

The collaborative process in the making of *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*

Raimunda Matilde do Nascimento Mangas (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7284-7740>)¹
Telma Freitas da Silva Pereira (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4185-4542>)¹
Luiza Pimenta Gualhano (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4890-7985>)¹
Danúzia da Rocha de Paula (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8966-4839>)¹

Abstract *This paper presents the different stages of the editorial process of Journal *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*. Different processing work methods have been overcome over these 25 years, and others have been introduced. Each stage of this construction will be analyzed in-depth to discuss the “making” of an academic publication of such a large scale and complexity. The Journal *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* delves into each issue a theme in the field, addressing its cross-sectionality and complexity. This thematization ranges from 10 to 35 papers. Thirty-five papers are published monthly (thematic and free subjects), mostly in Portuguese, English, and Spanish, fulfilling the most prestigious national and international open-access databases’ deadline requirements. In this making, one of the significant issues is funding because the crucial development institutions’ support is very scarce.*

Key words *Science, Collective Health, Editorial process, Open science*

¹ Associação Brasileira de Saúde Coletiva (Abrasco).
Av. Brasil 4036, sala 700,
Manguinhos. 21040-361
Rio de Janeiro RJ Brasil.
cienciasaudecoletiva@fiocruz.br

Introduction

This paper proposes to describe and analyze the singularities of *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva's* editorial process over these 25 years, highlighting its complexity, the different stages of the production process, from the submission of the manuscript, peer review, to its publication and indexing in the databases. We are four authors who jointly and responsibly answer for each edition's periodicity and quality delivered to the readers. We are strongly supported by other actors who will be mentioned in the course of this paper. Our work is that of small ants, in which each one carries a piece of the process, knowing that our goal is the whole, that is, delivering each month's issue. We will attempt to provide readers with an idea of what we do, knowing that we cannot transmit to them what transcends our task: love, dedication, our constant involvement any day, hour, and time. Why is that? Because we are aware of our mission.

The first issue of *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* (C&SC) was published in 1996, and it is also the first journal of the Brazilian Association of Collective Health (Abrasco). Its establishment occurred in a context of collective health consolidation and demands for a universal health system¹.

Historically, the Journal's periodicity started with two yearly issues, reaching a monthly issue in 2011, given its editorial success and growing demand. Each issue contains at least 10-12 thematic texts and about 20-25 others on several public health subjects, besides opinions and reviews. Currently, each issue contains 35 papers. As of 2014, the journal publishes the printed version in Portuguese and the complete version online in the SciELO database and other Portuguese and English indexing databases. In the last five years, *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* received an average of 4,000 originals/year. In 2019, more than 400 papers were released, and more than 1,800 researchers had the opportunity to showcase their research and reflections on public health.

The visible growth in national and international authors' participation has been observed both in the reception of originals and in the number of papers published throughout the Journal's history. The journal receives several collaborations from researchers from English, Spanish, and French-speaking countries. The Journal is currently ranked A3 in the Qualis/Capes classification system. It maintains its purpose of addressing the challenges, seeking consolidation, and promoting a permanent update of Collective

Health trends of thought and practices, dialoguing with Science & Technology's contemporary agenda.

We shall provide readers with an overview so that they may understand the several stages of *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva's* editorial process: (1) Submission and evaluation of papers; (2): Selection of papers, editing and publication; and (3) Printing, indexing and scientific dissemination.

Submission and evaluation of papers

The way papers were received has changed over the years. Initially, the authors submitted three copies of their original works by written correspondence to the Journal's Editor. This material should be accompanied by a floppy disk with the complete file. The paper's several copies were forwarded to the reviewers, and their opinion was also returned through the Post Office. Documents concerning originality and permission to publish duly signed were also expected.

In 2005, 263 manuscripts were received through the Post Office. The constant back-and-forth of papers during the evaluation overly delayed their dissemination. Other factors hindered the editorial process besides late publication, and the most common of which were lack of a management model to monitor the evaluation stages, the Journal's high maintenance costs – which is an ongoing issue –, and negligible investments by the scientific dissemination promotion agencies², which made the Journal always dance on a tight-rope: increased demand and hardships in making its publication feasible. It sounds like a miracle, but we never delay delivery to readers!

In 2006, the Journal created its computerized system to submit and evaluate papers on a website to meet increasing demand and follow the technological progress in the editorial follow-up processes: www.cienciaesaudecoletiva.com.br. This new model of relationship with the authors boosted the submission of originals, and 545 manuscripts were received that year, which was more than a 100% increase.

