

Celebrating *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, reminiscing about the trajectory of *Physis*

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Abstract *We describe the history and characteristics of the journal Physis by presenting an overview of what was published in the 24 years since its first issue. We present some data relating to quotations and a critical discussion of same. We end with a discussion of recently observed movements in policies of government agencies regarding scientific policy, expressing our concern and advocating a policy fomenting the diversity and the broadening of the scope of vehicles of scientific dissemination.*

Key words *Physis*

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Introduction

It was a great joy for us to receive the invitation to take part in the well-deserved celebrations of the anniversary of *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, as it is one of the most important public health journals in Brazil. This importance is due, among other reasons, to the fact that it is published by our main Association, Abrasco.

The set of Public Health journals, of which *Physis* is proud to be a part, has been an important instrument in discussing and diffusing the production of the field, which is relevant not only in terms of science, but also in terms of intervention, given the field's dual nature.

Characteristics, editorial line and history

Physis is published by the Instituto de Medicina Social (IMS) of Uerj and by the Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas em Saúde Coletiva (CEPESC), a not-for-profit organization linked to IMS that seeks to promote and diffuse the production of scientific knowledge in the Public Health field, as well as to foster and facilitate cooperation between researchers from the several institutions that work in Public Health. Though it is published by a specific institution, *Physis* is not a departmental or institutional agency and publishes works by authors from all over the country and the world.

Our history begins a short time before *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* was founded, in 1991. The date is relevant for other reasons as well. In that year, the Instituto de Medicina Social celebrated its 20th anniversary and its graduate program accepted its first PhD students. After editing a publication with limited circulation – the “*Cadernos IMS*” –, IMS took on the challenge of creating a new journal that more closely mirrored the themes of its studies and collaborators. Given its singular characteristics, including that it is the graduate program with the greatest percentage of professors/researchers from the Social Sciences and Humanities in Health in the country, IMS saw the opportunity to add new themes to what was already being published in the then-recent Public Health field. *Physis* began its trajectory as a biannual journal, with Joel Birman, an important intellectual in the field, as its editor.

Joel Birman remained as editor until 1999. The following year, professor André Rangel Rios took over as editor, having previously been an adjunct editor. During his tenure, he sought to

further broaden the journal's horizons, inviting researchers to coordinate special issues with specific themes, and, in 2002, establishing a new structure for the journal, with commissioned articles, reviews and freely submitted articles. Around that time, I was asked to join the journal as an adjunct editor and, in 2004, took over as editor. After the journal was admitted to the SciELO collection in 2005, the number of article submissions increased considerably and we started publishing three editions per year, in 2007, and four per year, starting in 2008 and continuing until the present moment. In 2010 we began working with six associate editors, three from IMS and three invited from other institutions. At the end of 2014, we invited four researchers from other countries to join the journal as associate editors.

In 2008 we revised the journal's graphic layout, in part to produce an *aggiornamento* in its appearance, but also so as to reduce publishing costs. Financial sustainability has been a constant concern throughout *Physis*'s trajectory. Unlike similar journals, we receive no funds besides those obtained from CNPq, which are limited and have been suffering increasing cutbacks, and are not enough to meet the demands made by SciELO.

Throughout its trajectory, *Physis* has sought to disseminate the production of national and international authors that is situated at the field's boundaries, emphasizing interdisciplinarity and the dialogue between the different disciplines that intersect around this theme. Its editorial line is open to production from the Public Health field, with an emphasis on the Social Sciences and Humanities and the Health Policy, Planning and Management areas. Since there are relevant Epidemiology journals in the country, the journal's editorial board chose to prioritize those epidemiological articles that discuss the area's conceptual dimensions or the social repercussions of the knowledge it produces. Due to this editorial line, the fact that it is one of the oldest Public Health journals in Brazil, and the predominance of epidemiological studies in other journals, *Physis* became one of the main vehicles for disseminating these Public Health sub-area. This specificity – i.e., that it privileges the Social Sciences and Humanities and the Health Policy, Planning and Management areas – is unique in the Public Health field in Brazil.

