

Editorial

The importance of publishing in English for our Journal

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A clear example of the scientific productivity of a country is, among other things, the number of articles published in journals registered in national and international indices (Table 1). In Mexico, it is advisable for journals to be accepted by the Ministry of Health and/or the bodies that include among their functions the promotion and dissemination of scientific knowledge (National Science and Technology Council, CONACYT, Institutional and National Investigators' Systems, and the Coordination of Health Institutes, among others). In Mexico, 15 Mexican medical journals are indexed in Pub Med and 44 in LILACS (acronym for Latin American Health Sciences Literature). The Virtual Health Library (VHL) and SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) publish the full version of articles and include 10 Mexican medical journals. *Acta Ortopédica Mexicana* (AOM) is included in all of these indices.

One of the various attributes of scientific productivity is having a sufficient quality that serves as a reference to the scholars in different subjects, together with efficient vehicles for national and international dissemination.

The recent history of *Acta Ortopédica Mexicana* (AOM) includes the need to overcome various difficulties among which the following are outstanding: a limited inflow of publication applications and the quality, which is good, but can be improved. Several reasons account for the limited number and quality of the manuscripts submitted to the AOM for publication. The most important ones include the following:

a) Mexican orthopedists ignore our journal. We must clarify the fact that this problem is not exclusive of us, as it is shared by most of the scientific publications in our country. The question that arises in view of this situation is: why do Mexican authors not submit papers to Mexican

journals? Cicero-Sabido¹ has pondered on this topic and says there are 13 basic reasons, with the most outstanding ones being: fear of not being cited; the possibility of being excluded during the peer review process with no explanation; the possibility of being judged by presumably incompetent reviewers or the unjustified critique by the latter; having to wait long to receive a reply, whether favorable or not, and having to wait even longer to see their paper published. Both the Editor and the Editorial Board of AOM are paying attention to these problems.

b) Another reason is the language. Although it is true that currently the language of science is English, we must recognize that many very prestigious journals are not written in English. An example of this is the fact that Hungary has nine medical journals registered in PubMed (Index Medicus); six of them are published in Hungarian and three in English. Spain has four internal medicine journals registered in PubMed and published only in Spanish. The Spanish Cardiology Journal, *Revista Española de Cardiología*, a journal of great prestige and impact, is also published only in Spanish. From Mexico we may say, as an example, that some journals indexed in PubMed are published only in English (Archives of Medical Research and Annals of Hepatology); others in both English and Spanish (*Revista de Investigación Clínica*), and others with an electronic version of the full text in English (*Cirugía y Cirujanos* and *Revista Mexicana de Anestesiología*). So far, AOM has been published in Spanish with abstracts in English.

Table 1. National and International Indices recognized by the Mexican Ministry of Health.

- ARTEMISA (National Health Information Center)
- BIBLIOMEX SALUD. (S.S., U.N.A.M., I.M.S.S.)
- LILACS (Latin American Health Literature at BIREME and PAHO)
- MEDICA LATINA (EBSCO)
- EMBASE (Excerpta Medica / ELSEVIER).
- ULRICH'S (International Periodical Directory, NY)
- CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS
- CURRENT CONTENTS OF LIFE SCIENCES AND CLINICAL MEDICINE (National Institutes of Health, USA)
- PUB MED (Index Medicus of National Library of Medicine, USA.)
- SCIENCE CITATION INDEX (Thompson Reuters, Canada).

