HIRSCH-INDEX

Introduction
The Hirsch index or H-index is a simple numeric number that indicates the scientific impact of a scientist based on his or her publications. An H-index of 15 means that a scientist has published 15 articles which have been cited at least 15 times. The H-index number of a scientist will not decrease. As long as a scientist is cited there it is possible that the H-index increases. If the H-index is 0 the published articles have had no visible impact.

Example of an author with an H-index of 4:
Article 1: 20 citations
Article 2: 10 citations
Article 3: 7 citations
Article 4: 4 citations
Article 5: 3 citations

In order to calculate the H-index, databases are used that show how often an article has been cited. There are three databases which can show how often a person has been cited, namely Web of Science (ISI), Scopus (Elsevier) and Google Scholar. Google Scholar is free of charge, for Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus there is a fee. The VU offers access to WoS, but not to Scopus. When using Google Scholar it is not clear how the number of citations are calculated and which journals and reference lists have been searched. This means that Google Scholar is not a reliable source for the calculation of the H-index. None of the three databases are comprehensive which means that the more databases are consulted the more comprehensive the result will be. WoS is considered the most reliable source for the calculation of the H-index.

For more information see: Hirsch JE. An index to quantify an individual’s scientific research output. PNAS 2005 Nov 15;102(46):16569-72. http://www.pnas.org/cgi/content/full/102/46/16569

Web of Science
- Go to the website of the VU University Library: www.ub.vu.nl
- Choose e-Resources in the menu Search in the e-library
- Type web of science in the search box
- Click Go!
- Click on the tab **Author Search**.

![Author Search](image)

- Type in the search screen the name of the author of which the H-index should be determined. Put prefixes before the last name ('van den berg') and use only the first initial.

- Click on **Finish Now**.

- The next screen displays an overview of the publications of the selected author name. Mark, if necessary, only the publications of the desired author and click on **Add to marked list**. Click on **Create Citation Report** in the menu on the right of the screen.

The citation report is now generated en the Hirsch-index calculated.

In the right middle the calculated H-index can be found.

![Citation Report](image)

Below this graph there is an overview of all the publications Web of Science has used for the calculation.

A more reliable and careful calculation of the H-index, than the method shown above, is needed for official purposes. The **Commissie Topkader (CTK)** therefore requires a citation analysis executed by the Medical Library. More information about this analysis at: [mics.ub@vu.nl](mailto:mics.ub@vu.nl).