

# Classification of journals in the QUALIS System of CAPES – changing the criteria is URGENT!

Due to the concern regarding the future of Brazilian scientific journals after the adoption of new criteria by the QUALIS system of CAPES (Brazilian Federal Agency for the Improvement of Higher Education), The Brazilian Medical Association (Associação Médica Brasileira - AMB), has held a series of meetings at its headquarters in São Paulo. Editors of the main medical journals in the country, directors of ABEC (Brazilian Scientific Editors Association) and coordinators of the areas Medicine II and Medicine III of CAPES exchanged information and, essentially, elaborated proposals to improve the process of evaluation of the Brazilian scientific publications by the new QUALIS system of CAPES. The scientific production classified by QUALIS will consist one of the main items of evaluation of postgraduate programs in the last triennium. Considering that the main source of scientific articles for Brazilian journals come from postgraduate programs related to CAPES, it was vital to accurate the discourse in order to facilitate communication to all involved parties. The Editors are afraid that the new criteria of CAPES may create a subclass of journals based exclusively in the ISI Impact Factor. The previous criterion indicated, as cutting point, impact factor equal to 1. Recently, Brazilian journals managed, with difficulty, to reach this level. Nevertheless, the new criteria, besides considering only the impact factor, have established higher cutting points. By adopting this resolution, it would cause the Brazilian journals to be despised by professors and postgraduate students – the main producers of Brazilian science– thus, creating a vicious circle which will make difficult the survival of our publications.

In behalf of CAPES, Professor João Pereira Leite stated that, besides coordinator of the Medicine II area, it is also a present representative of the health area in the Scientific Technical Council– major bureau of CAPES. The latter, during one of our meetings, explained in detail about the criteria adopted in the previous trienniums and their impact over Postgraduate Programs in Brazil. It also explained that, due to the evident improve in the level of programs, it was necessary to increase the cutting point in order to better classify and rate these programs regarding their quality. Based on the data proceeding from these programs – collected by the CAPES system – it was observed that many had more than 50% – some more than 80% –of their

scientific production published in high-profile journals. CAPES, on the other hand, decided to create a higher number of ratings in order to reclassify the publications. It was proposed a descending scale according to the value of the impact factor: A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and C. In addition, it created an equivalence factor according to which, the total amount of publications in lower rating journals would be equivalent to a lower amount in higher rating publications. Hence, for a certain area, 2 articles B1 would be equivalent to 1.2 article A1; 1 article B1 + 1 article A2 would be equivalent to 1.4 article A1; 3 articles B2 would be equivalent to 1.2 A1. According Professor João Leite, “*Such equivalence would benefit journals with different qualification levels*”. Professor Leite also informed that the new classification was developed with a base on the median impact factor of journals, acquired from the *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* and calculated annually by the *ISI Web of Knowledge*. For the calculation of the median it was developed a list of journals in each area published by CAPES. After completing the list, as well as the respective impact factors, the median was calculated for each area and the new rating built, ranging from A1, A2, B1 to B5 and C.

The Editors contradicted Professor Leite, reminding that the triennial characteristic of the evaluation process of CAPES would cause a relative discordance for the reclassification of publications, i.e: several Brazilian journals will have their impact factor increased or published for the first time along 2010, especially those who recently joined the ISI. Furthermore, they would have to wait for 3 years in order to change their category within the new QUALIS! The Editors also wonder regarding the choice of an impact factor published by the *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* as being a UNIQUE and universal characteristic index to estimate the quality of publications. The standard deviation is far from the impact factor values of the publications. Undoubtedly that is the reason why CAPES used the median of these indexes to analyze the behavior of production of the Postgraduate Programs. In fact, according this criterion, medical specialties such as surgeries, have their best journals with a lower impact factor, which could infer a drawback that would be extremely detrimental.

Both parties agreed that the improvement of Brazilian journals is vital for the national scientific progress and

development. In order to guarantee and stimulate this virtuous circle it is necessary to stimulate and promote the reference of articles by national authors and intensify the efforts of Editors, reviewers, translators and authors of publications in order to increase the quality of articles and, on the other hand, receive larger sponsorship from government bureaus, mainly from CAPES and CNPq, concerning, respectively, the administration of financial resources and qualitative rating.

The results of these discussions were presented in several meetings of Editors, Postgraduate Program coordinators and researchers being complemented by new suggestions. May the ideas, described below, serve as a conclusion of this editorial and may they represent, altogether, an important tool for the change of classification criteria of publications in the QUALIS system of CAPES by the responsible bureaus. The proposals are the following:

- *The qualitative analysis of Brazilian publications must be re-evaluated and not only involving the Impact Factor published by the Journal Citation Reports (JCR);*
- *The particularities of each area of interest or each specialty must be considered and respected;*
- *The Brazilian editorial area, apart from the rest of the world is supported basically by private initiative, it is run on the expense of Public and Private Universities and high-profile Scientific Associations;*
- *The Brazilian publications need more support and incentive, that could come as: scholarship for Editors, financial support for publication, publicity for national publications overseas, more objective and wide-ranging criteria for qualitative classification, and differentiated*

