EDITORIAL - SPECIAL 40 YEARS

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Four Decades Built by Many Hands: the 40th Anniversary of the Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery. A Tribute to Innovation

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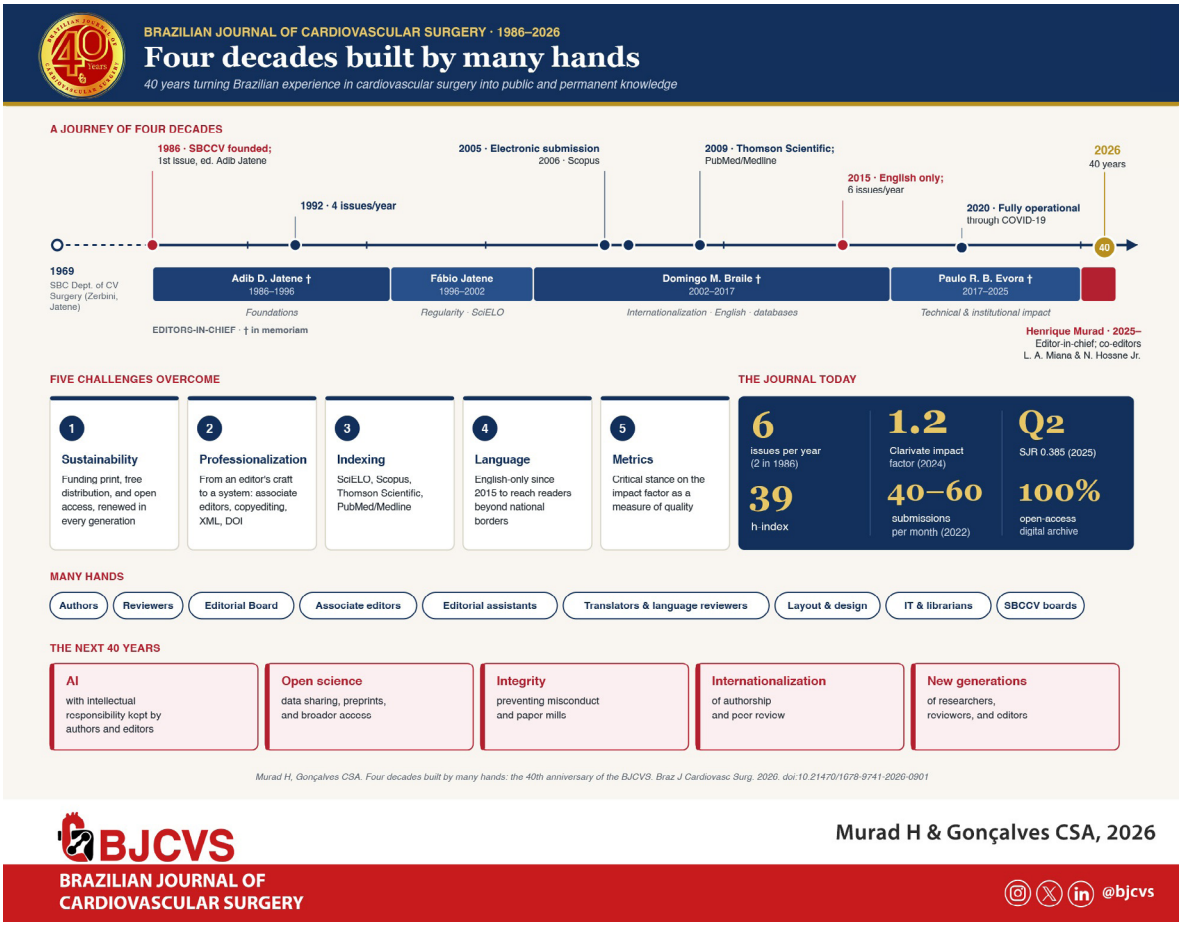

There are institutions measured by what they publish and others by what they preserve. A journal that survives 40 years is measured by both, and above all by the community that is part of it, by those who wrote it, those who reviewed it, those who checked every reference, those who translated it, those who laid out every page, and those who entrusted to the journal the result of their work. To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery (BJCVS) is to acknowledge a heritage built collectively.

When the Revista Brasileira de Cirurgia Cardiovascular, today the BJCVS, published its first two issues, in 1986, Brazilian cardiovascular surgery had already reached technical maturity,

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but it had no regular journal of its own. The journal was created to turn experience into record: so that the knowledge accumulated in Brazilian centres would no longer circulate only in the oral memory of services or in foreign journals[1,2].

