

THE IMPORTANCE OF JOURNAL QUALIFICATION TOWARDS ADVANCING NURSING RESEARCH PRODUCTION AND VISIBILITY

Nursing graduate education finds itself in plain expansion in Brazil, as shown in the increased numbers of courses and programs, graduates, and scientific production, with article publication in journals as an impact factor. Such expansion is seen throughout the country, with 58 *strictu sensu* Graduate nursing programs made up of 83 courses (45 Master's programs, 27 Doctorate programs, and 11 Professional Master's programs). However, the Northern and Midwestern Brazil regions still reveal a lag concerning their offer of this level of education, according to the quality demanded by the Brazilian Higher Education Accreditation Council Coordination (CAPES - Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) <http://www.capes.gov.br/>.

Upon comparing nursing scientific production between the three-year period of 2004-2006, in which 3563 articles were published in 373 journals, to the three-year period from 2007-2009, in which 5194 articles were published in 595 journals, one notes that such publication nearly doubled. Analyzing the production seen in the latter three-year period shows that 78.2% of the articles were published in journals evaluated at *Qualis B2* or higher, with 2.8% in *A1*, 28% in *A2*, 28.4% in *B1*, and 19% in *B2*. Recent data from Area 20 – Nursing in *Webqualis* include 794 journals, 199 included as of the year 2010, which already totaled 3000 articles produced among nursing graduate programs, thus demonstrating that the area continues its clear development and growth.

The product and process of scientific activity depend upon effective communication. Specialized journals constitute important vehicles to propagate scientific knowledge. Research results will earn recognition and credibility as a result of their publication in prestigious scientific journals.¹⁻²

The impact of graduate level growth within the international visibility of Brazilian Nursing scientific production is found in its ranking of the number of articles in the *Scopus/SCImago* database. In 2000, we occupied the 25th place among worldwide production within the area. In 2010, Brazilian Nursing scientific production reached 6th place, with only the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Australia publishing more.³ Such advances, at the peak of the 40 years of nursing graduate existence in Brazil, highlight not only the quality of scientific production of nursing researchers, but also the quality of the journals headquartered in Brazil, which have been gaining headway among the international scene, thrusting Brazilian Nursing to greater visibility.

Recognition of the growth in the quality of nursing research is still notorious for the amplification of the number of journals indexed in the principal national and international databases, as well as their reference within Nursing and Health Care, without mention of increased scientometric indicators. The number of nursing scientific journals with an impact factor measured in the *Journal Citation Report* in 2004 was 35 periodicals, with a median impact of 0.689 and merely six possessing a ≥ 1.00 impact factor. In 2009, one observes a notable 74 journal increase, with a median impact factor of 0.909 and 30 with a ≥ 1.00 impact factor.⁴ We highlight that four Nursing periodicals edited in Brazil were indexed in the *Web of Science* database, three of which obtained WoS/JCR with impact factors equivalent to that of other journals edited in the United States, international references in the area. These, and four other Brazilian nursing journals, are indexed in the *Scopus/SCImago* – SJR database with na H index. Other important indexations in referenced databases are: four Brazilian periodicals in MEDLINE – *National Library of Medicine*, six in CINAHL – *Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature*, ten in CUIDEN, which makes the *Index of Journals concerning Health Care and Repercussions in Ibero-america* (*Índice das Revistas sobre Cuidados de Salud con Repercusión en Iberoamérica*) available, seven in SciELO – *Scientific Electronic Library Online*, 19 in Latin-american Literature (*Literatura Latino-americana*), the *Caribbean Health Sciences* – LILACS, and 15 in Rev@Enf in the *Virtual Nursing-Health Library* (Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde-Enfermagem – BVS/Enf) which includes a collection for the best Nursing journals from various countries, published in the SciELO methodology.

This scenario evidences the recognition of the editorial quality of nursing journals edited in Brazil among internationally indexed databases, the conquest of political space, and greater participation from editors who are inserted within decision-making processes in national and international institutions and associations. A recent publication⁵ dealing with the process of affirming Brazilian Nursing as a science, of the scientific *habitus* and the construction of the nursing scientific field, analyzed from the point of view of the formation of managerial groups of researchers and their behavior concerning the development of Brazilian Nursing, shows how these advances are perceptible. In its conclusion, this study highlights the responsibility to further internationalization through the strengthening of national scientific journals as one of the challenges of the current generation, those responsible for educating and preparing new nursing researchers.

While one cannot characterize the process of taking Brazilian Nursing scientific production to an international level merely through publication in national journals with international circulation, their importance within the growth of nursing worldwide is undeniable.

In this sense, the *Qualis*, which consists of a system of stratification of the quality of the intellectual production of graduate programs, while it is questioned in its conception and purpose⁶, without a doubt has propelled the improvement process for national journals in search of international standards.

However, some barriers still must be overcome in attaining this standard of quality so-desired by periodicals. We understand that they are derived from some specific factors. In the first place, we highlight the role of graduate programs in comprehending the importance of producing new knowledge and that which generates news capable of awakening the interest of our scientific products. This interest needs to go beyond a simple reading; it must cause sufficient impact so that our conclusions are recognized by our peers.⁷

So that this may happen, graduate schools must concern themselves with the production of innovation, "we must be entrepreneurs upon visualizing the evolution of knowledge and we must fearlessly dare upon innovative thought."^{7:374} Producing newness requires great dominion of the state of the art concerning the theme one researches, to the point of investigating that which in fact is held within the gaps, in order to produce strong evidences. Finally, beyond the production of new knowledge, it is fundamental to develop abilities to scientifically communicate and write among new researchers. This aspect deserves more attention from our programs.

Another barrier yet to be overcome in this process is the need for change within the scientific editing process. It must be professionalized in the sense of making periodicals more attractive, especially in the logic used to select production that impact and indeed communicate novelties.^{6,8} The professionalization of journals further requires greater agility in publishing and communication with authors, the adoption of standardized norms capable of being recognized by researchers throughout the world, and the use of English as the official language of scientific communication. Finally, we highlight that the availability of periodicals in open systems, which make ample distribution and democratization of the science is a necessity, principally to give visibility to production, contributing as arenas for researchers, editors, readers to interact, which favors and amplifies the flow of scientific communication.⁹

In order to overcome these barriers it is imperative to break a last barrier, which speaks to financing, in order to incorporate structural improvements in the editing process. But it also speaks to the professionalization of scientific editing, given the need to improve periodicals, seeking to attain international standards of impact. This will only be achieved when the periodical is recognized for its quality and accepted in international databases which place it in evidence within the scientific world.

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