

## Editorial

## The editorial work in the journal

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The journal *Acta Ortopédica Mexicana* is the product of the work of three important pillars: 1) the authors, who with their manuscripts provide topical subjects; 2) the reviewers, who analyze each document and with their expertise enrich the contents by suggesting changes or complementing the information offered by the author, and thus allow us to publish updated, reliable, scientific contents that are applicable and original; and lastly 3) the editors, who make sure that unpublished, original articles of good scientific quality are published, and that the scientific quality criteria are met so that the articles are included in an index; they are responsible for the structure of the journal, the information it offers, its compliance with international guidelines, and the fulfillment of deadlines, among other things. They also make sure they have enough articles for maintaining the journal and seek support for the permanence of the journal and its inclusion in all the indices and data bases that grant an impact to the authors.

This kind of work is meticulous, anonymous and silent, it is so methodical and engrossing, that the editorial group and each one of those performing this job invest time, and even money, in the process; it involves many hours of reading, searching for information, reflection and constructive critique. They perform their job out of their love for the college and their profession.

It is important to describe the route followed by each document once it has been accepted by the journal for its review and then publication, once it has met all the established policies. To inform our authors and readers what happens with an article once it is received at the redaction department of the journal, we will describe each phase of the editorial work and the time it takes, to clarify the process so that the work we do for you can be better understood.

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1<sup>st</sup> Phase. Each document received at the redaction department is given a folio number, and it is included in a data base where it is followed-up; at this point it is reviewed for completeness, each section is checked according to the type of article, the citations and references are checked to make sure they are valid and the author really consulted them, and that they are written according to the Vancouver style. If the article contains figures and tables, they are checked to make sure they have the appropriate titles and footnotes and that they are cited in the text. Duration of this process: 24 hours.

2<sup>nd</sup> Phase. Copies are made so that the editing group can make a first review of the document, which may be rejected for not complying with the editorial policies or accepted with changes that are suggested to the author to improve it; other times, rather infrequently, it is accepted without corrections. At this stage the document is fully read, style and spelling corrections are made, it is checked to make sure it complies with the scientific method and the Vancouver style, it is classified based on the topic to choose a «peer reviewer», and the references are completed (checking each one of them to make sure they are properly written, that they exist and that the information concerns the article. It is often times recommended that the author include quotes that he did not consider in the article). The key words taken from MeSH are assigned (this activity involves certain indexation rules, so this is done in the redaction department). On the other hand, the abstract is reviewed to make sure it is properly structured and, if not, an abstract is prepared containing the necessary information for the data bases in which the journal is included, to convey a clear idea of its content. The reviewed documents that are accepted with corrections are forwarded to the author so that he completes or corrects the information; the documents accepted without corrections are sent for a second peer review, and those rejected are sent back to the author with a letter explaining the reason for the rejection. Each document has a file that contains its records and the changes it undergoes until it is published. Duration of this process: as long as one month with the editorial group and an indefinite period of time with the authors for corrections.

3<sup>rd</sup> Phase. The documents with the corrections by the author and those accepted without corrections are sent for peer review. The article is sent as a hard copy or in an electronic format, depending on the reviewers' preferences, removing the name of the author and the site where the study was

conducted in order to maintain the anonymity during the review. The content is reviewed by an expert whose role is to check that the information contained in each document is verifiable, reliable, updated, original, unpublished and supported by recent bibliography. This is a work for experts on the topic. An editorial dictum page serving as evidence of the review is sent with each document. After this review the articles may be accepted without corrections, with corrections (they are sent to the authors for corrections) or rejected. Duration of this stage: Two to four months depending on the work load of the chapter corresponding to the topic of the article, and indefinite time for correction by the authors.

Note: Often times the authors do not return their corrected articles and thus the editorial work done prior to that stage becomes useless.

4<sup>th</sup> Phase. The articles that have been accepted and those that have been corrected are reviewed again for completeness. Then they are chosen based on the relevance of the information, the topicality of the subject, their impact on the community, etc. An issue of the journal is then prepared making sure that 70% of the articles are original (research) and the rest are clinical case reports and review articles. Once the articles to be included in an issue have been selected, the content is prepared in Spanish and English and it is sent to the publisher. Duration of this stage: One week.

5<sup>th</sup> Phase. Once in the publisher house, the materials are edited in a processor and the journal is composed. This stage takes from 15 to 20 days. Then the publisher sends a copy of the issue, which is called "fine proof". The coeditor then reads each document together with the original version that was sent to make sure that nothing was changed during the transcription. In case mistakes or corrections not made, the corrections are marked and the materials are sent back to the publisher for correction. A second review is made to make sure the corrections were made. Once all the mate-

rial is complete and correct, the publisher is instructed to go ahead and publish the new issue, together with the PDF electronic version. The review of the fine proof takes two to three weeks.

6<sup>th</sup> Phase. Once the new issue is about to be published, the authors whose documents will be published are notified through a letter. Duration of this stage: 24 hours.

7<sup>th</sup> Phase. Once the published journal is received, it is packed and labeled for shipping to subscribers and, first of all, to the National Library of Medicine so that it is included in PubMed (Index Medicus), to BIREME so that it is included in LILACS-SciELO, and to the remaining indices. Three issues are given to each author and a stock of 20 journals is kept. Duration of this stage: 3 days.

8<sup>th</sup> Phase. Before publishing the 6<sup>th</sup> number of each year (the November-December issue), a subject index is prepared and included at the end of this issue, so that it contains the topics published in the six issues of that year. Lastly, each volume is bound so that the full collection of the journal is available at the office. Duration of this stage: One week.

The editorial work is like a clockmaking machinery in which, in order to work properly, one piece depends on the others and on the time they require to do their job, so at times it seems like time-consuming and careless.

Our main bottleneck within the editorial flow is the peer review and the correction of the articles by the authors. These delays cannot be solved by the editorial group. It would therefore be very useful that if any of you are part of this process, you assist us by speeding-up your procedure so that we can have better information flow and avoid misunderstandings among you, the authors, and us, who are responsible for publishing your work.

We hope to count on all of you to continue performing an editorial work that both, the college members and the editorial committee, can be proud of.