The story begins before 1986. In 1969, the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery of the Sociedade Brasileira de Cardiologia was created, under the presidency of Euryclides de Jesus Zerbini and the general secretariat of Adib Domingos Jatene, two names that defined the standard of the specialty in the country. In April 1986, at a general assembly, the department became the Sociedade Brasileira de Cirurgia Cardiovascular (SBCCV), and the approved bylaws provided, among the attributions of the new society, for an official publication. Four months later, the first issue appeared, under the editorship of Adib Jatene[1].

The editor opened the journal with a portrait of the country it intended to represent: "There are 325 of us surgeons today, working in 19 states and the Federal District, using 119 hospitals and performing, in 1986, close to 20,000 operations. The great majority were trained in Brazil, using equipment developed and manufactured here"[2]. We were a community with proper identity and no journal of its own, and a conviction that Brazilian production was not the mere application of foreign knowledge, but original knowledge that deserved to be read and cited[3].

The early years were ones of patient construction: two issues in 1986, three volumes a year from 1987 to 1991, four from 1992 onwards, with supplements carrying the proceedings of the Annual Congress[1,2]. Sustaining periodicity means honouring a compromise, assuring the authors that their work will be published, and to the Brazilian cardiovascular community that the BJCVS is a stable place where the science of the specialty could be stored.

None of the four decades was linear, and sustainability was the first challenge to be conquered. Producing a printed journal, distributing it free of charge to members, and at the same time keeping every issue openly accessible online requires a permanent cost that no small scientific community can bear alone. The continuity of the BJCVS depended, in every generation, on the institutional decision to fund it, a decision that is never automatic and had to be renewed in different economic contexts[1].

The second challenge was professionalization, a journal begins as a craft, the task of an editor and a few collaborators, and to survive decades it must become a system. The BJCVS incorporated an executive editor, co-editors, associate editors with autonomy by area, editorial assistants, language reviewers, copyediting, XML tagging, DOI assignment, and deposit in international repositories, a structure the journal described publicly in 2015[4]. The review flow, once concentrated in the editor-in-chief, was distributed among associate editors, which shortened decision times and trained new generations of editors[4].

The third challenge was indexing because no international database accepts a journal that has no standards and transparency. Entry into SciELO, achieved during Fábio Jatene's editorship, gave the journal visibility and credibility[2]. Acceptance by Scopus followed in 2006, and entry into the Thomson Scientific database in 2009[2], together with indexing in PubMed/Medline, achieved in the same period after direct negotiations with the National Library of Medicine[2].

The fourth challenge was language. In 2015, the BJCVS became published exclusively in English and began to appear six times a year instead of four[4]. The decision had its costs: it required systematic language editing, placed a burden on authors and, for a time, had an ambivalent effect on citation counts[5]. It was maintained because the alternative, remaining legible only within national borders, meant accepting a ceiling on circulation incompatible with the quality of what was being published.

The fifth challenge, metrics, is the one the journal shares with scientific communication as a whole. Pressure for impact factors and the hierarchy of evaluation strata weigh on editors, authors, and reviewers, and the BJCVS devoted successive editorials on the subject, sustaining a critical position on the use of the impact factor as a measure of scientific quality[5-7]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the journal remained fully operational, securing regularity in one of the most difficult periods in recent Brazilian science[8].

The balance can be read in a few indicators. From two issues a year in 1986, the journal moved to six issues a year from 2015[1,4]; from publication in Portuguese with an English version, it became entirely in English[4]. It accumulated indexing in SciELO, Scopus, PubMed/Medline, and the Thomson Scientific database[1,2]; and it preserved open access to the complete archive, made completely digital early in the past decade[2].

Bibliometric indicators accompanied this trajectory, with the oscillations proper to a specialty journal. The first impact factor, covering 2009 and 2010, was announced as a milestone of international consolidation[2]; in 2015, the recorded index was 0.526[5]; in 2021 and 2022, the Journal Citation Reports registered 1.312 and 1.283, placing the BJCVS eighth among the journals of the Cardiothoracic Surgery Network[9]. In the most recent assessment released by the journal itself, the Clarivate impact factor is 1.2 for 2024, with an SCImago Journal Rank of 0.385 in 2025, best quartile Q2, and an h-index of 39[10]. The editorial flow indicates maturity: in 2022, it held more than 80 articles ahead of print and received 40 to 60 new submissions a month[9].

No single achievement of the BJCVS can be attributed to one person. Adib Jatene laid the foundations, from 1986 to 1996; Fábio Jatene consolidated regularity and obtained indexing in SciELO, from 1996 to 2002; Domingo Marcolino Braile led internationalisation, the change of language, and entry into international databases, from 2002 onwards; and Paulo Roberto Barbosa Evora broadened the technical and institutional impact of the publication, from 2017 to 2025. Today, the journal is directed by Henrique Murad, with Leonardo Augusto Miana and Nelson Hossne Jr. as co-editors[8]. Each editorship inherited what the previous one had built and handed on a journal larger than the one it received.

