

Spine Journal

(ISSN: 0362-2436)

Spine is one of the most established journals in spinal research and surgery. Below is a critical analysis of its strengths and limitations.

□ Strengths

- **Reputation & Reach:**

Established in 1976 and published biweekly by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, *Spine* is a leading journal in spinal disorders with broad international recognition and strong affiliations with global spine societies.

- **Citation Impact:**

Maintains a solid presence with a historical impact factor around 3.0 (slightly declined to ~2.6 in 2023). Continues to be ranked in the top ~15% of orthopaedic journals.

- **Peer-Review & Editorial Standards:**

The peer-review process is rigorous, with multidisciplinary evaluation and consistent editorial quality.

- **Timeliness:**

Median time from submission to publication is ~175 days, competitive with biomedical publication standards.

⚠ Weaknesses / Critiques

- **Declining Impact Factor:**

Recent drop in impact factor from 3.0 to ~2.6 suggests either increasing competition or reduced citation rates.

- **Overreliance on Metrics:**

Editorial direction may prioritize high-citation content (e.g., reviews, trending topics), potentially at the expense of methodological or negative-result studies.

- **Opaque Peer-Review Details:**

Lack of transparency regarding reviewer conflicts of interest or public review histories, which are becoming best practices in academic publishing.

- **Access and Fees:**

Hybrid access model. Optional open-access with APCs, which may be restrictive for authors without institutional support.

□ Comparative Perspective

- Compared to **The Spine Journal** (Elsevier, ISSN: 1529-9430, IF ~4.17), **Spine** remains historically more established but now ranks slightly lower in terms of impact factor and perceived academic novelty.
- Newer journals are increasingly open-access and more transparent in peer-review practices, offering alternative platforms for authors.

□ Overall Assessment

- **For Readers:**

A reliable source for clinically relevant spine research and surgical updates.

* ****For Authors:****

Publication carries prestige but be aware of costs and competition from newer, high-IF journals.

- **For the Field:**

- *Spine** must evolve in transparency, peer-review innovation, and open-access engagement to retain leadership.

□ Final Verdict

Spine is a cornerstone in spinal literature with enduring value, but it faces modern publishing challenges. It remains highly recommended for established clinicians and researchers, while younger investigators may also explore newer open-access alternatives.

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