

MULTIDISCIPLINARITY

A multidisciplinary periodical in the area of biological and health sciences has its advantages – and also disadvantages.

The presentation of a variety of subjects in a same volume will cover a great deal of readers and, most important, allows a spontaneous interaction among related areas. Searching for an article of a specific issue allows readers to take a look at other issues that, sometime, has a keen relation to that selected specific issue. Therefore, these periodicals permit scientists to broaden their horizons and may induce the production of new and interesting hypothesis in their own area. On the other hand, one can see presently a tendency for concentration of a specific knowledge in a specialized journal. This is a natural outcome of the improvements in investigative technology and communication that has occurred in the last decades.

In this regard, the multidisciplinary periodical shows some problems facing their broad scope. However, there is enough room and reason for the existence and, more than that, the coexistence of both tendencies. The key factor to guarantee this interaction is an extensive indexation of these periodicals in database – a democratic instrument that exposes broadly the scientific production to the discerning sight of researchers. In this connection, it is important to remember that the most used access to scientific articles is by key words and not periodical titles.

However, the criteria for indexation have been confusing and hermetic. In this way, among the author, editor and readers – the key elements in the process of production, dissemination and appropriation of knowledge – emerges a fourth element that tends to destabilize this natural and necessary path – the periodical's indexing institutions or/and periodical's qualifying institutions. With no apparent reason they disturb the natural flow of scientific divulgation. Even though their purposes are praiseworthy, so far their interventions have been equivocal and deleterious. Seemingly, these institutions have not yet clearly defined their criteria, both qualitative and quantitative, to make up their list of selected periodicals. Mainly the multidisciplinary periodical have been

harmful on this regard since it is clear that the specialized periodicals seems to be the paradigm for quality and relevancy for scientific contribution. If they think carefully, they would arrive to the conclusion that readers, more than authors or editors, are the most adequate and trustful judges. In this way, it is highly inconvenient that a group, most of the time not representative, possess the power to make available or not this or that periodical in these data base. Remember that, if a periodical can not be included in a database, the scientific community will not have access to their contents to play their universal and expected role of true and judicious evaluators.

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