

## **PERENNIALITY OF BRAZILIAN NURSING JOURNALS: RECOVERY AND REAFFIRMATION OF THE JOURNALS' SOCIAL COMMITMENT TO SCIENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** to reflect upon the challenges that permeate the development and perennality of nursing journals published in Brazil for becoming entities at the service of the scientific community and heritage of the history of science for future generations.

**Method:** the reflective method grounded on the principles of complexity and pertinent literature was adopted.

**Results:** the perennial commitment to scientific publishing emerged as the starting point for this reflection; hence, the role played by sponsoring institutions as the guardians of scientific journals, the need for investments, and to valorize the management, professionalization, and internationalization of the editorial team are emphasized, along with the ability to expand communication breaking paradigms in the connections between science and society.

**Conclusion:** this reflection is expected to reaffirm the concept of scientific periodicals being perennial devices and, thus, survive the dynamics of time amidst the challenges science faces worldwide. In this sense, it indicates the importance of institutions supporting scientific journals as a condition to ensure their perennality.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Scholarly Communication. Scientific Communication and Diffusion. Publishing. Nursing. Editorial Policies.

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# PERENIDADE DOS PERIÓDICOS BRASILEIROS DE ENFERMAGEM: RESGATE E REAFIRMAÇÃO DO COMPROMISSO SOCIAL DA CIÊNCIA

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** refletir sobre os desafios que permeiam o desenvolvimento e perenidade dos periódicos de enfermagem, editados no Brasil, tomando-os como entidades à serviço da comunidade científica atual e patrimônio da história da ciência para as gerações vindouras.

**Método:** utilizou-se do método reflexivo, ancorado em princípios da complexidade e na literatura pertinente ao objeto da reflexão.

**Resultados:** a perenidade do compromisso com a editoração científica emergiu como ponto de partida para a reflexão que destaca a importância das instituições mantenedoras como guardiãs dos periódicos científicos; a necessidade de investimentos e valorização da gestão, profissionalização e internacionalização da equipe editorial; a capacidade de ampliar a comunicação rompendo paradigmas nas conexões entre ciência e sociedade.

**Conclusão:** esta reflexão poderá contribuir para reafirmar o conceito dos periódicos científicos como dispositivos que devem ser projetados em uma perspectiva perene e que, portanto, sobreviva à dinâmica dos tempos em meio aos desafios da ciência global. Nesse sentido, aponta para a importância das instituições mantenedoras dos periódicos como condição para garantia de sua perenidade.

**DESCRITORES:** Comunicação acadêmica. Comunicação e divulgação científica. Editoração. Enfermagem. Políticas editoriais.

# PERPETUIDAD DE LAS REVISTAS CIENTÍFICAS DE ENFERMERÍA BRASILEÑAS: RECUPERACIÓN Y REAFIRMACIÓN DEL COMPROMISO SOCIAL DE LAS REVISTAS CON LA CIENCIA

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** reflexionar sobre los desafíos relacionados al desarrollo y la perpetuidad de las revistas de enfermería publicadas en Brasil, considerándolas como entidades al servicio de la comunidad científica actual y patrimonio de la historia de la ciencia para las generaciones futuras.

**Método:** Se utilizó el método reflexivo, con base en principios de complejidad y en la literatura pertinente al objeto de reflexión.

**Resultados:** El compromiso perenne por la publicación científica surgió como punto de partida de una reflexión que destaca la importancia de las instituciones patrocinadoras como guardianas de las revistas científicas; la necesidad de inversiones y potenciación de la gestión, profesionalización e internacionalización del equipo editorial; la capacidad de expandir la comunicación rompiendo paradigmas en las conexiones entre ciencia y sociedad.

**Conclusión:** esta reflexión puede contribuir a reafirmar el concepto de las revistas científicas como dispositivos que deben diseñarse en una perspectiva perenne y que, por tanto, sobrevivan a la dinámica de los tiempos en medio de los desafíos de la ciencia global. En este sentido, señala la importancia de las instituciones que mantienen las revistas como condición para garantizar su perpetuidad.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Comunicación académica. Comunicación y divulgación científica. Edición. Enfermería. Políticas editoriales.

## INTRODUCTION

A scientific periodical is, far and foremost, a vital device integrated into a dynamic system of human and institutional interactions that govern the management of scientific knowledge worldwide. Therefore, the perennial nature of periodicals is related to their social role of ensuring that the results of the papers they publish reach the target audience and future generations<sup>1</sup>.

