

# The IJTMB as a Global Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork Resource

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**The *IJTMB* has a broad international (non-North American) readership, representing about one-third of all visitors to the Journal. What are the facilitators and barriers relevant to use of and participation in the *IJTMB* for international therapeutic massage and bodywork (TMB) researchers, educators, and practitioners? How can the *IJTMB* continue its growth and international recognition? This editorial looks at some of the opportunities for increased international involvement and relevancy, and the advantage of being open access for the non-North American audience.**

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One of the key mandates of the Journal is to be representative of therapeutic massage and bodywork internationally. In 2013, the *IJTMB* had visitors from 163 different countries, and manuscript submissions from four. The article featured in this issue outlines the process used to develop a vision for a unified massage therapy research directive in Canada. Developing these types of visionary programs is commendable because the research, development, practice, and professionalization needs for practitioners of a local therapeutic massage will be at different stages of development and will require locale-specific solutions. Without such a vision, valuable research opportunities are lost. The process used in this Canadian example is one of many developmental options, but shows a research process grounded in the needs of its practitioners, and would be a valuable undertaking for other groups and countries.

It is good, then, to also look at the ongoing development of the *IJTMB* from an international (non-North American) perspective. At the end of 2013, there were 4,365 registered readers. During 2013, 46,853 total visitors to the site viewed 145,200 different pages. However, the largest readership, 67.3%, is from the USA and Canada. Influences driving that readership may include the multiple sources of funding available for, and higher visibility of, massage research in the media and self-care health recommendations, as well

as the focus on massage research literacy in massage training and the massage therapy organizations in North America. However, those are not unique to massage in North America, so issues such as English literacy and knowledge of the Journal's availability may also affect readership. One area that the *IJTMB* would like to see is more international TMB research and readership. Some thoughts on increasing international participation:

- 1) There are multiple forms of therapeutic massage around the world, multiple standards, and many different conditions for which massage is used. Other health professions also use massage either as part of their scope of practice or as an integral adjunct. Much of the research in the *IJTMB* is focused on massage as it is taught and practiced by massage therapists in North American jurisdictions. Additionally, we hold high publication standards in order to ensure quality and competitiveness with other journals. Both of these may create publication bias in favor of North American standards of massage and publication style. We are taking steps to create a larger readership and establish contacts with researchers, educators, and practitioners in more countries, as well as to support publication at international academic standards. We would like more involvement of international persons with the Journal, either through commenting on the articles, submitting manuscripts, or participation on the Manuscript Review Board. We also need engagement with educators, to support journal clubs and the educational use of research, and to develop collaborative educational innovations.
- 2) The Journal welcomes more submissions from around the globe. The free submission and open access (free access) nature of the Journal ensures publication and readership access to the widest audience. From an international perspective this is important, because massage research often receives low levels of funding, so publication fees may be a barrier to sharing

research. Additionally, many practitioner-readers and school educators may not have access to subscription-based research journals. The *IJTMB* therefore offers a relevant, easily accessed, low-barrier international TMB research resource for a wide audience.

As always, the Journal is available to you for sharing your thoughts, your research, and your passion for increasing the quality and level of therapeutic massage and bodywork research, education, and practice.

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