

SOME FACTS ON INDEXATION

EDITORIAL

The amount of human knowledge that is being accumulated is enormous. This is a fact in all areas, particularly in the medical science. This sort of knowledge is shared among people by means of journals, books, films, tapes, radio, oral presentation in congresses, in Universities, among others.

In the biomedical field, however, journals play a basic role in this sense. Any mean of communication basically use the knowledge that is stored in scientific journals. As an example, a chapter in a medical book is mainly based in journals. Many of them has sections devoted to actualization, continuing education and news regarding other publications. However, the core of these journals and their main characteristic are the original articles they publish. They are the real way to expand knowledge. Many of these original articles are based on experimentation, new interpretation of previously known data, hypothesis on controversial issues or observation on diseases concerning its therapeutics or epidemiological aspects and analysis of its magnitude and transcendence. Information stored in journals contribute, most frequently, to improve the knowledge on diseases, on the etiologic agents and on the way to eradicate them.

The biomedical area is such a vast field that some division should be made in order to be assimilated by those interested in each of its aspects. In addition, some of these areas need further division due to the enormous amount of produced knowledge. This is the reason for the publication of so many different journals in order to offer information to each peculiar group.

The contents of these periodicals are listed in the *Index Medicus* and, nowadays, it is stored in computerized data base allowing rapid

access to the information. All information concerning a specific subject is at hand in a few minutes. This is of utmost importance to scientific research.

In order to participate in these data base, journals should follow some requirements. The quality of the articles is essential and, additionally, other aspects are important, such as the graphic presentation, type of printing paper, quality of photos and regularity of distribution. For these reasons, a periodical aiming to be indexed should carefully select submitted papers for publication. To some extent, these requisites limit the number of periodicals in the data base. In this sense, many important information are restricted to journals of minor circulation that could not achieve the requirements for data base indexation. In addition important articles are kept in the waiting list for months and even years to be published, preventing the disclosure of its important content. This is hazardous regarding the publication of aspects on investigation, treatment and control of some specific diseases that afflict a considerable part of some populations and that consist in important public health problems to some countries.

Nowadays, dermatology is an specialty that has many periodicals. In old times and in some instances, the title of the dermatology periodical was intentionally connected to some relevant public health disease in order to express the publisher's concern to this problem, such as the case of the "Annales de Dermatologie et Siphiligraphie".

Leprosy is an ancient contagious disease with a chronic evolution and with a high potential for promoting deformities. There are millions of people afflicted by leprosy living in developing countries. Many years ago, researchers interested

in its study and elimination created journals in order to spread knowledge on all aspects that could assist in their objectives. One of these journals, founded in the 30's was the **International Journal of Leprosy**. Soon afterwards other journals appeared such as the **India Leprosy Journal**, all published in English and that are still on circulation. Others, in many parts of the world, had a short life.

Also in the 30's was founded the **Revista Paulista de Leprologia**, named afterwards **Revista Brasileira de Leprologia** which presently become **Hansenologia Internationalis**. All these publications have contributed and still are contributing to the fight against leprosy. Having an multidisciplinary approach, such as a variable disease like leprosy deserves, they constitute as an important element in this battle.

A considerable number of leprosy patients are concentrated in the Americas, particularly in Brazil, the second largest load of cases in the world. For such reason it is very important the existence of a journal to transmit the scientific production of this region regarding leprosy. There are also obstacles, such as the language, to the exchange of information provided not all persons are bilingual. For this reason a periodical that intend to surpass this inconvenient is also important.

Hansenologia Internationalis meet these two requirements since it is distributed not

only to the Americas but worldwide and, from now on, it is providing a full English version of most of its original articles in Portuguese and Spanish.

Unfortunately, partially due to some delay in its production and distribution, we lost the indexation precisely in a moment that more and more communication is needed among leprologists. The control of leprosy is a palpable perspective in the short run and all effort should be aimed in this regard.

For this reason, it is highly recommendable and crucial that **Hansenologia Internationalis** returns again to the pages of the Index Medicus. The journal has had its circulation up-dated, its presentation is improving at each issue and it is becoming a bilingual journal. A further need is that members of the College of Hansenology of the Endemic Countries and of the Brazilian Association of Hansenology and all those concerned to this publication should contribute with articles reporting their results and observations. This is the way to achieve our goal.

The sole reason for a journal to exist is the persistence of the reason for which it was created and the existence of people that still believe that it is the best way to congregate those that are committed to the elimination of leprosy.

We have to proof this!

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