*and correspondent support according to the performance of each publication;*

- *Support for the internationalization of scientific journals by professionalizing the editorial process and advertising of the journals in other countries;*
- *Continuous update in the classification of publications by QUALIS disregarding the period of evaluation every three years ;*
- *Participation of class representatives (ABEC, AMB, among others) in the decision-making process of the CAPES' QUALIS system;*
- *Strong support to postgraduate programs, i.e., by determining that Postgraduate Programs grades 6 and 7, in addition to obligatorily having a percentage of publications in high impact journals, must also have a percentage amount of publications national journals. Hence, both extremes of scientific production will benefit, for young and gonna-be researchers start their career publishing in national journals under the supervision of experienced researchers.*

In conclusion, in order to support all these actions and looking forward to the effect of the new QUALIS of CAPES and other publication evaluations, ABEC (Brazilian Scientific Editors Association) dedicated in its last National Meeting of Scientific Editors, held in November, 2009; three days to the Forum of areas; where representatives of CAPES and Editors of all scientific areas discussed broadly the issue, and finally, proposed the **Guidelines for the Forum of Areas of the 12th National Meeting of Scientific Editors – 2009**, that will be eventually sent to all Brazilian advertising agencies, and it should occur on a regular basis, for the process is permanent.

### ***This Editorial is signed by:***

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Brazilian Journal of Pathology  
 GED Magazine  
 Archives of Gastroenterology Journal  
 Brazilian Journal of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
 Archives of Neuropsychiatry Journal  
 Brazilian Journal of Sport Medicine  
 Revista Femina (Women's Journal)  
 Journal of Venomous Animals and Toxins including Tropical Diseases  
 Surgical & Cosmetic Dermatology da Soc. Brasileira de Dermatologia  
 Brazilian Medical Association Journal  
 Brazilian Journal of Family and Community  
 Brazilian Journal of Infectious Diseases  
 Hansenologia Internationalis

Domingo M. Braile	Brazilian Cardiovascular Journal
Dov Charles Goldenberg	Brazilian Journal of Plastic Surgery
Edmund Chada Baracat	Brazilian Medical Association Journal
Edna T Kimura	Brazilian Archives of Endocrinology and Metabolism
Edson Marchiori	Brazilian Radiology Journal
Eduardo de Paula Vieira	Brazilian Journal of Coloproctology
Eros Antônio de Almeida	Brazilian Association of Medical Clinics Journal
Geraldo Pereira Jotz	Brazilian Journal of Head and Neck Surgery
Gilberto Camanho	Brazilian Journal of Orthopedics
Gilberto Friedman	Brazilian Journal of Intensive Care
Giovanni Guido Cerri	Brazilian Radiology
Ivomar Gomes Duarte	Health Administration Journal
Izelda Maria Carvalho Costa	Brazilian Annals of Dermatology
João Ferreira de Mello Júnior	Brazilian Journal of Otorhinolaryngology
Joel Faintuch	Revista Brasileira de Nutrição Clínica
José Antônio Baddini Martinez	Brazilian Journal of Pneumology
José Antonio Livramento	Archives of Neuropsychiatry Journal
José Eduardo Ferreira Manso	Brazilian Surgeons College Journal
José Luiz Gomes do Amaral	Brazilian Medical Association Journal
Linamara Rizzo Battistella	Revista Acta Fisiátrica
Luís dos Ramos Machado	Archives of Neuropsychiatry Journal
Luiz Felipe P. Moreira	Brazilian Archives of Cardiology
Luiz Henrique Gebrim	Brazilian Journal of Mastology
Marcelo Madeira	Brazilian Journal of Mastology
Marcelo Riberto	Revista Acta Fisiátrica
Marcus Bastos	Brazilian Journal of Nephrology
Mário Cícero Falcão	Revista Brasileira de Nutrição Clínica
Mario J. da Conceição	Brazilian Association of Anesthesiology Journal
Mauricio Rocha e Silva	Clinics Journal
Milton Artur Ruiz	Revista Brasileira de Hematologia e Hemoterapia
Milton K. Shibata	Brazilian Archives of Neurosurgery
Mittermayer Barreto Santiago	Brazilian Rheumatology Journal
Nelson Adami Andreollo	Brazilian Archives of Digestive Surgery
Oswaldo Malafaia	Brazilian Archives of Digestive Surgery
Regina Helena Garcia Martins	Brazilian Journal of Otorhinolaryngology
Renato Soibelman Procianny	Pediatrics Journal
Ricardo Baroudi	Brazilian Journal of Plastic Surgery
Ricardo Fuller	Brazilian Rheumatology Journal
Ricardo Guilherme Viebig	Gastroenterology Archives
Ricardo Nitrini	Dementia & Neuropsychologia
Rita Cristina Mainieri R. de Moura	Brazilian Association Traffic Medicine Journal
Rogério Dedivitis	Brazilian Journal of Head and Neck Surgery
Ronaldo Damião	Contemporary Urology
Sergio Lianza	Rehabilitation Medicine Journal
Sigmar de Mello Rode	Brazilian Oral Research
Winston Bonetti Yoshida	Brazilian Vascular Journal
Zuher Handar	Brazilian Journal of Work Medicine