This process makes clear the validation of journals as entities at the service of the scientific community and the entire civil society<sup>2</sup>, because, together with other academic-scientific devices, they are the guardians of research resulting from the direct effort of scientists; institutions' investments; the Brazilian State's investments; and the society that financially supports science through taxes. In this sense, by integrating the complex web of science, scientific journals reiterate their importance with the ontological becoming of perpetuating themselves in history as spaces that dynamize the dissemination and consumption of current scientific results, preserving the history of science over time.

Thus, the decision to launch a scientific journal cannot be grounded on occasional adventure based only on the desire to have a journal linked to the institution of its proponents<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, its conformation must derive from a genuine, singular, and collective responsibility towards the audience one wishes to provide with a new vehicle of scientific dissemination. Additionally, this new vehicle will be added to existing journals within a web of interactions that constitute a specific field of knowledge, either with a different and peculiar focus or with emerging possibilities for publication and other editorial processes.

The important thing is that, as it cannot be a one-off adventure, nor last, the mandate of an academic leader, the desire to create a scientific journal has to result from an expressive and constant responsibility that is not restricted to the idealizing individual, or an isolated group of people, but, first and foremost, result from the incorporation of this process as part of the institutional philosophy of the entity that will maintain the journal.

Therefore, when seeking its perennial nature, the outcome of a journal will not be restricted or depend on the success of those who launched it or those who will succeed them. Instead, it is an institutional responsibility and, therefore, goes beyond the boundaries of its original context as it becomes a commitment to the scientific community<sup>4</sup>, with significant national implications; however, no longer restricted to the country that hosts it. It is hoped that overtime, a journal will consolidate the principle of science as a global phenomenon and<sup>5</sup> publish papers authored by international researchers.

In this same movement, the vicissitudes involved in the editorial management process shape possibilities to broaden horizons between science and society while revealing challenges for maintaining epistemological prestige for the disciplinary field of knowledge that makes up a journal's scope. Therefore, open science is an important example of a principle that better connects scientific production with the society that financially supports it, considering that the target audience and society trust the science disseminated based on the practices postulated by open science<sup>6</sup>. From the context of scientific publishing, one may infer a broader view of editorial and institutional leaders on the challenges to maintaining a journal's prestige in the face of its target audience and, therefore, maintaining coherence with the global policies that permeate the consumption of science patterns.

In a global context, among the editorial challenges that reiterate the importance of the perennial nature of scientific periodicals is the need to keep vigilant and implement good editorial practices to ensure scientific integrity amidst the accelerated expansion of studies that deserve greater and better attention, considering that the publication of hasty results may imply false news<sup>7</sup> with scientific apparatus. Thus, the prestige of a journal aimed at perpetuity must consider and strengthen protocols that inhibit practices that call into question the scientific integrity of its published papers.

Therefore, it is insufficient to merely recognize the importance of researchers' leadership to start developing a journal as there is also an expanded view on science and social development. This path, of course, starts from a perspective on the need to invest in actions that foster the development of science, which is why its analysis cannot follow a linear but rather a complex theoretical conformation. Therefore, this reflection is permeated by the perspective of complexity, that is, what is woven together in a system whose whole must be perceived from the dynamic interaction between its parts<sup>8</sup>; within a context that values the local and global relationship of its own development, such as occurs in the publishing universe.

Because it is a non-linear dynamic, the challenges of editorial management of a journal that proposes to be perennial can be understood through the complex principle of the "ecology of action" by postulating that action, even if initial or lasting, does not depend only on of the will of those who practice it, but on a set of interactions established with the context and social actors involved in it<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, an action reveals developments, which, once inserted in the web of interactions, are no longer subject to being controlled. Therefore, as a journal is launched to its target audience, after acquiring pertinence and epistemological prestige in the face of a peer group (researchers and graduate students, mainly), it can, in essence, influence a complex system in which research institutions, including graduate programs, researchers, academic disciplines, and professions.

Moreover, as it starts to influence the academic life of researchers, educators, management and health care professionals, and their respective institutions, a journal goes beyond the linear dimension of merely communicating science<sup>5</sup>. Thus, its influence becomes positive if it goes up quality standards and represents prestige among its target audience, and starts to establish bonds. The success of such a venture is reflected in the ambiance wherever it is and extends to the team leading it, the authors and the institutions where they are affiliated, and the institution to which the journal is linked, in addition to graduate programs.

