

Editorial

Open Access and the Democratization of Knowledge: Guaranteeing the Human Right to Benefit from Scientific Progress

Acesso Aberto e Democratização do Saber: garantia do direito humano de beneficiar-se do progresso científico

Acceso Abierto y Democratización del Saber: Garantía del Derecho Humano de Beneficiarse del Progreso Científico

Sandra Mara Campos Alves¹

Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Brasília, DF.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6171-4558>

✉ smcalves@gmail.com

Jarbas Ricardo Almeida Cunha²

Defensoria Pública da União, Porto Alegre, RS.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5332-2642>

✉ jarbas.ricardo@yahoo.com.br

Marcelo Lamy³

Universidade Santa Cecília, Santos, SP.

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8519-2280>

✉ marcelolamy@unisanta.br

Edith Maria Barbosa Ramos⁴

Universidade Federal do Maranhão, São Luís, MA.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6064-1879>

✉ edith.ramos@ufma.br

Submitted on: 03/19/25

Approved on: 03/20/25

Abstract

The human right to participate in and enjoy scientific progress, its applications, and benefits has been recognized by the international community since 1948. Scientific journals play a crucial role in the dissemination and democratization of knowledge, directly contributing to the advancement of science and the realization of the human right to benefit from scientific progress. Regarding the Right to Health, knowledge sharing is particularly significant, as addressing health challenges requires collective actions and global cooperation due to the interconnected nature of health, social conditions, the environment, and globalization-related issues. Funding science that supports responsible editorial practices and follows the principles of Open Science is essential for the development of studies and research, ensuring the human right to benefit from scientific progress.

Keywords: Open Access Publishing; Health Law; Global Health.

¹ Ph.D in Public Health, Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brazil. Public Health Researcher. Coordinator of the Health Law Program, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Brasília, DF, Brazil.

² Ph.D in Law, Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brazil. Technical Analyst of Social Policies, Defensoria Pública da União, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil.

³ Ph.D in Constitutional Law, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil. Professor, Universidade Santa Cecília, Santos, SP, Brazil.

⁴ Ph.D in Public Policy, Universidade Federal do Maranhão, São Luís, MA, Brazil. Professor, Universidade Federal do Maranhão, São Luís, MA, Brazil.

Resumo

O direito humano de participar e desfrutar do progresso científico, suas aplicações e benefícios, é reconhecido pela comunidade internacional desde 1948. Os periódicos científicos desempenham papel relevante na difusão e democratização do conhecimento produzido, contribuindo diretamente com o avanço da ciência e com a efetivação do direito humano de beneficiar-se do progresso científico. No aspecto do Direito à Saúde o compartilhamento do conhecimento tem um papel de relevo, vez que os enfrentamentos de demandas de saúde reivindicam ações coletivas e cooperação global pela própria natureza da saúde, interconectada às pessoas, condições sociais, meio-ambiente e que muitos desses desafios estão diretamente relacionados ao processo de globalização. O financiamento da Ciência voltada à prática editorial responsável e que siga os preceitos da Ciência Aberta é primordial para o desenvolvimento de estudos e pesquisas e para o direito humano de beneficiar-se desse progresso científico.

Palavras-chave: Publicação de Acesso Aberto; Direito Sanitário; Saúde Global.

Resumen

El derecho humano a participar y disfrutar del progreso científico, sus aplicaciones y beneficios ha sido reconocido por la comunidad internacional desde 1948. Las revistas científicas desempeñan un papel crucial en la difusión y democratización del conocimiento, contribuyendo directamente al avance de la ciencia y a la materialización del derecho humano a beneficiarse del progreso científico. En lo que respecta al Derecho a la Salud, el intercambio de conocimientos es especialmente relevante, ya que el abordaje de los desafíos sanitarios exige acciones colectivas y cooperación global debido a la naturaleza interconectada de la salud, las condiciones sociales, el medio ambiente y los problemas derivados de la globalización. La financiación de la ciencia orientada a prácticas editoriales responsables y alineadas con los principios de la Ciencia Abierta es fundamental para el desarrollo de estudios e investigaciones, garantizando el derecho humano a beneficiarse de este progreso científico.

Palabras clave: Política de Salud; Evaluación en Salud; Derecho Sanitario; Proceso Legal.

The human right to participate in and benefit from scientific progress, its applications, and benefits has been acknowledged in international documents since 1948, with the publication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights(1), and reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights(2) – ICESCR, of 1966.

Scientific journals play a significant role in disseminating and democratizing produced knowledge, directly contributing to scientific advancement and the realization of the human right to benefit from scientific progress. This virtuous cycle is recognized by Meadows(3), who argues that communicating research findings is as relevant as the research itself, as it amplifies the reach of scientific activity.

Concerning the right to health, knowledge-sharing assumes a prominent role, as achieving the expanded concept of health established in the Constitution(4) of the World Health Organization (WHO) of 1946 is a Herculean task requiring not only State intervention but also international cooperation. Henk ten Have, in an article published in *Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário – CIADS*, titled *Global Health and Global Bioethics*(5), highlights that addressing health demands calls for collective action and global cooperation due to the interconnected nature of health with individuals, social conditions, and the environment, and emphasizes that many of these challenges are directly related to globalization processes.

