

The eternity of words

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The journal *Medicina Interna* is completing 16 years of life. Throughout this time, Portuguese Internists have contributed decisively to its existence, publishing articles of remarkable scientific standards. It is therefore important to reflect on the motivations, setbacks and challenges faced by the authors at present and in the future.

Clinical cases are the major source of articles for this journal. The highly didactic interest in many of them, it is the basis for publication. In others, the originality and clinic complexity are determinant to be valued by the Editorial Board. Unfortunately, original articles are in a lower quantity that all of us would like to be. Many of those articles emerge from a number of patients not always from a prospective nature. There are several reasons for this to happen. The difficulty to focus a high number of patients in a more specific pathology is a direct consequence of the very own Internal Medicine eclecticism. In most cases, the practice of care is dissociated from the research in basic science. The reduced number of laboratories of basic science in the areas of genetics, biochemistry and immunology cooperating closely with the clinical departments has limited the scope of clinical research in Internal Medicine.

The preparation sometimes inadequate of newly graduated physicians in terms of researching, statistics and publishing articles raises demanding obstacles. On the other hand, many of these young doctors start their Residency with an increasing assistance load in the Emergency service which is physically wearing, using up any time needed for scientific work. In some services, the absence of a written scientific culture is predominant. It becomes an easier option for the young doctor to get used to a mere role of assistance.

Although the kindness of the current regulation in terms of final evaluation of the Residency aiming that future residents will publish more scientific articles and lead a more credible and lasting research activity throughout the residency, in practical terms such effort dies out immediately after the final exam. Some of the papers accepted in our magazine for publishing

with changes proposed by experts end up often not being published as many authors lost any interest in publishing as soon as they got a specialty qualification. On the other hand, we will always be at risk that some colleagues may not be dedicated enough to their assistance learning throughout the Supplementary Residency in benefit of an artificial syllabus built upon only on the basis of publications and communications – known usually as “curriculite”.

Being a quarterly publication, there is a limit on the number of articles to be published yearly. There are inherent difficulties to the fact that the regulations impose to each article two independent experts. These experts' activities have always been done graciously on a good will basis. However, not always the turnaround has been quick enough due to their busy professional lives. All the experts are chosen on the basis of rigor, scientific quality and competence leading to a natural limitation in the existing options, compromising the number of available experts. Lastly, in some cases, the authors themselves have contributed to the delay on implementing the changes proposed by the experts.

From this journal Board there has been in these last few years a particularly attentive look to the best shown in the various Internal Medicine National Congresses. Due to this attention, letters were sent to the authors of the most promising works encouraging them to send those works for publication in this Journal. This encouraging action, without any commitment of accepting the articles for publication, has been useful and we hope the Internists motivation to keep on publishing will continue flourishing. It is important to highlight that a solid scientific work, throughout the Internal Medicine Supplementary Internship will bring unavoidably benefits to the Internist clinic activity, providing a more erudite sustainability. We also wish a wider contribution of articles from the District Hospitals, that due to their condition, often peripheral usually focus in their already demanding assistance role.

With the departure of the late Mr Anselmo we are poorer. His fraternal look upon the literary quality of

the texts in the journal will be always missed. The natural empathy of someone always ready to work on behalf of the Portuguese Internal Medicine will stand the test of time and inspire all of us in the future. In the Kingdom of Heaven, the beauty of his words has now become eternal. ■