Editorial

Information without barriers: a risk for patients

In organizing a journal, information is selected with the aim of using the best studies, especially taking into consideration the quality of the submissions, without forgetting the seriousness of the information sources. We shape the initial information with the aid of our editors, who help authors to refine their already well-written submissions. We are unyielding with regard to structuring and organization rules. After all, this information becomes eternal after publication.

What we publish will be used as a reference for treating people, as a basis for training doctors and, in some cases, even as a means for judging procedures that have been performed and have caused some type of harm. The responsibility of editing within press organizations can be imagined: a news item may change the course of events irreversibly. On many occasions, it has been seen that the news has changed the country's direction.

Editing information is very important, because it is a way or filtering and giving a final finishing to the ideas put forward. The editor is jointly responsible because of what he allows to be published.

Information has become trivialized thanks to the internet, where it is available without any editing or criteria.

We often receive patients who bring with them not only the diagnosis of their disease but also a proposal for treatment, using techniques that they have already selected.

– "Doctor, I have an anterior cruciate ligament injury and I would like to be operated using the double-band technique, arthroscopically."

I have already heard this sentence, and I imagine that I am not alone in this. This information is available from Dr. "Google", who makes it available without editing and without any criteria, since anyone can publish whatever they like on websites accessed through Google. There is no filter, no selection and no editing, yet the information has the nature of absolute truth because, after all, it is on Google.

Choosing between the professionals who will attend to these "plugged in" patients can also be done through websites carrying advertisements, which are also found through Google. The things promised in these advertisements and the information conveyed about the advertisers are something that just has to be seen. There are websites belonging to colleagues that ought to form part of an exercise for improving the daily mood:

Dr. Tom was "born to operate"; Dr. Dick has done a series of lectures in Miami; Dr. Harry got a prize for the best doctor in the world, in Austria; and so on.

Facebook has been refining this advertising, since this is a network that today reaches one billion people and makes any type of information available rapidly and efficiently, without any responsible editing.

Who has the power to contest Google today?

I believe that it would be not be useful to attempt to contest any information that is available through Google: its power for gathering and publishing information is immeasurable. For sure, this editorial will be accessible through Google as soon as it has been published. Another point is that there is a lot that is good and of incontestable quality on this search website, and this is true of the vast majority of the information available. Our bibliographic searches will soon be done through Google Scholar, a tool for searching for and storing scientific production that is already being used by the University of São Paulo.

Perhaps participating more efficiently in the globalized information process would be a way of protecting our clientele and the quality of our professional activity, thus rapidly and accessibly furnishing information on the advances within our specialty and making available our members' real curriculum vitae.

We would need professionals who are familiar with these ins and outs of information technology, so that we can create a defensive barrier against the advances of inconsequent information and deceitful advertising.

Where can these professionals be found?

On Google, of course.

Gilberto Luis Camanho