Periodical medical publications, colloquially known as medical journals, are published by health institutions (Revista Médica del Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social), educational institutions (Revista de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) or academies and medical-scientific civil associations (Gaceta Médica de México). Different groups of professionals participate in medical journals with specific activities and objectives, all of them with the purpose to publish a medical journal with scientific and editorial quality. This group of academic and scientific experts are the editorial and administrative boards, the editorial committees (national and international), peer reviewers, the editors and, finally, those who participate in the editing and printing process.

The role of editors and of those who take care of the edition process that culminates with the printed or electronic publication is well known within the medical-scientific community. The valuable activity of the group of peer reviewers is also known and acknowledged. In contrast, little is known about the participation of the editorial board members, how and by whom are they appointed, what is the professional and academic profile they must meet. The same goes for the editorial committee members, who frequently are mixed up with the reviewers. The reality is that board and committee members excel in scientific and academic aspects in the field of medicine.

The board of directors plays an important role, although in most Mexican medical journals it is not considered on the credits page in the legal page. Many consider its participation obvious and others regard it as a collaboration inherent to the work it performs in a public institution or civil association. In most cases, it participates owing to circumstances of temporality and location.

Our purpose is to share concepts and experiences that enable our readers to know the functions and the profile of an editorial board or committee and the mechanism to become part of it. About the editors and their functions, they are more widely known, and it has been the subject of another communication.

**The editorial board**

The editorial board is the authority in charge of defining the general academic and ethical editorial principles that seek to answer the following questions: What is the purpose of the publication? What type of reader is the journal aimed at? Which is the thematic field and extension it should have? What is its periodicity and extension in number of pages going to be? How to have a standardized evaluation procedure available? One of the activities it has to carry out is to propose guidelines for its integration, organization and functions.

At Gaceta Médica de México, the editorial board is currently comprised by the last former chairpersons of the National Academy of Medicine of Mexico. Given that the chair appointment term is two years, every two years, a new board member joins and the oldest one comes out. As for its organization, it functions as a collegiate body. The tasks it performs include the following:

**Correspondence:**
Francisco Espinosa-Larrañaga*  
E-mail: coeditor.gmm@anmm.org.mx

**Date of reception:** 27-02-2019  
**Date of acceptance:** 27-02-2019

DOI: 10.24875/GMM.M19000242

Gac Med Mex, 2019;155:109-111  
Contents available at PubMed  
www.gacetamedicademexico.com
1. Generating and periodically updating the guidelines that govern the board itself.
2. Holding meetings periodically.
3. Establishing a system for assessing compliance with the editorial and ethical principles established by the board itself and the performance of editors, as well as editorial production standards for the publisher-printing company it collaborates with.
4. Advising in the preparation of contracts with publisher-printing companies.
5. Proposing mechanisms for the selection, integration, functions and time of permanence of the editorial committee to the editors.
6. Convene and coordinate editorial committee and editors meetings aiming at decision making, establishing strategies and assessing the publication.

Editorial committee

There are local or regional, national and international medical journals. The former have a national editorial committee and the latter, an international one. The editorial committee is defined as an academic group that represents the publication within its field of influence whether institutionally, by specialty or by research area or geographical area. The proposal, selection and integration of its members, as well as their duration and functions, must come from the editorial board or the editors. The members of this committee may or may not be members of the Academy and will remain in office for four years and their appointment can be renewed. Although it is not their main activity, they can participate as peer reviewers in the scientific field of their domain. Their functions include:

1. Representing the publication with dignity and professionalism.
2. Participating in meetings convened by the editorial board or editors.
3. Publicizing and promoting the medical journals they represent within their area of influence.
4. Favoring the submission of papers to the journals they represent for publication.
5. Advising authors on submission procedures, instructions for authors and peer-review process.
6. Encouraging medical journals online consultation by offering electronic addresses or links to relevant sites.
7. Proposing actions to improve the quality of the publication to the editorial board and editors.

Administration board or group

It is defined as a group responsible for obtaining and providing the human resources, funding and materials required by medical journals to achieve their objectives. In public health or educational institutions, it depends on a publication department or office. For example, in the case of medical or scientific associations, including the National Academy of Medicine of Mexico, the board of directors is the guarantor of human resources hiring and obtaining the financial resources that will allow the processing and printing of the publication and the purchase of material resources for the publication daily operation. Its participation is highlighted, but masked, when mentioning the board of directors that runs the medical association in the legal page of the journal. Its functions are the following:

1. Asking the editors about the resources needed to comply with publications.
2. Making a plan or strategy to obtain the necessary resources for the medical journals.
3. Requesting cost estimates from providers of services or materials.
4. Analyzing and choosing the best option, if necessary, with the support of the editorial board and editors as technical advisors.
5. If required, as a consequence of the procurement of financial funds, making reports and adding physical and accounting evidence requested by the donor of resources.
6. Evaluating that the granted financial resources have met their purpose with efficiency and transparency, but, especially, with probity.

Many health, educational and civil institutions develop medical journals. The legal page allows us knowing their structure. We hope that this document has clarified and specified what the administration and editorial boards, the editorial committee and the peer reviewers are. One of the indicators committees assess in medical journals for incorporation into databases is the composition of their editorial boards and committees. In Mexico, the institution that best describes the composition, functions and permanence of editorial boards and committees is the National Autonomous University of Mexico, exemplified by the regulations of the Faculty of Medicine and the Institute of Esthetic Research editorial committees, where their organization, composition, functions and the time of permanence of their members can be observed.
We believe that editors and those responsible for medical journals should work on the subject, which would have the benefit of recognizing the participation of the different groups involved in the publishing process, as well as their functioning and integration with responsibility to generate resources, their transparency in the use of said resources and, especially, in turning journals into publications that are inclusive of all participants as boards and committees.

Recommended readings

3. Reglamento del comité editorial de la Facultad de Medicina, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Mecanograma. p. 4-14.