On the other hand, failure to fulfill its mission may negatively affect the actors and sectors mentioned above. This situation is even more accentuated when one verifies the discontinuity of a journal's editorial flow<sup>9</sup>, with implications for its periodicity, or as a worse outcome: its extinction, because, with it, the scientific information it published together with the efforts of the leaders involved, especially editorial managers, are lost. To a certain extent, relative damage in each case may affect the prestige of the institution maintaining the journal and the authors of the papers published. This is another example of the ecology of action<sup>8</sup>; however, with negative impacts.

Moreover, in addition to the dynamism involved in the commitment to disseminating knowledge, a journal is also the guardian of the history of science and assumes this commitment in front of the authors to keep the published papers accessible. Thus, it is said that the social contract established with the academic community must prevail for previous, current, and future generations. Thus, this process reveals the identity of a profession, discipline, and science, which can only be thought of within a complex systemic conformation.

Therefore, in line with the principle of the ecology of action, this reflection seeks to reiterate and revive the understanding that scientific journals can only fulfill their social role when conceived from a perennial perspective. This commitment, however, is not restricted to the creators or current editorial teams, but it has to be also, and mainly, assumed by the institutional sphere that maintains them.

In view of the previous discussion, this paper's objective is to reflect upon the challenges permeating the development and perpetuity of nursing journals published in Brazil, considering them as entities at the service of the current scientific community and heritage of the history of science for future generations.

## PERENNIALITY OF THE COMMITMENT TO SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING

As mentioned earlier, a journal must be conceived by the entire academic community as a heritage of the history of science. Moreover, as science is conceived as a systemic knowledge network, this reality implies all citizens. Therefore, the connections between journals and society conform social roles of guardians of knowledge.

Therefore, this context shows the need to be attentive and careful with hurried enthusiasm when facing the challenge of launching a new periodical without deeply considering and understanding that once the first number of papers is published, the commitment to remain in force achieves the trust of all research consumers and especially of the authors who deposited the fruit of their efforts there.

Hence, one has to keep in mind that if the commitment is not institutional, a scientific journal may not subsist. For this reason, linear thinking focused only on the present, without considering institutional prospects and goals and assessing whether such a periodical will be part of an organization and is sustainable, does not suffice.

Furthermore, the dynamics of a scientific journal's survival and quality development are directly involved with its institution's or sponsoring entity's development. Thus, it is said that a perennial institution has managed to survive the adversities of time. However, taking elements of complex thought as a premise, it is assumed that any reality, regardless of the historical moment it is conceived, is challenged by uncertainties, risks, and even illusions<sup>5</sup>. Scientific journals are also affected by this reality in the face of factors such as policies encouraging the scientific publishing process, global changes in scientific parameters in line with the qualification of researchers who publish in the journal in question, and dynamics of research production and consumption.

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, there is a non-dialogical or even non-dialectical but paradoxical context of the actors involved in the editorial management of Brazilian journals since there is considerable work overload among chief editors, associates, and the like due to the multiple roles they are required to play in their institutions, beyond editorial matters. Moreover, these same professionals divide their working hours between the journal and teaching activities at undergraduate and graduate programs; research activities; university extension; administrative, and, almost always, representation. Nonetheless, the editorial community has faced challenges in maintaining the emerging development history of Brazilian nursing journals.

This reality can be glimpsed as the outcome of investments in the technical qualification of editors and academic training of authors and reviewers, considering Brazil has shown significant development in its graduate programs, especially doctoral ones<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) is a valuable agency linked to the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, supporting Brazilian research and, therefore, establishing essential connections with the complex structure of science by promoting research; and with journals, by encouraging the editorial process. However, complexity says removing uncertainties and risks from human interactions and social phenomena is impossible. Nonetheless, it presents in the concept of strategy the possibility of dealing better with such circumstances. Thus, considering the context of human resources involved in the scientific publishing of journals, the university, and other institutions that maintain these scientific devices must rethink such resources as strategic actions to maintain the prestige and social role as an institution dedicated to knowledge, raising questions, values, vocations, and creating, preserving, and disseminating knowledge; being the keeper of the culture, connecting and integrating talents and generations, and serving as a bridge between the past, the path on the present, and feasibility for the future.

