

The importance of the Health Sciences Descriptors – DeCS – for the *Anais Brasileiros de Dermatologia* *A importância dos descritores em Ciências da Saúde - DeCS para os Anais Brasileiros de Dermatologia*

Journals are the fastest mean to disseminate new investigations and knowledge in a certain field of study. Journals should be indexed, that is, described and identified by their contents in national and international reference databases, so that researchers will be respected by their peers, the results of their investigations be reported and information shared. The main databases related to health are the Science Citation Index/ISI, Medline, Lilacs and Embase (Excerpta Médica).

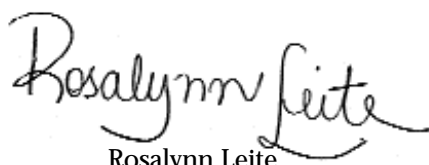
The *Anais Brasileiros de Dermatologia* is indexed in the database Lilacs (Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences) but its highest-priority goal is indexing in the database Medline, in order to assure international visibility, reporting and dissemination of its articles. It is worth mentioning that in order to achieve this goal, any scientific article submitted to approval by the peer-reviewers of *Anais* must comply with international standards, as required by international databases.

Two standards could be mentioned: Vancouver, an international standardization on bibliographic reference, and the Health Sciences descriptors, usually known as DeCS, created by Bireme and based on the Medical Subject Headings – MeSH, from the U.S. National Library of Medicine. The DeCS is a structured vocabulary designed to enable the use of common terms for indexing and retrieval of scientific articles in the databases Medline and Lilacs.

The descriptors, uniterms or keywords, were created to classify information and make bibliographic search easier. The correct use of descriptors, together with the abstract of the article, serve as access to find and retrieve articles published by several researcher groups in databases.

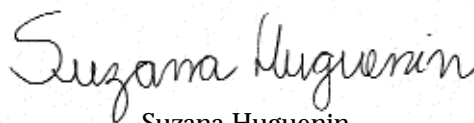
The DeCS are available on the Internet (HYPERLINK "<http://decs.bvs.br>" <http://decs.bvs.br>), and all authors have unrestricted access to them by just clicking on 'DeCS Search' and entering the term to be searched or searching by index. One example of search using the correct descriptor is the condition "Quincke's edema". When retrieved in DeCS, this term appears with the synonyms "angioedema", "giant urticaria" and "angioneurotic edema". The DeCS indicates the correct descriptor to be used – in Portuguese, "edema angioneurótico", and, in English, "angioneurotic edema". In the databases Lilacs and Medline, using any of these three synonyms, all articles indexed will be retrieved under "angioneurotic edema".

It is worth emphasizing the correct and careful use of descriptors by authors in their scientific articles, since other investigators could retrieve published articles through bibliographic databases. Therefore, the role of DeCS is not to restrict the use of terms by authors, but rather to be a single language for indexing and information retrieval in databases, controlling synonyms and standardizing the use of terms with the same meaning. □



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