

The role of a scientific journal

*Domingo M. Braile**

I start this Editorial expressing my gratitude to all my colleagues from the Brazilian Society of Cardiovascular Surgery who over my 6-year tenure as the Editor of the *Revista Brasileira de Cirurgia Cardiovascular (RBCCV)/Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery (BJCVS)* has lent me unrestrained support to perform at my full working out conditions the task ahead of the publication. This has been a period of remarkable achievements, which has reached the summit level with the so dreamed of indexation to Medline, at the end of 2007. A more detailed balance of the present administration is at page 108.

Over all these years, besides the activities inherent to the position, I have closely experienced the significant concerns related to the scientific publications, in general. Issues as the online availability of the content of the articles, impact factor (IF), importance of the peer reviews, among others, have been discussed by editors worldwide, such as in the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) forums. These growing concerns were also themes of editorials and articles issued by the *Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery* that has always sought to play its role as the official publisher, not only regarding the cardiovascular surgery, but also regarding the science as a whole.

The democratization of science in relation to the full-text availability published by the scientific journals is still surrounded by controversy. Some publications claim, undoubtedly, that the funds collected with the fee charged to access the full-text content is essential to the publication financing. However, there are counterclockwise leading actions, such as that of the Public Library of Science (PLOS) that charges the authors, but make available full-text contents online free of charge.

Another alternative was found by the Brazilian Government through the *Portal.periodicos.Capes*, which is the Brazilian national electronic library

consortium for science and technology, provides full access to the content of 11,419 journals (figures from February 2008). An article published in the newspaper “*Folha de São Paulo*”, in January 21 2008, by the Brazilian professors, Marco Antonio Raupp, Jacob Palis Jr., and Luiz Eugê nio Araújo de Moraes Mello, praised the Portal as a model of access to science, which, at the expenses of US\$ 35 million funded by the public purse, can be accessed by 188 educational institutions, of which 156 are free of charge. Among them are included the Public Higher Educational Schools with at least one postgraduate programme, grade 4 level, and the Private Higher Educational Schools with at least one postgraduate programme, grade 5 level, besides the Federal Centres of Technological Education (Cefets). “In these higher educational schools, the access is granted to all students, employees, and professors. The library of these schools allows access to the public”, say the authors.

Although the access to *Portal.periodicos.Capes* might be further expanded, and in a near future it should be, there’s no doubt whatever, that it is essential in a country in which only a few scientists have financial resources to get to be in touch with the groundbreaking news, and from then on to get the opportunity to spread out this knowledge allowing new patents to be developed, thus bringing benefits to the public.

We cannot forget the role of SciELO, which is a result from a research project supported by the Foundation for Research Support of the State of São Paulo (FAPESP) in a partnership with the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (Bireme). SciELO is a database developed to solve scientific communication demands in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Currently, this electronic library project has more than 200 Brazilian scientific journals in free and universal access, full-text format, including the *Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery*.

The indexes to evaluate the repercussion of articles published in scientific journals are another theme under discussion. Created in 1960 by Eugene Garfield, the *Science Citation Index* (SCI), which generates the impact factor, is used to measure the repercussion caused by an article published in the scientific community. IF is the number of citations the articles in a journal receive in the two previous years divided by the number of articles published over the same period of the citations evaluated by SCI.

New evaluation services such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and "Publish and Perish" (www.harzing.com/pop.htm) have arisen as an alternative to SCI. The last two offer the advantage of having user-friendly interfaces and free of charge. Regarding "Publish and Perish", downloading a 371-k software under the letter "h" makes possible to everyone to find his/her publications and to estimate the "H-index, besides other indicators. With all these resources being offered, these databases can have their representativity increased in a near future.

It is noteworthy that the impact factor of journals depends on the field of knowledge. Thus, a higher IF is expected in journals covering comprehensive areas of basic research, with a literature growing fast that uses a great number of citations per article. It is evident that an article about stem-cells, applicable to several specialties/areas of knowledge, will have more number of citations in comparison with an article of a particular area, such as the cardiovascular surgery.

The debate regarding of this significant matter is extremely positive because it allows evaluating new ideas and creating new paradigms in order to improve the scientific diffusion. The practitioners and the public are the true winners. BJCVS/RBCCV will continue to play its role of debating the aspects involved in the science dissemination. In order to do so, the support of CNPq (The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) is critical.

The editorial support approved in 2007 – R\$ 35 mil – has been substantially raised in relation to previous years, and it will be useful to keep the quality of the printed version and to improve further our website (www.rbccv.org.br)

The 35th Brazilian Congress of Cardiovascular Surgery, to be hold in São Paulo, 2008, April 18th-20th, predicts great news. The organizing team, led by Dr. Paulo Pê go Fernandes, has striven to organize a great event, including renowned international guests and special events, such as a live operation, which is going to mark the Brazilian cardiac surgery. We invite all colleagues to join this moment, which gathers knowledge and healthy companionship!

I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to pay my compliments to the board of Director, presided by Dr. José Teles de Mendonça, whose tenure is concluded, by his dedication and efforts to value the Brazilian Cardiovascular Surgeon. The work performed will serve as an example to the new board of directors, which will certainly follow their predecessors' steps.

Ending this Editorial, I render my homage to my colleagues, Dr. Magnus Rosa Coelho de Souza, who passed away on January 7th 2008, and Dr. José Maria Furtado Memória Júnior, who recently passed away on February 20th 2008. They were prominent Brazilian and International Cardiovascular Surgery names, whom we are already missing. They were example of life. I wish to express to their family members, our most sincere sympathies.

Sincerely yours,



Editor
RBCCV/BJCVS