

The *Portuguese Journal of Public Health* – A New Direction

João Pereira^a Helena Canhão^b

^aNOVA National School of Public Health, NOVA University Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal; ^bNOVA Medical School, NOVA University Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal

Welcome to the first issue of the *Portuguese Journal of Public Health* (PJPH). The journal takes up the legacy of the *Revista Portuguesa de Saúde Pública* (RPSP), a Portuguese-language journal, published since 1983, in the area of public health.

As Editors-in-Chief we are honored by the opportunity to lead this important transformation. Our first aim is to build on the strengths of RPSP and take the journal to a new dimension. We will strive to publish outstanding research, appeal to an international audience, cover key innovations in public health, and assure a fair and constructive reviewing process with rapid turnaround of papers.

RPSP began publishing in 1983 under the auspices of the Portuguese National School of Public Health, with Coriolano Ferreira, the School's Dean, as its first Editor. From modest beginnings as the School's prime means of communicating research and ideas to a wider audience it grew to be the key journal of public health in Portugal. Key to this development was an emphasis on topical themes and quality peer review. In recent years, various management and editorial changes led to indexation in Scopus and the SciELO Citation Index in the Web of Science. The quality of the journal and editorial standards

noticeably improved. We pledge to continue the proud tradition of RPSP.

As from 2017, the journal assumes a new direction by publishing in the English language and taking on an international character. This choice was not easy to make. We recognize the allegiance of our readership both in Portugal and in Portuguese-speaking countries worldwide, but the time has come to accept that the English language is the undisputed vehicle for communicating the most important research results in public health and other health sciences.

The new journal will continue to publish research findings in the Portuguese context, and indeed of other Portuguese-speaking countries such as Brazil, Angola, or Mozambique. In all likelihood, these will continue to form the backbone of articles published. However, the PJPH will actively encourage submissions from other countries worldwide with the aim of establishing a truly international research dissemination medium in public health. During a transition period up to the end of 2018, the journal will publish in both Portuguese and English, but will only accept new submissions in English.

The change to English language publishing coincides with a change in publisher. For almost a decade RPSP

was published by Elsevier, a giant in the area of scientific publication. With the move to Karger Publishers we aspire to having more dedicated professional support in achieving our objectives. Karger Publishers is an international publishing house with long-standing tradition and experience in medical and scientific publishing. We hope that Karger will enable a smooth transition to a fully international journal and build on the quality attained by RPSP by providing active support for further indexations in important databases. We also aim to preserve the open access format. Ultimately, however, the quality of the Journal will depend on the quality of published articles.

At the editorial level we hope to maintain and improve on the highest standards reached by RPSP. All original research articles as well as review and perspective articles, submitted to PJPH, will be subject to rigorous double-blind peer review, with at least two independent evaluations per article. Over the coming year we will completely renew and broaden the editorial board, providing it with an increasingly international base. Referees, too, will be drawn progressively from international circles and cover a wider range of expertise and diversity in subject areas. Their work is fundamental to the success of the journal and we will naturally recognize them.

We will work with the PJPH editorial board to develop opportunities for commissioned review articles and methodological papers as well as thematic issues edited by experts in specific areas. We will work with authors, reviewers, and the editorial board to promote the journal in academic research communities and public health practitioner organizations worldwide. And we will assure a just reviewing process with rapid turnaround of submissions and improved production time. Our aim is that the quality, citation level, and social impact of the research published in the Journal reaches ever higher plateaus.

What can readers and authors expect in terms of thematic matter in the new journal? The field of public health is uniquely challenging with research needs ever growing. PJPH will publish scientific content – original articles, reviews, editorials, and opinion articles – in the field of public health as well as in related disciplines, with the aim of promoting the discussion and advancement of knowledge at a national and international level. Among key topics and subject areas covered will be public health practice, public health methods, epidemiology, environmental health, occupational health, health determinants, health promotion, health surveillance, public health hazards, information systems and technologies, health policy, health services management, health economics, health sociology and psychology, and health law and ethics.

The journal will cover a broad spectrum of medical disorders and major health problems, focusing also on population groups and questions of health equity and on the evaluation of programs and interventions.

We hope that readers find the content to be focused, topical and relevant, and readily accessible. The journal aims to reach out to a wide audience including public health practitioners, decision-makers, researchers, and a wide range of professionals in the healthcare community. Our goal is to provide a forum for public health research, focused on Portugal but with an increasingly international outlook, that fosters the development and discussion of innovations and evidence that serve the health of the population.

In closing, we would like to thank Luís Graça, former editor, for his dedication in making RPSP one of the most reputable health journals in Portugal. The former associate editors will accompany us in the new journal as will the excellent Managing Editor, Isabel Andrade. This in itself is assurance of an efficient transition. We hope that our readers and authors find the journey we are embarking on now both stimulating and worthwhile.