Why do we see a downward trend in Journal Impact Factors in the 2023 JCR release compared to last year?

JIFs were anomalously high over the last two years:
1. spike in research output driven by sudden appearance of COVID19.
2. the introduction of Early Access content in JCR.

The 2023 JCR release reflects:
-- publication output stabilizing to a new post-pandemic normal in 2022.
-- increased volume from COVID and Early Access now in denominator.
-- highly cited 2019 COVID papers shifting out of denominator.

2021 release 2022 Release Preview Blog
“Two novel events drove the 2020 data: the inclusion of Early Access content in the JCR for the first time, and the sudden appearance of COVID-19 as an entirely new, extremely urgent field of study.”
• More papers published in 2020 due to COVID and accelerated publishing cycles.
• Inclusion of Early Access 2020 papers with more citations to denominator years.

2022 release
“The 2021 JCR contained over 25% more articles and citations than the prior year. These were not just articles about COVID-19, but the intensity of the research effort in the face of this global crisis was broadly observed by researchers in information science”.
• More 2021 citations from final Early Access indexing expansion to remaining compatible journals.
• Highly cited 2019 and 2020 papers in denominator years.