

Editorial

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Tools for strengthening peer review in the Journal of the Faculty of Medicine, another step to increase its impact and visibility

The Journal of the Faculty of Medicine (*Revista de la Facultad de Medicina*) of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, after being in the A2 category for ten years, was classified in the B category during the Call 768 of 2016 for Indexing Specialized Colombian Scientific Journals - Publindex (1), which is valid until September 15, 2019.

This new categorization occurred despite the notable evolution of the Journal in the past months, which aimed at increasing the visibility and impact of the published scientific production. To achieve this increase, the Journal migrated its editorial process to the Open Journal System (OJS) and implemented the progressive publication of articles in English starting with the coming issues (2). This is also consistent with its purpose: “to disseminate knowledge on various scientific, social and artistic fields related to health sciences, their professional practice and teaching processes.”

These strategies have led to a significant increase in publication requests from different countries and the publication of original studies, which, in turn, generates the need to increase the number of members of the editorial committee and the peer review base (2), fundamental pillars for guaranteeing the quality of any scientific journal.

Peer review is essential for the editorial process in order to help publishers during the selection of research manuscripts whose results must have credibility and methodological quality, and should also be innovative and interesting for the scientific community. Peers collaborate in the detection of errors or weaknesses of the submitted articles (3), reason why the reviewer is expected to behave respectfully, timely, realistically, empathically, and impeccably from an ethical (4), scientific, professional, and constructive point of view at the moment of accepting, carrying out and filling out the format for reviewing a contribution to the journal. Additionally, a quality, relevance and importance assessment of the research is also expected, without replacing the editor (3).

To guide the work of authors and reviewers, the use of checklists is recommended to verify the quality of reports from the very beginning of the research process. The EQUATOR (Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency of Health Research) Network is an international initiative, supported by the World Health Organization, that seeks to improve the reliability and relevance of the published literature resulting from health research (5). This strategy promotes transparency and precision in scientific reports by using publication guidelines in order to systematically counteract inadequate reporting of research.

The products generated by this initiative, available at <http://www.equator-network.org> (6), are a growing list of resources that, from the construction of the protocol and according to the type of study

and methodological design, allow the researcher to prepare the final reports of their work, guaranteeing the transparency, veracity and reliability of the results to the final consumer to contribute effectively to the growth of scientific knowledge.

Out of the 386 checklists available to date, the following are the most relevant: the SPIRIT 2013 (Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials); the CONSORT 2010 statement: updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomized trials; the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) statement: guidelines for reporting observational studies; the Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement; the CARE Guidelines: Consensus-based Clinical Case Reporting Guideline Development; the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR); the COREQ (Consolidated criteria for REporting Qualitative research) Checklist; the Standards for Reporting Diagnostic Accuracy (STARD) 2015; the Transparent Reporting of a multivariable prediction model for Individual Prognosis Or Diagnosis (TRIPOD) Initiative; the Consolidated Health Economic Evaluation Reporting Standards (CHEERS) statement, and The AGREE Reporting Checklist: a tool to improve reporting of clinical practice guidelines. The aforementioned are the most frequently used checklists based on the types of studies published more regularly in scientific journals.

The use of these checklists by authors, reviewers, editors and members of the editorial team will result in the strengthening of editorial quality by incorporating international publication parameters, which, together with the changes already implemented, will favor the international visibility of the published articles, since the submission, evaluation and final publication process will be optimized for the researchers who choose the Journal of the Faculty of Medicine as a platform to achieve the recognition and disclosure of their work.

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