Our editorial line continues being faithful to what its first editors proposed. In Birman's words, in the journal's first editorial, “*The public health field is, thus, fundamentally multidisciplinary and*

admits within its territory a diversity of objects and theoretical discourses, without placing them within a hierarchy or scale of value. Evidently, the different biological discourses have a central place within the health field, but that should not place them in a hegemonic position with regard to all others. For all of these reasons, we intend to make multidisciplinary this journal's symbolic mark. We intend to bring together research originating in different areas of knowledge, giving space both to those that circulate in already-established fields of objectivity and to those that open new spaces of investigation.”¹

Some characteristics of published articles

In the 24 years since then, we have published a total of 59 issues (not including the commemorative supplement to volume 15) and 654 articles as of the last issue published in 2014 (Figure 1). Most of the themes – 30 in total – were connected to the Social Sciences and Humanities in Health, followed by Health Policy and Planning – 17 in total. Within the Social Sciences and Humanities in Health, some sub-themes received greater attention: those connected to sexuality (5), to mental health (4) and to Philosophy (3).

Some of the special issues stand out due to their innovation and contribution to the Public Health debate. In issue 7, in 1997, we discussed sexuality as an important issue for Public Health. In 2002, “health in large cities” was the theme of one of the issues. The following year, we put human resources in health at the forefront of discussions and also addressed the issue of abortion. In 2004, we discussed relations between “race” (just like that, between quotation marks), sexuality and health. Issues related to science evaluation have increasingly been the object of debate in our field and, in 2005, we were one of the first Public Health journals to discuss them. These are only some of the topics that show the scope of the journal's specific contribution to broadening the field.

It would be more difficult to discuss specific articles, since it would be hard to select from the nearly 700 we have published over the past 24 years within the available time. We therefore resorted to a shortcut. The statistics available at the SciELO website provide an interesting basis for reflection, with the caveat that we continue to be critical of their use as criteria for evaluation².

First, let us consider the ten most cited articles for the period beginning in 2009. The time

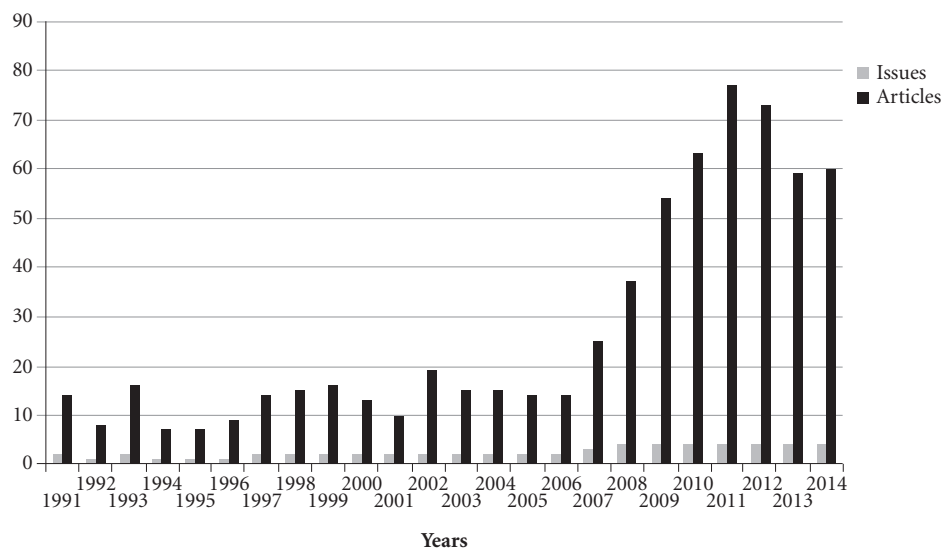


Figure 1. Issues and articles published in Physis, 1991-2014.

limit is set by the Google Scholar database, which is used by SciELO in its website. As is the case with all citation databases, there are important limitations. Since the citations were retrieved in order to calculate a bibliometric index (H5) which refers only to articles published in the past five years, there is no reference to articles published before 2008. In any case, the list in the Table 1 reflects, to some extent, the variety of themes published by the journal.