But a journal is not made in the editorial office alone. It is made on the Editorial Board, which guides without appearing; by the reviewers, who voluntarily give their time and knowledge; by the authors, who entrust years of research to the journal; and by the professionals who ensure that each issue exists, namely editorial assistants, translators and language reviewers, layout artists and designers, information technology staff, librarians, and communication teams.

Institutional gratitude must also include the boards and presidents of the SBCCV, who understood, each in their time, that sustaining a journal is sustaining the specialty[8]; the partner institutions and supporters who contributed to the continuity of the publication; and the members of the Editorial Board and of the successive bodies of associate editors. The excellence of a journal does not depend on its editors or its authors alone: it depends on a network

of professionals whose quiet work sustains the credibility of everything published.

This celebration should include an explicit tribute to those no longer among us: Adib Domingos Jatene, founder of the journal and the foremost reference of Brazilian cardiovascular; to Domingo Marcolino Braile and to Paulo Roberto Barbosa Evora, editors who gave the journal national and international standing and whose memory was honoured at the commemorative ceremony[8]. To them, and to all who contributed to the journal and have passed away, the recognition of a community that continues to benefit from their work.

The journal read today is not the one of 1986, and the difference is not only technological. Readers in the first decade received a printed volume, in Portuguese with English abstracts; today the reader can access, on the day of acceptance, an article with a DOI, tagged in XML, and deposited in international repositories[4]. Submission, once dependent on postal correspondence, became electronic in 2005[1]; review, once concentrated in the editor, is distributed among associate editors[4]; the graphic presentation has been redesigned several times; and the complete archive has been digitised and made freely available[2].

There is, however, a continuity that these transformations did not dissolve: editorial identity. The BJCVS kept its commitment to Brazilian cardiovascular surgery as its central subject, to the training of specialists as its purpose, and to the memory of the specialty as its responsibility. The medium, the language, the design, and the reach have changed; the function has remained, to be a place where Brazilian experience in cardiovascular surgery becomes a public and permanent knowledge.

What comes next is not only a question of technology but of judgement. Artificial intelligence (AI) already takes part in scientific writing, in reference curation, and in the interpretation of literature, and the BJCVS has taken an explicit position in this debate, including the requirement to declare the use of AI tools and the publication of editorials on digital transformation. The challenge will be to use these tools without transferring to them the intellectual responsibility that belongs to the author and the editor.

Open science raises analogous questions of sharing data, adopting preprints and broadening access are goals that may reinforce or contradict one another, depending on how they are implemented. Scientific integrity, from the prevention of misconduct to confronting paper mills, has ceased to be a peripheral theme and became a condition of editorial survival. And internationalization, achieved through language and indexing, must now reach authorship and review, without relinquishing the representation of Brazilian cardiovascular surgery in the forums that set the specialty's agenda.

There remains, finally, a task that no technology resolves: the formation of new generations of researchers, reviewers, and editors. A journal ages when its editorial office ages; it stays alive when it transmits method, rigour, and memory. The BJCVS that reaches 80 will probably be the one that today teaches young surgeons to write, to review, and to disagree on evidence.

At the end of these four decades, the greatest heritage of the BJCVS is not in the indices it accumulated, nor in the databases that welcomed it, nor in the number of pages it published. It is in the people who learned to think better because they read what was published there; in the surgeons who operated more safely because a colleague had described, in its pages, what had worked; in the researchers who found in the journal the first place where their voice was taken seriously. It is also in every reviewer who read an anonymous manuscript with utmost attention and thereby sustained the credibility of an entire system.

As a tribute to Brazilian cardiovascular surgeons, the BJCVS will publish an issue devoted to innovative surgical procedures that some of them have developed, focused on state of art or tips and tricks. We have chosen surgical procedures that have passed the time span barrier: arterial switch for transposition of the great arteries, left ventricular aneurysm repair, cone operation for Ebstein's anomaly, aortic valve reimplantation for aortic root aneurysm, homografts, transcatheter aortic valve replacement, aortic endografts, off-pump coronary artery bypass grafting, and blood cardioplegia.

Forty years are not celebrated as a point of arrival, but just a crossing, with gratitude to those who rowed before, with attention to what is being done now, and with the responsibility of those who know that the next generation will judge what we do with what we received. The BJCVS reaches 40 years not by having avoided difficulties, but by having faced them together, issue after issue. May the next 40 years find the same community, with utmost attention broader, more diverse, more demanding, and willing to continue this work.

Artificial Intelligence Usage

The authors declare use of Genspark for grammar corrections and illustrator. The content produced by the artificial intelligence tool was revised and edited by the authors as necessary, and they take full responsibility for the content to be published.

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