

## Editorial

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# *Psychology & Neuroscience* indicators in 2013: evidence of growth and internationalization

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Data are essential for scientific endeavors, with advances of knowledge through the accumulation of evidence. Although not limited to it, the notion of quantification is at the core of the definition of evidence. While it is true that reality is more complex than any numerical representation of it, objective measures allow us to identify patterns and find meaningful relationships between different aspects of a phenomenon. Thus, any numerical datum is, by definition, a reduction, in the same sense that a map is not the territory, but the manipulation and analysis of numerical variables that allow us to gauge the magnitude of a phenomenon, charting its progress and allowing comparisons with previous occurrences and related facts.

This logic can be applied to the editorial process. Overall trends in publishing can be detected without resorting to data analysis, but descriptive and inferential statistics provide a more solid framework with which to draw conclusions. Moreover, by making data on the editorial process public, editors meet one of the essential requirements in academic publishing, namely, transparency.

In this editorial, we report *Psychology & Neuroscience* performance indicators during 2013, establishing a baseline that will allow future comparisons and presenting to the scientific community a snapshot of the journal's current structure, editorial process, and results.

### **Editorial policy and indexing**

*Psychology & Neuroscience* is a relatively new journal that was founded in 2008. In terms of scope, *Psychology & Neuroscience* publishes articles that encompass all intersecting areas of psychology and neuroscience. The journal is organized into five thematic sections: 1 – psychophysics and perception (covering studies on sensory processes, perception, attention, and psychophysics, as well as descriptions of research methods and techniques in this field),

2 – plasticity and neural development (focusing on theoretical and experimental studies on the neural mechanisms that underlie adaptability, development, and plasticity), 3 – clinical and experimental psychology (exploring the relationship between neurological and psychiatric disorders and human cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functions, especially studies that employ neuropsychological evaluation), 4 – behavior/systems/cognition (publishing advances on general topics that are related to learning, memory, emotion, cognition, and other psychological systems), and 5 – psychopharmacology (focusing on clinical, preclinical, and basic pharmacological studies that use human and animal models to address the physiological, molecular, and behavioral properties of psychotropic agents).

*Psychology & Neuroscience* is currently indexed in the following databases: PsycINFO, SCOPUS, CrossRef (DOI), SciELO, LILACS, RedALyC, DOAJ, Chemical Abstracts Service, PSICODOC, CLASE, PEPSIC, LATINDEX, and Index Copernicus. As part of the journal's expansion strategy, indexing in more databases is constantly sought. CAPES' Qualis system ranks *Psychology & Neuroscience* in the area of Psychology as an A2 journal, the second highest ranking (Landeira-Fernandez, Ventura & Cruz, 2012).

With regard to its financial support, the journal mainly relies on grants from government agencies such as CNPq (Brazil's Ministry of Science and Technology), FAPERJ, and FAPESP (agencies for the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, respectively).

The journal is published every 6 months (June and December), with one volume per year and two issues per volume. Thematic issues are also published between the main issues. In 2013, a special issue entitled "Studies on Vision and Visual Dysfunction," in honor of the careers of Prof. Barry Lee and Prof. Dora F. Ventura, was published. In 2014, up to three special issues may be published.

*Psychology & Neuroscience* is an open-access journal, providing free online access to all of its content

on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge in the field. In addition to its online presence, hard copies of the journal are distributed to libraries and at scientific conferences.

## Editorial process

The editorial team is composed of one Journal Administrator, one Managing Editor, three Editors-in-Chief, and numerous Associate Editors. Additionally, two language reviewers (native English speakers who specialize in academic revisions) provide assistance with language- and copy-editing. Finally, the journal has a third-party production team that is responsible for layout editing and printing.

All submissions are processed within Scholar One, Thomson's editorial system, which is provided by SciELO. Manuscripts initially go through an administrative check to verify that they are within the scope of the journal and all files submitted are in an acceptable format. This stage also determines whether English language revision is necessary before the peer-review process. After being allowed to proceed with the editorial process at this stage, manuscripts undergo a two-tiered editorial system in which they are first evaluated by one of the Editors-in-Chief, who can then make an immediate decision or send the manuscript to an Associate Editor with expertise in the field. The Associate Editor will then choose reviewers and send the manuscript for peer-review. Peer-review is performed in a single-blind manner in which the reviewers are anonymous, guaranteeing the independence of their evaluation, but the identity of the authors is disclosed. Usually up to three reviewers are selected by the Associate Editor who then recommends acceptance, minor or major revision, or rejection based on a minimum of two reviews. The Editor-in-Chief who is responsible for the manuscript will then make the final decision based on the recommendations of the reviewers and Associate Editor. The authors have up to 3 weeks to resubmit their manuscript for minor revisions and up to 6 weeks for major revisions.

## 2013 Results

A total of 83 original submissions were received in 2013, of which 16 were reviews and 67 were research articles. This represents a slight increase relative to 2012, during which 72 submissions were received. This trend toward an increase in the number of submissions continues, with a total of 68 submissions in the first 6 months of 2014.