Through the SciELO website, we can also identify the most accessed articles, measured, according to the website, through access to summaries, abstracts and to articles in HTML and PDF formats. In order to maintain the comparability with the Google Scholar metric, we only considered articles published since 2008 and accessed since 2009. The ten most accessed articles, according to these criteria, are in Table 2.

When considering the two tables, two facts stand out. First, there is little correspondence between the most cited and most accessed articles. Only two appear in both tables (those by Carrara, Russo and Faro and by Gomes and Menezes). Second, and most importantly, there is an

immense discrepancy between accesses and citations. The articles at the top of the list had more than seven hundred more accesses than citations. Even if we take into account possible limitations to the access index (and there are limitations to citations), this difference should at least encourage us to reflect on the issue.

“Impact” indicators and the future of the Brazilian scientific publishing

Public Health includes not only the production of knowledge, but also different modes of action, from health care to policymaking and implementation, and also including social movement activism. In such a field, to consider only (and in a limited fashion) use by other researchers, as is the case with citations, leaves aside a relevant aspect of its contributions.

And yet, that is the increasingly criticized – also internationally³ – narrow evaluation that continues to set the norms for our field. This makes us apprehensive for the future. We were able, with much effort and dedication, to achieve

Table 1. Most cited articles in Google Scholar.

Citations	Reference
34	CARRARA, Sérgio; RUSSO, Jane A. e FARO, Livi. Política de atenção à saúde do homem no Brasil: os paradoxos da medicalização do corpo masculino. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol 19, no.3, p. 659-678.
29	MARTINS, Poliana Cardoso et al. Conselhos de saúde e a participação social no Brasil: matizes da utopia. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.1, p.105–121.
22	GOMES, Edlaine de Campos; MENEZES, Rachel Aisengart. Aborto e eutanásia: dilemas contemporâneos sobre os limites da vida. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol. 18, no.1, p.77-103.
20	SANTOS, Suelleng Maria Cunha et al.. Perfil dos pesquisadores da Saúde Coletiva no Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol. 19, no.3, p.761-775.
20	MENDONÇA, Fernanda de Freitas; GARANHANI, Mara Lúcia; MARTINS, Vera Lúcia. Cuidador familiar de seqüelados de acidente vascular cerebral: significado e implicações. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol .18, no., p.143-158.
20	SANTOS, Wederson Rufino dos. Pessoas com deficiência: nossa maior minoria. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.3, p.501-519.
19	SILVA, Daniela Wosiack da et al. Condições de trabalho e riscos no trânsito urbano na ótica de trabalhadores motociclistas. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.2, p.339-360.
17	ANJOS, Tatiana Coletto dos; DUARTE, Ana Cláudia Garcia de Oliveira. A Educação Física e a estratégia de saúde da família: formação e atuação profissional. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol.19, no. 4, p.1127-1144.
16	PIERANTONI, Célia Regina et al. Gestão do trabalho e da educação em saúde: recursos humanos em duas décadas do SUS. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.4, p.685-704.
16	LUDERMIR, Ana Bernarda. Desigualdades de classe e gênero e saúde mental nas cidades. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol. 18, no.3, p.451-467.

Source: Google Scholar. Data collected from 2009 until 2014.

Table 2. Most accessed articles in SciELO site.

