

## Subsequent publication of abstracts presented at the Brazilian Society of Oral Research Meeting

*Taxa de publicação dos resumos apresentados no encontro da Sociedade Brasileira de Pesquisa Odontológica*

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### RESUMO

A publicação de trabalhos científicos está cada vez mais difícil e demorada, fazendo com que grande quantidade de trabalhos não sejam aceitos pelas revistas do meio. Dessa forma objetivamos avaliar qual a taxa de trabalhos apresentados na SBPQO de 2001 que foram publicados na forma de artigo completo e o tempo decorrido entre a apresentação e a publicação. Dez por cento de todos os resumos aceitos no evento de 2001 foram selecionados aleatoriamente (n=140). Três avaliadores treinados realizaram as buscas em três bases de dados (Pubmed, Lilacs e BBO). Os resumos eram considerados publicados quando os artigos encontrados possuíam os seguintes itens de comparação com o resumo: nome dos autores, título, objetivos, material e método, resultados e conclusões. Trinta e sete artigos foram considerados publicados (26.5%) enquanto o tempo médio para a publicação foi de 24.1 meses. Conclui-se que um maior rigor para a aceitação dos trabalhos pode fazer com que a qualidade dos mesmos aumente e assim a posterior taxa de publicação. Também se conclui que a demora para a publicação dos resumos pode ser devido a morosidade das revistas, bem como a demora e/ou falta de incentivo aos autores para publicarem seus achados.

**Palavras chave:** formatos de publicação, resumo em inglês, pesquisa.

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the publication rates and the time taken for publication, as a function of the qualis, of the peer-reviewed journals for abstracts presented at the 2001 Brazilian Society of Oral Research meeting. The abstracts were numbered and 10% of the total were randomly selected, resulting in a sample with 140 abstracts (N=140). The research was done by three trained researchers, crossing-out the first author's name and the last author's name with key words from the title. When the peer-reviewed journal abstract fulfilled all criteria of the search protocol (name of authors, title, aims, materials and methods (sample size and laboratory tests used), results, and conclusions) it was designated as "published". When the researchers disagreed each other, another independent researcher decided about that. Of the total abstracts, just 37 (26.5%) were considered "published"; most of them were published in journals with good qualis. The average time elapsed between the congress presentation and the publication of the corresponding full articles was 24.1 months, and the abstracts took longer to be published in journals with better qualis. The publication rate found (26.5%) was considered low, especially since the study was conducted on the main Brazilian scientific Dentistry meeting.

**Keywords:** Publication formats, Research, English abstract.

### INTRODUCTION

Presentation of scientific information at international congresses is important for propagating new research worldwide<sup>1,2</sup>. However, the abstracts of the papers that are presented at these congresses do not completely provide all the important details of the study, like the methodological aspects, results, and discussion<sup>3,4</sup>. This reduces the capacity of the reader to

critically evaluate the study, apply the results, and disseminate the knowledge presented in the papers<sup>3,4</sup>. Thus, researchers should be encouraged to go beyond congress presentations and publish their findings in periodicals as soon as possible, irrespective of the relevance of the study or direction of the findings.

An accepted method for investigating publication trends is to rate the publication reviews of studies that were originally

presented at conferences and specific meetings<sup>1,2,5,6,7</sup>. According to Walby et al<sup>8</sup>, studies presented at congresses are not published for reasons such as the meticulous requirements of indexed periodicals for accepting papers, the number of periodicals being less compared to the amount of studies conducted, poor methodological quality of the research, and the existence of publications types other than research paper, such as theses and books.

Previous studies have shown that most abstracts are not published in indexed periodicals<sup>1,2,4,5,6,7,9,10</sup>. However, the type of scientific meeting at which the abstracts were presented<sup>1,2</sup>, the different search criteria used by research<sup>4,6,7</sup> and the databases used for search can influence the obtained abstracts publication rate<sup>1,4,6</sup>, so we can't compare all the studies one each other.

