



Letter to readers: Scientific rigor, ethics, and democratization of knowledge in the field of clinical nutrition

Carta a los lectores: rigor científico, ética y democratización del conocimiento en el campo de la nutrición clínica

Carta aos leitores: rigor científico, ética e democratização do conhecimento no campo da nutrição clínica

Diana Cárdenas, MD, PhD*

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A new journal of clinical nutrition emerged at the beginning of 2018⁽¹⁾. The clear conviction of the then president of the Colombian Association of Clinical Nutrition (ACNC), Dr. Charles Bermudez, to have its own journal of the Association, launched this project. I accepted the challenge that, as editor, has allowed me today to deliver a journal that is positioned as an instrument of scientific dissemination in the field of clinical nutrition at a national and international level. During the four years of the aforementioned presidency and later, with the impulse and full support of the presidency of Angélica Pérez, the journal was able to consolidate an editorial board and develop under a clear and precise editorial guideline. In these six years, all my efforts were focused on three fundamental aspects: Scientific rigor, ethical practice in publications⁽²⁾ and the democratization of knowledge in the field of clinical nutrition⁽³⁾.

Scientific rigor is more and more at stake in scientific publications; these should be an end in themselves and not a means to other ends (commercial, among others). The contribution to scientific knowledge is the end that should allow the progress of science and, thus, impact on medical practices and human health. However, in the last decades we have been faced with a deluge of publications, which makes it difficult to be prepared to

understand and identify what is truly quality scientific. Isabel Correia questions us about this by asking: Will we be able to separate the wheat from the chaff when evaluating meta-analyses?⁽⁴⁾ Frequently, meta-analyses include studies lacking in transparency, without reproducibility and lacking the necessary scientific rigor, which entails a heterogeneous mass of redundant publications that do not contribute to knowledge. So, how to trust the deluge of scientific information?⁽⁵⁾ In my work as editor, my main responsibility was to identify the publications in the field of clinical nutrition that rigorously comply with the scientific method, and assure you, the readers, a scientific and reliable publication. What is at stake is not only scientific quality, but also ethics in publications.

Ethics in publishing is, from my point of view, the most important issue in the editorial field. Each one of the journal's stakeholders had an important role in ensuring the ethics and transparency of the publications. The authors, reviewers, associate editors, and other members of the scientific advisory board aligned themselves to our requirements, which are stated in the Ethics, integrity, and transparency policy section: <https://revistanutricionclinicametabolismo.org/index.php/nutricionclinicametabolismo/politicaetica>. We were very rigorous with the declaration of conflicts of interest, funding of studies and authorship listing of articles. We were intransigent against plagiarism and commercial use of articles. Nevertheless, you, the readers, please, remember that you also have a very important role here:

*Correspondencia: Diana Cárdenas.
dianacardenasbraz@gmail.com



You are the judges of our scientific and ethical quality; you can contribute to the enhancement of scientific rigor and promote an ethical culture in our journal. The *letters to the editor* space is and will continue to be the means to do so.

How to reach readers in Latin America and worldwide without the current barriers that most publications have was a *leitmotiv* of my job as editor. Science is a common good and, as such, should be democratized⁽³⁾. However, the monopoly and economic interests of large publishing companies have turned this into a business with multiple barriers to the main stakeholders interested: The readers. In light of this, from the beginning of the journal, we have been focused on having an open access publication. Since 2020, it has been published in the free and open code software Open Journal System (OJS). Therefore, our journal has achieved what seems impossible: Neither the readers, nor the authors pay for access to our publication; this was achieved with the financial support of ACNC. For the ACNC, the journal has been a priority, and this has been very clear in the 2018-2023 executive boards. With the OJS, the journal has been growing until achieving all the quality criteria that have allowed us to, currently, enter very prestigious databases, such as DOAJ, Latindex, REDIB, REDALYC and ROAD⁽⁶⁾. Today I am leaving a journal that complies with 100% of the indexing criteria to be submitted to Pubindex, PubMed Central and others, such as Web of Science. I leave a journal with a solid editorial board with gender equity and international representativeness, so necessary for indexing.

Dear readers, this letter is not intended as a farewell. The vision of a journal that breaks all paradigms is possible, and that legacy will remain forever. My first gratitude goes to you, because it is through your critical eye that the journal is what it is today. To Sonia Echeverry, thank you for your example and unconditional support. To those who have been my assistants in the editorial process, Fanny Aldana, Angela Navas, Lorena Montealegre, Mónica López and Carolina Sánchez, thank you for your unconditional support and availability; you were always willing to help and grow along with the journal. To the associate editors, particularly to Evelyn Frias who, from the beginning, has rigorously supported us. To Iván Osuna and Rafael Almendra, thank you for the quality of your work, your commitment and availability. Thanks

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So, dear readers, I end here my work as editor with this question: Was it worth it? And I answer it like the Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa: “Everything is worthwhile if the soul is not small.”



Diana Cárdenas MD, PhD
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