

## Authorship of articles: questions for reflection

One of the major national projects in recent years with impact on the scientific work relates to the increasing number of publications, especially in internationally indexed periodicals, such as the *Journal Citation Reports / Thomson Reuters e SCImago Journal & Country Rank / Scopus/ Elsevier B.V.* Not to go too far, just to maintain the accreditation conferred to a professor/ researcher in graduate programs requires a minimum amount of “products” published annually in periodicals indexed in such databases.

This is a phenomenon that effectively has raised Brazil to the world rankings of scientific “production”, but at the same time posed diverse problems. In the competitive scenario that sets the rules for fundraising and career progress (job positions) that bring distinction to those who attain them, we can cite the procedures that the field operation agents resort to succeed in obtaining capital, either material or symbolic.

Based on the recognized importance of investments in generating and disseminating knowledge, we will discuss here what is just part of the problems outlined above, which refers to the authorship of manuscripts submitted to scientific journals.

Our magazine has operated valuing approaches from the most diverse scientific fields, under a multi-epistemological perspective. This means coping with various cultures, whether those that traditionally value works produced by a single author, usually in Human and Social Sciences, or those that result from works of biomedical nature, conducted by laboratory teams or epidemiological studies conducted by group(s) of research and, in this case, signed by multiple authors. However, the predominant nature of the studies published in our journal is nutrition, given its insertion in the social space that deals with this theme. In our editorial work, we have noticed, even among biomedical-themed works, a considerable increase of the number of authors per article. The growing number of authors of works in the field of Humanities is also a recent phenomenon among the articles submitted to DEMETRA.

Other periodicals – such as *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* (Reports in Public Health), for example – have touched on such issue, not without some discomfort. Various journals have expressed their concerns with such situation and some of them – such as the *Revista de Nutrição* (Brazilian Journal of Nutrition) – has set limits to the number of authors per article.

Camargo Jr., editor of *Physis: Revista de Saúde Coletiva* (Physis: Collective Health Journal), commented that “it has been surprising to receive manuscripts with a number of authors that is close to or even exceeds the number of subjects that participated in the research work that gave origin to the article” and highlights “the authors multiplication phenomenon, at least in some cases, is due to the euphemistically called ‘honorary authorship’”<sup>1</sup>. (Our translation).

In the international level, in 2013, the *San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment* (DORA)<sup>2</sup> was published, which succeeded in obtaining the adherence of thousands of researchers and hundreds of scientific organizations. This document presents an in-depth discussion of the processes of evaluation of scientific production that has led to the growing number of publications, including the number of authors per article.

In several institutionalized areas of assessment of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), including the so-called “Nutrition” area, the Brazilian periodicals are clearly in a secondarized position in the criteria of assessment of *stricto sensu* Graduate Programs that conform it. Still, the number of submissions of articles has grown considerably in our journal, which we believe is due, at least in part, to such inducement to publish more ... and more... and more... that marks the production of knowledge and the education of teachers and researchers, also in Brazil.

We note that, according to the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors*, authorship is defined based on substantial contribution to (1) conception and design or analysis and interpretation of data; (2) drafting or critically revising the manuscript for important intellectual content; (3) final approval of the version to be published, conditions that must be fully met. Those contributors that had some participation in data collection or other minor contributions should be acknowledged (in Acknowledgements), differently from authorship, which implies accountability for the accuracy of the final manuscript.

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1 Camargo JR., Kenneth R. de. Publicar ou perecer, ou perecer por publicar (em excesso)? *Physis* [online]. 2014, vol.24, n.2 [cited 2015-05-08], pp. 337-339. Available at: <[http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0103-73312014000200337&lng=pt&nrm=iso](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-73312014000200337&lng=pt&nrm=iso)>. ISSN 0103-7331. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0103-73312014000200001>

2 Accessed in November 26, 2014. Available at:<http://am.ascb.org/dora/>