

## Renewal of editorial practices and author guidelines to RBMFC authors from 2019

Renovação das práticas editoriais e instruções aos autores da RBMFC a partir de 2019

*Renovación de las prácticas editoriales y directrices para autores de RBMFC a partir de 2019*

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### Abstract

This editorial presents the new editorial practices and author guidelines for Revista Brasileira de Medicina de Família e Comunidade (Brazilian Journal of Family and Community Medicine – RBMFC) starting in 2019. With them, RBMFC renews its commitment to publishing quality academic papers for family and community physicians and other primary care practitioners, contributing to the improvement of health care.

**Keywords:** Family Practice; Primary Health Care; Periodicals; Scholarly Communication; Editorial Policies

### Resumo

Neste editorial, são apresentadas as novas práticas editoriais e instruções aos autores que nortearão a Revista Brasileira de Medicina de Família e Comunidade (RBMFC) a partir de 2019. Com elas, a RBMFC renova seu compromisso com a publicação de trabalhos acadêmicos de qualidade para médicos de família e comunidade e outros profissionais da Atenção Primária à Saúde, contribuindo para a melhoria do cuidado à população.

**Palavras-chave:** Medicina de Família e Comunidade; Atenção Primária à Saúde; Publicações Periódicas; Comunicação Acadêmica; Políticas Editoriais

### Resumen

Este editorial presenta las nuevas prácticas editoriales y las directrices para autores para la Revista Brasileira de Medicina de Família e Comunidade (Revista Brasileña de Medicina Familiar y Comunitaria – RBMFC) a partir de 2019. Con ellas, RBMFC renueva su compromiso de publicar documentos académicos de calidad para los médicos de familia y comunidad y otros profesionales de atención primaria, contribuyendo para la mejora de la atención de salud.

**Palabras clave:** Medicina Familiar y Comunitaria; Atención Primaria de Salud; Publicaciones Periódicas; Comunicación Académica; Políticas Editoriales

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Revista Brasileira de Medicina de Família e Comunidade (Brazilian Journal of Family and Community Medicine – RBMFC) is a publication of Sociedade Brasileira de Medicina de Família e Comunidade (Brazilian Society of Family and Community Medicine – SBMFC). Apparently redundant, this definition is the foundation of RBMFC's mission. According to David Crotty,<sup>1</sup> editorial director of Oxford University Press,

Every society I've worked with sees itself as a steward of their field. The society is meant to bring together and support its research community, to promote the study of the subject it represents and drive funding where available, and to guide and protect the integrity of that research. Publishing a journal is a natural extension of that mission, putting the members' expertise to use in a high-quality peer review process to help improve and expose the latest research results. Society journals are sometimes started to foster communities of research. They are often not just "a journal" but the outlet for that community of research and its members working on advancing a particular field.

Family and community medicine is a relatively young specialty in Brazil and, thanks to a number of factors, SBMFC has been in continuous operation only since 2001.<sup>2</sup> RBMFC was (re)started three years later,<sup>3</sup> bringing articles that even today are classic reference, despite the artisanal production. Back then, the journal was published exclusively in printed form, so that the author instructions were summarized in a single page; the authors were expected to save their articles on a diskette and post it by regular mail.<sup>4</sup> In the following years, editorial production improved, the author guidelines were aligned with international standards, and manuscripts began to be received by e-mail and, then, through the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform.<sup>5</sup> Originally distributed in printed format for authors and SBMFC members, RBMFC began to be distributed as well in electronic format, which then became the exclusive publication format.<sup>6,7</sup>

In RBMFC, as in other scientific journals, editorial policies and instructions to authors have become increasingly extensive and elaborated, reflecting the space allowed by the electronic format, as well as the development of international recommendations. For example, the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) have extended their scope from manuscript preparation ("Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals") to the arc from conducting the research until after publication of the article ("Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals"). The "Vancouver" citation style is no longer defined by the ICMJE (which first met in Vancouver, hence the name), and is now under the auspices of the United States' National Library of Medicine,<sup>8</sup> the same organization responsible for the MEDLINE database and the PubMed portal. Another example was the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing,<sup>9</sup> published jointly by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME).

Throughout 2018, RBMFC's editorial policies and author guidelines have undergone a complete revision, with the purpose of making them clearer and ensuring compliance with the pertinent recommendations. This revision was based not only on the two abovementioned recommendations, but also on COPE's

Core Practices;<sup>10</sup> the Council of Scientific Editors' White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications;<sup>11</sup> and (partially) the Transparency and Openness Promotion guidelines,<sup>12</sup> as well as others, more specific ones. We highlight some of the main novelties:

- The mission statement and scope of the journal were rewritten to emphasize more clearly family and community medicine and primary care, establishing RBMFC as a means of scholarly communication among researchers and practitioners in the field.
- The section policies were amended to explicitly accept theoretical and methodological essays, integrative and scope reviews and quality improvement reports. They also clarified the difference between clinical reviews<sup>13</sup> and evidence-based reviews,<sup>14</sup> and consolidated some sections in the new Perspectives section.
- The editorial policies now have specific sections on Conflicts of Interest, Authorship and Collaboration, Ethics in Research, and Open Data and Reproducibility, giving more prominence to previously dispersed guidelines.
- Good practices have been adopted, such as the statement of contribution of each author or contributor, the statement of the data sharing plan (mandatory for clinical trials) and the statement of the role of the funder in the research.
- Articles are now being published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license.

This renewal of editorial policies and author guidelines is part of a broader process, namely RBMFC's ongoing commitment to the improvement of its editorial practices. The new editorial policies and author guidelines became effective in late December 2018 and should progressively reflect in the articles published during 2019. In parallel, RBMFC launched a call for associate editors to recompose and streamline its editorial team. With regard to peer reviewers, in 2017 RBMFC started publishing annually an acknowledgment to those who actually evaluated manuscripts that year, instead of simply publicizing the register of potential reviewers. Finally, in early 2018 RBMFC made a commitment to agility in evaluating and publishing articles. Indeed, the evaluation time for articles was generally less than two months, and the time until the publication was generally less than six months. All this without giving up rigor: about half of the submissions were declined without peer review, and three quarters of the peer reviewed submissions were rejected.

In short, RBMFC reaffirms its commitment to promoting scholarly exchange among researchers and practitioners, adopting editorial best practices to publish relevant work in family and community medicine as well as primary care in general.

### **Conflict of interest**

None declared.

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