Construction and maintenance of a medical journal comprises various aspects, ranging from the organization and institutional structure that supports the effort to the most important elements: its authors and readers. The Colombian Society of Ophthalmology, following its statutory mandate, has supported and maintained the Scientific Journal, respecting the independence and academic criteria of the editorial committee. Given the characteristics of the target population, the journal is open to contents of interest in ophthalmology, including all subspecialties; it also has an interest in related scientific issues coming from other disciplines such as immunology, pharmacology, neurology, endocrinology, biology, public health and epidemiology.

The editorial committee, coordinated by the editor-in-chief, is responsible for the content, the selection of topics and types of articles to publish; also, for defining the authorship policies and ensuring high publication standards. In addition, he establishes the peer review process, determines
the interaction and feedback with authors, and
is committed to improving the quality of texts
and of research in the field of ophthalmology. His
duties also include proposing improvements
and mechanisms to find potential authors,
improving the quality of the journal, and
find new outreach strategies, thus increasing
its visibility.

The authors have a leading role in this
process; ultimately it is thanks to them that
the journal exists; after a thorough research
process, they submit the results for publishing
and subsequent dissemination, thus deserving
special recognition, as the limitations to this area
in our country are known. However, great talents
bring great responsibilities; the publication
requirements and standards are increasingly
demanding and include not only adequate
knowledge of their area of clinical expertise but
general knowledge of research methodology,
epidemiology, statistics, languages (English)
and management of computer programs among
others. There are numerous resources that guide
authors in the process of writing the articles;
they are also encouraged to review publications
such as “Recommendations for the Conduct,
Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly
Work in Medical Journals”, indicating the
correct way to write the report; “Style manual to
publish in a medical journal”, explaining the
use of medical language in Spanish for scientific
publications and “Recommendations for the
Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication
of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals: Sample
References”, which provide guidance on proper
use of bibliographic references.

In every process of scientific publications
the receptivity of the target audience, which in
this case includes over 1,000 ophthalmologists
of our country, ophthalmologists from other
countries and members of other specialties,
is fundamental; the intent is to permanently
courage ophthalmologists through articles
that allow them to discover new aspects of their
specialty, review previously learned concepts,
and learn about the status of the research area in
ophthalmology in their country. It is expected
that the great target readers be able to interact
with authors, issue on which we shall work
in the near future; in addition, it must not be
forgotten that the option of sending letters
to the editor to discuss, controvert, and look
published issues is always open.

Indexing of the journal is a process
comprising different aspects. It includes the
institutional process that supports the publication
and is related with the formation of the editorial
committee, the convening of peer reviewers,
and other very specific administrative issues
that are critical for maintaining the indexing
level. These processes are constantly being
revised and improved, and have enabled the
journal to be awarded category C by Publindex –
Colciencias. However, this is only a part of
it; the quality of the material submitted and
published is a fundamental indicator for the
category of the journal. On this front, Colombian
ophthalmologists have the great responsibility
of submitting for publication research papers
that correspond to the requirements demanded
to improve the category. According to the
Colciencias guide document, the scientific
research articles, reflection articles, and review
articles are more important than short articles,
case reports, and topic reviews. The current
situation of the journal shows that there is
a large trend to publish more reports and
case series than analytical and experimental
articles. It depends only on the Colombian
ophthalmologists to move a little further
towards the type of studies required to improve indexing. Hence, and through a joint effort it will be possible to maintain and improve the Scientific Journal of the Colombian Society of Ophthalmology.

It is a challenge for the Colombian ophthalmologic community to maintain a level of publications that accounts for its starring role in the Latin American medical scene. The axiom “publish or perish” should be a motto to instill enthusiasm, for Colombian Ophthalmologists have a well-known reputation but this is not clearly supported by national publications. It is fair to think about a future scenario in which the journal is integrated into the current needs of scientific communication, which covers not only the movement in print, but includes an electronic version of agile and modern design that allows for easy location and obtaining the contents of the articles through any means, indexation in relevant databases, the improvement of the peer review process and the interaction between authors and readers in a more dynamic way.

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Journal of the Colombian Society of Ophthalmology

Bibliografía

1. Estatutos Sociedad Colombiana de Oftalmología. Art 1, Art 2, Art 53.