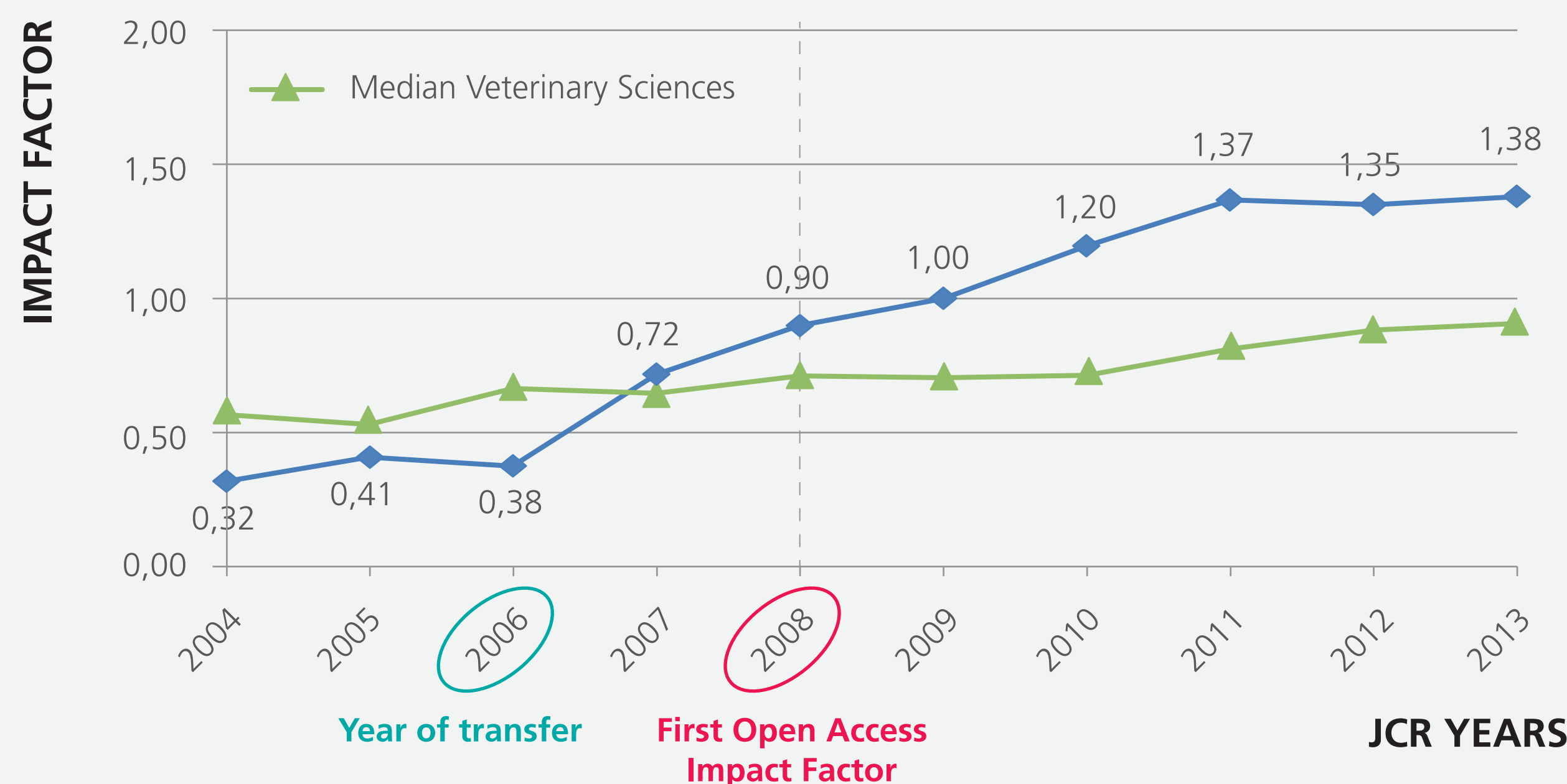


**Aim of the study** This study follows up on the one carried out in 2013<sup>1</sup> to analyze how the transfer of established, subscription-based journals to BioMed Central, and thus their conversion to the open access model, affected the journals' Impact Factors (IF). In addition to last year's study we also compare the results with the general (median) IF development in the respective JCR subject categories.

