

Ethical publication providing social benefit: challenges of editors and the *ABEC Brasil*

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The relationship between science and scientific output is evident: the latter being the product of the former. Science is done by conducting studies and then disseminated by publication of technical-scientific articles. The aim of research is to contribute to society, expanding and/or deepening knowledge for subsequent dissemination and comment.

The process of debate and healthy criticism are key elements of any project or research program, and promote the drawing of robust conclusions. One of the best ways of broadening debate is through publication of technical-scientific studies. Publication allows academia to read and critique research work, drawing on it for future investigations, leading to fresh results and advancements in knowledge. The guiding principles underlying research and its publication, shared by researchers from the international scientific community in scientific journals, are honesty and accuracy, vital components for furthering knowledge without distorting the truth.

The editor remains at the front line of scientific journals, playing a central role in controlling ethical aspects and overseeing the quality of appraisal, publication and dissemination of scientific research. The editor is also charged with defining and upholding standards of quality in scientific research and communication; publishing quality scientific studies of national strategic importance; and with being actively engaged in research and publication. Editors not involved in research or publication tend not to make good editors.

Intrinsic characteristics of editors:

- Basic commitment - an editor's main responsibility is to guarantee the scientific integrity of the journal.
- Confidentiality - the editor is responsible for keeping secrecy in handling original manuscripts and other materials under review.
- Impartiality - the editor must remain impartial throughout the review process.

Editors are also expected to:

- ensure regular and timely publication of the journal;
- prevent endogeneity, whether related to geographical region, authorship or subject matter addressed by studies;
- promote the journal;
- cut down on review time and control the quality of appraisals;
- seek to attain national and international indexing of the journal (with important implications for quality);

- manage the infrastructure and secure funds for the journal;
- decide to accept submitted manuscripts or otherwise, based on recommendations and justifications of assistant editors and on reviewers' reports, as well as on the previous publication of similar manuscripts.

Editors must also act as the ombudsman of the journal, protecting the rights of authors, reviewers, readers and of the journal itself.

In 1985, tasked with supporting, guiding and standardizing the conduct of editors of scientific journals, the *Associação Brasileira de Editores Científicos* (Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors) - *ABEC Brasil*, was created. The association is a permanent non-profit, non-governmental organization that brings together both corporations and individuals whose common goal is to improve the publication of technical-scientific journals, enhance the communication and dissemination of information, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, debating of problems and to defend the common interests of scientific journals and related issues.

Since its foundation, *ABEC Brasil* has constantly striven to standardize the format and content of technical-scientific publications in Brazil;

consistently hold at least one national meeting of its members annually; liaise with similar institutions and organizations both nationally and internationally, advising them on their needs; regularly publish articles of technical-scientific editorial interest; run conferences, seminars and courses within the scope of its objectives; represent the interests of national scientific journals, while pursuing high ethical standards of quality and science.

ABEC Brasil currently boasts a membership of 645 journals, 289 institutions and 310 effective members, representing a broad variety of fields of knowledge that enriches debates. The improvement in national scientific journals is unquestionable, with significant effort toward internationalization of Brazilian journals and achievements being attributable to the actions of the *ABEC Brasil* in conjunction with professionals from the area (editors, librarians), funding bodies, indexing organizations and publishers.

In the current context of Brazilian journals, the roles of editors and the *ABEC* are clearly inseparable. Both must remain alert to the needs of authors, reviewers and readers, while seeking the necessary tools to make the journals a channel for increasing the prominence of Brazil's scientific community in the international milieu.