

Scientific Information for Unqualified Readers

Informações científicas para leitores leigos

New scientific concepts of information has encouraged journals to offer information as open access articles by electronic means. This will be in the near future, the reality of most indexed journals, transferring the burden of publishing to authors or their entities, for the benefit of readers (and not more subscribers).

One of the positive points to consider is the expansion and facilitation of access to articles, greater agility in literature researches and increasing network information.

The spread of information will become faster. However, the largest intersection of search engines will provide the reader with a miscellany of information. If not well understood, it may cause serious problems to readers, researchers and eventually patients (in the case of medical articles). A random individual making a search through a regular search engine will have at hand a series of links, websites and articles not arranged in an organized scientific relevance.

Lay information without any scientific support will be highlighted and eventually more emphasized than scientific articles with conclusions based on clinical evidence. We must find some way to democratically categorize information by relevance, so that readers can understand the real value of the information obtained.

Frequently we see patients in medical care bringing a multitude of documents about their diagnoses, with inadequate, confusing or even deleterious information to their treatment. Now we have to add the free access to scientific articles, interpreted from the perspective of an individual who has no scientific understanding of the subject. Problems will arise and is our job to find the best way to resolve this side effect of indiscriminate science communication.

Dov Goldenberg
Coeditor