

Revista Brasileira de Oftalmologia: Open Access and Visibility

Revista Brasileira de Oftalmologia: Acesso Aberto e Visibilidade

Open access or free access means providing scientific research texts on the internet without any restrictions⁽¹⁾. Until 2006, the Revista Brasileira de Oftalmologia (RBO) was a scientific journal of closed access, that is, distributed in its printed version to members of the Brazilian Society of Ophthalmology (SBO) or subscribers. The costs of printing, distributing, and publishing RBO was paid by SBO. As of 2007, a digital version of the journal was indexed on SciELO database (an electronic scientific online library), and became a free and open access scientific journal.

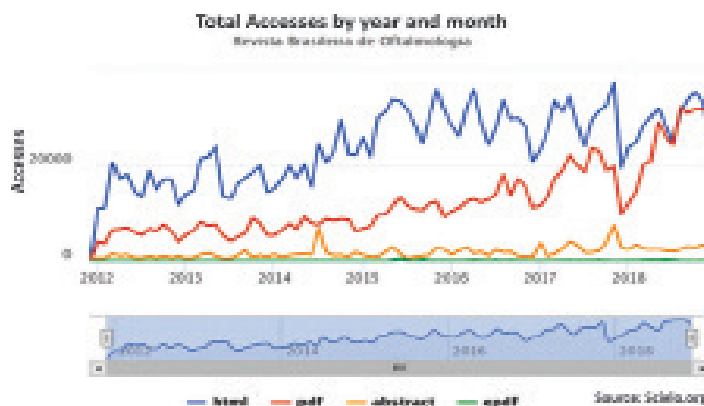
SciELO is a model for digital publication of open access scientific journals selected from Latin American, the Caribbean, and Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain). It is supported by FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo e Pesquisa de São Paulo), Bireme (Centro Latino-Americano e do Caribe de Informação em Ciências da Saúde), and since 2002 has the support of CNPq (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico)⁽²⁾.

The main motivations for RBO to become an open access journal were:

- Enabling articles to be present in various virtual spaces in Brazil and around the world, increasing their visibility.
- Making content easily and promptly available online to any interested user (even if those who are not ophthalmologists), increasing accessibility.
- Creating an important circle in which greater visibility and accessibility lead to a greater reading of the journal, followed by greater perception of the academic, clinical or social benefits of the knowledge conveyed, stimulating greater production of knowledge to be more visible and accessible, leading to greater reading of the journal and so on⁽³⁾.

After a decade of open and free access, one wonders whether there is evidence that open access has improved the quality and reading of this journal. The answers to these questions were searched in the journal's statistics on SciELO's website⁽⁴⁾.

Since it became open access, the number of accesses to RBO articles has progressively increased (Figure 1). In 2012, there were two hundred and forty-six thousand, one hundred and ninety accesses to the content of the journal. In 2018, there were six hundred and eighty-one thousand, seven hundred and thirty-seven accesses. Therefore, we can say that accesses increased by approximately 277% in 7 years⁽⁴⁾. It is important to understand that the same person can access in multiple ways. For example: an individual reads a research abstract that may be of interest to an article they are writing; as they liked the abstract (first access), they decide to read the work on the internet (second access), and then download the pdf work to their computer (third access) in order to be able to access it without internet connection.



Source: <https://analytics.scielo.org/w/accesses>

Figure 1: The upper chart shows the RBO accesses according to the type of document in the SciELO digital library between 2012 and 2018. The lower chart shows the total number of accesses.

The most quoted original article of RBO according to Google Scholar database was published by Renato Ambrosio Jr et al., and was titled: “Dynamic ultra high speed Scheimpflug imaging for accessing corneal biomechanical properties”. He had 40 quotes, and was created from a research involving the institute of the author and US Universities⁽⁵⁾. The second most quoted article of RBO was : Self-reported visual conditions and falls in institutionalized elderly. It had 20 quotes, and was carried out by authors of medicine colleges and nursing colleges at Universidade Federal de Goiás⁽⁶⁾.

It is very likely that the largest number of RBO online consultations and quotes of certain articles are due to their easy, open and free access, in addition to the good quality of the scientific research. It allows authors from other countries or other areas of knowledge to access the journal quickly (texts are on the Internet in Portuguese and English). The printed version of the journal continues to be distributed to SBO members. Having a printed magazine is still considered the most comfortable way to read texts, instead of using video terminals. However, with the development of new technologies, (tablet, kinder, ipad, cell phones, or nebooks, notebooks, etc.), this perception may change in the future.

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