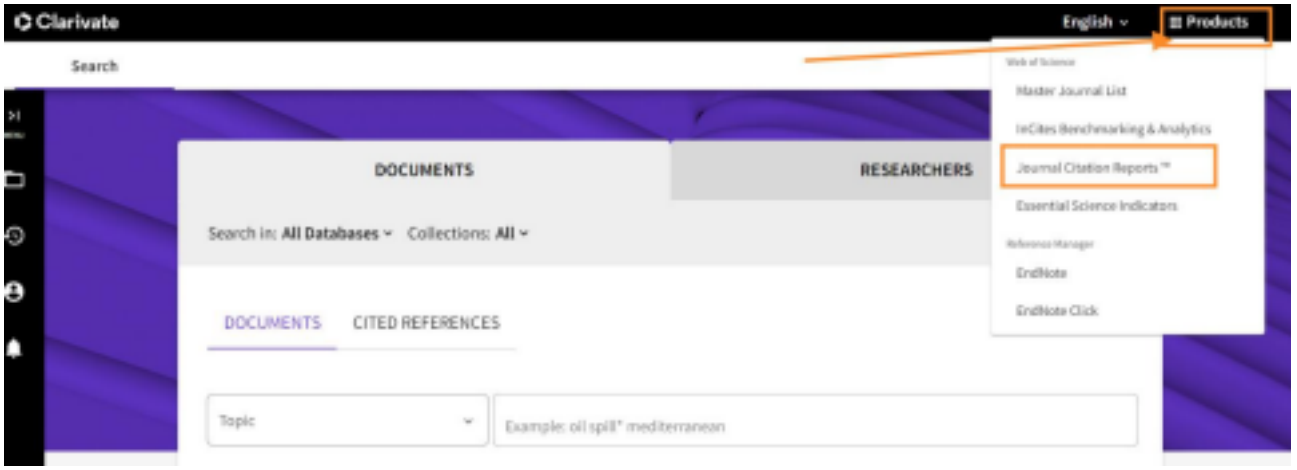
When comparing journals, it is always best to use a variety of methods and we recommend that you use Journal Citation Reports in conjunction with other journal ranking tools and alongside qualitative judgements.

Search for Web of Science via StarPlus, or go directly to:
https://students.sheffield.ac.uk/library/eresources/web-science.

From here, click Connect to Web of Science



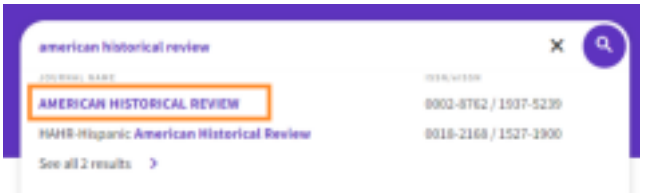
Once in **Web of Science**, click the **Products** menu at the top of the page, then select **Journal Citation Reports** from the list



This should bring you to the JCR homepage:

You can use JCR to look up citation data on individual

journals, or compare all the journals in a particular subject category.



