

Editorial management: Challenges in the scientific editorial process of nursing journals in Brazil

Gestão editorial: Desafios no processo de edição científica das revistas científicas de enfermagem no Brasil

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The editorial management processes of scientific journals have become a specific and highly specialized field of knowledge with complex stages. Over the last 10 years, the steps, flows, and procedures for article publication and dissemination have been professionalized. In recent years, the concern with editorial management has been addressed nationally and internationally with a focus on the adoption of good practices and technological and editorial innovation (Marziale, 2017).

As leaders, editors-in-chief are a driving force in this continuum of changes that, together with the professionalization of editorial teams, are creating a new culture of scientific dissemination and communication. Implementing the fundamentals of open science and its assumptions has been a major challenge for the editors of the leading scientific nursing journals in recent years (Sousa et al., 2022).

The search for the best practice guidelines for journal editors is a requirement constantly discussed and reviewed by the editorial teams. At the international level, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, 2022) has been producing these manuals and recently developed a checklist for editorial processes to help the editorial team adopt good practices with transparency and ethics.

The responsibilities of the editor-in-chief, who coordinates and leads the editorial team, include: coordinating the editorial committee, supervising all stages of the editorial process from submission to final acceptance of the scientific article, proposing continuing education activities, updating and reviewing the journal's norms and guidelines, representing the journal both inside and outside the university (at events, forums, working groups, among others), financial management, among others. It is important to develop editorial management skills to play this strategic role in the journal's leadership.

A recent study on the knowledge of 197 nurse-researchers from different regions in Brazil about trends in the scientific editorial process and good research practices found limited knowledge on the subject, reflecting a concern that may impact the development of Brazilian nursing (Sousa et al., 2022).

A pressing concern in the world of the scientific editorial process is the training of new editors. Leading journals and leaders in scientific publishing agree that the professionalization of editorial management is the way ahead to strengthen nursing journals and consolidate the discipline as a science with epistemological assumptions and specific know-how that delimit its knowledge. Although the renewal and expansion of the editorial team is an underdiscussed topic by the competent authorities, it needs to be planned and incorporated into the priorities of the editorial management process. Although some initiatives in postgraduate programs propose disciplines and activities focused on the training of reviewers and ad hoc consultants, the scientific editorial process requires editors to have specific knowledge beyond their academic expertise in a particular area of knowledge. In editorial management, knowledge of the entire scientific editorial process needs to be disseminated in the training of future editors of nursing journals in Brazil and worldwide.

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Most editors and editorial boards of Brazilian nursing journals belong to the permanent faculty of public universities, which have undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, research, extension, and management activities in different areas. Therefore, it is important to highlight that this overlap of activities compromises the workload of the journals' scientific editorial process because the editor is also a teacher who is required to develop the activities inherent to that position. So, we propose that the institutions value and recognize the work of the faculty member who is the editor of a journal, consequently reorganizing the work processes inherent to the journals, that is, the workload should be planned to be compatible with the work requirements.

In this scenario, editorial management brings us to questions such as: what is necessary to attract and train future editors of scientific journals? How should we start the process of renewal and continuity in scientific publishing? We risk saying that a valued/recognized and professionalized editorial leadership supports the activity's survival with the quality and academic excellence that authors, readers, and the scientific community expect. Workload planning should be compatible with the editors' work demands, regardless of the stage of the process.

Another aspect to be integrated into this discussion on editorial management is the autonomy of journals and editorial boards to innovate and transform the scientific editorial activities. For several years, the academic context has established well-defined and consolidated rules and guidelines about the quality, merit, impact, repercussion, and ethics of the papers submitted to scientific journals. These rules and guidelines usually fall in the domain of editors' responsibilities because they relate to the training process of researchers in doctoral programs. However, behind the scenes of editorial management, journal funding, database entry and maintenance, bibliometric indicators and metrics, professionalization investment, and internationalization initiatives have their own rules too. These elements permeate different areas with which editorial boards may have limited interaction and intervention, but they need to understand their particularities. The journal's viability and visibility depend on the quality of the editorial management process.

A current concern for nursing journals in Brazil is the decrease in funding in recent years due to funding cuts and reduced opportunities for fundraising through specific calls. Recommendations for effective editorial management have focused on the triad: sustainability, professionalization, and internationalization according to the criteria of the SciELO Brazil Collection (Packer et al., 2020). The emerging question is mainly concern with funding, considering that the entire editorial process involves different items to make a professionalized work process viable and provide conditions for international dissemination. The costs to maintain an editorial management system recognized in different languages are high, such as acquiring software for similarity checks, building a group of loyal reviewers, and disseminating the journal and the papers in different platforms, among others. These conditions require financial planning and forecasting for the regular maintenance and publication of a scientific journal.

Therefore, it is essential to keep investing in the training of new editors with critical skills and other specific resources to update on the progress and advances made by the leaders, editors-in-chief, and editorial boards in recent years. The journals' editorial management consists of a team of highly qualified professionals committed to developing Brazilian nursing by adopting good editorial practices with ethics and integrity.

Shared and documented knowledge of editorial management will help the next generation who shows interest in this activity to provide a solid, consistent response to current challenges, such as the implementation of open science, the fight against predatory journals, the increase in the number of initiatives of internationalization of Brazilian journals, among others. These challenges define the quality and, consequently, the visibility of editorial management in national and international scientific journals.

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