In this flow, the mean time taken between submission, evaluation, approval, and dissemination of a paper was eight months. However, another innovation was introduced that same year. We opened an online space on the Journal's website designed to immediately disseminate each text within 24 hours after it was approved. This same space indicated the citation form if the paper was already mentioned. This method – which lasts to this day – aimed to give visibility

to the approved works while waiting for printed publication and indexing in the databases. Its only issue, at the moment, would be that we are unable to assign the DOI to the works. We observed an exponential growth in the demand with the computerization process of submission and evaluation flow. We achieved a submission of 2,800 papers/year in 2013.

In 2014, *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* migrated from its paper management system to ScholarOne Manuscripts, provided by SciELO. This is an electronic platform for publishing scientific journals, used worldwide, and belongs to Clarivate Analytics (Web of Science Group). It standardizes the publishing process of major national and international journals, and allows transparency in all stages of the paper evaluation process by authors and other collaborators². Entering this platform required a greater degree of professionalism from the editorial team, Editors-in-Chief, and employees so that everyone could master the new processes. ScholarOne allows pre-analysis of papers arriving in the system, immediate refusal due to lack of standardization, submission, referral for peer review, approval, conditional approval, or refusal³.

The Journal's adherence to the ScholarOne platform has contributed to its internationalization, which has happened in parallel with the increased representation of international collaborators in the Editorial Policy Council of the Editorial Council. Besides the Journal's review body, ad hoc reviewers from several countries have contributed to the quality of originals, and the main ones were from Portugal, Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, Cuba, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and France.

Given the Journal's increased demand, in 2014, the group of specialists who are part of the "Associate Editors" team was also expanded. As a result, 19 researchers now represent their respective sub-areas. They are responsible for most peer review referrals from the three Chief Editors who lead the evaluation process. This organization is justified because the number of originals currently posted on the page exceeds, as already said, 4,000 works/year.

Noteworthy is that the evaluation of a manuscript in the Journal can take up to 90 days, but, as already mentioned, once approved, the paper is immediately posted on the Journal's website in the Ahead of Print section, and the author can inform colleagues and to the institutions that their work is already disseminated. This positive-

ly impacts the author and the scientific communication process.

Selection of papers, editing, publication

The editing work begins with the selection of papers that will compose an issue. It is worth mentioning that the *Journal Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* publishes thematic issues since its inception. The idea of making a journal with this peculiarity stems from Abrasco's aim to promote, further analyze, and socialize academic discussions and peer debates on significant and relevant subjects, following the historical development of public health in the country. Today, various actors of the field recognize this specificity's relevance, mainly for the training of professionals who are enrolled in stricto and lato sensu post-graduation courses, to support research, debate public and management policies of the sector, and inform public opinion. A non-negotiable scope of the Journal contributes to the improvement of the Unified Health System (SUS).

A thematic issue generally contains the following scientific work categories: (1) ten unpublished papers on the subject in its most different aspects, which must all or almost all the result of research; (2) some opinion text that considers the free-thinking of someone important in the field with intellectual mastery over the topic, which can be replaced by an interview; (3) one or more book reviews on the issue.

Thematic issues currently enter the agenda in three types of demand:

- By *Term of Reference* sent by professors/researchers in public health spontaneously, or equally by coordinators of unpublished and comprehensive research, relevant to the area, on results presented as papers, within the framework already described. The term of reference can be suggested by the Editors-in-Chief when considering the urgency of a given subject. In these first two modalities, the Term of Reference is evaluated concerning its scientific merit and relevance by the Editorial Policy Committee.

- By *Public Call* announced on the Journal's page and under the coordination of Guest Editors. This call is a process inducing knowledge production on relevant topics, which is done through an advertisement on the Journal's website. In general, the Call process works like this: researchers in the field propose a Term of Reference that justifies the demand and proposes to receive study and research data on a given topic to analyze it further. In this case, the manu-

scripts are submitted via e-mail available during a specific period. The papers' evaluation requires a collective effort by the editors responsible for the issue and group of associate editors and chief editors. After receiving the originals, papers enter the ScholarOne system and undergo the peer review process.

- By *Internal Organization* of the Editors-in-Chief themselves, gathering under a relevant title free demand papers on a specific topic, within the criteria already described. In this modality, the first step is to look at the bank of approved papers for the most recurring themes. Currently, the bank of approved papers comprises more than 300 papers on public health's most diverse themes.

