

Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação is concluding 2010 by reaching this, its 35th issue. The end of one year and the start of a new one is always a propitious moment to weigh up the balance of activities and share our achievements and new challenges with readers and collaborators.

The growth in postgraduate programs, research and, consequently, the demand for publication is well known throughout the field of Public Health, and this is reflected not only in our periodical but also in many others. We are concluding the year with around 700 submissions, whereas four years ago, in 2006, we had 195. One major contributory factor in this enormous increase has been the greater agility provided by the online submission system since February 2008. This takes place through a system developed by the Scielo Virtual Library (Scielo Submission), through which we have also modernized the entire publication process, thereby equally improving the work of the journal's team. Nonetheless, the most important achievement in this direction has been within the sphere of communication, as authors, reviewers and section editors will have felt in the day-to-day progress of the processes: a form of communication that is not only fast but also directly accompanies the processes, thus enabling an intense dialogue between reviewers and editors and between editors and authors.

On the other hand, this set of new achievements has also created great challenges. In this regard, we would like to share some of our concerns with readers and collaborators, with the aim of maintaining the good quality of the journal and further improving its merit as a scientific periodical. We will thus highlight some of the main points that are considered in the methods through which Interface is assessed by peer reviewers, editors of other periodicals and the scientific publication indexing organizations. They are as follows: faithfulness to the journal's scope; faithfulness to the editorial propositions, i.e. keeping to the designs and proportions of the sections defined; a body of consultants of international reach; authorship of articles of international reach; quality of the articles, with regard to knowledge production; achievement of relevant indexation; adequate initial screening for submissions, expressed as a significant rejection rate; maintenance of the proposed periodicity; and finally, clearly, maintenance of the time that elapses between submission and publication of an article, which must not be very long and, above all, must not be subject to large variations.

This last point, particularly, deserves additional comments, given that even with the greatly increased volume of processes, we have sought to maintain the quality of communication and the average time taken between submission and publication, which is around 14 to 16 months. However, it needs to be borne in mind that only part of this success relates to matters that are internal to the journal, such as rapid pre-evaluation of manuscripts (which is the phase in which we basically identify the pertinence of the submissions to the journal's scope) or the speed of final editing. Another part, which is substantive for the existence of a journal and for its scientific merit, concerns participation by the scientific community itself in the peer review process, as assessors in ongoing evaluation processes. This participation is today indubitably a great challenge: one that we exhort all of our community of peer reviewers to face. This matter has become emblematic of the latest difficulties faced by publications, either because of the expanded range of topics covered by researchers within this field, or because of the intense volume of activities that has taken hold in this field, within the parameters that we have created for our own assessment of scientific quality.

The requirements for a good periodical are thus many in number and of different orders. As we have pointed out, these requirements are both ours and those of our collaborators, hence the relevance of making everyone aware of them. Communication spaces and opportunities should always be used and stimulated, as we have done, in conjunction with other editors of periodicals in this field, with participation in round tables, colloquiums or debate sessions at various scientific events within this field, thereby creating direct contacts with our collaborators. This editorial adds to this perspective of always keeping our communication channels open: our Interface with the scientific community that stimulates and challenges us.

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