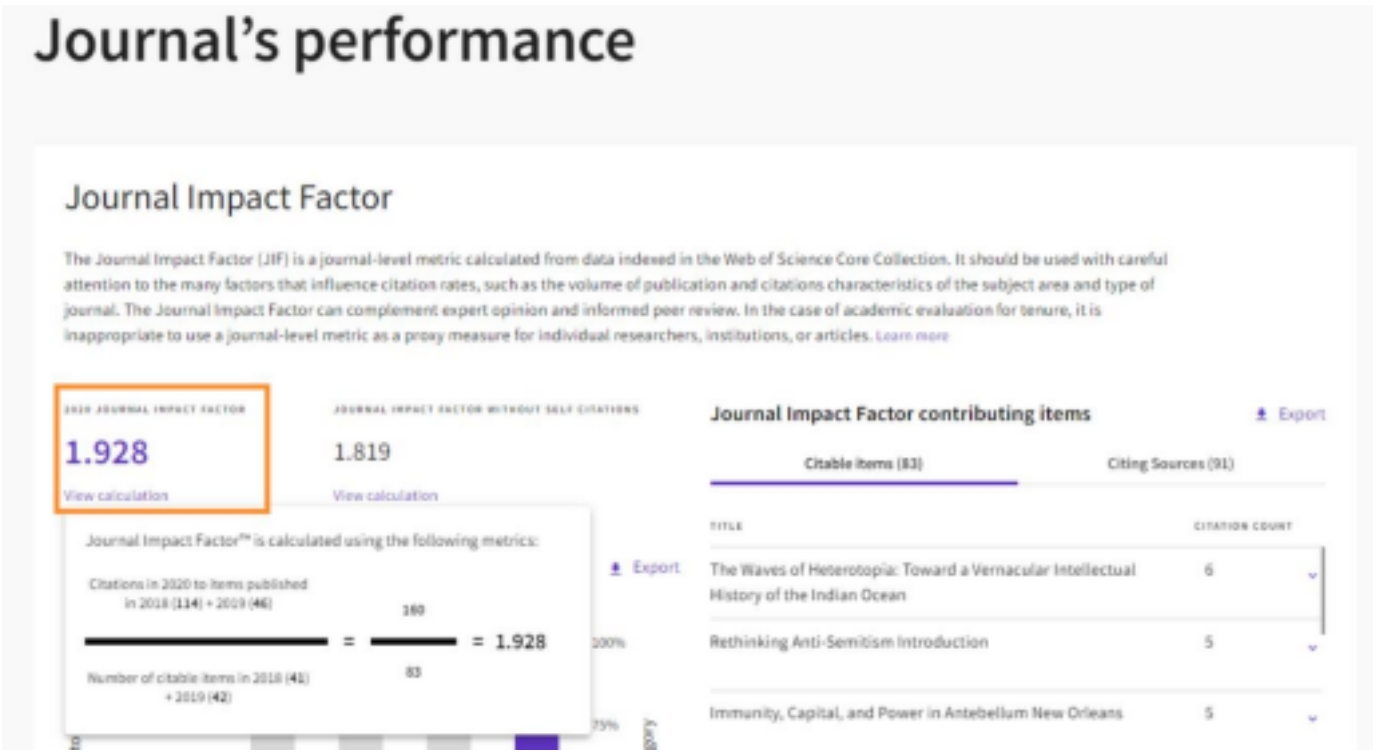
Search for an individual journal title

Enter a journal name in the search box (eg: **American Historical Review)**

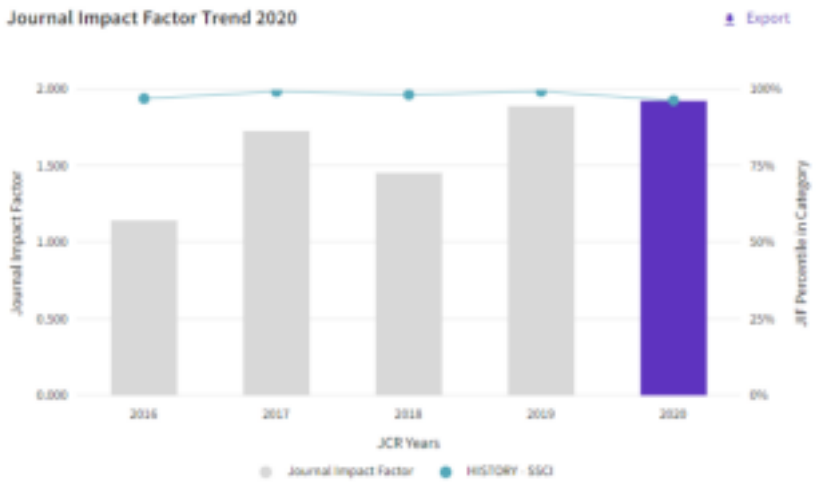
If the journal is included in JCR, the title should appear under the search box as you type. Click on the journal title you are interested in.

