



Editorial

Objectivity in scientific publication



A objetividade na publicação científica

With social media and search engines, the agility and the objectivity of information retrieval has undergone an important advance.

These new features have led a major transformation in all media and outreach mechanisms.

Scientific publications have not yet been affected by this evolution, in such a way that we are distancing ourselves from the ways of transmitting knowledge to young people.

A new fact is publicized in seconds, while in the academic world we still follow an archaic methodology that delays this process by months.

Academic studies follow a production line that is still based over a very long period.

We begin the writing of our studies with an introduction, a long chapter that justifies and situates the subject to be described. This section was appropriate when the journals were general, addressing several specializations; for example, articles would explain that knee osteoarthritis was a common disease, affecting more women, etc., as the readers were general practitioners.

Currently, journals address specializations or even restricted areas such as anatomical segments or specific diseases (such as *Foot and Ankle*, *Sports Medicine*, *Journal of Biophotonics*), which makes it unnecessary to provide long information on the topic to be studied.

A bibliographic review is also unnecessary, as studies on the subject can be easily accessed through search sites, which are very well structured; perhaps a very specific citation of works on the subject could be made.

Material, methods, results, and conclusion are the core of the work and must be objective and direct.

The discussion should only address controversial aspects of the work, so the reader can easily research a dubious point.

Regarding theses, in addition to their more elaborate production, public defenses are held, but the audience is limited to a few people in the candidate's family who do not understand the subject and are frequently annoyed by a more

inquisitive committee member. These events end with the usual approval, photos of the candidate with the committee, and forgetfulness.

Theses, which sometimes are very long and have enormous titles (discussed and modified several times) and over 100 bibliographical citations, are destined to a shelf to be rarely consulted.

A survey conducted at the Medical School of USP showed that publication in scientific journals is not the norm.

I think we should abolish the thesis and replace it with the more modern and straightforward article, which would be read and consulted, disseminating the knowledge generated by the applicant, as is the goal.

The examining committees mimic the meetings of cardinals; dressed in borrowed, mothball-scented robes (most of which are too small or too large), they seek to demonstrate in their structure (braces, vests, hats) an academic hierarchy that no one understands or cares about. The members, three or five, will analyze the same work in the same way.

The assessment performed in the current system – in which the members of the examining committee evaluate print quality, detail in the use of the Portuguese language, quality of the photos, numerical tables, and objectivity (or lack thereof) – should be replaced by an analysis of the candidate's career, because the study itself, in its form and suitability for publication, would be analyzed by the reviewers of the journals in which the article is published. Editorial systems are very efficient and reliable, and approval for publication in previously selected journals would be one of the criteria for obtaining the desired degree.

The study would be more efficiently publicized and would reach a greater number of readers.

In the current system of thesis defenses, a candidate completely oblivious to the theme defended can be approved, as long as the work uses correct Portuguese, has perfect photos, contains complete statistics, and follows the standards

of printing. This already occurs at the beginning of some graduate programs, when the candidates are given articles made by other authors, so that their theses can be defended more quickly.

The candidate is approved as a good “thesis writer,” rather than as a good researcher or teacher.

Publicity is paramount for the appreciation of the work and the author.

Currently, there are two types of readers of scientific studies:

- those who are doing bibliographic research on the subject, for whom the journal in which the work was published is of secondary importance;
- and those who are journal readers, flipping through it as a newspaper and stopping on the most important articles.

Nowadays, studies approved by RBO are sent to Science Direct, which allows online access to them in a short time, catering to the bibliography researcher. The printed

publication is also available; however, due to space and periodicity limitations, the access to the information is slower.

I believe that the combination of the two systems meets the demand for information and dissemination of current scientific production. We just need to tailor the texts to the more modern publishing systems, considering the objectivity of the subject and the ease of searching in specialized websites. Shorter and more objective works will be the result, facilitating consultation and increasing the possibility of publication.

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