

Challenges of scientific communication: the role of *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* in its 40 years of history

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In 2014, I had the privilege of writing the Editorial that celebrated the 30th anniversary of *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, a national and international reference journal for all who are interested in the interdisciplinary field of Public Health. After 10 years, I feel honored and, above all, challenged to be invited to share some of my ideas at a time that challenges us to think about the social value of science and health. In *Cadernos*, as we intimately call this powerful publication, we find a collection that is permanently updated for such reflection and positioning. Today, all over the world, *pari passu* the processes of change in the world of work, environmental challenges (including climate change and its impact on health), the processes of financialization, and the crisis of democracies, we live with the denial of science and its values, practices, and results. COVID-19, one of the most frequent themes in health publications in the last four years, can be seen as an important social marker of the imbrication of these processes. Without losing its academic rigor and editorial independence, *Cadernos* has become an important and necessary platform at a time when it is even more necessary and urgent to distinguish scientific autonomy from neutral values ¹. This is particularly the case in the Debate, Thematic Section and Perspectives sections.

In retrospect, I also remember the book fellow researchers from Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (COC/Fiocruz, acronym in Portuguese) and I organized for the 50th anniversary of the Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health (ENSP/Fiocruz, acronym in Portuguese) back in 2004 ². In its Part II (*Uma Casa de Pensamento e Ação – A House of Thinking and Action*), chapter *Cadernos de Saúde Pública: Uma Trajetória de 20 Anos* (CSP: A Journey of 20 Years) readers can find a well-founded description and interesting analysis of the times of creation and consolidation of *Cadernos*. Here, I highlight the importance of Carlos Coimbra Jr., the longest-serving editor of *Cadernos* ³.

It is interesting to think of a house as a metaphor to tell this story. The vast literature on History of Science and Social Studies addresses the role of scientific journals. One of its branches analyzes them as institutions, rather than only as vehicles of scientific communication. It sees them as spaces to produce and reproduce science, models of organization that contribute to the formation of scientific agendas and their communication to society ⁴. On the other hand, the image of the house makes us think of the domestic environment,

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a space of affection that can be perceived in the work of institutional creation. Academic institution, home, and tribune are three dimensions in an intellectual and affective history.

Since 2012, *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* has placed greater emphasis on gender and race equity, regional diversity, and international representation. Researchers Marília Sá Carvalho, Claudia Travassos, and Cláudia Medina Coeli took over its scientific editorship that year. In 2015, Luciana Dias de Lima became part of the scientific publishing group and, after 2022, its trio of editors consists of her, Luciana Correia Alves, and Marília Sá Carvalho, the latter with 12 years of dedication to this role. The inclusion of a researcher from outside the ENSP staff is another noteworthy fact, in addition to the appreciation of women in an institution in which gender barriers are yet to be overcome.

The classic scientific journal models date back to the 17th century and were established as an alternative to the previous scientific communication conveyed by letters between scholars or in minutes and memoirs of scientific societies. Since its origins, the language of journals has been characterized by impersonality and has been one of the characteristics of the very construction of scientists as a social category⁵. Peer reviews, reference standardization, among other norms we see today with a certain automatism resulted from complex historical processes. Today, many of these mechanisms are in transformation with preprints; processes with greater elaboration, certainly indicating the transition to new forms of academic communication⁶.

Cadernos de Saúde Pública pioneered different fronts of scientific communication, such as open access to scientific knowledge and contribution to the SciELO portal. In the last 15 years, the journal has brought important debates on open access and developed the discussion on academic evaluations. Its articles offer astute criticisms of the use of indicators as an impact factor and consistent arguments about the need for quantitative assessments. Also, a remarkable aspect is the discussion about graduate studies in Brazil and their role in its scientific agenda and in responding to priority issues for its society. The journal currently encourages us to address topics such as open science, digital transition, and artificial intelligence.

In 2023, the journal opened a Thematic Section on the Amazon rainforest, contributing, among other analyses, to the relations between health and social and environmental sustainability and bringing new ideas about the region. This year, the election of President Lula and my appointment to the Brazilian Ministry of Health resumed the interaction between the government and the scientific community and the possibility of greater appropriation of scientific knowledge to formulate public policies and consistently retake research funding and respect for scientific autonomy and critical thinking.

A theme for reflection: how to think about Public Health in times of transformation in a country in which problems with different temporalities seem to coexist: historical inequality and current challenges; health realities characteristic of the 19th century and problems yet unovercome in the 20th century side by side with new challenges of the 21st century, such as the COVID-19 pandemic? Due to its tradition of being simultaneously an academic space, a place of affection, and a platform, I hope *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* will continue to bring us the necessary restlessness – and perhaps new paths – to science communication and even scientific practice.

Additional information

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