You should now see a range of information on the journal. Scroll down the page to see the Impact Factor for this journal for the most recent year. The Journal Impact Factor is a journal-level metric which is calculated by dividing the total number of citations to papers published in the journal in the last two years, by the total number of papers published in the the journal during the same period.

Click on View Calculation to see how the impact factor was calculated.



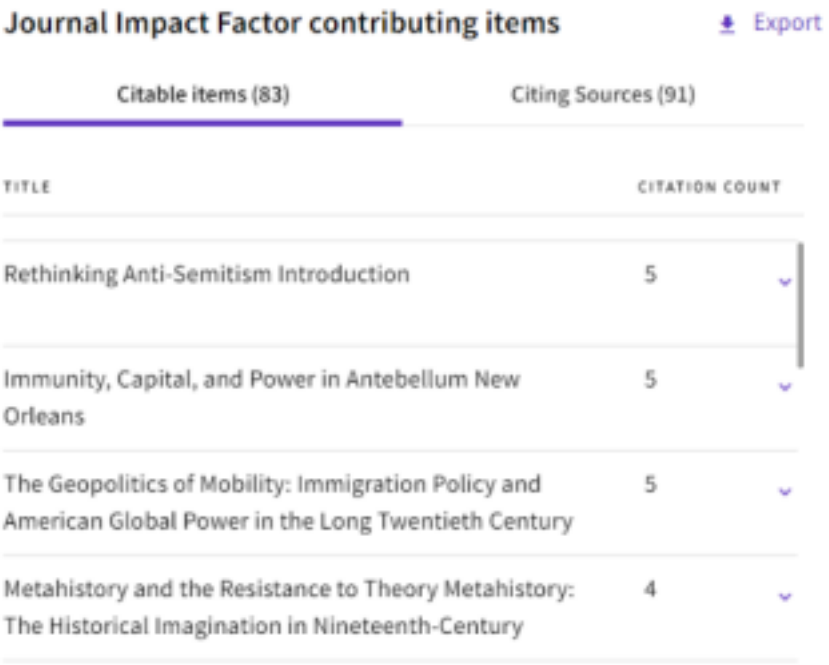
Journal Impact Factor Trend: shows how the Impact Factor for this journal has changed over the past 5 years



Journal Impact Factor contributing items: shows the articles published in this journal which contribute to the current Journal Impact Factor. Click on any to read them.

You can also see the journals which have cited them by clicking on the ‘Citing Sources’