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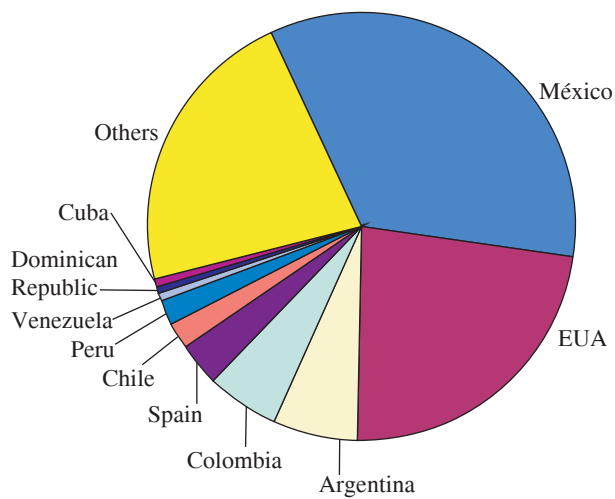
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Visits: N = 284,117
Countries: N = 123

Country	%
1. Mexico	34.16
2. EUA	22.77
3. Argentina	6.43
4. Colombia	5.61
5. Spain	3.38
6. Chile	1.95
7. Peru	1.79
8. Venezuela	0.64
9. Dominican Republic	0.48
10. Cuba	0.44
11. Others	22.35

Chart 1. Visits by Country and Year during 2009.

Attempts have been made for several years to publish AOM in English. Five years ago a single issue was published in paper in English, but this exercise has not been repeated.

Considering the above, several questions arise: why publish the full text in English?, why invest time, effort and money in doing it if there are successful journals written in languages other than English?, is it justifiable to do it systematically? To answer these questions, we include below an analytical exercise on the convenience of publishing or not publishing in English.

In a recent study prepared by our journal we published the bibliometry of the two most recent years.² We found that 22.7% of the consultations were made by the United States of America and 18% by non-Spanish speaking countries (*Chart 1*). We concluded that approximately 40.7% of the consultations of our journal corresponded to the English abstract.

It is important for AOM to have a good impact level. This will be achieved once the journal is included in Current Contents of Clinical Medicine (CCCM), Journal Citation Report (JCR), Science Citation Index (SCI), and in CONACYT's journal listing (Redalyc). Its inclusion in these indices depends on two factors: a) time and b) the number of citations in other publications and journals. The former is a slow process; the citation depends on the dissemination possibilities of the papers published. Unfortunately, providing only the abstract in English does not offer to the readers all the information needed to cite the articles in their papers. This depends to a great extent on their publication in English.

The Ministry of Health has classified the scientific journals into five levels (*Table 2*), and the National and Institutional Investigators' System requests that the journals where they publish their work be included in the annual listing of CONACYT or in *Current Contents*. Thus, it is easy to understand that professional investigators will undoubtedly prefer to submit their papers to journals of great impact and that have already been accepted by the organizations to

Table 2. Classification of journals by level at the Ministry of Health.

Level	Requirements
I	Those included in one of the 10 approved indices (Table 1).
II	In CONACYT's annual listing (Redalyc).
III	Current Contents of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), with an impact factor less than 3.0.
IV	Current Contents of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), with an impact factor from 3.0 to 5.9.
V	Current Contents of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), with an impact factor greater than 6.

which they have to justify their work. For non-professional investigators, i.e. those who only want to share their studies, observations and experiences with the medical community, it is very encouraging to have their articles published both nationally and internationally. It is also important for them to have an English version.

Ever since the creation of *Anales de Ortopedia* (the first version of our journal) in 1946, the mission of the various names that followed it has always been to disseminate Orthopedics in Mexico and, so far, it has been fully met. The current times demand changes that should focus on the search for a greater and more efficient dissemination. In view of the above, publishing in English is a current need.

Starting with Volume 24, Number 4 of 2010, the full text of our journal will be published in English online, and we will continue to publish it in Spanish, which is our language.

References

1. Cicero-Sabido R. ¿Por qué los autores mexicanos no envían trabajos importantes a las revistas médicas mexicanas? Un comentario breve. *Gac Méd Méx* 2006; 142(2): 128-9.
2. Gómez GF, Matus JJ, Torres GR, Izaguirre HA, Villanueva LI. Acta Ortopédica Mexicana en México y el mundo: Estudio bibliométrico. *Act Ortop Mex* 2010; 24(1): 47-50.