

Acta Reumatológica Portuguesa 2014-2020: 6 years at a glance

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Acta Reumatológica Portuguesa (ARP) is the official scientific organ of Sociedade Portuguesa de Reumatologia (SPR). Its publications substantially reflect the quality of the scientific work generated by Portuguese Rheumatologists and therefore ARP is of prime importance to our scientific community.

This editorial describes, at a glance, my almost 6 years of editorial management as Chief-Editor of ARP in an enthusiastic and entrepreneur journey.

Between 2012 and 2014, ARP had experienced a particularly difficult period due to the instability in the process caused by the replacement of the ARP journal website, that created several hurdles in the submission, peer-review and online articles availability. Therefore, the first action as Chief-Editor was to promote the development, and to ensure the stability, of the new ARP website, already in progress, to allow for a smooth article flow and peer-review process. Of interest, this was an ARP dedicated website, developed from scratch with the support from a web design company, based on the feedback given by the ARP editorial team. Several tools were created including a statistics module to inform on the number and typology of articles at each step of the review process, timings for different actions and global rejection rates, among others. To facilitate the use of this new ARP website we created tutorials for both Associate Editors and Reviewers.

New Associate Editors were invited timely in the course of this activity to reinforce the Editorial Board. Selecting Editors with recognized experience in clinical and/or basic research, namely methodology, medical writing and peer-review is key to improve a journal's performance. Additionally, young rheumatologists' collaboration is critical as they are often first authors of submitted articles but also careful Reviewers. Recognizing this, we created a Reviewer's manual entitled

"How to review a manuscript to ARP" that became available at the ARP website but also as a link in every invitation, as a pedagogical tool to define standards and uniformization of reviews.

The editorial line of action for these 6 years was based on a rigorous selection of articles, implementing high rejections rates early in the peer-review process ($\approx 60\%$ by the Chief-Editor and $\approx 20-30\%$ after peer-review), leading to a total rejection rate that ranged from 75% to 90% during this period. In parallel, we progressively modified the ARP editions' structure by increasing the number of review articles and original articles and by reducing those of clinical cases, later replaced by review based clinical cases. We established as fundamental the discussion of the editorial strategy with the Editorial Board, and annual meetings took place at the Rheumatology National Congress, with this objective.

Since 2018, all submitted articles were in English language to improve international visibility and the potential for citations. Also, in 2018, we moved to full digital editions that were sent to all SPR associates through a newsletter and made available at the ARP website. Digital advertisement was promoted according to legal assumptions. An online questionnaire was elaborated to take in consideration the opinion of rheumatologists on the editorial views and decisions that preceded some of these modifications.

Frequent updates of authors guidelines were applied to align the submissions with the editorial strategy, which included restriction to exclusively English written manuscripts (2014), updates on articles submission and review timings criteria (2015), manuscript typology (2017 and 2019), authorship criteria (2019) and methodological requirements-PRISMA, STROBE, and CONSORT (2019). Furthermore, a careful review of all accepted manuscripts was carried out before publication.

To promote the visibility of accepted articles, ARP joined several open access publications platforms.

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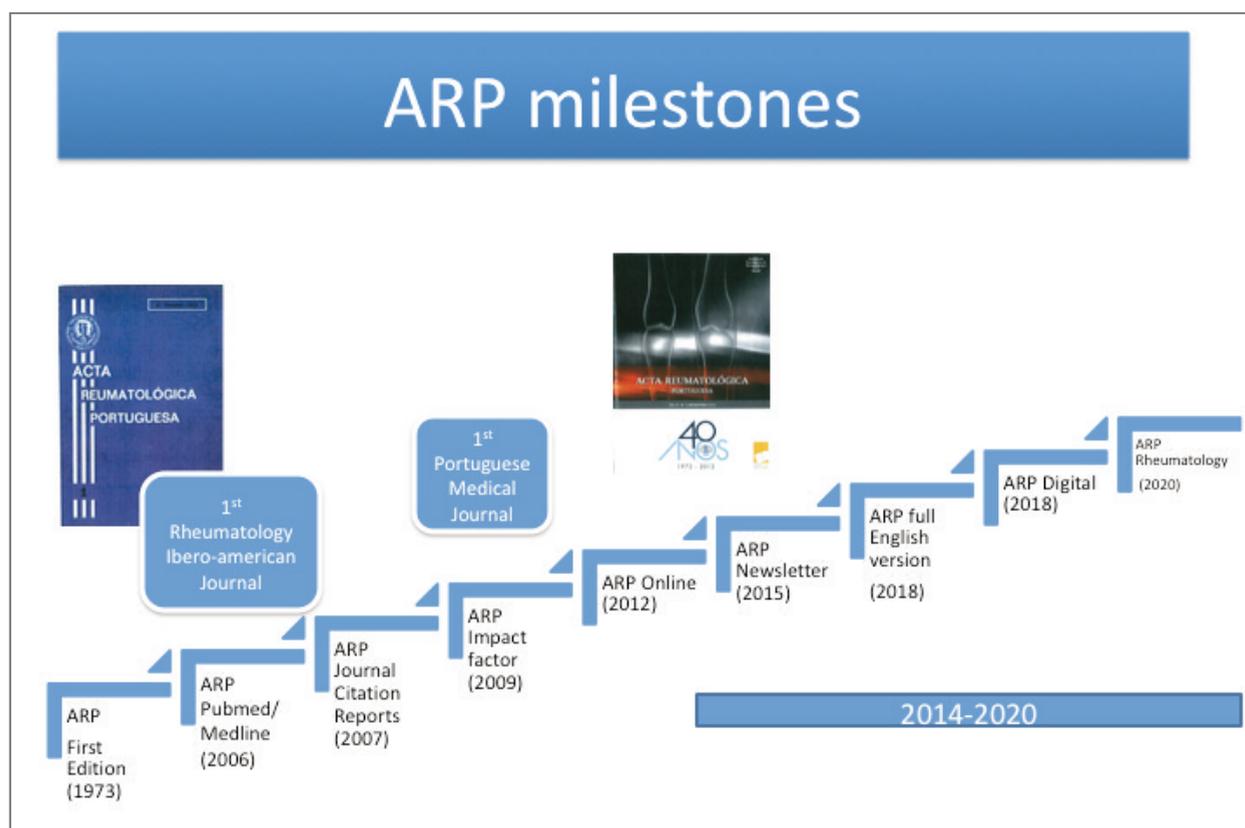


FIGURE 1. Acta Reumatológica Portuguesa historical milestones, from its first Edition in 1973, including those between 2014-2020 corresponding to this Editorial period.

There were also small publications in the “Manual do Interno” (2015) of “Journal Médico” (2017) and representations at meetings such as those promoted by Ordem dos Médicos namely the “IV and V Simposium da Acta Médica Portuguesa” (2015 and 2016) and the “Clinical Research Bootcamp”(2016), or at the first meeting of Federação Portuguesa de Sociedades Científicas Médicas (2019). More recently, we have embraced the procedures for the change of ARP name to “ARP Rheumatology” that now need to be put through.

Throughout the years, working in close collaboration with our Technical Editor and Associated Editors, with the contribution from all Reviewers and Authors, to all whom we acknowledge, this concerted effort led to a progressive and overall sustained increase in ARP

impact factor from 0.286 in 2014 to 1.185 in 2019, the highest achieved for ARP.

The support from the three SPR Direction Boards across this period of activity was undoubtedly determinant for the achievements of ARP and for the recognition of its relevance for our medical society.

The continuity of this work will now be ensured by a new team to whom we wish the best of luck and success.

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