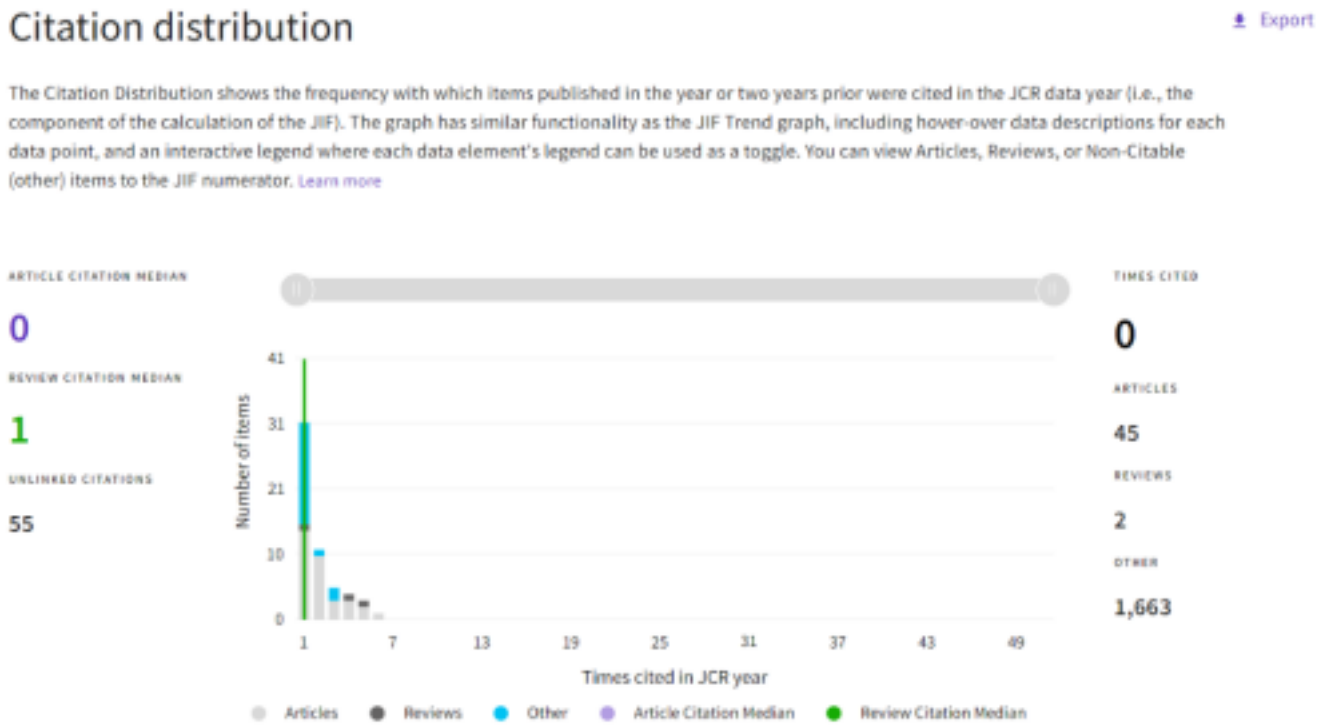
tab



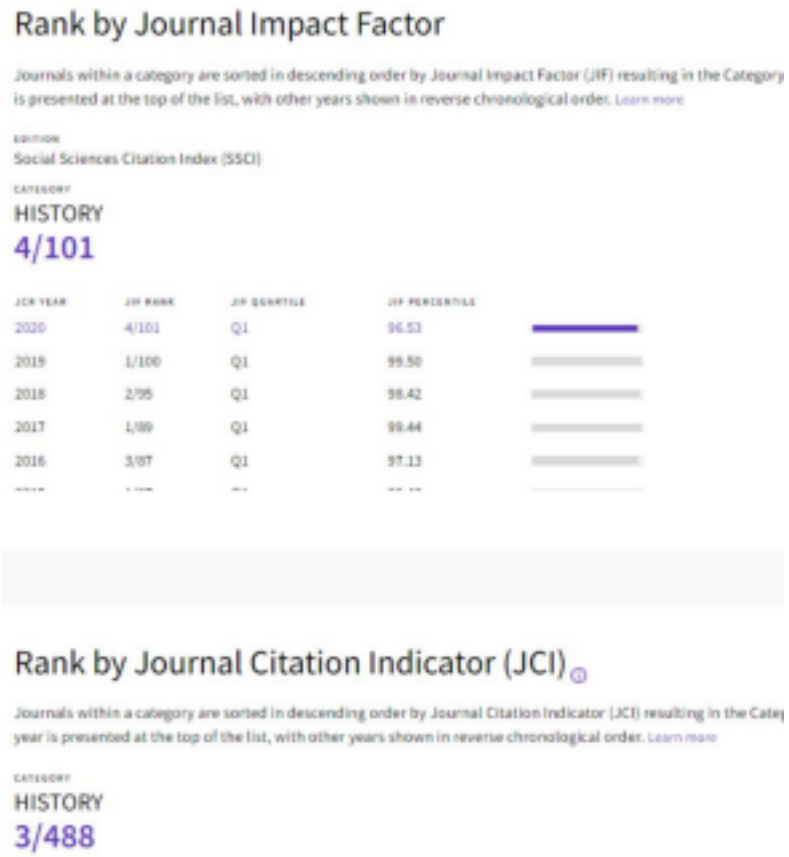
There’s a range of other information available which will help you to understand how the journal has been cited