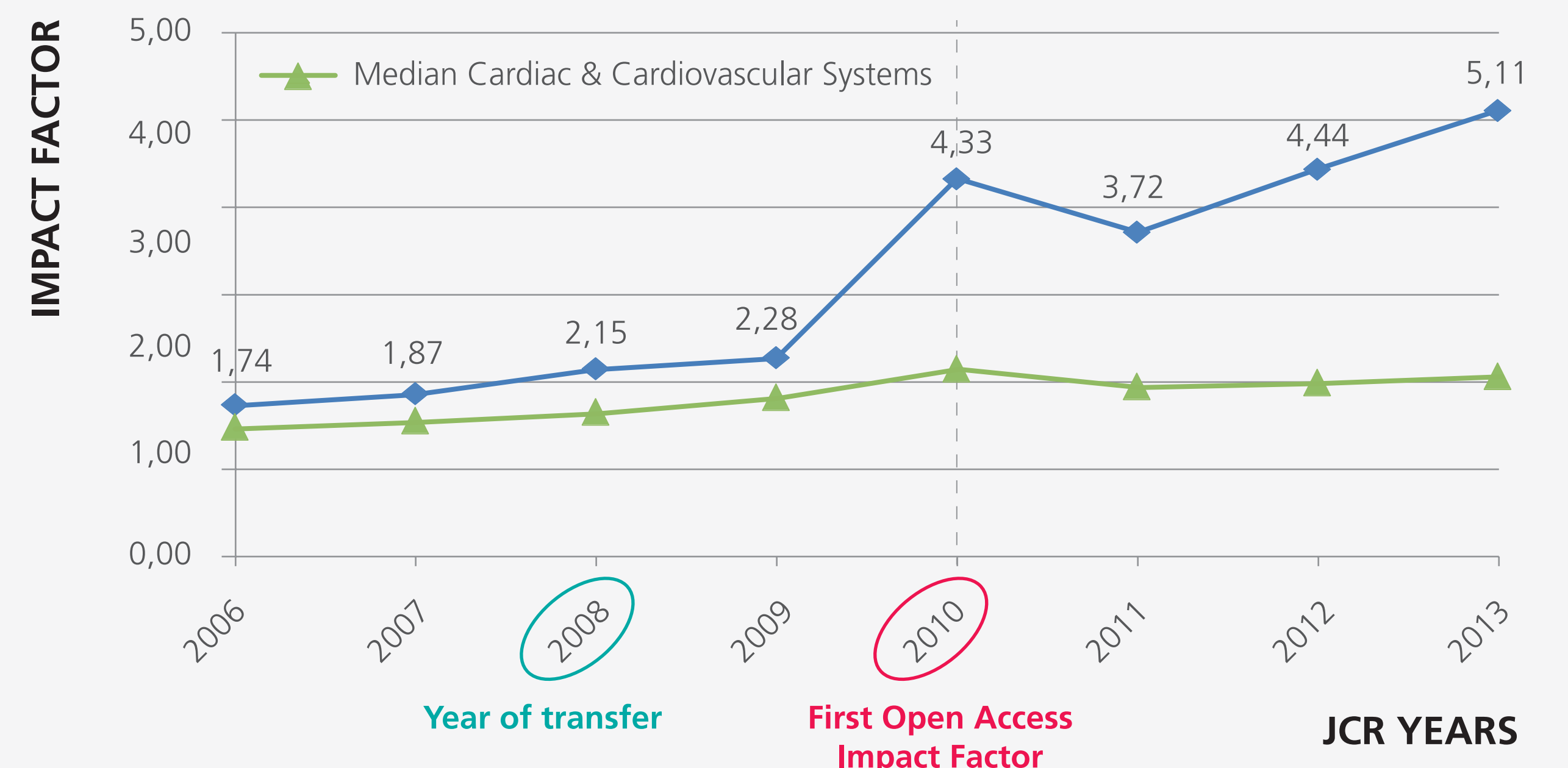
**Study group** So far six journals meet the following criteria that allow a meaningful comparison of Impact Factors before and after transfer. The criteria are that the journals

- have been with BioMed Central for long enough so that the calculation of the most recent Impact Factor is based solely on open access articles (i.e. 2 years);
- had had Impact Factors for at least 2 years before their transfer to BioMed Central;
- have published not fewer than 30 articles p.a. in each of the 2 years either side of the transfer.

