

## Enhancing the *Portuguese Journal of Pediatrics*: focusing on what matters most

### *Melhorar o Portuguese Journal of Pediatrics: focar no que mais interessa*

Luís Pereira-da-Silva

Retiring Editor-in-Chief of the *Portuguese Journal of Pediatrics*; Faculdade de Ciências Médicas, NOVA Medical School, Lisbon, Portugal; Unidade Local de Saúde São José, Hospital Dona Estefânia, Lisbon, Portugal

Three years ago, Professor André Graça, President of the Portuguese Society of Pediatrics, and Dr. David Lito, the newly appointed executive Editor-in-Chief of the *Portuguese Journal of Pediatrics* (PJP), invited me to collaborate with the journal as a non-executive Editor-in-Chief in an advisory role. I accepted the honorable invitation for a three-year term, as retirement was approaching. My decision was based not only on the motto “What can you do for society?”, but also on the opportunity to work with a young, ambitious, and responsible executive editor.

What could I offer? It would be my advice, based on years of knowledge accumulated through my interest in scientific and editorial activities. I should note that that collaboration was not my editorial debut in the journal of the Society. For eight years (2005-2013), I was an associate editor of its predecessor, the *Acta Pediátrica Portuguesa*. I took advantage of this experience to propose the PJP restructuring, anchored in a critical analysis expressed in an editorial about the weaknesses that led to the unsuccessful attempt to index our journal in Medline<sup>1</sup>. What is noteworthy is that 13 years after this reflection, most of the substantial shortcomings of the journal remained. Against this backdrop, the PJP reorganization prioritized the following strategies: increasing the proportion of original research relative to descriptive case series and case reports; limiting the

number of narrative reviews and opinion articles and trying to attract systematic reviews; inviting the presidents of the Portuguese Society of Pediatrics’ sections and societies to use the PJP as their primary means of disseminating guidelines; and opening the doors to international authors by capitalizing on the fact that the PJP was published in English. In addition, professional English editing was implemented to ensure consistent quality and accuracy, particularly to avoid literal translations from Portuguese and gross translation errors. To avoid unacceptable delays in the editorial process, all its steps began to be monitored in a structured way. The Instructions for Authors were rewritten and substantially shortened to make them user-friendly. “What is added” in relation to the literature must now be stated in bullet points in all submitted manuscripts. Meetings of the entire editorial board, including the associate editors and technical assistant, were started to identify and solve the main problems as a team.

Many objectives have been achieved. However, there are two main concerns that deserve the most attention, especially in light of a potential new attempt to index the PJP in Medline:

- The first concern is continuing the effort to increase the number of research-based articles. Decades of not being indexed have created a pernicious cycle in which the best national pediatric research has

#### Correspondence:

Luís Pereira-da-Silva  
E-mail: l.pereira.silva@nms.unl.pt

2184-3333 / © 2025 Portuguese Society of Pediatrics. Published by Permalyer. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Received: 06-06-2025

Accepted: 09-06-2025

<https://pjp.spp.pt>

Available online: 25-06-2025

Port J Pediatr. 2025;56(3):129-130

DOI: 10.24875/PJP.25000039

fled to indexed journals, in search of prestige for the articles and curricular advantages for the authors. It is pointless to dream of indexing the PJP if it does not contain a sufficient amount of quality research.

- The second concern is to guarantee a minimum number of reliable reviewers. In a country the size of Portugal, it has been challenging to ensure the regular and sustained collaboration of the few Portuguese experts as reviewers in pediatric subspecialty areas. With the recent “boom” in medical and biomedical journals worldwide, the online harassment of reviewers has reached unprecedented levels. Portuguese reviewers are no exception.

Therefore, a shortage of reviewers is foreseeable, which could delay the peer review process and editorial decisions further.

When times change and problems seem insurmountable, difficulty can create opportunity. As I retire, I am confident that the current PJP editorial team will support the dissemination of our authors’ scientific work through their dedication, competence, and innovation, thereby reinforcing the prestige of our Society’s journal.

## Reference

1. Pereira-da-Silva L. Editorial: recusa de indexação na Medline – discriminação ou veredicto inevitável? Um ponto de vista [Editorial: Refusal of indexing in Medline – discrimination or inevitable verdict? A point of view]. *Acta Pediatr Port.* 2008;39:XXV–XXVI.