

Editorial

Revista Bioética: quality & transparency

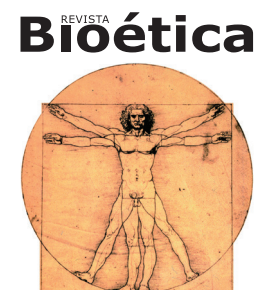
Broadening the practice of systematically informing the editorial staff and ad hoc reviewers on the main aspects of the annual editorial process of the *Revista Bioética (Bioethics Journal)*, the editors take advantage of the opportunity provided by the dispatch of the Editorial Development Plan to the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo - Fapesp (Foundation for Support to Research of the State of São Paulo) and the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) to extend the policy of transparency in management to readers, authors and all those interested in the journal. We believe that the dissemination of this information will bring even more confidence in ethics and probity.

The Revista Bioética, edited by the Conselho Federal de Medicina - CFM (Federal Council of Medicine) since 1993, has been fulfilling in its 26 years of existence the institutional mission of fomenting multidisciplinary and plural discussions on bioethics and medical ethics in order to stimulate the academic formation and the constant improvement of health professionals¹. The journal is consonant with the CFM's mission to ensure, defend and promote the legal practice of medicine [and] good practices of the profession². Revista Bioética also meets the provisions of the National Curricular Guidelines for the medical graduation course³. Its Article 3, Chapter I, which defines the training guidelines, specifies that:

The medical graduate will have general, humanistic, critical, reflexive and ethical training, with capacity to act in the different levels of health care, through actions of promotion, prevention, recovery and rehabilitation of health, in individual and collective spheres, with social responsibility and commitment to the defence of citizenship, human dignity, the integral health of the human being and always having the social determination of health and disease processes running transversely in their practice⁴.

In the section I of the same resolution, in the part on health care, point VI recommends that *contact with professional ethics based on the principles of Ethics and Bioethics should be provided to the student, taking into account that the responsibility of health care does not end with the technical act⁵*. The ministries of Health and Education, besides the CFM itself, recognise the importance of ethics and bioethics for the professional training of physicians, as well as for other professionals of the healthcare area, which substantiates the institutional reason for the undoubted support that the CFM has been dedicating to the publication throughout these more than two decades.

The composition of the editorial staff remained stable during this period, which corresponds to the emergence and consolidation of the field of bioethics in the country, but it was modified whenever necessary. The policy of the composition adopted seeks diversity without giving up excellence and takes into account the competence in bioethics of the board members. This qualification allows the best evaluation of the papers, considering specifically categories and concepts, as well as their interface with different theoretical perspectives in the field. An extensive list of professors from undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including bioethics,



as well as professionals specialised in themes discussed in the papers submitted to evaluation collaborate as ad hoc reviewers.

Bioethics acts in interface with different fields of knowledge, and is classified as interdisciplinary by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Capes (Coordination of Improvement of Graduate Personnel) and it is classified as Human Sciences and Health Sciences by the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO). The 53 members of the editorial staff are graduates from different areas such as philosophy, nursing, international relations, law, biology, medicine, anthropology, veterinary medicine, theology, dentistry, education, taking into consideration the thematic and research specialties in each of them.

In addition to contemplating the training areas, we seek collaborators of both sexes, based in different institutions and localities of the country and, when possible, of different ethnic origins. It is also to be noted that 30% of the members of the editorial staff are foreign reviewers who, fulfilling the same criteria of diversity, work in South America, the Caribbean, Spain, Portugal and the United States. It is never too much to thank all the collaborators (members of the Editorial Board and ad hoc reviewers) who have generously contributed as reviewers in the evaluation of the published articles.

Bioética Magazine is currently the only Brazilian publication exclusively dedicated to bioethics indexed in international databases (SciELO, Latindex, Doaj, Redalyc, Lilacs). Its articles are also available on the CFM website and on the Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde - BVS (Virtual Health Library). For this reason, the journal plays an important role in the communication of research in bioethics in the country, publishing, among others, articles from postgraduate and undergraduate courses in bioethics. The selection of the works prioritises those that contribute to the latest level of knowledge, discussing concepts, proposals, techniques and processes in health care that can be analysed in light of bioethics, including studies aimed at education in this field.