Ciência & Saúde Coletiva's publishing house has several services and work processes, including English translation, Portuguese proof-reading, standardization, text editing, printing, XML markup, and database indexing. These are all services and work processes carried out in a dynamic process including several actors, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes in parallel, making their complexity even greater and holding everyone responsible. It is a making that is individual to each specialized service, but at the same time, it is collective as a whole, requiring everyone's engagement so that the product – the issue – is perfect. In other words, when a new edition is ready, it is the result of the collaborative spirit and the complicity of the actors involved: authors, reviewers, translators, editors, and the editorial team.

Since the Journal is committed to the international dissemination of the authors' production, about 70%-75% of the 35 unpublished manuscripts published in each edition are translated into English. This means that the publishing team works with almost two monthly issues: one in Portuguese and one in English. We know that many Brazilian journals already publish only in English. However, *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* is a journal produced by Abrasco. It is usually read by undergraduate students, people in the community, and professionals working in health services, so the Portuguese edition is part of the Journal's commitment. However, its bilingual elaboration is a challenge and a dual-task, part of our commitment.

Printing, indexing, and scientific dissemination

Today, *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* prints 300 copies monthly, and according to the demand and available resources, some issues have a more extensive circulation. The future trend, as big publishers like Oxford do, will be to print only on demand. Printing requires other processes, such as making press proofs, amendments, adjustments, and distribution. Currently, *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva's* printing process is supported by the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, which has been funding its printing and publishing services since 2011.

The Journal is submitted to a technological process with specific steps such as XML markup and indexing before reaching the databases. It is indexed in 22 national and international databases. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* strictly follows the five performance criteria to remain in the SciELO collection: timely delivery of files for indexing; an indicator of periodical use through downloads; impact indicator per paper citation; the influence of papers on the web; internationalization indicator of journals; and preparing an annual performance report⁴.

Ciência & Saúde Coletiva has been aligned with the worldwide movement of open access scientific communication since its inception. Concerning its principles, it participates in the so-called "open science" movement that advocates accepting manuscripts deposited on preprint servers, the progressive opening of the peer review process, and opening and sharing data as part of the paper submission process. As of 2019, the authors' ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) already appear in all published papers, and works published in preprints⁵ are now accepted. In 2021, in each issue, the researchers' names who contributed to the evaluation of the material published will be disclosed.

We should also mention *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* entering the social networks such as Facebook in August 2014, Twitter in September 2015, and Instagram in 2019. Initially, the posts were straightforward. In 2019, we started counting with the professional performance of a communication and scientific dissemination editor, who is at the forefront of dissemination on social net-

works and contact with the press. We also publish press releases for each issue on the SciELO in Perspective blog, social networks, and our website.

The impact factor (IF) of C&SC has been on the rise, and according to the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) index of the Web of Science, the Journal *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* achieved an IF of 0.780 in 2016, and 1.008 in 2019. In the last three years, it topped the Google Scholar ranking, above all Brazilian scientific journals from all fields. This success story of a national publication is deserving because of its transparent evaluation processes, the support of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, the development institutions such as CNPq/CAPES and FAPERJ, the collaborative and voluntary work of so many names in Brazilian science, and the tireless work of the editorial team and its Editors-in-Chief.

Several challenges lie ahead, and we will have to confront them. However, we have had a beautiful story in these 25 years. We are proud of it, and we can continue writing it with a lot of dedication, professionalism, and overcoming in

favor of Brazilian scientific dissemination. On a special note, we would like to say that, while the four of us are spearheading the entire editorial process, we are very grateful to all working with us. First, to Adriana Fontes, who has been our graphic designer and faithful partner for over 13 years; Marcelo Afonso, our Portuguese proof-reader for over 10 years; Derrick Phillips and Jean Pierre Barakat, who have flown the Journal's flag and are our English translators; Livia Marinho, who has already arrived excited about the work and is also our Portuguese reviewer companion; Neyson Freire, who takes care of communication and scientific dissemination with great competence and has given a new impetus to the Journal in this field; and Karine Oliveira, our undergraduate student who is increasingly introducing us to the scientific dissemination process. Besides GN1, which provides a professional XML markup service, we are also extremely grateful to SciELO, with all its predicates, which is our source of knowledge, encouragement, and certification that we are on the right track.

Collaborations

All authors participated equally in all stages of writing the paper and read and approved the final version.

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Article submitted 30/07/2020

Approved 05/08/2020

Final version submitted 07/08/2020