Journal Citation Indicator (JCI) is the average Category Normalized Citation Impact (CNCI) of citable items (articles & reviews) published by a journal over a recent three year period. The average JCI in a category is 1. Journals with a JCI of 1.5 have 50% more citation impact than the average in that category. It may be used alongside other metrics to help you evaluate journals.

Citation Distribution gives a breakdown of the number of times articles in the journal have been cited for the given year. Also gives the median number of citations for articles and reviews in the journal.



The impact factor of a journal doesn't mean much on its own – you need to see how it compares to other journals in the field. Scroll down the page to see the Rank by Journal Impact Factor and JCI. In this example, the journal was ranked 4th by impact factor out of the 101 journals in its subject category for 2020.



There are a range of other metrics available, which will help to give you a balanced picture of how a journal has been cited:

- **Immediacy Index**: similar to the Journal Impact Factor but only looks at citations from most recent year. Can help indicate how quickly papers in a journal are cited.

- **Cited Half-life:** indicates how many years back you need to go to reach the point where half the citations are included. The higher the figure, the longer the time period during which research is actively cited.
- **Normalised Eigenfactor:** gives an indication of the relative importance or influence of a journal within its citation network. The average score is 1. Journals with a score higher than 1 can be considered to be more influential than those with a score less than 1.
- **Article Influence score:** determines the average influence of a journal's articles over the first five years after publication. The mean Article Influence Score for each article is 1.00. A score greater than 1.00 indicates that each article in the journal has above-average influence.
- **Average JIF percentile:** many journals cover more than one subject area. A journal classed under 2 different subject categories might have 2 different impact factor scores (one for each category). This metric gives the average Journal Impact Factor score across all the subject categories a journal is classed under. It's represented as a percentage – journals scoring 100% could be considered highly cited for their fields.

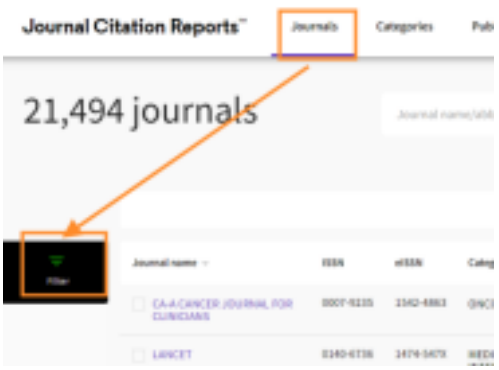
See a list of the top journals in a subject area