By adopting the open access policy of the Creative Commons 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), the journal allows users to share, copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, provided the source is cited, including authors and the periodical. The scope and characteristics of the *Revista Bioética*, as well as its adoption of open access policy allow, in regional terms, to compare the journal with the *Acta Bioethica*⁶, a biannual publication of the Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethical Studies of the University of Chile; *Revista Redbioética*⁷, a biannual online journal published in Uruguay and aimed at the Latin America and the Caribbean; and the *Revista de Bioética y Derecho*⁸, published quarterly by the University of Barcelona.

The *Revista Bioética* receives unpublished works of research from undergraduate, specialisation, masters, doctorate and postdoctorate students. The journal also receives unpublished works from professors and professionals that meet the editorial requirements regarding the theme, number of words and other detailed specifications in the editorial norms⁵. Given the subjectivity and historical constraints of the criteria that define ethics in each era and social context, works that contradict the fundamental principles of the Brazilian Constitution are not accepted, not even in the name of “freedom of expression”, especially Articles 1, 3 and 4, which guarantee human rights and the rejection of racism⁵.

But the acceptance of manuscripts by the system does not necessarily ensure their publication, since all articles are subjected to rigorous double-blind examination by three reviewers and only those studies which receive at least two favourable evaluations are considered approved. This includes manuscripts submitted by members of the editorial staff and by the editors themselves, with the exception of editorials, which do not go through evaluation. In addition,

unfavourable opinions received by an approved work are sent to its authors, who must then make the requested changes in order to improve the work further.

The editorial norms inform the authors that works submitted for evaluation by the *Revista Bioética* can not have been concomitantly sent to other journals. It is warned that those who reproduce works by other authors in whole or in part without reference will be summarily refused, even if the work reproduced is from the author who is submitting a new work. Field research works must count with an evaluation number provided by the comitê de ética em pesquisa – CEP (Research Ethics Committee), as defined in Resolution CNS 466/2012⁹. The registration of approval by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) is also required in the case of clinical trials.

The editorial standards inform that the research method must be presented in a complete and detailed manner in order to qualify the evaluation and instrumentalise the readers. This is true even for bibliographical research which, according to Resolution CNS 466/2012⁹, is exempt from a CEP evaluation: *it is indispensable to identify the research subjects, where and when the study was carried out, which data collection and analysis techniques were used, including names of software packages used and measurement methods adopted*¹⁰. Interview scripts and questionnaires used to collect data that originated the articles are included as annexes in order to base the methodological design of future study projects.

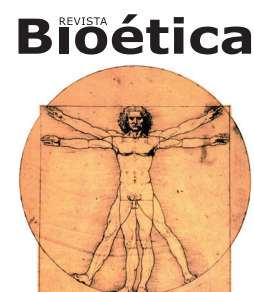
It is also requested information about the institutional association of authors in three levels (educational program, department, faculty), in addition to university, city, state, country, their highest level of education and electronic address. When a paper is approved, all authors must authorise the publication by electronic means and the responsible person should send the signed document by post.

Individual collaborations of each author must be specified at the end of the work, where they should inform dates of receipt, revision and approval as it is also requested in the norms of the journal. It should be noted that the review date refers to the reviewers' approval and the approval date indicates when the final version was received by the authors, with the aforementioned consent for publication. There is no charge for publication of papers, not even for their full translation into Spanish and English, which are published in the institutional site, SciELO, Latindex and Doaj.

Accumulating 1,218,217 visits to its website since it was made available online in 2009, *Revista Bioética* was accessed 77,139 times between January and June 2018 and 158,936 views were registered throughout 2017. The number of accesses up to June 2018 was 64,847, considering only data from SciELO¹¹. 992,196 accesses to the full html, PDF and ePDF versions, including abstracts viewing, were also registered. That is, more than 2,210,413 accessions were registered in both systems over a period of nine years.

The journal is also available on the digital platform “CFM Publications”, that can be accessed by computer or mobile devices (the necessary application is available for download on Google Play and Apple Store) in a format suitable for viewing on mobile phones and tablets via a link directed to approximately 300,000 professionals enrolled in the CFM, whose addresses are valid and constantly updated. In addition, the link to the online version is sent by WhatsApp to the Rede Brasileira de Professores de Bioética (Brazilian Network of Professors of Bioethics), which brings together 177 participants from the most diverse areas of action in all regions of the country. Reports about the journal are available on the CFM's profile on Instagram.

In addition to its more recent online version, the journal prints 10,000 copies which are distributed free of charge to libraries of higher education institutions registered by the Ministério da Educação - MEC (Ministry of Education); affiliates



of the Sociedade Brasileira de Bioética - SBB (Brazilian Society of Bioethics); research groups in ethics, bioethics and human rights which are registered in the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico - CNPq (National Council of Scientific and Technological Development); students and professors of Brazilian postgraduate courses in bioethics, as well as undergraduate students of the disciplines Bioethics and Medical Ethics and their professors, when the latter request the journal and commit themselves to use it in the classroom.