In 2021, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization – UNESCO published the Recommendation on Open Science(6), defining it as follows:

[...] an inclusive construct combining various movements and practices aimed at openly providing multilingual scientific knowledge, making it accessible and reusable by all, fostering scientific collaboration and information sharing to benefit science and society, and opening the processes of creation, evaluation, and communication of scientific knowledge to societal actors beyond the traditional scientific community.

According to UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Science(6), scientific knowledge refers, among other things, to free access to scientific publications disseminated on open-access online platforms, which are "supported and maintained by an academic institution, [...] government body [...] well-established and dedicated to the common good, allowing open access, unrestricted distribution, interoperability, and long-term digital preservation."

Since 2012, CIADS has been working tirelessly as a platform for democratization and access to knowledge and research produced in the field of Health Law, being indexed by 16 national and international databases. A significant recognition of this work was receiving the "Diamond Seal" in 2024, awarded by the Instituto Brasileiro de Informação em Ciência e Tecnologia – Ibict/Miguilim, to journals meeting rigorous international standards of open science and free access to scientific information, provided that all content is freely available to researchers, societies, communities, and society in general.

Further demonstrating its ongoing commitment to expanding access to research and studies, CIADS, also in 2024, innovated by adopting English translations of all articles approved for publication, free of charge to authors, and by incorporating XML indexing into its articles.

The daily routine of this editorial activity involves complex stages, from manuscript submission, peer review, revision, editing, translation, through to its publication and dissemination. Moreover, continuous specific actions required by indexing databases, metrics monitoring, communication with authors/users, scientific outreach, and indispensable promotion demand the presence and dedication of a team with consolidated expertise and thorough knowledge of editorial processes and workflows. In the case of CIADS, all these actions occur without any charge—submission, publication, and translation fees—for authors. This practice aligns with the Open Access Policy of the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz(7), recently updated, whose guideline number 3 includes budgetary allocation provisions "aimed at promoting and sustaining Open Science initiatives within the institution."

The financing of science for the development of humanity(7), a topic covered in CIADS' editorial published in 2021, already addressed the crucial role of investment in science, technology, and innovation, emphasizing its impact not only on economic growth but also on social equality, reduction of inequalities, and improvement of quality of life.

Despite reports by certain science communication channels and regrettable statements in some unethical articles, CIADS starts the year 2025 firmly established in its commitment to Open Science, ensuring, through its actions, free access to qualified and high-quality scientific information, thereby contributing to societal development and safeguarding the human right to benefit from such scientific progress.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contributions

Alves SMC contributed to the critical revision of the content and approved the final version. Cunha JRA contributed to the conception/design of the manuscript, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting of the manuscript, critical revision of its content, and approved the final version. Lamy M contributed to the analysis and interpretation of data, drafting of the manuscript, critical revision of its content, and approved the final version. Ramos EMB contributed to the analysis and interpretation of data, drafting of the manuscript, critical revision of its content, and approved the final version.

Editorial team

Scientific publisher: Alves SMC
Assistant editor: Cunha JRA
Associate editors: Lamy M, Ramos E
Executive editor: Teles G
Editorial assistant: Rocha DSS
Proofreader: Barcelos M
Translator: Câmara DEC

References

1. Organização das Nações Unidas. Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos 1948. ONU [Internet]; [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]. Available from: <https://nacoesunidas.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/DUDH.pdf>
2. Organização das Nações Unidas. Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales 1966. Naciones Unidas [Internet]; [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>
3. Meadows AJ. A comunicação científica. Brasília: Briquet de Lemos, 1999. 268 p.
4. Organização Mundial da Saúde. Constitution of The World Health Organization. [Internet]; [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]. Available from: <https://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/bd47/EN/constitution-en.pdf?ua=1>
5. ten Have H. Global health and global bioethics. Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário [Internet]. Jul./set. 2021 [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]; 10(3):50-65. Available from: <https://www.cadernos.prodisa.fiocruz.br/index.php/cadernos/article/view/777>
6. Unesco. Recomendação da UNESCO sobre Ciência Aberta. UNESCO Digital Library [Internet]. 2022 [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]. Available from: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949_p_or
7. Fundação Oswaldo Cruz. Política de Acesso Aberto da Fiocruz: versão atualizada em 2024 [Online]. RJ: Fiocruz, 2025 [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]. Available from: <https://campusvirtual.fiocruz.br/portal/sites/default/files/Pol%C3%ADtica%20de%20Acesso%20Aberto%20Fiocruz%20-%20vers%C3%A3o%20atualizada%202024.pdf>
8. Alves SMC. O financiamento da Ciência para o desenvolvimento da humanidade. Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário [Internet]. Out./dez. 2021 [Cited Mar. 2, 2025]; 10(4):08-10. Available from: <https://www.cadernos.prodisa.fiocruz.br/index.php/cadernos/article/view/858>

How to cite

Alves SMC, Cunha JRA, Lamy M, Ramos EMB. Open Access and the Democratization of Knowledge: Guaranteeing the Human Right to Benefit from Scientific Progress. Cadernos Ibero-Americanos de Direito Sanitário. 2025 jan./mar.;14(1):8-11
<https://doi.org/10.17566/ciads.v14i1.1361>

Copyright

(c) 2025 Sandra Mara Campos Alves, Jarbas Ricardo Almeida Cunha, Marcelo Lamy, Edith Maria Barbosa Ramos.