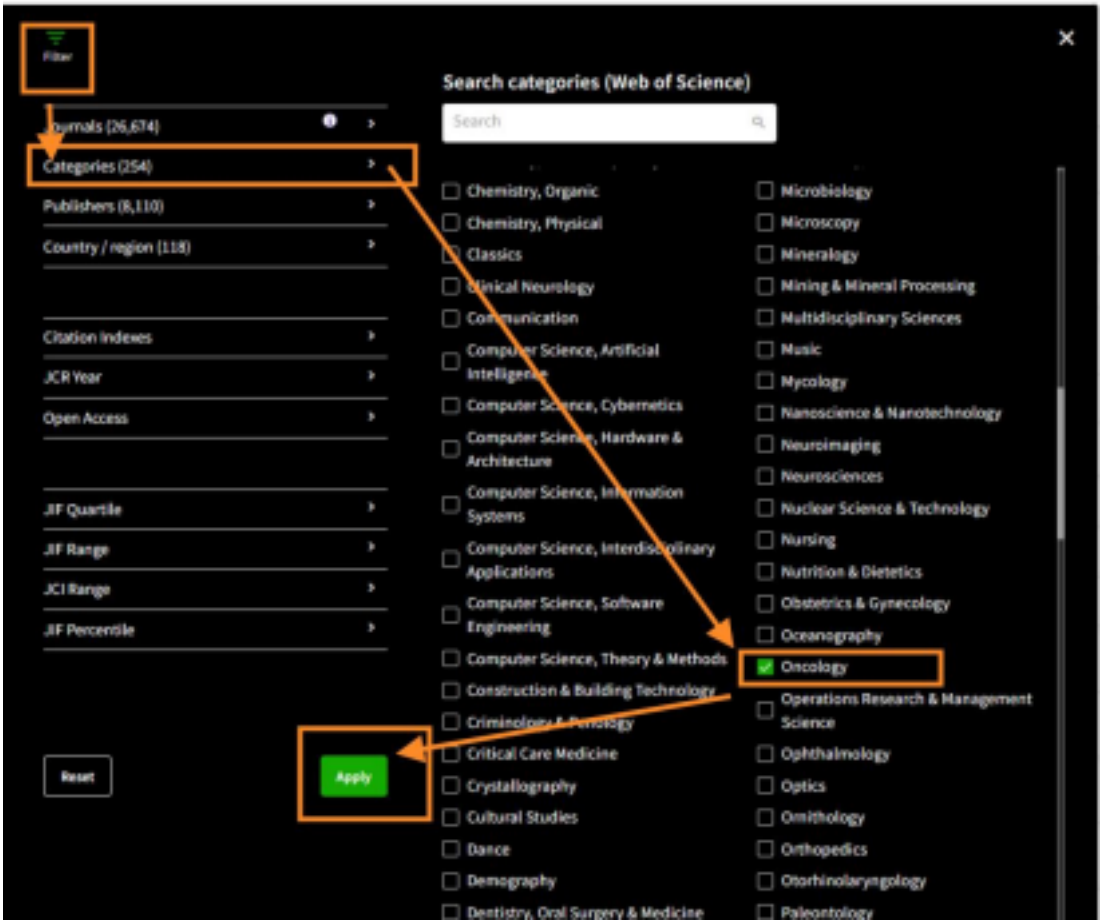
Journal Citation Reports can also provide a list of the most highly-cited journals in a particular academic field.