Other libraries receive *Revista Bioética* in addition to the libraries cited and, together with the copies destined to professors and students, they total 9,500 recipients: the libraries of the Procuradoria Geral da República (Attorney General's Office), the Supremo Tribunal Federal (Supreme Court), the Ministério da Saúde (Ministry of Health), Procuradorias da República (Attorney General's Offices) in 167 municipalities throughout the country, and 17 Procuradorias da República nos Estados (State Attorneys' Offices) in the five Brazilian regions. The distribution of the printed version is intended to disseminate bioethics among students, professors and professionals, especially in the areas of health and law, contributing to their formation, stimulating continuous training and, finally, to promote reflection on bioethics and the adoption of practices compatible with human rights and principles of citizenship.

Considering the number of citations as a parameter to identify readers and authors of the published articles, it appears that they are mainly from the health areas, especially public health, nursing, psychology, epidemiology, dentistry, bioethics and medicine. The main interests, considering only medicine, are works related to life finitude and palliative care, especially in the areas of intensive medicine, paediatrics and oncology. There are also citations published in periodicals of education, engineering, biology, botany, veterinary and history.

The same criterion indicates that Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Portugal and South Africa are the countries where other journals cite *Revista Bioética* in addition to Brazilian journals. According to SciELO¹¹, 648 citations have been computed in journals indexed between 2013 and 2018 on SciELO itself and on Web of Science (WoS). We also receive manuscripts of philosophy from Brazil, Latin America, Portugal and Spain during the editing process.

The editor-in-chief and the scientific editor share the journal's official representation at the various governmental and scientific entities, as well as in national and international events in which *Bioética Magazine* participates. They constitute the editorial management, which has two secretaries who work in the administrative process of editorial and supervisory procedures related to outsourced companies, which are contracted by public bid session to perform services of proofreading, translation, layout, revision, printing, conversion to XML and posting of the printed copies. All phases of the outsourced services are monitored directly by the scientific editor and team.

In addition, editors are responsible for the administrative, financial and human resources planning, which comprise an annual strategic planning. Editors are also responsible for periodicity of the publication, review, marketing planning and media relations. The editors have checked the availability of evaluators every six months, seeking to keep only those who can effectively collaborate with the journal, which has a proposal of publishing 80 articles per year until 2021. The editors have been dedicated to attempt the entry of the journal in other databases to further expand its international visibility, as well as to seek membership of the Committee on Publication Ethics (Cope).

The working group also counts with the specialised service of two CFM's librarians, who make the last checking of the references in the published works and

with the press office of the institution, which is in charge of disseminating the *Revista Bioética* online for registered doctors in the country, in a version appropriate for mobile phones and tablets. When necessary, the information technology department collaborates with system support, making users' access possible. Other institutional sectors such as financial, legal, bidding, personnel and contracts, respond to the specific demands of the journal according to their administrative specificity.

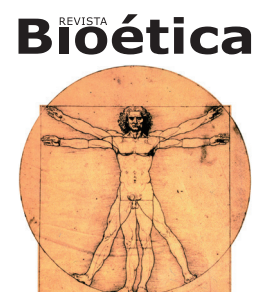
The policy of evaluation of manuscripts follows the steps set forth in the editorial norms. Submitted manuscripts are checked for the number of words in the text and abstract, examined by a professional plagiarism detection program and formatted according to the presentation model adopted by the graphic design. In this initial stage the scientific publishing company reads and evaluates the manuscripts regarding the inclusion of keywords in the banco dos Descritores em Ciências da Saúde – DeCS (Bank of Descriptors in Health Sciences), the complete and correct presentation of references and the content of the text. It is at this stage that the first changes are made and requirements and suggestions of adjustments are indicated. Then the work is returned to its authors in order to confer the editing of their manuscript and to make requested changes, if applicable. Once the authors return their work (with the requested changes), the manuscript is sent to the reviewers, who are designated after the first reading of the work.

