

Editorial

Present and Future of the Journal of the Colombian Society of Ophthalmology

Construction and maintenance of a medical journal comprises various aspects, ranging from the organization and institutional structure that supports the effort to the most important elements: its authors and readers. The Colombian Society of Ophthalmology, following its statutory mandate, ¹ has supported and maintained the Scientific Journal, respecting the independence and academic criteria of the editorial committee. Given the characteristics of the target population, the journal is open to contents of interest in ophthalmology, including all subspecialties; it also has an interest in related scientific issues coming from other disciplines such as immunology, pharmacology, neurology, endocrinology, biology, public health and epidemiology.

The editorial committee, coordinated by the editor-in-chief, is responsible for the content, the selection of topics and types of articles to publish; also, for defining the authorship policies and ensuring high publication standards. In addition, he establishes the peer review process, determines

the interaction and feedback with authors, and is committed to improving the quality of texts and of research in the field of ophthalmology.² His duties also include proposing improvements and mechanisms to find potential authors, improving the quality of the journal, and find new outreach strategies, thus increasing its visibility.

The authors have a leading role in this process; ultimately it is thanks to them that the journal exists; after a thorough research process, they submit the results for publishing and subsequent dissemination, thus deserving special recognition, as the limitations to this area in our country are known. However, great talents bring great responsibilities; the publication requirements and standards are increasingly demanding and include not only adequate knowledge of their area of clinical expertise but general knowledge of research methodology, epidemiology, statistics, languages (English) and management of computer programs among others. There are numerous resources that guide authors in the process of writing the articles; they are also encouraged to review publications such as “Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals”,³ indicating the correct way to write the report; “Style manual to publish in a medical journal”,⁴ explaining the use of medical language in Spanish for scientific publications and “Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals: Sample References”,⁵ which provide guidance on proper use of bibliographic references.

In every process of scientific publications the receptivity of the target audience, which in this case includes over 1,000 ophthalmologists of our country,⁶ ophthalmologists from other

countries and members of other specialties, is fundamental; the intent is to permanently encourage ophthalmologists through articles that allow them to discover new aspects of their specialty, review previously learned concepts, and learn about the status of the research area in ophthalmology in their country. It is expected that the great target readers be able to interact with authors, issue on which we shall work in the near future; in addition, it must not be forgotten that the option of sending letters to the editor to discuss, controvert, and look published issues is always open.

Indexing of the journal is a process comprising different aspects. It includes the institutional process that supports the publication and is related with the formation of the editorial committee, the convening of peer reviewers, and other very specific administrative issues that are critical for maintaining the indexing level. These processes are constantly being revised and improved, and have enabled the journal to be awarded category C by Publindex – Colciencias. However, this is only a part of it; the quality of the material submitted and published is a fundamental indicator for the category of the journal. On this front, Colombian ophthalmologists have the great responsibility of submitting for publication research papers that correspond to the requirements demanded to improve the category. According to the Colciencias guide document, the scientific research articles, reflection articles, and review articles are more important than short articles, case reports, and topic reviews.⁷ The current situation of the journal shows that there is a large trend to publish more reports and case series than analytical and experimental articles.⁸ It depends only on the Colombian ophthalmologists to move a little further

towards the type of studies required to improve indexing. Hence, and through a joint effort it will be possible to maintain and improve the Scientific Journal of the Colombian Society of Ophthalmology.

It is a challenge for the Colombian ophthalmologic community to maintain a level of publications that accounts for its starring role in the Latin American medical scene. The axiom “publish or perish” should be a motto to instill enthusiasm, for Colombian Ophthalmologists have a well-known reputation but this is not clearly supported by national publications. It is fair to think about a future scenario in which the journal is integrated into

the current needs of scientific communication, which covers not only the movement in print, but includes an electronic version of agile and modern design that allows for easy location and obtaining the contents of the articles through any means, indexation in relevant databases, the improvement of the peer review process and the interaction between authors and readers in a more dynamic way.

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Editor-in-Chief

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