



Trabalho, Educação e Saúde

Position statement: scientific publications, novelty and institutional repository policy

Posicionamento: publicação científica e ineditismo frente à política de repositórios institucionais

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Angélica Ferreira Fonseca¹ Maria Lucia Frizon Rizzotto²
Kizi Mendonça de Araújo³ Maria Elisa Silveira³
Antonio Pithon Cyrino⁴ Luciana Dias de Lima⁵
ABRASCO's Collective Health Editors' Forum^{*,6}

The exercise of good editorial practices imposes on science publishers the ethical responsibility of publishing unpublished texts, ensuring originality and academic integrity. Novelty refers to submitted works that have yet to be published and has promoted the adoption of criteria to curb redundant publication, a practice that undermines the credibility of science.

However, the application of novelty criterion by editorial teams has led to the rejection of articles derived from theses and dissertations made available in institutional repositories, characterizing them as self-plagiarism. This problem has been discussed in postgraduate programs and postgraduate coordinator forums without questioning similarity criteria adopted by journals. The concrete repercussions of this stance demand urgent reflection and positioning.

Repositories were created to make the intellectual output of a given institution available to the institution itself and to society as a whole. Their purpose is to record, preserve and promote the wider dissemination of this output through various types of open access documents (Freitas and Leite, 2019). Adding barriers to publishing the full content of theses and dissertations interferes in an incoherent and retrograde manner in

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¹ Trabalho, Educação e Saúde

² Saúde em Debate

³ Reciiis – Revista Eletrônica de Comunicação, Informação e Inovação em Saúde

⁴ Interface – Comunicação, Saúde, Educação

⁵ Cadernos de Saúde Pública

⁶ Cadernos Brasileiros de Saúde Mental. Cadernos de Saúde Pública. Cadernos ESP. Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário. Cadernos Saúde Coletiva. Ciência & Saúde Coletiva. Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde – RESS. Interface – Comunicação, Saúde, Educação. Physis – Revista de Saúde Coletiva. Reciiis – Revista Eletrônica de Comunicação, Informação e Inovação em Saúde. Revista Brasileira de Saúde Ocupacional. Revista Brasileira em Promoção da Saúde. Revista de APS. Revista de Saúde Coletiva da UEFS. Revista de Saúde Pública. Revista de Saúde Pública de Santa Catarina. Revista Pan-Amazônica de Saúde e Sociedade. Saúde em Debate. Trabalho, Educação e Saúde. Visa em Debate.



information and institutional memory policies designed to disseminate scientific knowledge and goes against the principles and concrete actions that defend knowledge as a public good that should be made available to society.

ABRASCO's (Brazilian Association of Collective Health) Collective Health Editors' Forum thus understands that rejecting articles on the basis of textual similarities between works and theses and dissertations made available in institutional repositories weakens open access policy and hampers the dissemination of research, which is largely publicly funded and can contribute to tackling social, economic and cultural problems – especially in periphery countries.

Given the social significance of the information and open access policies adopted by institutional repositories, we might ask: what do students, teachers, researchers, information professionals, managers and society in general gain from this practice?

The rejection of articles derived from theses and dissertations made available in repositories runs counter to the current dynamics of science communication, which encourages the publication of preprints (preliminary versions of articles that have not been peer-reviewed), and to structuring theses and dissertations in article format.

This restrictive stance drives the search for non-peer-reviewed accelerated publishing journals, many of which are predatory and come with high costs for both authors and institutions. Furthermore, the practice of embargoing a thesis or dissertation until an article is published disregards the differing nature and forms of circulation of these types of documents: the production of an article does not impede the circulation of a dissertation, nor does it diminish its relevance, or vice versa. It is possible for a diversity of documents and forms of descriptive and thematic representation of scientific knowledge to coexist (Costa and Leite, 2010).

As science publishers, our commitment to transparency and unrestricted public access to the knowledge contained in theses and dissertations deposited in institutional repositories should prompt us to adopt alternative measures. Journals can and should:

- encourage authors to declare the thesis or dissertation that gave rise to the article, ensuring transparency and facilitating access to the full context of the research.
- Adopt novelty criteria, recognizing that the fact that the full-text version of a thesis or dissertation is available in a repository does not nullify the academic value of a derivative article.
- Align with open science and open access practices, rejecting measures that weaken repositories or favor exclusionary publishing models, such as predatory journals.

In the light of these arguments, ABRASCO's Collective Health Editors' Forum opposes editorial practices that pose barriers to depositing academic output in institutional repositories, since they undermine the democratization of knowledge, favor predatory journals and contradict the principles of open science. We argue that – far from being an obstacle – free access to theses and dissertations is an essential element of best practices in research, teaching and for promoting the social impact of science, which are the foundations of science communication.

Finally, in line with these recommendations, the member journals of ABRASCO's Collective Health Editors' Forum undertake to incorporate the above measures into their editorial policies and practices.

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ABRASCO's Collective Health Editors' Forum

* Editors of ABRASCO's Collective Health Forum:

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⁷ Cadernos Brasileiros de Saúde Mental

⁸ Cadernos de Saúde Pública

⁹ Cadernos ESP

¹⁰ Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário

¹¹ Cadernos Saúde Coletiva

¹² Ciência & Saúde Coletiva

¹³ Epidemio – Revista Brasileira de Epidemiologia

¹⁴ Interface – Comunicação, Saúde, Educação

¹⁵ Physis – Revista de Saúde Coletiva

¹⁶ Reciis – Revista Eletrônica de Comunicação, Informação e Inovação em Saúde

¹⁷ Revista Brasileira de Saúde Ocupacional

¹⁸ Revista Brasileira em Promoção da Saúde

¹⁹ Revista de Atenção Primária à Saúde

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²¹ Revista de Saúde Pública

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²³ Revista Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde

²⁴ Revista Pan-Amazônica de Saúde

²⁵ Saúde e Sociedade

²⁶ Saúde em Debate

²⁷ Trabalho, Educação e Saúde

²⁸ Visa em Debate

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