



EDITORIAL

GE – Into the Future

GE – Rumo ao Futuro

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The GE-Portuguese Journal of Gastroenterology (formerly *Jornal Português de Gastrenterologia*) was created in 1994 with the main purpose of representing the Portuguese Gastroenterology. It officially represents the three main societies of Portuguese gastroenterology – The Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology, the Portuguese Society of Digestive Endoscopy and the Portuguese Association for the Study of the Liver.

In the beginning it was a small journal from a small publisher only publishing articles in Portuguese. With time and with an intensive work from all the previous editors and directors the GE grew and became an important journal in the Portuguese gastroenterology panorama. Some important changes were made in order to innovate and internationalize the journal, namely, starting to publish articles in English and being represented by the main publisher in the world, Elsevier. These aspects gave some extra strength to the journal, however, the non-indexation of GE in the main medical databases made the journal unappealing for all international authors and even for most Portuguese authors. In fact, Portugal has several important scientific researchers in the gastroenterology field, is one of the countries with more works submitted and presented

in the main Gastroenterology European congress and has several personalities with international reputation in the different areas of Gastroenterology. Nevertheless, even for Portuguese authors GE was traditionally the last line for publication and generally of less-quality papers.

In 2014 this editorial team assumed the guidance of the journal with the main objectives of improving the quality of the published papers and journal internationalization. These ambitious goals led to several changes in the journal, not all of them very popular. First of all, English became the articles obligatory language. For some this was a dramatic change disrupting with all the principles of the journal. However, the truth is GE is a scientific journal and English is, in fact, the language of science. We maintained the abstract also in Portuguese remembering that GE is a Portuguese Journal with pride. Secondly, we restructured all the editorial board. Even though this decision was probably the most unpopular one, the truth is it was absolutely necessary! The editorial board of GE was not a true editorial board but a list of all the reviewers. More than reviewing articles, a member of the editorial board should also advice on journal policy and scope, attract new authors and submissions and write editorials or invited papers when asked. By definition this should be a restrict group of motivated people that want to actively contribute to the journal. Now the editorial board of the GE is composed by only 41 people, 11 of them international non-Portuguese members, which can be changed depending on their contribution to the journal. Moreover, the entire reviewers list was updated and the reviewers of the year awards were created to reward the best reviewers.

Abbreviations: ISSN, International Standard Serial Number; COPE, Committee on Publication Ethics; DOAJ, Directory of Open Access Journals; WAME, World Association of Medical Editors; OASPA, Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association; EQUATOR, Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of health Research; ICMJE, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

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Table 1 Submitted articles to GE, period 2012/2015.

Submitted articles		Final disposition		Results (articles with peer-review)			
		Articles with peer-review	Articles without peer-review	Withdrawn	Accepted	Rejected	Rejection rate
2012	53	43	10	5	37	1	0.02
2013	64	54	10	1	46	7	0.13
2014	78	62	16	5	46	11	0.19
2015	102	87	15	1	76	10	0.12

Articles without peer-review are editorials or letters to the editor, rarely opinion articles. All the other type of articles were peer-reviewed.

To internationalize our journal a number of key steps were taken. We developed changes in accordance with the highest ethical and editorial standards required by PubMed for indexing, and a new era of our journal started with a new name and a new ISSN.

The instructions for authors were reformulated adapting the GE to the submission of PubMed. The English language was adopted for publication and other relevant changes were made:

- Last year GE adhered to the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (joint statement by COPE, DOAJ, WAME, and OASPA) with a registration in the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) as a journal subscribing to the principles and guidelines of the COPE;

- Started following the good practice guidelines of the biomedical edition of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and the EQUATOR Network Resource Centre Guidance on Good Research Report (study design);
- The peer review processes as well as fast track option were clearly described in the instructions for authors;
- The editorial freedom policy was defined and Corrections, Retractions and Copyright policy were implemented;
- Promotion of responsible authorship with compliance with the ICMJE authorship criteria;
- Integration with the Reference Manager Mendeley, indexation in SCOPUS, the largest abstract and citation *database* of peer-reviewed literature, and also indexation in the Web of Science were achieved;

