

REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA: on the Way

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REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA, the official publication of the Spanish Society of Cardiology (SSC), is an international journal devoted to cardiovascular disease which is clearly on the right course. The apparent potential dichotomy that had arisen when defense of “our” journal as a natural meeting ground for scientific expression by members of the SSC encountered aspirations to turn the journal into a prestigious “international” scientific publication is now behind us, and everyone now concurs that our journal is in fact an international journal. This maturing process has been a gradual one that has taken place mainly over the last decade, but we must continue our commitment to this goal in order to maintain the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA on its current course.

REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA has shown admirable progress during its 57-year history, moving steadily upward in the ranks so that it now occupies a place among the most prestigious biomedical journals in its specialty. This praiseworthy and demanding process,¹⁻⁶ which required continuous technical improvements to meet rigorous quality standards, has been marked along the way by significant highlights, most notably our inclusion in Index Medicus, EMBASE/Excerpta Medica, and Current Contents. However, the event that different groups of researchers working in cardiovascular specialties appreciated most was probably the appearance of our impact factor in Journal Citation Reports.⁶ This unquestionably makes publication in the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA more “scientifically profitable.” This popular bibliometric index simply reflects the degree to which items accepted by a given journal are cited by authors who publish their studies in journals of the prestigious, select Science Citation Index club to

which the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA now belongs. In other words, published scientific contributions are used in turn by other researchers as a reliable source of support for further progress in their own areas of interest. Thus the impact factor represents a widely accepted way to evaluate a journal’s scientific prestige. All researchers now acknowledge that publishing in the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA is not only an efficient means of disseminating the results of their research among colleagues in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries (for several years now the journal has topped the list of journals on cardiovascular disease published in Spanish), but also has substantial scientific impact internationally. This privilege previously graced only those manuscripts accepted in one of the more classic English-language journals in this specialty.

We still do not know clearly what niche the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA occupies with respect to other international scientific publications in cardiovascular disease. Only future changes and shifts in the ranking of different bibliometric markers in the coming years will show where we are and what goals we can and should aspire to. Two things are clear, however: first, that this is a dynamic process that reflects, albeit after some delay, previously implemented editorial strategies, and second, that further efforts—by all of us—are needed to consolidate the scientific merits of the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA.^{1-3,6} A practical way to implement these efforts is to actively cite articles published recently in the journal in new research studies. This practice not only reflects maturity in recognizing the merits of similar or related publications often produced in our setting, and with which it seems appropriate to compare ourselves. In addition, it also clearly feeds back into and enhances the flow of scientific information emanating from the journal, making it increasingly attractive to readers and researchers.

The real challenge of working with such an attractive journal is to be able to choose the best from an array of very good offerings, and this is not always easy. In fact, our responsibility as editors will increa-

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se, since we should now be expected to know how to choose the best articles from among the ever-increasing number of interesting manuscripts that are submitted for consideration. Of key importance in this task is the continued and frequently underappreciated work of the Editorial Board, the Editorial Committee, and our various advisors. Peer review of the manuscripts, even with its potential limitations, is unanimously recognized as the best tool available for achieving excellence in this meticulous process. In this connection we should note that the acceptance rate for manuscripts of original articles submitted to the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA has changed, falling markedly in only 6 years from 70% to 40%. This means that rejection needs to be interpreted in perspective.⁷ We simply cannot publish all the good manuscripts we receive, and are forced to choose. The challenge now faced by reviewers and editors is to choose wisely.

Other problems of increasing concern to the international scientific community are conflict of interest, authorship and redundant publication, among other issues.⁵ In response to these problems, we intend to develop appropriate editorial policies for the journal. Nor can we neglect the fundamental role played by the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA in continued education and training. Readers have often expressed a preference for our editorials and commentaries, controversies, review articles and updates. These articles have consistently offered the opinions of highly qualified experts and in-depth reviews of current issues in cardiology. At a time when the SSC is becoming more open to all health professionals interested in cardiovascular disease, maintaining quality in our educational efforts is another of our major goals.

All biomedical journals are now facing a continuous process of adaptation to new demands from the scientific community. The speed with which the results of bibliographic searches can now be expected has revolutionized the field, as has the abrupt appearance of electronic publishing, which has clearly become the predominant means of dissemination of scientific information. It remains unclear whether print editions (with their inherent production and distribution problems) will survive in the new era. In this connection, another challenge we consider inevitable is changing how the editorial office is run to allow our communications system to gradually become fully electronic. As a tentative first step in this direction, the consequences of which we are still assessing, we have urged all reviewers to use e-mail and the Internet (90% of our editorial correspondence at this time still arrives on paper) as the basic medium for reviewing and communicating with us more efficiently. However, the change to a fully electronic system of manuscript reception, review and publication is imperative in the short term to allow authors,

reviewers and editors to interact smoothly. This will allow us to compete with other journals that use electronic communications, and yet will require further efforts to enhance our infrastructure and logistics both in the editorial office at the Casa del Corazón in Madrid and in terms of editorial and production processes.

In our efforts to consolidate the international prestige of the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA, we recently began cover-to-cover publication in English on line.⁸ This new challenge has led to an exponential increase in the workload at the editorial office, and to maintain quality and achieve consistency across the huge volume of specialized translation this involves, we have decided to create a new position at the journal, with responsibility specifically for supervising the English on line edition of the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA.

In closing, it is appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the work of the previous editors, who each enriched the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA in different ways while holding a steady course that has guided the journal to its current position. Xavier Bosch has been an outstanding teacher for this new subject, with its ever-increasing demands in terms of professionalism and dedication. We would like here to express to him our deepest appreciation, and to add our applause to the resounding ovation he received upon stepping down formally as Editor-in-Chief. It is clear that we are stepping in at a time of growth and expansion at the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE CARDIOLOGÍA. We will devote our energies and efforts to maintaining our current course, while at the same time taking great care to build further upon the hard-won achievements obtained thus far. It is reassuring to the current editorial staff to know we have the full support of the Board of Directors of the SSC for our policy of editorial independence for the journal, an indispensable condition to ensure that the journal is managed well both editorially and scientifically.

With the new year comes an opportunity to change. Moving forward is the best direction for change to take, in our efforts both to consolidate our position and to achieve further goals. Although it may sound clichéd to say that the road is made in the walking, our achievements thus far have shown us the importance of walking that road together.

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