Scroll to the top of the page and click on **Journals**

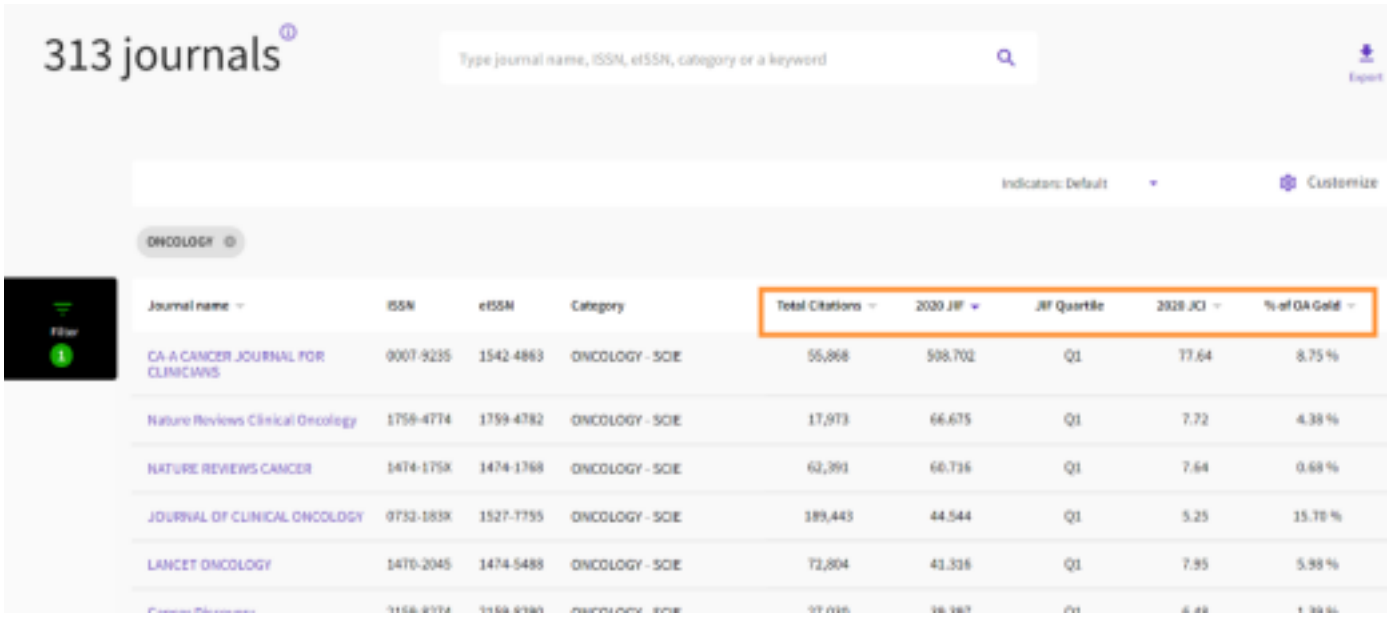
This should display a list of all the journals indexed in Journal Citation Reports, ranked in terms of their impact factor. We don't recommend comparing journals from different subject areas, as very few metrics take into account differences in citation behaviour between disciplines, and so it doesn't allow for a fair comparison. For example, maths papers generally cite far fewer papers than life science ones, so the impact factor for life science journals will always be much higher than those of maths journals. This does not mean that life science journals are better, it's merely a reflection of the different conventions in those disciplines.

You can use the Filter menu to filter the list of journals by subject category. To do this click on Filter and select Categories. This will open a list of subject categories. You can either select the one you're interested in, or search for a subject in the search box. Note that you're limited to the subject categories provided by Journal Citation Reports.



