

I Editorial

***Epidemiology and Health Services: journal of the Brazilian National Health System* is classified B2 for Public Health at Qualis/Capes**

doi: 10.5123/S1679-49742017000200001

In 2017, *Epidemiology and Health Services: journal of the Brazilian Health System* (RESS), is celebrating its 25th anniversary and has more reasons to celebrate. Besides its MEDLINE indexing,¹ our journal received the classification B2 on Qualis by the assessment committee on Public Health of the Brazilian Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes).

The Journals' Qualis is a system of journals classification, which is the main criterion to evaluate the scientific production of professors and students who are part of Post-graduation Programs accredited by Capes. A scientific journal automatically joins the list of journals to be assessed by Capes committees when a professor or student publishes a manuscript in that specific journal. The Public Health area adopts strict criteria to assess its journals; it takes into consideration the bibliographic databases in which the journal is indexed and citation indicators, such as H-index and impact factor. There are eight assessment categories (A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and C), and the number of journals in the higher strata is restricted.²

In the area of Public Health, B2 classification or higher means to be part of a select group of Brazilian and international journals and expresses the relevance of these journals for the dissemination of scientific production in this area. This new classification is extremely important for RESS, because it represents wider recognition of its quality and position among the most prestigious journals in Public Health.

It is important to highlight that the assessment system of Capes Post graduation Programs, which included Journals' Qualis, has been criticized. The main criticism is related to the use of citation indicators, because they present several limitations and are responsible for some distortions in journals comparison, and, consequently, among the Post-graduation Programs.^{3,4} With the objective of overcoming these limitations, Capes Public Health area has changed some procedures in the last journals' classification assessment; these changes aimed to reduce gaps among the sub-areas that are part of Public Health – Epidemiology, Social Sciences and Politics, Health Planning and Management – and classify as B3 the journals that were not indexed in bibliographic databases that provide citation indicators, but were regarded as adopters of good editorial practices and important for scientific knowledge dissemination in their area.⁵

The fact that Qualis criteria are mainly based of citation indicators bring on other distortions, besides the aforementioned. Nowadays, the editorial market of scientific journals is basically centered in few and big international publishers, which are also owners of the bibliographic databases used as reference by assessment committees. This is a highly profitable market. The journals associated to the great publishers charge fees for publishing (open access model) or to access their published manuscripts (even Capes allocates a great amount of its annual budget to the maintenance of the Journals' Portal). Despite of the high revenue, these publishers do not usually pay for their reviewer, rarely pay for their editors and publish papers produced mostly with public funding, which makes them one of the most profitable businesses worldwide.⁶ In this context, economic interests become priority, and this results in restrictions to indexing in commercial bibliographic databases by journals that are not bonded to big publishers. In the Brazilian context, these journals are hindered from achieving higher Qualis classification.

On the other hand, MEDLINE indexing, which is managed by the National Library of Medicine, from the United States, is not considered by the Capes Public Health committee as a criterion for the classification of journals above B4. Notwithstanding, MEDLINE indexing is conducted under an extremely strict selection process and is possibly more impartial than what is adopted by the big publishers who own commercial bibliographic databases. Currently, there are only 50 Brazilian health-related journals indexed in MEDLINE, and RESS is part of this exclusive group.

We agree with Camargo,³ who affirms that the democratic scientific dissemination involves the strengthen of a “diverse ecosystem of journals”, in contrast with the privilege of a restricted group of so called high visibility journals, from citation indicators produced by the same commercial publishers to which they are related.

Regardless of the critics, the Journals’ Qualis system is still the main mechanism for assessing the production of Post-graduation Programs in Brazil. Thus, we hope that with its new Qualis classification as B2, RESS becomes even more attractive to authors for manuscripts’ submission. Although classification is done *a posteriori*, that is, after publishing the manuscripts, Qualis classification is frequently considered by authors when selecting a journal to submit their scientific papers. Authors who are part of Post-graduation Programs frequently have to comply with some demands and submit their articles to journals with a minimum Qualis classification, usually B2.

Other great news is the expansion of RESS editorial team, with the inclusion of new assistant and associate editors, who are all civil servants at the Secretariat of Health Surveillance, of the Ministry of Health (SVS/MS) and have masters’ or doctorate level degrees in the area of Epidemiology, as well as the other editors who are employed in other institutions. Thereby, RESS strengthens its editorial team, which makes us able to receive a higher number of manuscripts and perform more actions for scientific dissemination and qualification of authors and reviewers.

Leila Posenato Garcia¹
Elisete Duarte²

¹Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, Diretoria de Estudos e Políticas Sociais, Brasília-DF, Brasil

²Ministério da Saúde, Secretaria de Vigilância em Saúde, Brasília-DF, Brasil

References

1. Cavalcante AL, Garcia LP. Os 25 anos da Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde: revista do Sistema Único de Saúde do Brasil e sua indexação na base MEDLINE®. *Epidemiol Serv Saude*. 2017 jan-mar;26(1)7-8.
2. Barata RCB. Dez coisas que você deveria saber sobre o Qualis. *RBPG*. 2016 jan-abr; 13(30): 13-40.
3. Camargo Júnior KR. Ao vencedor, as batatas? *Physis*. 2015 jan-mar; 25(1): 9-12.
4. Iriart JAB, Deslandes SF, Martin D, Camargo Júnior KR, Carvalho MS, Coeli CM. A avaliação da produção científica nas subáreas da Saúde Coletiva: limites do atual modelo e contribuições para o debate. *Cad Saude Publica*. 2015 out; 31(10):2137-47.
5. Ministério da Educação (BR). Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior. Considerações sobre Qualis Periódicos: Saúde Coletiva [Internet]. Brasília: Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior; 2016 [citado 2017 fev 10]. Disponível em: http://capes.gov.br/images/documentos/Qualis_periodicos_2016/Consideracoes_Qualis_Periodicos_Area_22__20_12_2016_Revisto_GLW_Final_v2.pdf
6. Larivière V, Haustein S, Mongeon P. The oligopoly of academic publishers in the digital era. *PLOS One*. 2015 Jun;10(6):e0127502.
7. Van Noorden R. Open access: the true cost of science publishing: cheap open-access journals raise questions about the value publishers add for their money. *Nature*. 2013 Mar; 495(7442): 426-9.