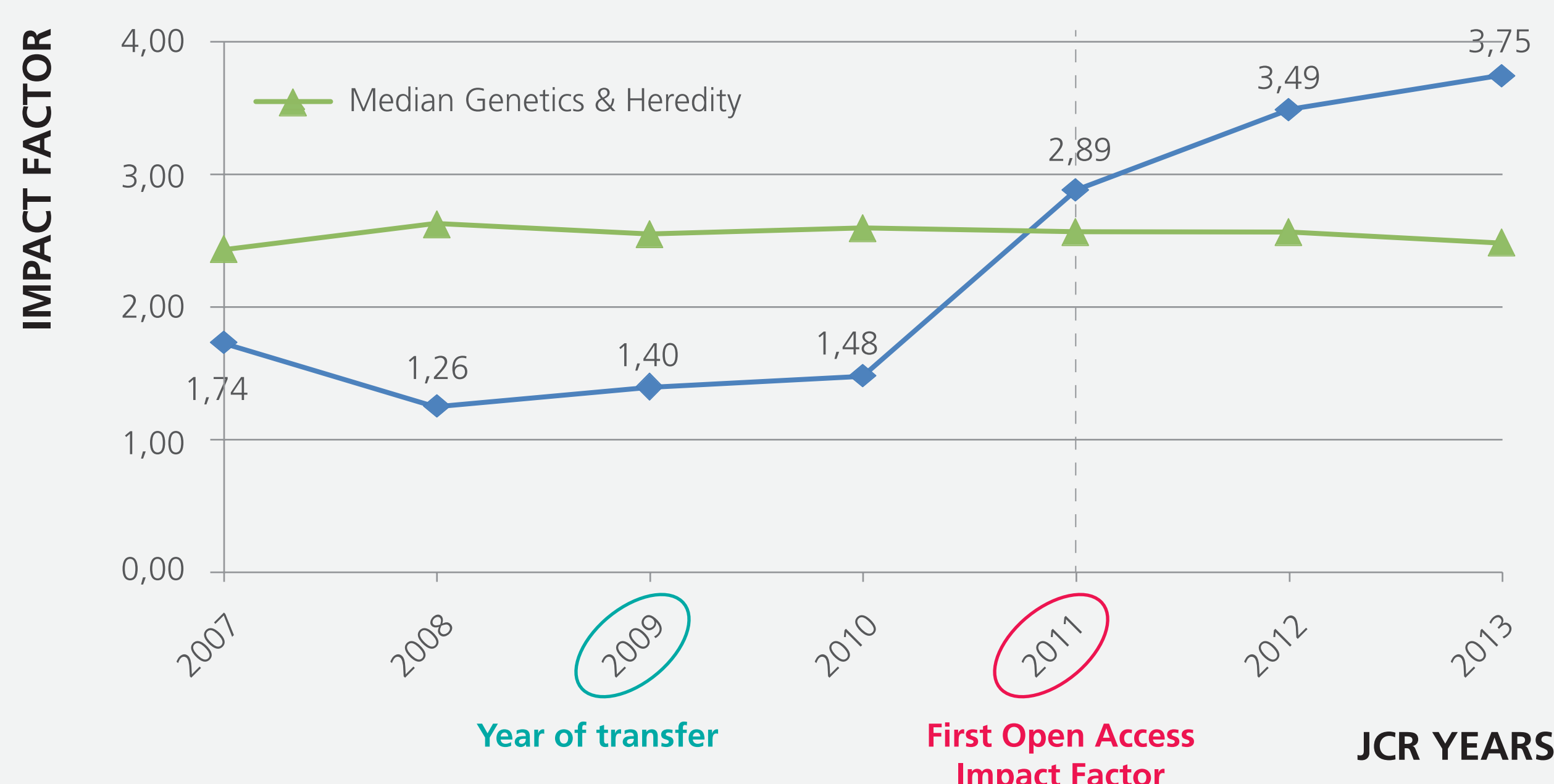
**AVS** ACTA VETERINARIA SCANDINAVICA



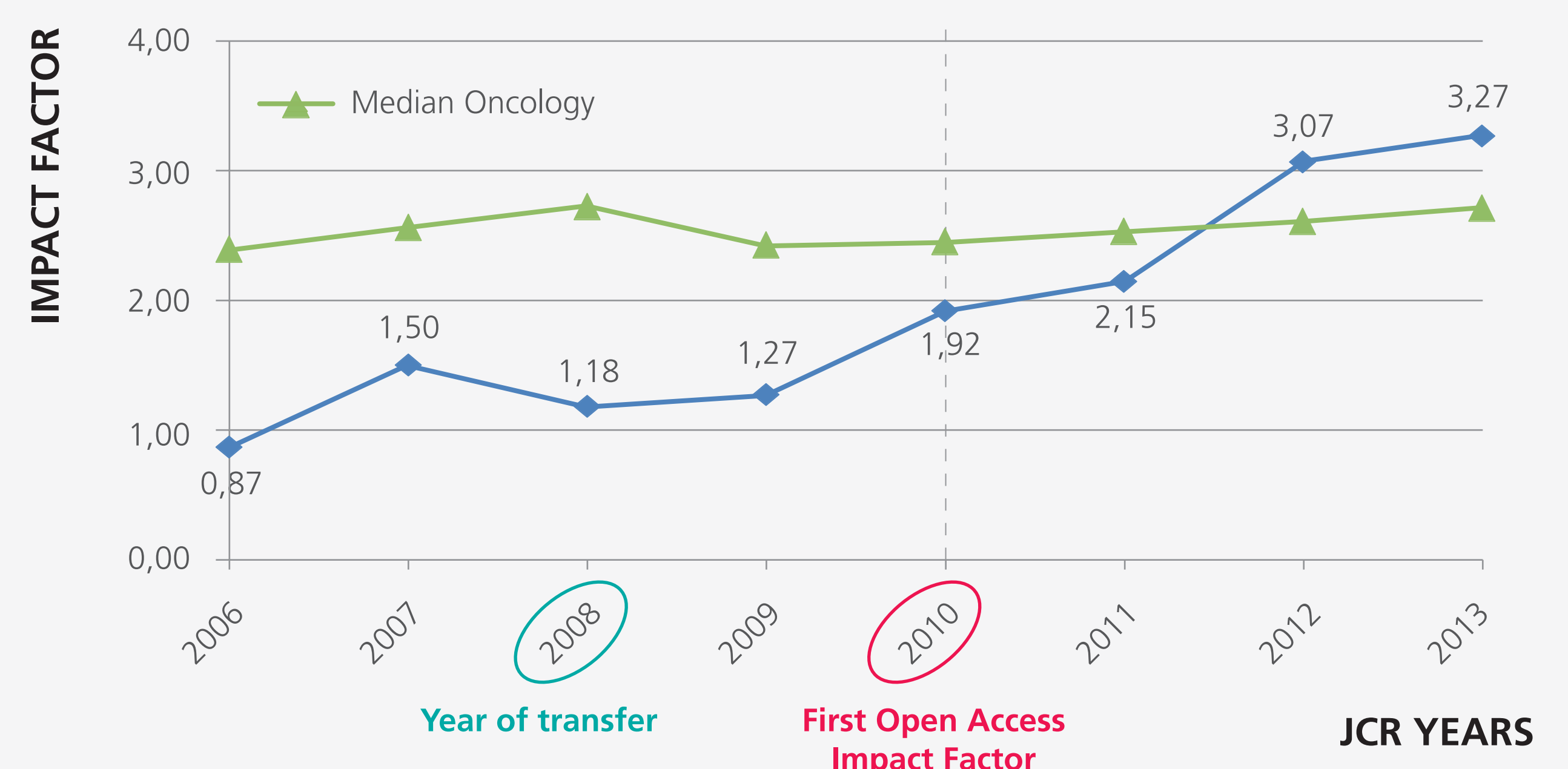
**Journal of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance**  
Official publication of SCMR



