



EDITORIAL

The goal is to improve.

DOI: 10.17126/joralres.2016.037

In the last editorial of the *Journal of Oral Research*, the results of the evaluation performed by SciELO of this journal were informed; unfortunately, these results¹ were negative. Once again, a similar outcome has to be reported; this time from PubMed Central.

The MEDLINE database and its search engine PubMed are well known among all or almost all researchers in biomedical sciences. However, some are not familiar with PubMed Central and the differences it has with MEDLINE or PubMed. The following is its official description: “*PubMed Central® (PMC) is a free archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine (NIH/NLM). In keeping with NLM's legislative mandate to collect and preserve the biomedical literature, PMC serves as a digital counterpart to NLM's extensive print journal collection. Launched in February 2000, PMC was developed and is managed by NLM's National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI)*”².

Our journal initially applied to be included in PubMed Central in June 2015, but it was required to have a minimum number of issues completely published in English (including letters and editorials) therefore our application process was repeated in August 2015. It has to be noted, however, that the due dates and conditions of the application were not the ones PubMed Central establishes on its website. The answer received was short and stark, as can be observed from the following statement: “*I regret to inform you that Journal of Oral Research has not passed the first stage of acceptance to PMC. NLM has determined that the journal does not meet PMC's Scientific Quality standard. The application to PMC will not be accepted at this time. Journal of Oral Research is eligible to reapply in 24 months from today. NLM would like to see an overall improvement in the quality of science, specifically with significant improvements in the design and execution of research studies. Also, NLM noted that there is significantly variable writing quality in the journal*”.

Although the evaluation performed by SciELO had clear

misperceptions, it could be considered objective and detailed, unlike the one received by PubMed Central, which referred to general aspects regarding the quality of our journal. The main conclusion was that “it had to be improved” and the two main aspects to achieve this goal were concerning the methodological and reporting quality of the studies included in the journal. This evaluation does not really contribute to the identification of objective aspects that should be prioritized, and much on the contrary, it just seems to imply that every aspect of the articles included should be improved.

Regarding the above, we would like to remind our readers what was stated in the last editorial: “*Despite the above objections, it is clear that some observations of the reviewers are true, ours is not yet a journal publishing exclusively internationally funded multicenter clinical trials written by world-renowned researchers, we are referring those to Science, Nature, NEJM, The Lancet, JAMA, and to a lesser extent to PLOS One and Scientific Reports*”. In this sense, although it seems a difficult challenge, the *Journal of Oral Research* will strive to perform all the changes requested and take advantage of all the opportunities to improve upon our strong foundation, despite some of our natural limitations.

The number of articles our journal receives increases each year, many of which are observational studies performed with small samples that analyze variables and extensively researched phenomena. Since 2015, many of the smaller articles together with those that lack novelty have been rejected and not submitted to any peer review. This aims to improve not only the quality of the journal itself, but also to avoid any delay to authors as well as extra work done by reviewers, and in general, to control any kind of inefficiency that can affect the peer-review system. Henceforth we will continue to increase these requirements. Therefore, to provide better guidance to researchers that are interested in publishing in our journal, it should be considered that studies limited to one geographical location, performed on less than 200 patients, which analyze just the oral health status



(e.g. caries, periodontal disease, dento-maxillary anomalies) as well as considering only sociodemographic variables (e.g. sex, age and socioeconomic class) are very likely to be rejected and will not be sent to peer review. However, studies including samples of less than 200 patients with some kind of distinctive characteristics, disease or condition will be considered as exceptions.

Until last year, the articles that were accepted underwent hardly any editing. The main reason behind this was to preserve the content and form of the message the authors wanted to deliver in their manuscript. However, with the passing of time, it has become undeniable, that most of the accepted articles do require further editing, making sure their content is preserved, but undergoing significant changes to the way that content is delivered. For this reason, during 2016, the articles are edited at least on two occasions. Firstly, the writing and structure of the Spanish versions are reviewed (most articles which are received are originally written in Spanish). Secondly, during the translation of the articles into English, minor changes are made to adjust meanings of certain concepts.

In addition to the above, since 2015, the requirement to adapt manuscripts to the checklists or statements of Equator-Network has become increasingly more demanding. Therefore, it remains important for authors to understand that the use of checklists and statements is not a recommendation, but a requirement. Authors should identify the study's design and apply the appropriate checklist, available on the Equator-Network website³.

Considering the exposed above, the Authors' Guidelines of the journal will be modified during the coming weeks and reported in the next issue's editorial. However, these norms will have little or no value if it is not validated and supported by the community that will be ruled by these norms. We thank all the comments and letters sent to us by the authors, readers, and reviewers to improve our Author Guidelines and the general editorial process.

RICARDO CARTES-VELASQUEZ.

DDS BPsych MPH PhD.

Editor-in-Chief

Journal of Oral Research

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