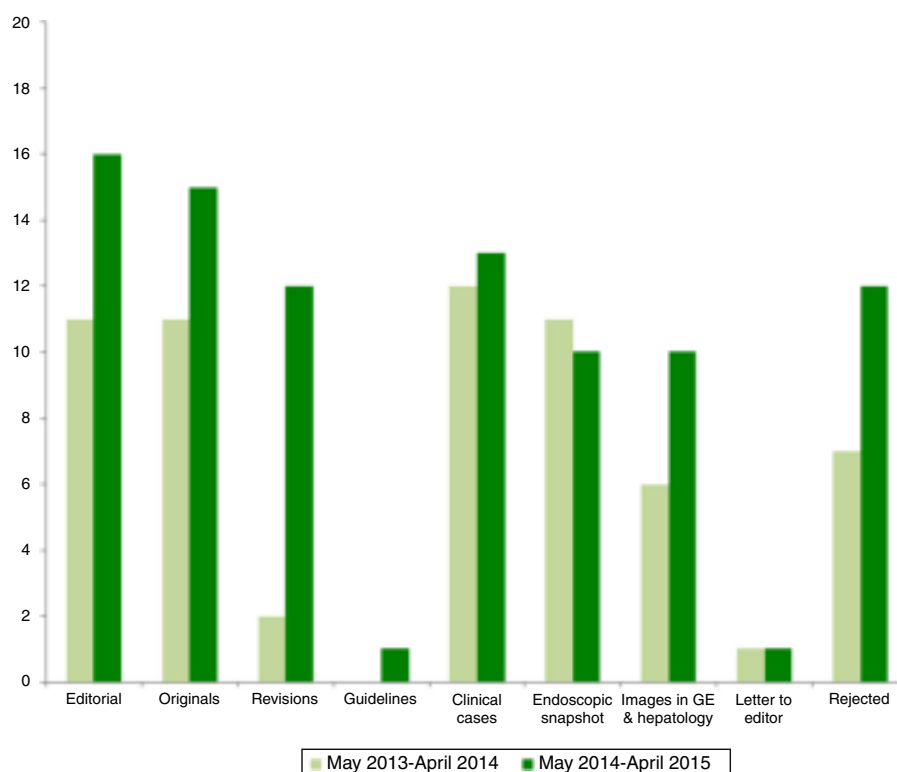


Figure 1 Submitted articles during the last year before this editorial team (May 2013–April 2014) and during the first year of this editorial team (May 2014–April 2015). With the exception of endoscopic snapshots all the other types of articles increased significantly. The greatest increase was in review articles (>500%), however, original articles submission also increased significantly (>36%).

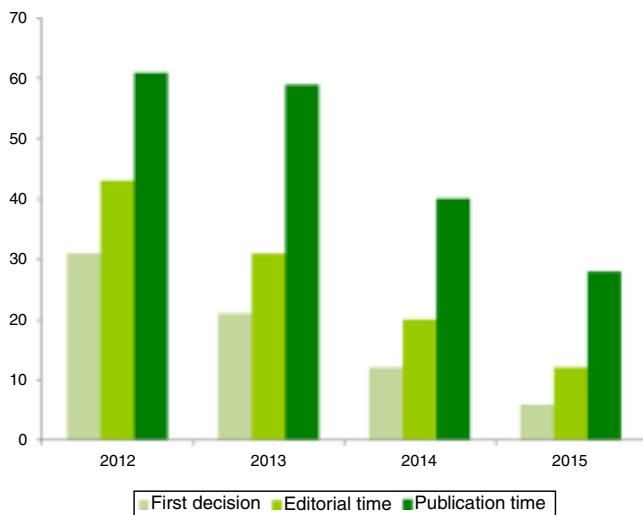


Figure 2 Times for reviewing and publication during the period 2012–2015 (in weeks). From 2012 to 2015 all the times significantly decreased (>70%).

- Advertising Policy was defined.

Lastly, but more importantly, all the editors committed themselves with an intensive work of paper chasing and also to improve times for reviewing and publishing the articles. Of course all the politics have to be evaluated and scrutinized, and the best way is by analyzing the obtained results. As we can see in [Table 1](#) the number of submitted articles has steadily increased since 2012. The greatest increase was in 2015, almost doubling the numbers of submitted articles

when comparing to previous years. Indeed, when comparing 2014/2015 (first year of this editorial team) with 2013/2014 (last year before this editorial team) all types of articles increased significantly, however, the greatest increase was in review articles ([Fig. 1](#)). In fact, one of the areas of intensive paper chasing was in review/opinion articles. For that it was essential the collaboration of some Portuguese Gastroenterologists that submitted high-quality review articles. All these articles were peer-reviewed contributing even more for increasing the quality of the papers. Moreover, original articles also increased 36%, reflecting greater confidence of the Portuguese Gastroenterologists in GE.

But why did confidence in the journal increase? We want to believe that our work to improve the reviewing and publishing times was an important part of the process. Indeed, as we can see in [Fig. 2](#) the entire editorial, reviewers and consequently publishing times significantly decreased. From 2012 to 2015 time to first decision (decision taken by the editor on the basis of a first peer review), editorial time (time it takes on average for an article to go through the process of peer review and revision by the author) and web publication time (time it takes on average for an article to go through the refereeing and production processes) all decreased more than 70% ([Fig. 2](#)). In 2015 these markers were in line with the most important and prominent journals in the area. Of course, this is also a result of an amazing and extensive work of our reviewers, most of them Portuguese Gastroenterologists that are in fact the cornerstone of the journal.

Taking all together we believe that we are on the right track. But, as always, we still need all of you if we want to place GE into the future!