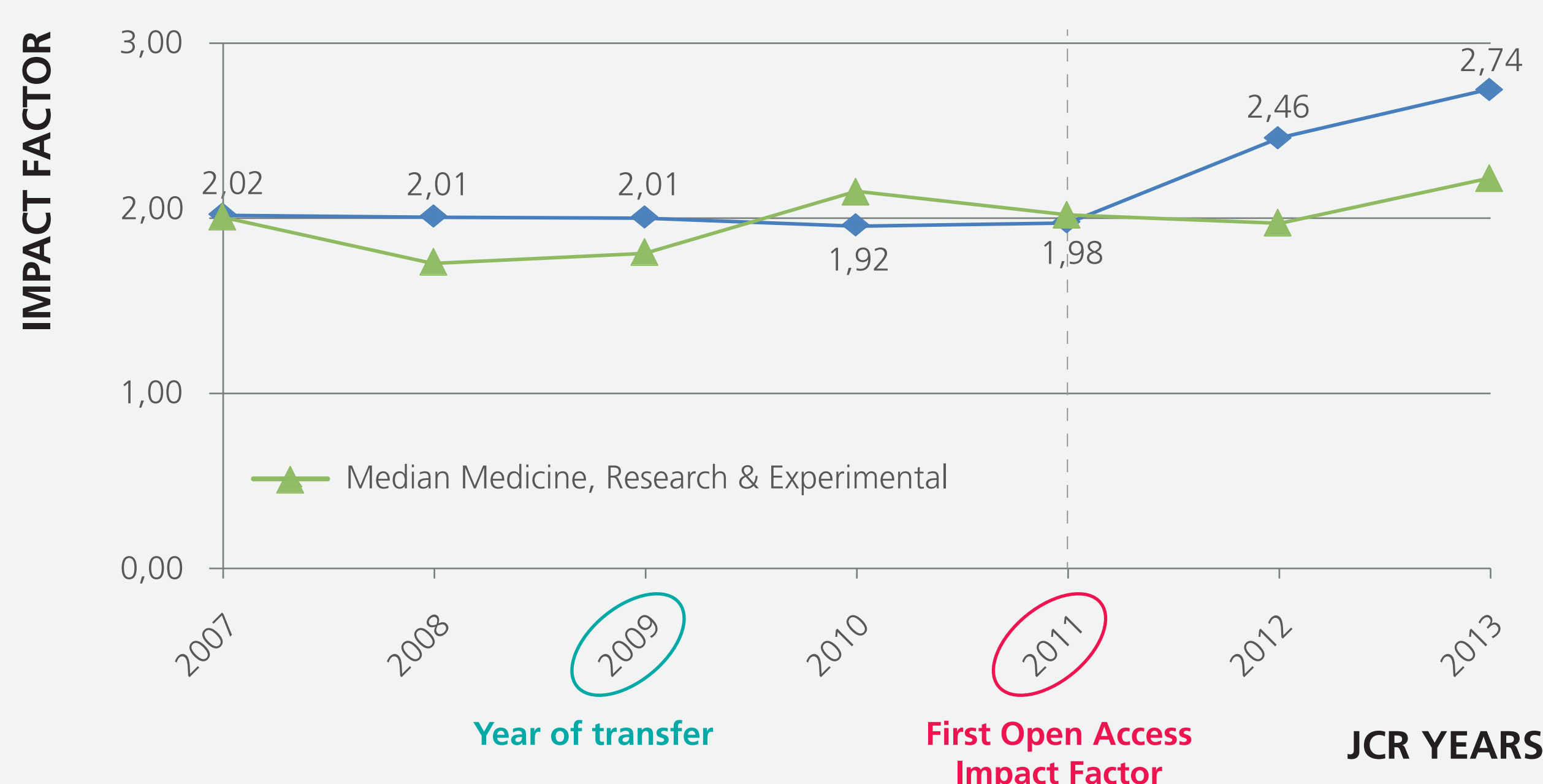
**GSE** Genetics Selection Evolution



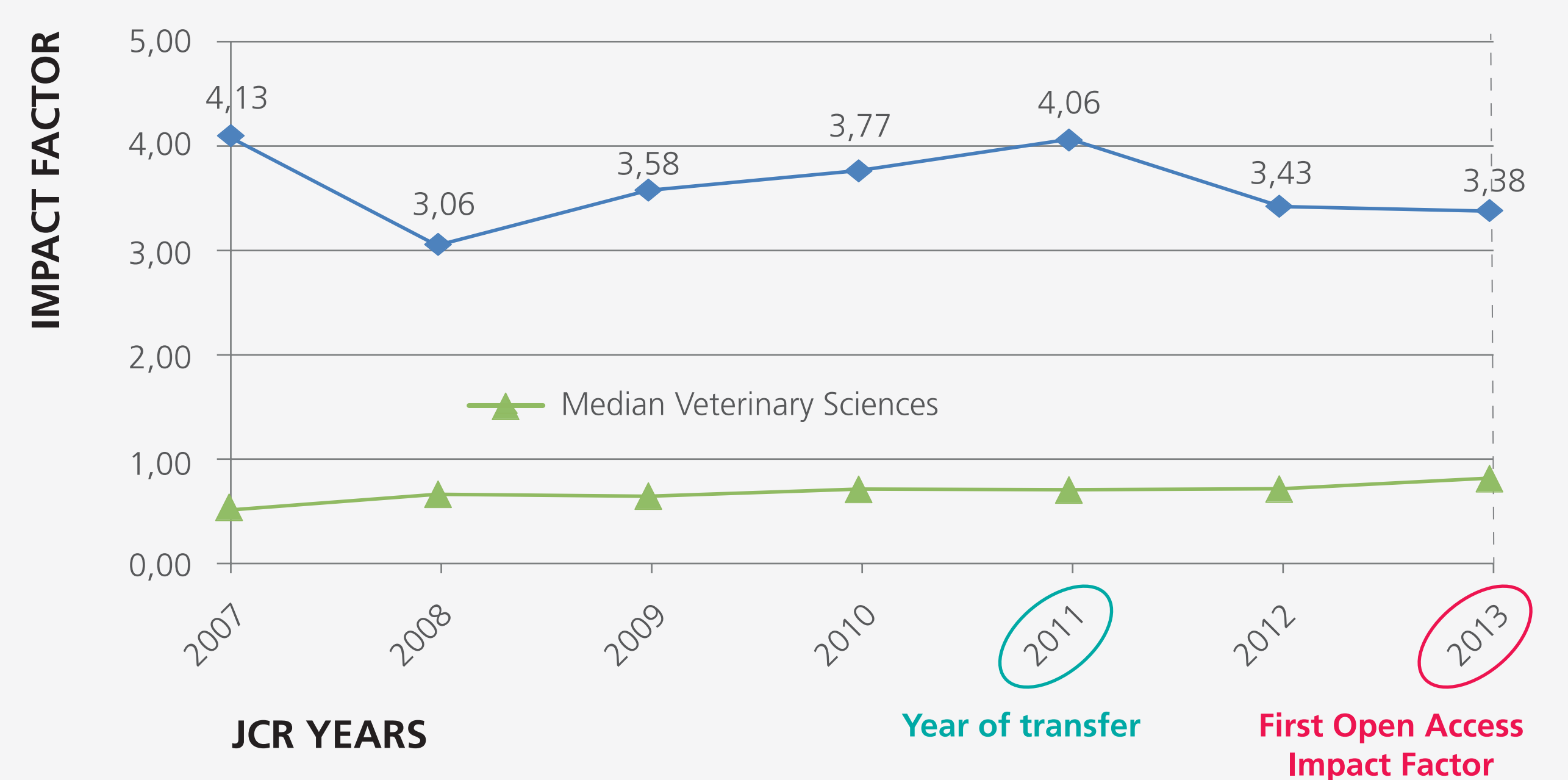
**Journal of Experimental & Clinical Cancer Research**



**JBS** JOURNAL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE



**VR** VETERINARY RESEARCH



**Summary** Most journals show a significant increase – typically by a factor of 2 – in their Impact Factor once the calculation is based on articles published after the transfer to BioMed Central. This effect appears to be less pronounced for journals with IFs that at the point of their transfer are in line with or above their respective category's median IF, and a counteracting factor is a significant increase in the number of articles accepted for publication in the post-conversion years.

No journal included in the study published fewer articles after the transfer than before. However, two journals – *Journal of Biomedical Science* and *Veterinary Research* – stood out through the size of the increase in their annual publication numbers: both journals published 50% more articles in their respective first year as an open access journal. These two journals also saw no increase, or even a decrease, in their IFs.

After the initial substantial rise in its annual article numbers, *Journal of Biomedical Science* subsequently reduced the number of annual publications again, to about 25% above pre-conversion levels. It appears safe to assume that the delayed onset of the increase in its IF correlates with the trend in annual article numbers.

Since the transfer of *Veterinary Research*, the journal has seen a decrease of about 15% in its IF but was and remains the number one ranked journal in the veterinary sciences category.

**Conclusion** Although the sample size is still small, the data confirm the observation that a transfer of established journals to BioMed Central, and their conversion to the open access model, is followed by a strong positive effect on citations and IFs.

A condition for such IF increases is an editorial strategy that balances quantitative and qualitative growth. If the journals' size (number of articles per annum) is kept relatively stable or only increased moderately after the conversion, such publications are in a great position to start their rise through the ranks. Alternatively, editors can choose to grow the journal in size (article numbers) with no or little negative effect on its IF. In coming years the sample size of this study will continue to grow and provide an expanded basis for further reports.

<sup>1</sup> Stefan Busch: The careers of converts – how a transfer to BioMed Central affects the Impact Factors of established journals, January 15 2014, <http://blogs.biomedcentral.com/bmcblog/2014/01/15/the-careers-of-converts-how-a-transfer-to-biomed-central-affects-the-impact-factors-of-established-journals/>