

Revista Paulista de Pediatria in search of its dream

A Revista Paulista de Pediatria segue em busca de seu sonho

La Revista Paulista de Pediatria sigue en búsqueda de su sueño

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Editing a scientific journal in Brazil is a challenge that requires simultaneous integration into two worlds that do not always overlap. *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* has as its objective the dissemination of high-quality scientific knowledge in the field of child and adolescent health. There is only one other Brazilian specialist journal in the area of pediatrics with a predominantly clinical focus and a core target audience of pediatricians: *Jornal de Pediatria*. Its indexing status and pursuit of international standing place it at a different level from that currently intended for our journal. *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* seeks to increase the visibility and accessibility of knowledge output in its field of interest to Brazilian and worldwide audiences. To this end, the journal must establish itself both as a vehicle of interest to producers of knowledge seeking to publish their output and as an appealing source of information for physicians who wish to stay up to date, improve their clinical practice, and even formulate new research questions and conduct their own investigations, using the questions addressed by published articles as a springboard of sorts. These, therefore, are the two worlds which do not always overlap: the world of research, which creates knowledge and uses it as a support for further investigations, and the world of practice, which transforms itself through updates provided by courses, conferences, and the scientific literature.

To meet the needs of the “world of clinical practice,” *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* is published both in print and online. The print edition of the journal is distributed to over 5,000 pediatricians in the state of São Paulo. The online version is available entirely free of charge on the São Paulo Pediatrics Society website (www.spsps.org.br) or through the SciELO database (Scientific Electronic

Library Online, www.scielo.br). Since October 2007, over 806,000⁽¹⁾ articles published in *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* have been retrieved and read through SciELO alone, and the information contained in these articles was somehow disseminated – evidence of the penetration of our journal and of the achievement of its mission. From August 2009 onwards, the number of retrievals has also been counted according to visitor language, revealing a minor but significant contribution of readers seeking content in Spanish (13,327 hits) and English (25,519 hits)⁽²⁾. A fine example of the journal’s popularity is provided by the number of times its most viewed articles have been retrieved⁽³⁾: Murahovschi J, *Tétano dos recém-nascidos: revisitado* (2008) – 52,967 views; Ribeiro IF et al., *Fisioterapia em recém-nascidos com persistência do canal arterial e complicações pulmonares* (2008) – 16,542 views; and Cortez et al., *Conhecimento de pediatras e nutricionistas sobre o tratamento da alergia ao leite de vaca no lactente* (2007) – 15,076 views. In this respect, one may safely say that *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* is fulfilling its purpose, and, perhaps, even succeeding beyond it, by providing access to knowledge on important themes in child and adolescent health, not only to pediatricians but to other professionals interested in this subject area, with particular emphasis on themes of relevance to physical therapy and nutrition.

If *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* is doing a very good job of meeting the needs of the “world of clinical practice,” much work remains to be done on the “academia and research” front. Creators of scientific knowledge are recognized by the quality and repercussion of the scholarly journals in which their findings are published. The greater the visibility and importance of these periodicals in the academic universe, the greater the likelihood that authors’ findings will have

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an impact on other researchers in their field. Despite certain distortions and criticism, this “scientific impact” is ultimately measured by the number of citations a publication receives. In other words, a scientific article whose findings indeed contribute to advancement in current knowledge will be cited by researchers who agree with its findings, by those who disagree, and by those conducting critical reviews on the theme, which will, in turn, have an impact on clinical practice and lead to countless citations of both the original article and the periodical in which it was published. The greater the visibility of an article – its availability, at least in abstract form, in all bibliographic databases used by opinion leaders as a source for research – the more likely it is to be cited. Therefore, the impact factor (IF) of a journal plays a key role in conferring visibility to articles; on the other hand, highly cited articles increase the visibility of the journals in which they were published, in a vicious circle of author/journal feedback. According to Thompson Reuters, which maintains the JCR (Journal Citation Reports) impact factor database, the three highest-impact journals in the field of pediatrics were, as of 2010⁽⁴⁾: *Pediatrics* (IF 5.39); *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* (IF 5.15); and *Journal of Pediatrics* (IF 4.04). The JCR database lists 108 periodicals under the Pediatrics heading. *Jornal de Pediatria*, the finest Brazilian journal covering the specialty, holds the 69th position in the JCR rankings, with an impact factor of 1.065⁽⁴⁾. *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* has yet to be indexed in the JCR database. One may argue that the JCR listing consists mostly of traditional, English-language journals that overwhelmingly cite articles (and journals) published in developed nations. However, one must also bear in mind that the language of science – at least over the past 30 years – is and has been English, and that all scientific output that truly makes a difference in building knowledge is published and disseminated in English. In an attempt to encompass a database that includes a greater number of Latin American journals and has higher penetration in Brazilian academia, we analyzed the same information mentioned above, but using the Scopus[®] database maintained by Elsevier, which, as of 2010, indexed 189 periodicals in the fields of pediatrics, perinatology, and child health. Analysis shows that the highest-impact pediatrics journals in Scopus[®] are⁽⁵⁾ *Pediatrics* (IF 5.59), *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* (IF 3.99), and *Developmental and Disabilities Research Reviews* (IF 3.90). *Jornal de Pediatria* holds the 51st position in this database, with an impact factor of 1.31, whereas *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* could not be assessed as it was first indexed in

