Online management of manuscripts in the professionalization of journals

The peer-review process remains the most common form of assessment of manuscripts submitted for publication in journals[1]. It is an integral part of the enterprise of doing research and communicating its results. In the evaluation of manuscripts, the whole process must be conducted in a transparent and ethical manner by the editorial teams of the journals and *ad hoc* reviewers qualified in the research topic. Despite being target of criticism[2] regarding its efficiency and transparency, the evaluation of manuscripts by peer researchers in its several forms prevails historically as being the most used.

The complete process, which includes from the submission of the manuscript until the decision about its acceptance or rejection, is complex and may involve a lot of comings and goings of the manuscript among the authors, editors, and reviewers, until the final decision is taken.

The publication of this issue of *Fisioterapia e Pesquisa* coincides with the adoption of a new system for the management of manuscript submission. This is the ScholarOne system, owned by Clarivate Analytics, one of the platforms that represents the state of the art of online editorial management systems, used by about 6,000 journals worldwide[3] and made possible by the SciELO/Fapesp Program for the indexed journals in the SciELO Brazil Collection. Available since April 2017, this advance contributes to strengthening the professionalization and internationalization of the journal in keeping with the courses of action of the Scielo program.

Online management systems are designed to perform the management of manuscripts from submission to final decision, offering greater control, automation and logging of processes that were once manually done, such as delay notices, reminders and alerts in general, thus supporting the editorial board of the journal in the analysis of content and quality of the research.

The adoption of a new manuscript management system most of the time involves a review of editorial policies and procedures, which represents a unique opportunity for the improvement of the journal. This occurs because it is a moment of mutual adaptation between the system and the editorial team: the system must adapt to the journal and the journal must adapt to the system. In this exchange it is not uncommon for the journal to relinquish activities or even to reverse the sequence of one or more tasks. This is part of the adaptation process and it is noted that such changes are proven satisfactory in the medium- and long-term, contributing to the professionalization and enhancement of the editorial team.

We also highlight the facility to extract reports of usage statistics when an online system is used. It is possible to obtain statistics of submissions, acceptance and rejection rates, time of processing, data from authors and foreign reviewers, among others, with greater efficiency, practicality and speed. Extraction of statistics through an online system ensures greater data reliability with much less working time, which allows the team to have more time to dedicate to other activities.

Such statistical data will certainly be of great value to *Fisioterapia e Pesquisa* in the continuous improvement of the journal. The systematic use of these data enriches the journal management when it allows analyzing the profile and behavior of authors and reviewers, identifying impediments in the processing time, assessing the editorial policy, and developing projections for the coming years.

A study conducted by the editors of the *Revista de Sociologia e Política*[4] after one year using the ScholarOne found that besides the time gain due to streamlining of the editorial routines, the system also provided a reduction in the workload of reviewers, greater control of the editors on the production process of the journal as well as on the final quality of what is being published. In addition, foreign authors' submissions are expected to increase with the use of an internationally known system.

The SciELO Program considers the use of an online editorial management system as being paramount to a scientific journal, and since 2016 its use has become a compulsory index criterion of entry and permanency in the Scielo Brazil Collection[5]. By adopting the ScholarOne, the *Fisioterapia e Pesquisa* journal does not only meet this criterion, but also aligns its editorial and management policy to the international state of the art.

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