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The Rise of Colombian Biomedical Publications

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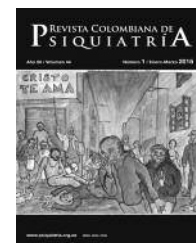
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Letter to the Editor

The Rise of Colombian Biomedical Publications



Ascenso de las publicaciones biomédicas colombianas

In 1998, the *Colombia Médica* journal published an article describing the poor presence of Colombia in the context of Latin American biomedical publications¹. Journals of the region were then reducing their share in the total number of publications indexed in MEDLINE. According to this study, in 1966, 2.03% of all references (3536 out of a total of 174 553) in this database came from journals edited in Latin American countries. In 1976 the percentage was 1.04% (2553 references out of 24 616), and dropped further to 0.81% in 1986 (2609 of 320 511) and even more in 1996, to 0.39% (1375 of 356 740). At that time, Colombia did not have any PubMed indexed journals. The situation, however, has changed in the past decade. Now we have five journals indexed in the database of the National Library of Medicine (*Biomédica*, *Colombia Médica*, *Investigación y Educación en Enfermería*, *Revista de Salud Pública*, and *REVISTA COLOMBIANA DE PSIQUIATRÍA*), and Colombian participation in international journals has grown significantly.

Considering only PubMed indexed publications, and based on data from RICYT (*Red de Indicadores de Ciencia y Tecnología*)², publications from Latin America and the Caribbean increased 3.6-fold (from 8584 to 30 536) between 2000 and 2013. Colombia, with a 5.9-fold increase in that period (from 175 to 1037), followed by Peru (from 70 to 371, a 5.3-fold increase) show the greatest growth.

According to statistics reported by the Scimago consortium, specialized in bibliometric analysis³, in 2000, for every Latin American medical publication ($n=9350$), the United States published 12.1 ($n=113\,538$). In 2013 the ratio was 6.4 to 1 (198 530 against 31 100). There were 114 Latin American journals in the Scopus database in 2000; the number has increased to 201 in 2014. Much of the growth is due to Brazil, which in 2000 represented 43% of all publications in the region (4005 of 9350); by 2013 that percentage had increased to 55% (17 116 to 31 100). During that period, the net number of biomedical publications in Brazil grew 4.3 times. Other countries had a higher growth: Peru saw its number increase 6 times (from 102 to 608) while Colombia, which went from 248 publications in 2000, to

1974 in 2013, had an 8-fold increase. Apart from the inclusion of Colombian journals in international indexes, other factors must have contributed to this increase in the number of publications. Incentives from both public and private universities have certainly played an essential role, as well as the requirement to include publications as part of the projects financed by COLCIENCIAS.

Conflicts of interests

No conflicts of interests to declare.

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