2010⁽⁵⁾. Therefore, if *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* intends to establish itself as a competitive option for dissemination of scientific knowledge, it must make its content available in English and achieve indexing status on the most influential bibliographic databases, to ensure that articles will be visible to and available for citation by knowledge builders – namely, academia in its broadest sense and scholarly researchers. We are making headway in this direction: the full text of all original articles is being published in Portuguese and English; all abstracts are made available in Portuguese, English, and Spanish; and Scopus[®] indexing of the journal was achieved in 2010. Also in 2010, we requested MEDLINE/PubMed indexing. The journal was rated good or excellent on all criteria, but articles from overseas contributors were felt to be underrepresented. One might argue that the journal should not be punished for trying to address the issue in which it was found wanting. How can the journal receive articles from other countries if MEDLINE/PubMed is unwilling to boost its visibility? Furthermore, *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* has systematically published articles from all regions of Brazil, taking into account that scientific output in the country is highly concentrated in the South and Southeast regions. Even though the journal is wholly funded by the São Paulo Pediatrics Society, approximately 70% of the articles we publish are submitted by authors from other states. Moreover, to criticize a purported underrepresentation of foreign content in a journal published in a country of continental proportions that is relatively isolated by language is to disregard the efforts the journal has made to open its proverbial doors to all investigators who seek to publish their findings in a high-quality venue. Therefore, a second application for MEDLINE indexing will be submitted in early 2012. We hope that indexing, when achieved, will both attract publication of further high-quality studies and increase our worldwide readership.

Finally, whether its focus is clinical practice or academic research, a journal such as *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* requires considerable financial and human resources to achieve timely publication of its issues – both in print and online – every 3 months. The São Paulo Pediatrics Society has been providing this much-needed support. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of investment required is quite substantial, and partnerships must eventually be established. A tireless search for ethical partners that are able to understand the mission and challenges of *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* has required heroic effort on the part of the Society's Directorate for Publications. On the other

hand, adequate article flow depends on the support of an editorial office that is agile and maintains a good rapport with authors, reviewers, editors, and other professionals involved in editorial production of the journal. The editing “machine” must remain in constant operation, and we have been fortunate to receive the cooperation of hundreds of ad-hoc peer reviewers who have graciously helped select submitted articles for acceptance, suggest any necessary modifications, and point out which studies are best rejected. This body of volunteer peer reviewers has provided vital support to *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* along its path towards scientific visibility. So has our corps of editors, who devote countless hours of their free time every week (in stark contrast to the professional nature of the editorial boards of international journals) to help this

dream come true – the dream of publishing a journal that is both useful and available to the pediatrics community and disseminates high-impact scientific knowledge. Again, towards this end, our staff and editors take extraordinary steps to make sure each submitted article is quickly and fairly reviewed so that those selected for publication, with content and format appropriate for reading, can help disseminate research findings with the potential to make a difference in the field of child health.

In short, the challenge faced by editors of Brazilian scientific journals is that of internationalization – to be able to compete with the best, highest-quality journals available without shifting focus away from the interests of its readership. *Revista Paulista de Pediatria* remains in pursuit of its dream.

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