A majority of the 83 submissions received in 2013 were sent for peer-review, whereas 10 manuscripts (12% of the total) received immediate decisions from the Editors-in-Chief (these submissions were immediately

rejected or withdrawn for not complying with the submission guidelines, falling outside the scope of the journal, or not having a high scientific standard). All of the manuscripts submitted in 2013 have already received a final decision, with a rejection rate of 21.7%.

For the 73 manuscripts sent for peer-review, the average time for the first decision was 38 days, with a final decision rendered after an average of 93 days for reviews and 118 days for research articles. Table 1 shows the decisions reached for all 83 submissions. The most common decision was major revision followed by rejection and minor revision.

Table 1. Editorial decisions by manuscript type.

Manuscript type	Editorial decision		
	Minor revisions	Major revisions	Reject
Review	4 (25.0%)	8 (50.0%)	4 (25.0%)
Research article	12 (17.9%)	41 (61.2%)	14 (20.9%)
Total	16 (19.3%)	49 (59.0%)	18 (21.7%)

*Psychology & Neuroscience* was the first Brazilian journal in the field of psychology to accept only submissions in English. This was part of a deliberate strategy to increase the internationalization of the scientific production of Brazilian authors from this field, allowing better integration with researchers from abroad and disseminating findings to a larger audience. English is the *lingua franca* of science, which also allowed a growing number of submissions from international authors. Table 2 shows that almost a quarter of the submissions in 2013 were from international researchers, with authors from the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany contributing over 10% of the total number of submitted

Table 2. Number of submissions by country.

Country of submission	# of papers (%)
Brazil	64 (77.2)
United States	6 (7.2)
United Kingdom	2 (2.4)
Germany	2 (2.4)
Greece	2 (2.4)
France	1 (1.2)
Russia	1 (1.2)
China	1 (1.2)
Mexico	1 (1.2)
Colombia	1 (1.2)
Iran	1 (1.2)
Argentina	1 (1.2)
Total	83 (100)

manuscripts. The process of internationalization continues to expand, with one special issue currently under editorial process having a majority of authors from abroad.

One direct advantage of having submissions only in English is the ability to attract reviewers from abroad, which expands the scope of potential reviewers and allows the selection of scholars with expertise in the topics of the submitted contributions. *Psychology & Neuroscience* has successfully attracted reviewers from different countries. As shown in Table 3, most of the reviewers for *Psychology & Neuroscience* are based at international institutions, a factor that may contribute to an increase in the quality of the review process and gradually provide more visibility for the articles published in the journal.

Table 3. Number of reviewers by country.

Country	# of reviewers (%)
Brazil	44 (34.9)
United States	25 (19.8)
Italy	9 (7.1)
United Kingdom	7 (5.5)
Canada	6 (4.8)
Germany	5 (3.9)
Australia	4 (3.2)
Belgium	2 (1.6)
Colombia	2 (1.6)
France	2 (1.6)
Greece	2 (1.6)
Japan	2 (1.6)
Mexico	2 (1.6)
New Zealand	2 (1.6)
Portugal	2 (1.6)
Argentina	1 (0.8)
Czech Republic	1 (0.8)
Denmark	1 (0.8)
Hong Kong	1 (0.8)
Ireland	1 (0.8)
Netherlands	1 (0.8)
Russia	1 (0.8)
Spain	1 (0.8)
Sweden	1 (0.8)
Uruguay	1 (0.8)
Total	126 (100)

## Concluding remarks

To summarize, the data presented herein indicate a trend toward an increase in the number of submissions to *Psychology & Neuroscience*. With more submissions, the journal can adopt a more stringent evaluation of the articles submitted, gradually increasing its rejection rate from current levels. Submitted articles are processed relatively quickly compared with standards in the field, with most submissions receiving a decision to implement major changes before publication. The data also point to the growing internationalization of the journal, with just under a quarter of submissions from authors from abroad, and the majority of the reviewers selected from international institutions.

Despite its considerable growth in the past few years, *Psychology & Neuroscience* has a number of important challenges to consolidate its position within the field of psychology. First, the journal needs to be indexed in more databases to expand its visibility. Given the focus of the journal on the interaction between psychology and neuroscience, indexing in biomedical databases such as Medline is particularly important for the journal's expansion. Similarly, indexing in Thomson's Science Citation Index would allow the registration of a traditional impact factor index which, although often misinterpreted, would also expand the journal's profile and visibility (Landeira-Fernandez, Ventura & Cruz, 2013). Second, the journal can further improve its evaluation in CAPES' Qualis, especially in fields outside of psychology such as social, medical and biological sciences, expanding interdisciplinary contributions to the journal. Third, as the journal receives an increasing number of submissions, an expansion of the Editorial Board is needed to cope with the growing demand. In particular, more active Associate Editors would help keep the speed of the editorial process at its current level. Finally, Brazilian journals currently have an overreliance on funding agencies, which is unparalleled elsewhere. One of the ways to achieve more independence and a sustainable position is to rely on the professional structure and financial backing of an academic publisher or scientific society, a model that is commonly used by leading international journals.

By publishing this first performance report, we are establishing a baseline against which new data can be compared, providing resources for better planning that we hope will lead to further expansion and consolidation of the journal's position.

## References

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