Moreover, the university as a governmental entity may allow not only the projection or maintenance of journals but strengthen them as it understands them as indispensable elements for the consolidation of science and, therefore, fundamental for these institutions' social role. It is also known that this process is valued by other important institutions that maintain journals, such as scientific associations and class councils. However, the expressive majority of Brazilian nursing journals are maintained by universities, even if decentralized throughout academic units – as noted by the Ibero-American Network of Scientific Publishing in Nursing<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, because this reflection addresses the Brazilian context, universities as institutions that maintain journals are highlighted, even if they assume transversal perspectives to other editorial segments. Furthermore, in a hologrammatic projection of complexity<sup>5</sup>, in which the whole reflects the parts and the parts reflect the whole, journals mirror their sponsoring institutions and the entire scientific community that meets its publication scope. In this sense, it also reflects the profession itself and, in a way, how society sees Nursing.

Despite the previous discussion, there is a paradox in the funding of journals by universities. In this context, investment in Brazilian science has been gradually reduced, as noted by the Unesco Science Report (2021)<sup>12</sup>. It shows Brazil allocates only 1.15% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to Research and Development (R&D). Furthermore, this report points out that between the study period, from 2014 to 2018, the total amount invested in science decreased by approximately 16%, with a significant drop, reaching 50% in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovations, and Communications (MCTI).

## **UNIVERSITY: GUARDIAN OF THE EXPRESSIVE MAJORITY OF SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS**

Like any sociopolitical phenomenon, science and the outcome of scientific production affect and are affected by the development of journals. Therefore, journals must be considered from their macro and micro political perspectives because, although there has been a reduction in investments toward Research and Development (R&D), Brazilian researchers have persevered, preventing the projection of scientific production and, consequently, the contribution of Brazilian science at the world level, from declining<sup>12-13</sup>. Therefore, it is important to consider the success these talented and dedicated researchers achieved to funding their research projects. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that most of these researchers are professors, educators in graduate programs linked to public universities<sup>14-16</sup>.

Furthermore, the leading indicators of academic productivity remain the scientific publications of university professors, educators and students<sup>17</sup>. These parameters added to others, such as the development of patents and internationalization, for example, reveal significant impacts on the development of nations<sup>18</sup>, which is why investments in science and, consequently, in scientific production and dissemination cannot be conceived as a policy concerned only with universities. However, it interests all sectors of society and other institutions that maintain journals.

In addition to the previous discussion, another indicator of a university's international ranking concerns the prestige of its graduate programs, which depend on qualified publications in journals with an impact factor and citation rates of their faculty members and students to remain well evaluated by the regulating and evaluating bodies of graduate education, which in Brazil is composed by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). These rankings include Times Higher Education World University Rankings, a compilation of universities published by Times Higher Education; QS World University Rankings, which comprises annual university rankings published

by Quacquarelli Symonds, UK; and the Global 2000 list by the Center for World University Rankings. Therefore, the following question has to be asked to universities: why not fund the journals published in their system? Why depend on the individual efforts of educators and students for a significant portion of their journals' financial support? Why not fund a portion of their scientific dissemination system, in line with the budget already dedicated to libraries?

From another perspective, when investigating the origins of resources of Brazilian journals in the field of Nursing, with emphasis on those linked to the Ibero-American Network of Scientific Editing in Nursing, as previously mentioned, most, 81.25%, are linked to public universities; in this context, only nine out of the 48 Brazilian journals are linked to professional organizations, councils or private companies<sup>11</sup>.

Therefore, in the hypothesis that universities assume part of the funding, there must be a management council to distribute the resources and discuss with the university's president if supplementation is needed, according to each supported journal's quality indicators. Hence, universities must invest in journals in a comparable way to what they invest in the production of knowledge, even though the latter also lacks more solid investment policies by the State. After all, this whole process must be seen from its systemic perspective; that is, scientific communication is valued as an inseparable part of the impact of developed science and the society that benefits from it.

In addition to the ability of universities to reinforce their social roles concerning the development of science, which includes the maintenance and strengthening of scientific journals, we reiterate that it is also opportune to reflect on the qualification and overload faced by editors-in-chief, associates, and other members of the editorial team, including reviewers as well.

At the same time, it is necessary to appreciate investments in the editorial team's management, professionalization, and internationalization. It follows from this statement an understanding that the management process of scientific publishing is conditioned by multiple elements that, together, determine a journal's success and its continuity.

In this circumstance, the following are central points of this process: investment in publishing training, the profile and productivity of the editorial board and its action, focused on expectations, time, and planning, based on the principles of responsibility towards the professional community, transparency, and integrity scientific. The combination of these elements, added to financial and institutional investment, allows the results to be positive and go beyond national borders, strengthening the construction of a universal language through the internationalization of the knowledge produced and published in a particular field of knowledge, preferably being freely accessible.

