

Promoting and strengthening the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Geriatrics, Gerontology and Aging

Promovendo e fortalecendo princípios de diversidade, equidade, inclusão e acessibilidade no periódico Geriatrics, Gerontology and Aging

Promoviendo y fortaleciendo los principios de diversidad, equidad, inclusión y accesibilidad en el periódico Geriatrics, Gerontology and Aging

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Not-for-profit journals published by scientific societies and university presses play a fundamental role in disseminating knowledge and advancing research. They serve as focal points for the description of scientific results of regional, national, and international relevance.¹ To fulfill this role, such journals adopt rigorous ethical and scientific integrity standards, aiming to prevent scientific misconduct, encourage open science policies (including open access, transparency, and data sharing),² and ensure the originality and validity of published content.³ Furthermore, they adapt to technological innovations, including the recognition of publications in preprint repositories and the promotion of alternative metrics.⁴

In addition to seeking international visibility – which increases the impact and reach of the articles they publish –, these journals strive to promote best practices in the dissemination of scientific knowledge. In doing so, they contribute to the development of science, the scientific community, and society as a whole by engaging researchers, academics, reviewers, editors, and readers. In the field of aging, Geriatrics, Gerontology and Aging (GGA) has made a concerted effort to encourage good scientific practices through editorial policies that promote open science and its principles, as well as adopting the DEIA principles – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility – throughout the editorial process.

To support authors whose native language is not English, GGA makes an effort to incorporate open science values into all stages of the editorial process. This includes offering professional editing and translation services and providing guidelines for manuscript preparation in three languages. Multilingualism is recognized as a key challenge for open science and for advancing research.⁵

Despite the many advances already incorporated into our journal's editorial practices,^{6,7} we understand that ongoing editorial commitment is essential. This involves planning and taking deliberate, intentional actions to challenge all forms of discrimination, stigmatization, and ageism⁷ – not only through the language policies adopted by multilingual journals such as GGA^{8,9} but also to mitigate the negative effects of systemic racism on access to health care systems and the promotion of healthy and sustainable aging.¹⁰

By writing this editorial, our aim is not only to reaffirm the commitment of all GGA editors and collaborators, along with the Brazilian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology, to addressing inequalities in aging-related research and practice, but also to inform readers of specific practices already being adopted to integrate the DEIA principles into GGA's editorial process and scientific policy. These include racial, cultural, gender, and age equity, as well as the adoption of bias-free scientific language.

We have formed internal committees to provide resources for our editors and reviewers, offering information on DEIA-related activities and on how we can improve our organizational culture and adopt best practices in language use, editing, and the structuring of our editorial board. With the support of editors from the leading journals in the field of aging in Brazil, we plan to establish a forum that encourages the adoption and dissemination of language policies that reduce the use of ageist and potentially stigmatizing terms, and that promote the use of more inclusive language.

The editorial board of GGA currently includes two scientific editors, representing the fields of geriatrics and gerontology, with gender parity. Among the 22 associate editors, over one-third are women, who in turn represent more than 45% of the editorial council members. Considering the importance of increasing the representation of Latin American researchers and academics in our editorial body, we have progressively included colleagues from these countries. Our goal is to achieve near-50% representation from the area covered by the Latin American and Caribbean Committee of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (COMLAT-IAGG), with a rotation of approximately one-third of its members every 3 to 5 years.

Since 2024, all authors and coauthors submitting manuscripts to GGA have been invited to complete a compliance form regarding open science and the DEIA principles. This form gathers information that allows us to record data on gender identity, institutional and geographical diversity, and whether the authors considered DEIA principles when selecting their sample and reporting their findings. It also inquires whether participants and their families participated in validating research results, among other criteria. In the near future, authors will also be required to describe and adopt alternative formats to improve content accessibility

– for example, ensuring that visually impaired individuals can understand figures and illustrations.

By promoting diverse representation, our journal safeguards and reinforces the DEIA principles, affirming our commitment to avoid the unintentional promotion of one-sided perspectives at the expense of others, as recommended by the Council of Science Editors.¹¹

Each year, as we update our editorial policies and author guidelines, we plan to report our progress and the challenges we face in implementing these practices. Our long-term goal is to achieve gender-balanced representation by 2035, reflecting the diversity of both researchers and the populations investigated by manuscripts published by GGA.

To achieve these objectives, we will implement short- and long-term recommendations. These will be developed in collaboration with a working group composed of members from scientific societies and other scientific journals. The goal is to create policies and procedures that promote diversity in leadership roles. This initiative will enhance representation and foster opportunities for dialogue, especially among ethnic-racial minorities. It will also support special calls for research involving vulnerable and marginalized populations and help identify gaps and barriers to participation across disciplines, individuals, and geographic regions, among other aims.

Since 2024, GGA has been a signatory to and partner of the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC) initiative,¹² and has adopted affirmative actions for journals, editors, and reviewers, following the recommendations of the SciELO Brazil Collaboration¹³ and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).¹⁴ Likewise, GGA is a signatory to the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA),¹⁵ reinforcing its commitment to responsible research evaluation.

The adoption of the DEIA and DORA principles in GGA's editorial practices represents a significant advancement in the journal's editorial policy. It contributes to promoting more inclusive, fair, transparent, responsible, and accessible scientific publishing practices. By embracing and institutionalizing these practices, GGA reaffirms its commitment to scientific integrity and actively contributes to the scientific and social development of the field of human aging.

DECLARATIONS

Author contributions

Patrick Alexander Wachholz: formal analysis, conceptualization, writing – first draft, writing – review & editing, supervision, validation, visualization. Renata Eloah de Lucena Ferretti-Rebustini: formal analysis, conceptualization, writing – first draft, writing – review & editing, supervision, validation, visualization.

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