

# Originals in translation!

## Originais para Translação!



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“Health is a subject of paramount importance” used to say the World Health Organization.

Medical publishing is also subject of paramount importance! Not only for doctors, researchers, hospitals, institutions, but also for helping patients and society in general. For doctors, publishing means *curriculum vitae*, honor, personal gratification, grants, recognition by colleagues, universities, etc. For patients and society in general, publications mean the advance of the science and the medicine. The knowledge leads to new insights in pathology, physiopathology, virology, oncology, and so on. So new means of diagnosis, new treatments, new drugs, new surgical procedures, etc. The British Medical Journal used to self-promote by saying “Helping doctors make better decisions”.

The original research articles must be the main target: clinical research combined with papers coming from basic research. Keeping in mind the old paradigm, the more cited is an article, the more impact has produced on readers and researchers. Despite the common belief, original articles are among the most cited contributions.<sup>1</sup> Publishing a greater proportion of original research articles does not reduce the journal Impact Factor.<sup>2</sup> Originals dealing with new aspects of the clinical practice, new therapies, new and effective drugs, data coming from registries, randomized and multicentric clinical trials, etc. On the other side originals from basic research should not be misplaced. They should set up the basis for a future clinical application through the, so called, translational research.<sup>3</sup>

Medical publishing in Portugal, like in other countries have been steadily increasing. The ‘publish or perish’ policy has reached our institutions and hospitals, producing a huge

increase in the willingness to publish of Portuguese doctors. In the field of Medical and Health Sciences the number of publications has been increasing from 1657 in 2001 to 4445 papers in 2011.<sup>4</sup> As in other countries, a first manifestation of this situation was an increase in the number of case reports submitted to Acta Médica Portuguesa. Colleagues justify the submission of these case reports based on the “rare and interesting” case they are reporting. But in a general medicine journal like Acta Médica Portuguesa, covering around 60 specialties, subspecialties, or competences, we face every day quite rare clinical cases.

When journals assess the impact of these case reports, also using the citation paradigm, they struggle with the evidence that case reports are less likely cited than other types of articles.<sup>5</sup> This means that other authors just ignore these case reports. Perhaps, rarity is not a sufficient condition to make interesting a clinical case. The interest of a case report relies on the potential novelty it represents, not on its rarity.

Original research articles must be our core business, in detriment of case reports. And must help educating from the beginning, from the medical schools.<sup>6</sup> Teaching the importance of the time to plan, to think, to develop the plan, to write, to think again, and then to try to publish. Our endpoint target, the patients, deserve this. They deserve the best medical education, and the best medical publishing that can translate the basic knowledge into advanced clinical practice.<sup>7</sup> Original research articles, presenting the results of well-designed and performed research, will help doctors on this task: to make better decisions.

## REFERENCES

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