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## The ABEC, research grant agencies, CAPES' mandatory evaluations and how Brazilian journals can pay their bills

The Brazilian Scientific Editors' Association (ABEC) is a non-profit organization formed under Brazilian Civil Code provisions. It is of national scope and was established for an undetermined period of time. It brings together both companies and individuals interested in developing and improving the publication of technical and scientific periodicals, in enhancing the communication and promotion of information, and in fostering the exchange of ideas, the debate of problems and the defense of common interests. In its endeavor to achieve these goals, ABEC holds a Scientific Publishing Course yearly, and a Workshop and a National Meeting of Scientific Editors biennially. This year's 12<sup>th</sup> National Meeting of Scientific Editors will be held from November 23-27, at the Hotel Majestic in Águas de Lindóia, SP. For more information, please go to <http://www.abecbrasil.org.br>.

ABEC also participates in the evaluation committees of the CNPq (the José Reis Award and the Brazilian Journal Publishing Program) and of SciELO (SciELO Brazil Advisory Committee). It takes part in the national discussion of fundamental topics, like placing the science produced in Brazil in the world scientific community. Along this line, it discusses language issues, as a primary obstacle to world placement, and also the manner in which Brazilian articles are published. In this regard, language is truly a difficult-to-solve issue considering that we are outside the axis of the first world. Therefore, we will always have to resort to professionals from the area to copyedit our texts, as regards those published in the English language. "If you want to be read and cited," this is the pattern in place today.

On the other hand, the policies laid down by the new CAPES Qualis System placed Brazilian journals on the same level as international journals. From now on, we will be competing on equal terms with the international market, which is maintained basically by professionalized publishers. This means that our editors will have to compete with international editors, and, as such, will have to spend much more time on a journal's publication. He cannot be "also the editor," but rather, "the editor," whereas the ideal would be "solely an editor," like it is in the first world. Ultimately, this means that our editors will have to professionalize themselves and devote much more time to publishing. In this regard, a good alternative would be for research grant agencies to create incentives for Brazilian editors. A possible incentive would be an Editor's Scholarship, patterned basically after the existing scholarships offered by CNPq (Research Productivity Scholarship, Technological Productivity Development Scholarship and Innovative Extension and Out-

reach Scholarship, among others). The granting of such a scholarship would be based on competence, and under the evaluation of peers. Accordingly, possible candidates should have pre-established goals for their journal and time frames for implementing goals, primarily as regards improving publication visibility, periodicity and competitiveness. These incentives would be yet another support and evaluation tool for Brazilian journals.

In addition, Brazilian journals receive funds to finance their publications. Funding may be either public (from a public funding institution – a university, institute, research center, etc.) or private (publisher, company, pharmaceutical, scientific association, etc.). In the model currently in use in Brazil for publishing scientific journals, journals are mostly funded by universities and scientific associations. It's important to understand that without this support, the idea of a new incentive to editors will be difficult to maintain in practice. I would like to point out that most of the investments must come from these institutions. Research grant agencies would then supplement these funds. In 2008, at SciELO's request, we made an assessment of how much a scientific article published by *The Journal of Venomous Animals and Toxins including Tropical Diseases* (of which I am the Editor in Chief) costs. We came

up with an astounding figure. Each article of ours costs R\$ 2,534.39! Factored into this are the wages of employees paid by our University (UNESP), their respective social charges, infrastructure costs (water, electricity, telephone, Internet, etc.) and outsourced services (copyediting, layouting, standardization, etc.) I would further like to point out that our journal has only an electronic version and has no printing or mailing costs. Therefore, this figure could be even higher for those publications that distribute a print version.

Annual funds distributed by CAPES and CNPq to about 250 journals amount to R\$ 5,000,000. If we make a quick calculation, this works out to R\$ 20,000.00 for each journal. This gives us a good idea of how short these figures are from what would be desired by a publisher and needed to maintain a publication. The conclusion we have reached is that these figures are very low and urgently need to be reviewed.

Finally, I understand that these two funding options (directly to the journal and directly to the editor in the form of a scholarship) would lend greater professionalism and competitiveness to journals produced in Brazil. Editors would be further pressured to excel and the final user would ultimately stand to gain.