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Why shouldn't I use the h-index?

The h-index is a ratio measure which looks at the number of citations a researcher has received over a period of time.

We believe the h-index is not a responsible metric for assessment of individuals or groups because:

- 1) It is a metric for evaluating the cumulative 'impact' of an author's scholarly output and performance, but fundamentally is a measure of quantity not quality. High citation counts do not automatically equate to high quality research: A 2020 study found Didier Raoult, proponent of hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19, had a greater h-index than Albert Einstein.
- 2) There is not one single h-index: calculation varies between systems eg Scopus compared to Google Scholar, therefore unfair comparisons may be drawn.
- 3) The h-index favours those who have been able to build up a body of research over time, disadvantaging ECRs or those who work part-time, for example.
- 4) The sector, and our funders, are increasingly moving away from 'blunt' quantitative measures. For example, the CoARA agreement for research assessment reform seeks research assessment to be based primarily on qualitative measures.
- 5) We are a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment and advocate the use of responsible metrics. We ask colleagues to consider a range of indicators when assessing individuals and their research, including qualitative measures.