⬚ Critical Review of *The Spine Journal* (Elsevier, ISSN: 1529-9430)

The Spine Journal is the official journal of the North American Spine Society and one of the highest-impact publications in the field of spinal surgery and research.

⬚ Core Metrics

- **Impact Factor:** ~4.9 (2023)
- **CiteScore:** ~6.9
- **H-index:** ~126
- **Quartile:** Q1 in Orthopedics and Surgery
- **Frequency:** Monthly (since 2001)

⬚ Strengths

- **High Academic Influence:**

Maintains strong impact factor and citation metrics, with consistent inclusion of top-tier clinical and translational spine research.

- **Reputable Society Affiliation:**

Official journal of the North American Spine Society, which enhances credibility and attracts influential research.

- **Multidisciplinary Scope:**

Covers spine surgery, rehabilitation, biomechanics, pain, imaging, and clinical trials. Includes reviews, case reports, and methodologically sound original research.

- **Transparent Editorial Guidelines:**

Provides clear author instructions and peer-review flow, improving submission experience.

⚠ Weaknesses

- **Peer-Review Variability:**

Like other spine journals, reviewer agreement is low ("slight"), raising concerns over inter-reviewer reliability.

- **Impact Factor Bias Risk:**

There is potential prioritization of reviews or "trendy" studies over negative or neutral findings to

maintain citation metrics.

- **Limited Transparency in Conflicts of Interest (COI):**

COIs for editors and reviewers are not publicly listed, limiting transparency despite adherence to Elsevier/ICMJE standards.

- **Hybrid Access & APC Costs:**

Open access is optional but costly. May disadvantage authors without funding, especially from low/middle-income countries.

- **Unclear Time-to-Publication:**

The journal lacks publicly reported average timeframes from submission to final publication.

🔲 Comparative Table

Feature	*The Spine Journal*	*Spine* (LWW)
Impact Factor (2023)	~4.9	~2.6–3.0
Publishing Frequency	Monthly	Bi-weekly
Society Affiliation	North American Spine Society	Multiple global societies
Peer Review Agreement	Slight	Slight
Open Access Model	Hybrid (Elsevier)	Hybrid (LWW)

🔲 Overall Assessment

- **For Authors:**

Prestigious venue with high visibility, but high APCs and peer-review variability must be considered.

- **For Readers:**

Broad, clinically applicable content and innovation in spinal research make it a high-value source.

- **For the Field:**

A leading journal, but improvement is needed in peer-review transparency, COI disclosure, and support for open-access equity.

🔲 Final Verdict

The Spine Journal is a top-tier platform in spine science with outstanding academic influence. It balances clinical and basic science content, but remains bound by structural publishing limitations shared across high-impact journals.

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