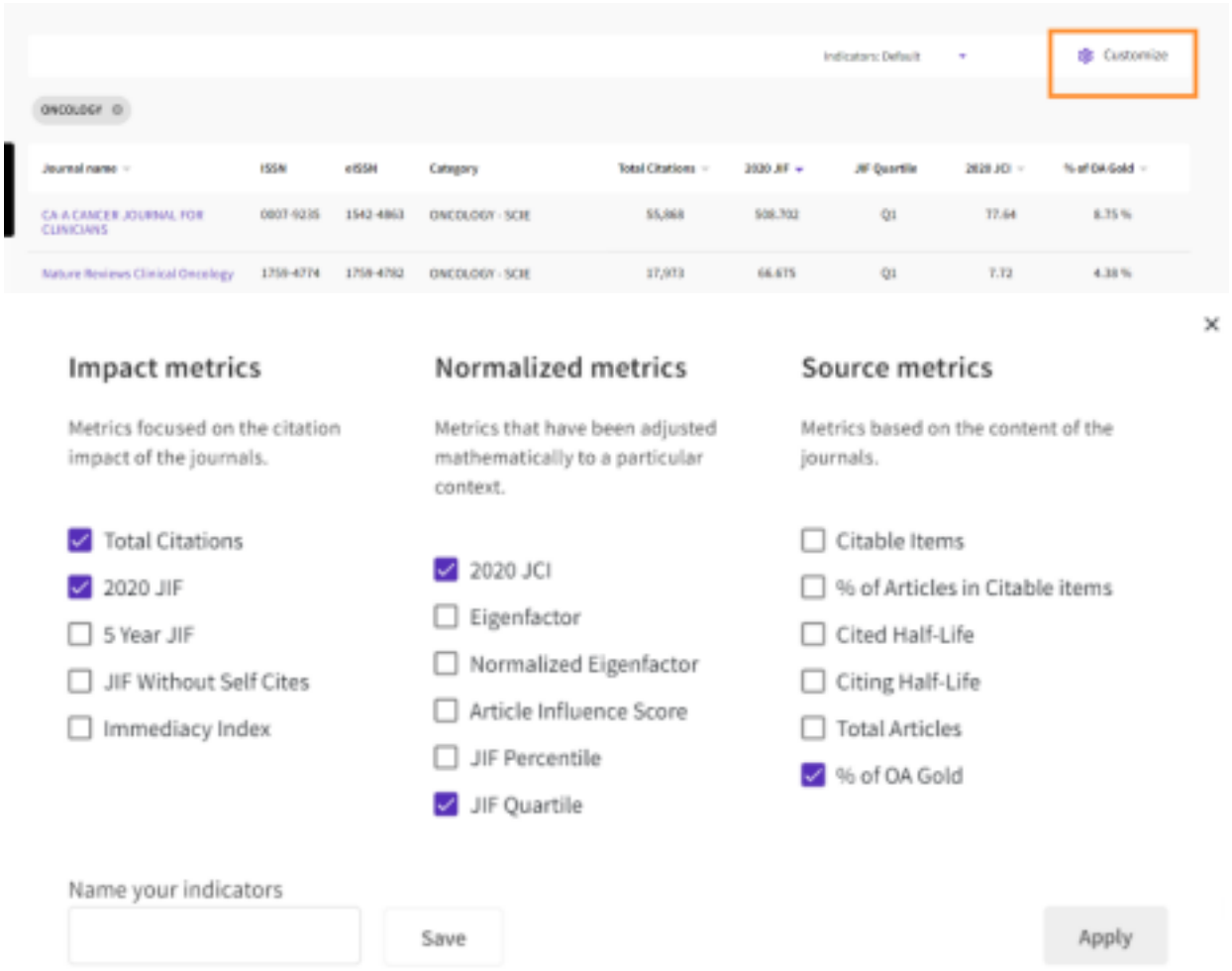


This will bring up a list of journals for that subject category, ranked by Journal Impact Factor

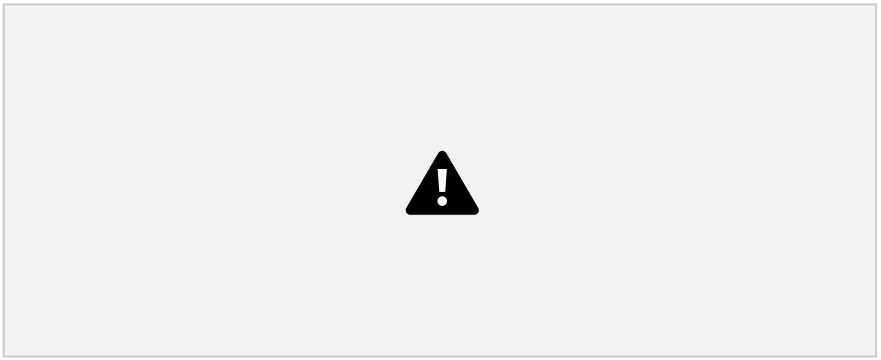


You can re-order the list according to different metrics. Try clicking on any of the column headings to see which journal is ranked highest by each metric. You may see that the order of the list changes quite significantly – this is because different metrics measure different aspects of citation impact.

You can explore the other metrics available by clicking on Customise:



Clicking on any of the journal titles in the list will open a page with more metrics for the journal.



Using metrics responsibly

Metrics are a measure of attention, not quality. They can't tell you which the 'best' journal is, they merely measure how something has been cited.

The ranking of journals will vary significantly depending on which metric you use – make sure you use a range of metrics for a balanced view.

Only compare like with like. Most metrics don't take into account the differences in citation behaviour between different scholarly disciplines, so you can't use them to make fair comparisons between journals from different subject categories.