Citations	Reference
26195	PAIM, Jairnilson Silva. A reforma sanitária brasileira e o Sistema Único de Saúde: dialogando com hipóteses concorrentes. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.4, p.625-644.
17044	CARRARA, Sérgio, RUSSO, Jane A. e FARO, Livi. A política de atenção à saúde do homem no Brasil: os paradoxos da medicalização do corpo masculino. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol.19, no.3, p.659-678.
15391	HAMMERSCHMIDT, Karina Silveira de Almeida e SANTOS, Silvana Sidney Costa. Família: redes, laços e políticas públicas. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol.19, no.4, p.1203-1208.
12119	PIETROBON, Louise, PRADO, Martha Lenise do e CAETANO, João Carlos. Saúde suplementar no Brasil: o papel da Agência Nacional de Saúde Suplementar na regulação do setor. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.4, p.767-783.
10608	GOMES, Edlaine de Campos e MENEZES, Rachel Aisengart. Aborto e eutanásia: dilemas contemporâneos sobre os limites da vida. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.1, p.77-103.
10413	MOIMAZ, Suzely Adas Saliba, MARQUES, Jeidson Antônio Moraes, SALIBA, Orlando et al. Satisfação e percepção do usuário do SUS sobre o serviço público de saúde. <i>Physis</i> , 2010, vol.20, no.4, p.1419-1440.
10268	TRAD, Leny A. Bomfim. Grupos focais: conceitos, procedimentos e reflexões baseadas em experiências com o uso da técnica em pesquisas de saúde. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol.19, no.3, p.777-796.
8684	BRITO, Paula Fernandes de, GOMIDE, Márcia e CÂMARA, Volney de Magalhães. Agrotóxicos e saúde: realidade e desafios para mudança de práticas na agricultura. <i>Physis</i> , 2009, vol.19, no.1, p.207-225.
8555	SILVA, Luna Rodrigues Freitas. Terceira idade: nova identidade, reinvenção da velhice ou experiência geracional?. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.4, p.801-815.
8443	VIANA, Ana Luiza D'Ávila e MACHADO, Cristiani Vieira. Proteção social em saúde: um balanço dos 20 anos do SUS. <i>Physis</i> , 2008, vol.18, no.4, p.645-684.

Source: SciELO. Data collected from 2009 until 2014, only including articles published since 2008. Measured through access to summaries, abstracts and articles in HTML and PDF formats.

a near six-fold increase in the number of articles we published each year. We did this while working with the same infra-structure and with growing funding limitations. Without meaning to start a controversy with our colleagues who made that choice, we would not wish to adopt the (unfortunately increasingly common) model of shifting the onus of financing publications onto authors. Additional demands made by SciELO, especially those concerning the need to publish a considerable portion of articles in English, lead to additional costs – in this case, those related to translation. This cost will add more tension to an already stretched budget, in our case.

Other than that, goals based on, in our view, questionable concepts of impact and internationalization run the risk of interfering with editorial lines and even undermining the quality of what is published.

We have noted with some concern growing signs that the quality of what is produced in our field has been decreasing. We believe this is in large part attributable to the pressure to publish an ever-growing volume of articles. We have been especially vigilant of the exponential growth in

the number of authors per article, something we have previously documented⁴. We have even observed an increase in the number of authors in articles from the Social Sciences and Humanities in Health sub-area, even though this remains a largely authorial field and despite the fact that its methods have not undergone any radical transformation in recent years and continue to be artisanal. We and many of our colleagues worry that what is published risks becoming mediocre, restricted to the reiteration of what is known and safe, “more of the same”, as the editors of *CADERNOS DE SAÚDE PÚBLICA* have pointed out⁵.

We believe there is a need for a deep reflection on the meaning of scientific publishing, the problems brought about by its growing commercialization and on the insertion of Brazilian science into the world setting in order to correctly identify what path we should follow. As *Lancet* editor Richard Horton recently stated *the question publishers should be asking is not how to protect market share. It is how to explore – and exploit – the full value of science for society*⁶. We have not seen signs that key instances for the production and diffusion of science in Brazil are rising to the

occasion. On the other hand, these themes have been present in discussions carried out by the newly-created Forum of Public Health Editors, which brings us some comfort.

Having access to a wide and varied set of journals is essential to any scientific field. It is even more important in the case of Public Health, considering its immense internal diversity. We need a solid, broad set of journals, with different editorial lines and scopes, even just so that articles in different journals can cite each other. Given Public Health's political and social commitments, our sights must always be set on broadening, not restricting, publishing opportunities. That has been a goal during the trajectory of *Physis* and clearly the same applies to *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*. May the next twenty years see us grow even further.

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