## **ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE AND BREAK THE PARADIGMS OF THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SCIENCE AND SOCIETY**

For journals to remain perennial over time and through generations, journals must record and secure the identity of their papers. Hence, technologies that favor the maintenance of papers in a safe, easy-to-locate and access must be favored.

Thus, the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), adopted by journals worldwide, is indispensable to ensure that scientific papers are accessed, regardless of their location. In this sense, in this reflection, we call on the actors involved in the editorial universe to defend the importance of adopting DOI as a principle of equity to recover and duly appreciate science and its history, which includes implementing this device retroactively to the papers already published<sup>19</sup>.

Therefore, DOI is one of the ways to consolidate a journal in database indexes and obtain better bibliometric indexes, increasing its visibility relative to other scientific journals, encouraging reflections in the Nursing editorial community, and reiterating the commitment to science itself.

This measure ensures not only the accelerated dynamics of the parameters for good editorial practices but also the configuration of journals as guardians of scientific knowledge, which must be perennial so that an accurate understanding of current and future challenges in Nursing Science can be achieved.

Moreover, until a decade ago, one indicator was used almost exclusively to assess the impact of a publication, i.e., formal citations referenced in other articles, book chapters, books, theses, and dissertations (these last four are not always computable). Recently, more immediate measures have been the focus of the attention of journals: first, because they provide authors with feedback on the target audience's receptivity to a given product; second, they present the responses of an attentive public in search of solutions to their professional problem or research problem.

Thus, the strategic indicators of journals and evaluating institutions in Science, Technology, and Innovation include research product scores on social media, paper downloads, and others; thus, the measurement of these "new" indicators records the scope of engagement of scientific journals and their global ranking<sup>20-21</sup>.

In this path, alternative indicators (altmetrics) are increasingly elevated to complementary indicators because, as science advances in its projections of impacts and influences on society, the relational process of communication assumes expressive relevance in social media. Thus, journals are expected to include expanded scientific communication in their list of priorities as a strengthening strategy<sup>21-22</sup>.

As previously mentioned, such a movement expands the visibility of a journal, researchers, respective institutions, and the field of knowledge. Besides strengthening and favoring the social representation of science in the face of society, it boosts the target authors who may publish in the future and cite the papers they consumed. Therefore, altmetrics drives scientometrics, which, by itself, should conform to a context of interest and institutional priority for science communication.

Along this path, investment in an editorial team for scientific digital marketing should be considered as a process of breaking the *status quo* that maintains this a "non-professional" situation, considering that altmetric indicators are not used as strategic sources for journals to boost the communication process that impacts the hegemonic indicators, that is, citations.

Although Brazilian nursing journals are aware of the importance of social media, the use of these technologies in the editorial process is still incipient, with the active participation of authors as co-responsible for disseminating science. In part, this situation follows the movement of adaptation and paradigmatic change among researchers and research institutions in the process of scientific communication in social media. It is a changing context that needs to speed up and be qualified and professionalized.

## CONCLUSION

This reflection is expected to reaffirm the concept of scientific journals in nursing as devices that must be designed with a perennial perspective in mind and, thus, survive the dynamics of time amid the challenges faced by science worldwide. Appropriate strategies and policies must be used so that journals fulfill their role of scientific knowledge guardians, which requires editorial managers to dedicate themselves, in addition to institutional investment, as a condition for ensuring journals' perpetuity.

Moreover, from an epistemological, historical, and political perspective, the perennial perspective of Brazilian nursing journals implies, among other things, to appreciate the prolific nature of the science produced by Latin American nursing researchers, as these journals gather most of the scientific production developed by the countries in the region while preserving and strengthening the epistemology of the South, in the field of Nursing.

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## NOTES

### ORIGIN OF THE ARTICLE

This article originated from a lecture entitled “Policy and management of scientific publishing in nursing: contemporary challenges” given by the first author at the 30<sup>th</sup>-anniversary of Revista Texto & Contexto Enfermagem - History, challenges, and future perspectives, on September 20th, 2022.

### CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORITY

Study design: Mendes IAC, Silva IR, Araújo AAC.

Data collection: Mendes IAC, Silva IR, Araújo AAC.

Data analysis and interpretation: Mendes IAC, Silva IR, Araújo AAC, Ventura CAA, Godoy S.

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