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Editorial

Goals, globalization and the impact factor of the journal

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Over the years, as editors of Revista Brasileira de Hematologia e Hemoterapia (RBHH), we have faced different issues. The first of these, an observation that sometimes became a question, is about the purpose of the journal.

To answer this question it is necessary to return to the journal's origins in the 1980s. In those difficult times of discretion, Brazil was different and the Sociedade Brasileira de Hematologia e Hematologia (SBHH) was going through a period of restructuring and controversy about the role of hemotherapy in the country. In a firm and decisive action, remunerated blood donation was banned in Brazil. The SBHH had published a monthly newsletter since 1973 which aimed to promote the activities of the Executive Board of the society and informing everyone about what was going on in hematology and transfusion medicine across the country. At a time when there was little information, when for most it was difficult to access scientific journals, it was said that for some corners of the country, this was the only accessible communication about hematology and transfusion medicine.

An international congress of hematology was hosted by the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1984 when the Board of the SBHH, in a daring act involving four or five people, modified the format of the newsletter and launched instead a prototype of the scientific journal that circulated during the event. At that point the primary objective and heresy of the creators was to move forward and to mark a scientific position, a criticism that the SBHH received, in addition to attracting young people to the society. Today, thinking about it, many people might consider that act as conceited, as a sign of progress in Brazilian hematology, to have a journal of its own as there were none

in Brazil or even in any South America country. The journal of hematology for all the other societies in this area in Latin America was *Sangre*, from Barcelona. After being published in Spanish for forty years, *Sangre* stopped to circulate in 1999.

After a shaky start, the journal of the SBHH became effective two years after its first edition was indexed in the extinct *Index Médico Latino Americano* (IMLA); soon after, it was included in the *Literatura Latino Americana de Ciências da Saúde e do Caribe* database (Lilacs). From then on there was no turning back and the successive Executive Boards have always had as their main goal to publish the national option on hematology and transfusion medicine; this culminated with changes that led to the current title. So the journal slowly became a depository for publications of authors across the country, the results of dissertations and doctorate theses, of information relevant to Brazil, and mainly for works that would probably never be accepted for publication in foreign journals. Submissions until then had basically been limited to the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo but with this change there was an increase in the numbers of contributions from every state in the country.¹ In order to illustrate this, I will mention subject matters such as the damaging effect of the fortification of flour with iron,^{2,3} Dengue fever,⁴⁻⁸ the compassionate use of cell therapy in the country,⁹ articles on the Associação Médica Brasileira (AMB) and Associação Brasileira de Hematologia, Hemoterapia e Terapia Celular (ABHH) guidelines project¹⁰⁻¹⁴ and many others of scientific and national interest that were published and had a great impact. I endorse this and ask the readers a question: would the themes mentioned be accepted by a journal published in another country?

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From the beginning, the journal always aimed to be the official representative of Brazilian hematology and transfusion medicine. Today, this goal continues, but the visibility of Brazilian production was also added, with the change to publishing in English and indexing it in important international databases such as Scopus and PubMed. To achieve this, the journal needed to progress, with great improvements in its editing, in particular, with the choice to publish in English, the lingua franca of communication. One major contribution of the journal is in education as it has provided guidance to authors, urging them to improve their scientific papers in order to increase their chances of publishing in the RBHH and, in the future, in all other scientific periodicals. Nowadays in the RBHH all contributions are assessed by the Internal Review Board in respect to the format, the English and the statistical analyses before being assessed by experts on the merit of the submission. With these measures the rejection rate has increased dramatically, but the editorial policy and the primary objectives have been preserved.¹⁵ And to think that five years ago there was an attempt to close the journal; it remains due to its history and to the work of many past and present hematologists.

Internationalization of the journal

In addition to the measures already mentioned, such as being published in English, the Editorial Board was changed a few years ago with several foreigners being invited to participate. Albeit an important step, this, in itself, does not make the RBHH international as its contents, so far, are almost exclusively from Brazil, despite efforts over the last three years including personal invitations to obtain contributions from foreign authors. Summarizing, the RBHH is a publication edited in a non-anglophone country, Brazil, representative of Brazilian scientific institutions (ABHH, Sociedade Brasileira de Transplantes de Medula Óssea [SBTMO], Associação Italo-Brasileira de Hematologia [AIBE] and Sociedade Brasileira de Oncologia Pediátrica [SOBOPE]), it publishes almost exclusively Brazilian papers and, in general, is executive and scientifically controlled by Brazilians and so this is not an international journal.¹⁶ Will it one day be international?

The impact factor of the journal

We define impact as a measurement of the repercussion of an article or some knowledge published by a determined scientific journal, that is, how it influences and makes a difference to the community that it covers. This can be measured by means of reading, use and application of knowledge, chiefly represented by citations in other published articles, which symbolize the level of interest of other researchers and recognize the quality of information.¹⁷ In order to rank scientific journals from various fields of knowledge, a bibliometric index was created by Garfield comparing the number of citations of a journal obtained in the universe of journals with the number of publications in the journal, all within a certain period of time. However when asked, the aim is to know the

importance and the rank of a particular scientific journal. Thus arose the impact factor (IF) of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) that, since 1955, reports every year a list of the classification of journals in the Journal Citation Report (JCR), within the universe of journals in its charge.^{17,18} The IF does not aim to evaluate the quality or qualification of authors.^{18,19} However interest in the IF in academic circles increased with the reclassification of journals by the Qualis system of the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* (CAPES) that privileges journals according to their IF (ISI, JCR, Thomson Reuters). Following this, the evaluation of postgraduate programs and evaluations comparing researchers went on to grade scientific publications using these criteria thus generating controversy until today.^{20,21} The two- or three-year IF is a useful bibliometric index; it has variations according to the universe of journals covered with the largest number today being indexed to Scopus or Google. In our area, the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) Brazil collection offers the IF and other indexes and recently announced the new SciELO Citation Index in partnership with Thomson Reuters. Another evaluation index for journals is the Scimago Journal Rank (SJR). Other indices exist including the index of immediacy, and the H index, with all being relevant and helping in the evaluation of journals, but with imperfections and dissatisfaction.²¹ Hence, altimetry appeared as an alternative to the traditional bibliometric indices and H index in the midst of this dissatisfaction with evaluations using traditional scientific scientometric assessments, and after behavioral changes reflecting the rise of the internet and the electronic availability of every journal. Altimetry sets out to assess the impact as in its definition¹⁶ measuring the complete range of repercussions of articles, data and scientific information cited in the lay media, in print and electronic media, and as viewings (internet site visits), downloads, endorsements in the social media and new media, and as an influence to change government policies.^{2,3}

In conclusion, the journal aims to be the foremost journal of hematology, transfusion medicine and cellular therapy of Brazil. It aims not to stray from this goal after gaining visibility and indexing in all the major databases in the world.

The journal is not an international journal, but has the ambition of becoming better known throughout the world.

The journal has an impact factor in databases and has applied to be included in the JCR/ISI/Thomson Reuters IF; it is widely available electronically and entered in the world publishing market to progress with a new website and a contract with an internationally renowned publisher.

The journal depends on the editors as the guardians of its progress in order to avoid 'elitization' and deviations from the goals that it has had since its inception.

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