Nowadays is important publish articles in journals with high impact factors. Currently, in Brazil, periodicals are categorized, in accordance with their impact factors, in different *qualis*. This *qualis* is attributed by CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, Ministry of Education, Federal Government), as follows in decreasing order of relevance: A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, and C<sup>11</sup>. Evaluation of the abstract publication rates of indexed periodicals is one of the methods for evaluating national dentistry research. In addition, evaluate in which journals these abstracts were published, is important to verify if the national dentistry research has good quality or not.

Thus, this study aims to evaluate the publication rates and the time taken for publication, as a function of the *qualis* of the peer-reviewed journals, for abstracts presented at the 2001 Brazilian Society of Oral Research meeting. The null hypothesis is that, independent the *qualis* of the journal, won't be difference in relation to the number and time for the publication abstracts.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample comprised 10% of all abstracts<sup>6,7</sup> presented at the 2001 SBPqO, selected from each section (Panel A, Panel B, Hatton/POAC, and ISSAO). For randomization, the abstracts from each section were numbered, and 10% of the total were randomly selected

([www.randomizer.org](http://www.randomizer.org)). The sample finally included 140 abstracts (N=140).

To verify whether the selected abstracts were published in peer-reviewed journals, a search was conducted in the years 2009 and 2010 using the Medline, LILACS, and BBO databases. The search was conducted by 3 previously trained, independent researchers. The search protocol initially involved crossing-out the first author's name along with key words from the title. In the case of a negative response, the last author's name was also crossed-out along with the same key words from the title. Some aspects of the abstracts identified during the search were compared to those in SBPqO abstracts, like authors, title, aims, materials and methods (sample size and laboratory tests used), results, and conclusions<sup>2,7</sup>. When the peer-reviewed journal abstract fulfilled all the criteria of the search protocol, it was designated as "published". When the researchers disagreed with the search results, another independent researcher decided about that.

The "published" abstracts were evaluated according to the time taken for publication as the function of *qualis* of the peer-reviewed journals. The time taken for publication was measured as the number of months elapsed between the congress presentation (September 2001) and the month of the volume of the journal in which the paper was published. The journal *qualis* was defined on the basis of the new parameters given by the CAPES as A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, and C<sup>11</sup>.

## RESULTS

Of the total 140 abstracts that were searched, 37 (26.5%) were considered "published". The average time elapsed between the congress presentation and the publication of the corresponding full articles in peer-reviewed journals was 24.1 months, for the sample used. The relationship between abstract publication and journal *qualis* and the average time to publication and its relationship with the *qualis* are presented in table 1.

**Table 1:** Relation between *qualis* of the journals, amount of abstracts published and mean time for publication.

Journal <i>Qualis</i>	Abstracts published (n)	Mean time for publication (months)
A1	3	27
A2	4	25.2
B1	8	32.1
B2	4	28.2
B3	1	24
B4	12	22.2
B5	4	17
C	1	6
TOTAL	37	24.1

## DISCUSSION

The results show that a small portion of the searched abstracts (26.5%) was published in the journals indexed, at least, in one of the databases used in this research. This finding is similar to that of other studies<sup>5,7-9</sup>, but the literature shows a large variation in the publication rates, ranging from 15% to 69%<sup>9,12-14</sup>.

Different search criteria used by previous researchers can influence the final results<sup>4,6,7</sup>. The choice of the databases used for the search can also be one of the factors that influence the obtained abstract publication rate<sup>1,4,6</sup>. According to Carroll et al<sup>1</sup>, some abstracts could be published in journals that are not indexed in the Medline database. Corroborating this possibility, Scholey et al<sup>6</sup> admitted that had they used another database associated with Medline, they may have obtained more significant publication rates. In the present study, 37 abstracts were found to be published as full articles by using 3 different databases (Medline, LILACS, and BBO). If the search had been conducted using just the Medline database, only 18 abstracts would have been considered "published".