The selection of reviewers seeks to consider several criteria: affinity with the theme, area of training and performance, institution and region of the country. The reviewers chosen for each work are never from the same institution of the authors and we also avoid to choose reviewers who are from the same city and region of the authors. These criteria, however, end up influencing the process of some works, which may take longer to be evaluated, because there are still relatively few professionals with *stricto sensu* training in bioethics. This circumstance has an even greater impact when one considers the need of adequacy to the theme and approach of each work. The average time between submission and publication of a work was 9 months in the period between 2013 and 2018, according to SciELO data. Considering the publication in SciELO, the average time increases to 10 months¹¹.

238 papers were received in 2017 as mentioned. The average time for evaluation was 196 days in the first semester and 220 days in the second. The number of manuscripts immediately rejected is high, varying around 40%: 40 works rejected for 107 manuscripts received in the first semester (37%) and 58 rejected among the 131 received in the second semester (44%). Partial data for the first half of 2018 indicate that 94 manuscripts were submitted and 22 rejected, making for 23% of refusals, with an average processing time of 184 days. The significant number of initial rejections verified, especially in recent years, ends up working as a pre-selection of manuscripts to be read by the reviewers, speeding up the editorial process, facilitating the checking of formal aspects and allowing the reviewer to focus on the content.

The journal regularly invites members of the editorial staff and other well-known authors to collaborate with articles for publication, although the spontaneous contribution is increasingly frequent. However, as previously specified, all submitted works - even by invited authors - goes through double-blind evaluation and may even be rejected. However, due to the quality of the contribution of these collaborators, such a situation is not common. The journal doesn't publish special issues or dossiers, keeping to the periodicity of publications established yearly.

The editorial standards of *Revista Bioética*, in response to a request from SciELO, specify that only manuscripts whose authors have a Orcid identifier will be accepted from February 2018. In order to effect this request, it was established that it is mandatory to provide an Orcid identifier when submitting a work from that date. In order to ensure this information in papers sent to the evaluation previous



to that month, the identification is systematically requested in letters to the authors, which accompany the initial edition of the manuscript and detail initial changes.

As informed, *Revista Bioética* is published in Portuguese, English and Spanish, seeking not only the internationalisation of the journal, but also of Brazilian bioethics itself, which adopts both universalist parameters related to ethics and to good clinical practices (based mainly on theoretical proposals from abroad) as it also reflects the sanitary and epidemiological specificity of the social, economic, cultural and environmental context of our country. The bilingual publication in Portuguese and English started in 2010, with the translation done by a specialised company. The publication in three languages was adopted in 2014 to further intensify the diffusion of the journal and to collaborate with the consolidation of bioethics.

The discontinuity in the publication of other Brazilian bioethics journals contributes to intensify the influx of submitted manuscripts to this journal. The quarterly periodicity was adopted in 2018, maintaining a total of 60 annual articles for now, in order to avoid major impact on the editorial process. The proposal of the editors and the editorial board is to reach the number of 80 articles per year by 2021, that is, to resume the same rate of 20 articles published per issue, thus significantly increasing the number of bioethics work published per year in the country.

In addition to shortening the interval between the date of approval and publication, this process seeks to support the production from courses and disciplines of bioethics, providing students and professors with an active vehicle of quality to communicate their research findings and theoretical reflection that is capable of promoting ethical debates in everyday practice. This will also favour other areas of health, which make up the multidisciplinary teams in primary care and in the clinic, favouring the deepening of the dialogue, the overcoming of obstacles and the adoption of the highest ethical parameters.

Aware that this objective implies an increase in the number of evaluations and acceleration of the process by the editorial staff, the editors have checked the availability of evaluators every six months, seeking to keep only those who can effectively collaborate with the journal. With the same objective, the role of ad hoc reviewers has gradually been expanded, considering the competence and availability of the collaborators.

When the quarterly editions and the number of articles published per year are consolidated, the editors intend to dedicate themselves to seeking membership to the Committee on Ethics in Publication (Cope), as well as requesting the entry of the journal in other databases to further expand its international visibility. It is believed that this will stimulate authors and courses of bioethics, promoting the effective dissemination of this field, fundamental to the formation of professionals and citizens.

The institutional support of the CFM to all the demands and activities of *Revista Bioética* should be considered a permanent commitment. Not only has the Council sponsored the journal for 26 years, but it has also made a decisive contribution to the hosting of Brazilian congresses on bioethics and other events in the area. In addition, the CFM invested in the increase of the editorial team, which started with the employment of a second secretary in 2018, which was necessary considering the increase of publication of the journal from three to four times per year in 2018. *Revista Bioética* will continue to be supported by the CFM in order to keep the journal's track record and its growing recognition by health professionals and the academic community, which strives for the quality of health care for the entire Brazilian population.

The editors

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