

Why Publish in National Journals?

Max Grinberg, Maria Cecília Solimene, Maria do Carmo Cavarette Barreto

Instituto do Coração do Hospital das Clínicas da Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Abstract

The reluctance of Brazilian authors to publish in Brazilian journals is historical and no longer justified. Currently, several Brazilian journals are indexed in international databases, of which English versions allow disclosure of our studies to foreign countries. The authors express their views on the importance of publishing in national journals and cite the example of the impact of publications from Instituto do Coração – InCor- HC-FMUSP in the past two years.

Point of View

It has become a “cultural” practice in Brazilian Medicine to persistently try to publish articles in international journals. The reason is simple: if the study is thus accepted for publication, its merit will be recognized and its citation will earn the authors, especially those in graduate school, “points” at the institutions where they work. Otherwise, the author (s) will have to settle for the undervalued publication in a national journal.

This “culture”, unfortunately, is fostered in our universities and educational and research institutions by their own coordinators, teachers and advisers of undergraduate and graduate students; they are the first to boast that their students publish in “international” journals and therefore, they, the teachers, would be more credentialed than their peers who publish in the national journals.

Incidentally, it is worth remembering that the design of the Qualis database has been undergoing a reorganization process, following changes in the evaluation process of post-graduation, which has resulted in controversies in different areas.

On this issue, Rocha-e-Silva¹, in an open letter to the president of Capes, emphasized an article published in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, showing that the Brazilian scientific journals are at risk of extinction. We agree with Rocha-e-Silva, that, even though we are still at a disadvantage when compared to Americans and Europeans, our science grows every day in quantity and quality¹.

A similar situation occurs regarding citations: in an article recently published in *Jornal da Ciência*², Alves emphasized that, ideally, the bibliographic citation only demonstrates that the author does not ignore certain work. The mere citation

Palavras-chave

Bibliometrics; periodicals; scientific and technical publications; Brazil; evaluation.

Mailing Address: Maria Cecília Solimene •

Rua Otávio Nébias, 182 / 71, Paraíso - 04002-011 - São Paulo, SP, Brasil

E-mail: mcsolimene@cardiol.br, maria.solimene@incor.usp.br

Manuscript received May 31, 2011; revised manuscript received October 31, 2011; accepted November 01, 2011.

of a study never reveals whether it is well or badly designed; but with the advent of the citation system, any citation now counts as a positive point.

However, the authors are more respected if they are cited in journals with the greatest impact – naturally, the ones published in a foreign language – which are worth more points than the citations in journals with lower impact – the Brazilian ones; to be cited or not has become an act of political power². And the political power fails to realize that to look down on the national journal is to despise the institution to which it and oneself belongs.

The contemporary world has changed: not to publish in Brazilian journals because “nobody reads it, does not have access to it”¹ no longer applies. There is a tendency toward the electronic publication of scientific articles, which facilitates the Brazilian publication in English, which is the international language of science. The negative effect of the comparison of two curricula by the distribution in Brazilian and international journals needs to be revised. One reason is that high-quality work in Brazilian journals have electronic versions in English (Journal of the Brazilian Medical Association) or even in English and Spanish (Brazilian Archives of Cardiology).

Is this not the same type of communication? Or what counts is the historical credibility of the journal? If so, it is imperative to break this concept, through an intramural effort to potentiate the synergy between scientific excellence, editorial quality and globalized content.

In this respect, a promising step is the current understanding that Brazilian journals indexed in international databases (Medline, Scopus, Web of Science, Latindex), i.e., that meet pre-qualifying requirements and are exposed preferably in English, be classified similarly to the others, from other countries. Why not admit the global dissemination of studies carried out in the country as an incentive for Brazilian researchers to consider the journals of our country as the first choice for publication?³

From 2008 on, the Scientific Documentation Service of Instituto do Coração - InCor-HCFMUSP - began to adopt the new index; in the 2009-2010 period, 681 studies were published, 69 (10.1%) in national databases, and 612 (89.9%) in international databases, of which 40.5% (248/612) were published in Brazilian journals and 59.5% (364/612) in international journals⁴.

Urgent conceptual changes are necessary in the academic environment and the current “cultural” practice should be permanently banned. The change in attitude must come from the most experienced professionals, the teachers, as they are the ones who guide and serve as an example to their

disciples, the young apprentices. The new generations should be encouraged from the beginning of their careers, to aim at high-quality scientific production and publish it in national journals; they also must get used to citing Brazilian authors, eliminating the belief that “foreign” studies alone have merit. Thus, Brazil will also be recognized as a world reference in teaching and research; if we insist on undervaluing Brazilian scientific journals, we are working toward self-extinction.

Better research design, appropriate treatment of the results, communicative writing, efficient Brazilian editorial filters: let us aim at this nationalistic mission.

References

1. Rocha-e-Silva M. O novo QUALIS, que nada tem a ver com a ciência do Brasil. Carta aberta ao Presidente da CAPES. *Clinics*. 2009;64(8):721-4.
2. Alves RJV. Impactos do fator de impacto: o darwinismo aplicado ao fomento da ciência. *Jornal da Ciência*, 19 de agosto de 2010. [Acesso em 2011 fev. 15]. Disponível em: <http://www.jornaldaciencia.org.br>
3. Moreira LF. Os Arquivos e a publicação de seu primeiro fator de impacto. *Arq Bras Cardiol*. 2010;95(1):1-2.
4. Instituto do Coração do Hospital das Clínicas da Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo. Serviço de Biblioteca, Documentação Científica e Didática “Prof. Luiz Venere Décourt”. Memória científica InCor: base de dados. São Paulo; 2011.

Potential Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Sources of Funding

There were no external funding sources for this study.

Study Association

This study is not associated with any post-graduation program.