Most studies state that 4 to 5 years is a sufficient time to publication for abstracts presented at scientific meetings<sup>15-17</sup>. However, this study was conducted 8/9 years after the congress presentation in order to evaluate the number of full articles published after a period of 60 months (5 years). Of the 37 full articles that were found, 30 (81.1%) were published during the first 3 years after the 2001 SBPqO presentation and only 2 (5.4%) were published after 5 years. Thus, it seems justified to affirm that 5 years is an acceptable period for analysis of abstracts presented at meetings and scientific congresses.

The type of scientific meeting at which the abstracts are presented may also influence the publication rates, as demonstrated by some previous studies<sup>1,2,6</sup>. Abstracts presented at meetings that involve several specialties normally have lower publication rates than those presented at meetings with only few specialties. This study analyzed the 2001 SBPqO, a multiple specialty meeting, and found publication rates (26.5%) similar to those of the 1999 and 1983/1984 IADR, which were analyzed by Leles et al.<sup>5</sup> and Corry<sup>7</sup>, respectively, and involved multiple specialties. On the other hand, previous research that evaluated specific meetings like those dedicated to Pediatric Dentistry<sup>1,2,6</sup>, Orthodontics<sup>6</sup>, Cariology<sup>6</sup>, Radiology<sup>4</sup>, and even Otorhinolaryngology<sup>8</sup> showed publication rates ranging from 33% to 69%.

In this study, the percentage of published full articles is low. Many factors may have contributed to these values. Sprague et al<sup>18</sup> cited some reasons for poor abstract publication rates, for example, the lack of time and interest shown by authors to write the manuscripts. The lower scientific rigor by meetings compared to scientific journals to accept studies may be another factor responsible for low publication rates<sup>10</sup>. The discrepancies between the abstracts and the published manuscript with respect to author names, title, purpose, and conclusions make their comparison difficult and this may interfere with the final publication rates<sup>2,7</sup>.

The average time taken to publish an abstract was found to be 24.1 months. This value seems to be in accordance with the values present in the literature<sup>1,2,6,8</sup>. Scholey et al.<sup>6</sup> found an average time to publication of 18 months. Corry<sup>7</sup> found that this value for 1984 IADR abstracts was 36 months.

Other researchers have found intermediate values with respect to the categories in which the abstracts were presented in the congresses. For example, Carrol et al.<sup>1</sup> found rates ranging from 20.3 to 26.5 months; Roy et al.<sup>8</sup> found an average of 22.5 months for the publication of analyzed abstracts; and Dahllof et al.<sup>2</sup> found an average of 20 months.

Even with the difficulties involved in publishing, results show that more than 50% of the full-length articles were published in reputed journals, according to the CAPES *qualis* criteria<sup>11</sup> (Table 1). With respect to the time to publication as a function of journal *qualis*, the results showed that better qualified journals (A1, A2, B1, and B2) take more time for publication (28.5 months) than the other journals (B3, B4, B5, and C), where the publication processes occur faster (17.2 months). Most Brazilian journals belong to the B3, B4, B5, or C category and are written in Portuguese. The shorter time to publication observed for these periodicals may be because of the fact that it is not necessary to translate all the manuscripts to English. Because the number of manuscripts sent to better-indexed journals is high, more time is required to analyze the manuscripts and respond to the authors, which can slow down the entire process.

The results of the present research correspond to those obtained for the main Brazilian Dentistry congress in the year 2001. Other national meetings probably show lower publication rates. This suggests that measures should be taken to increase the number and improve the quality of manuscripts published. In addition, new research should be carried out to evaluate the effect of these measures on the publication rates of abstracts presented at national meetings.

## CONCLUSION

The publication rate found in this study (26.5%) is low, especially since the study was conducted on the main Brazilian scientific Dentistry meeting. Therefore, measures to encourage publication and increase publication rates should be discussed at scientific meetings.

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