

EDITORIAL



**Susana Oliveira
Henriques** ¹
Head of the Library and
Information Division,
Faculty of Medicine,
University of Lisbon

¹ Lisbon School of Medicine, University of Lisbon; Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS), Leiden University; School of Arts and Humanities, Centre for Classical Studies, University of Lisbon; Member of the Editorial Board, JSCMed.

“

Society journals are uniquely positioned to advance publishing models grounded in academic responsibility rather than commercial interests.

The Journal of the Society of Medical Sciences of Lisbon

From Historical Legacy to Renewed Responsibility

First published in 1835, the Journal of the Society of Medical Sciences of Lisbon (JSCML) is inextricably linked to the evolution of biomedical science in Portugal and its growth within the international scientific community. As the official journal of one of the oldest medical-scientific societies in the world, it has long served as a qualified platform for the dissemination of knowledge, critical discussion, and scientific exchange. Its continuity over nearly two centuries stands as a testament to a sustained commitment to science as a collective and public endeavour.

From its earliest decades, JSCML demonstrated a relevance that extended well beyond national boundaries. The contributions of international authors, along with its inclusion in the catalogues of institutions such as the Wellcome Collection Library, the British Library, and the National Library of Medicine, reflect the embedding of the journal in a broad international network. This is also evident in historical collections held by more than thirty libraries across Europe, the Americas, and other regions around the globe, including Macau. Thus, international collaboration and visibility are foundational elements of the journal's identity.

The current scholarly landscape poses significant challenges that threaten the sustainability of this legacy. Research assessment practices are predominantly guided by quantitative indicators, particularly those at the journal level, such as the impact factor and the *h*-index. While these metrics may provide relevant insights in certain contexts, they have increasingly been regarded as proxies

for scientific quality. This reliance on metrics shapes publication strategies, academic careers, and institutional evaluations. Consequently, these practices tend to privilege a narrow segment of commercial and for-profit journals while marginalizing the contributions of well-established scientific society journals, whose value is not properly captured by these metrics.

This reality directly affects JSCML. Once a pivotal entity in sharing biomedical knowledge, the journal now operates in an environment where relevance frequently hinges on quantitative metrics rather than on the principles of editorial rigour, community engagement, or societal value. The consequence is not only a reduction in diversity within scholarly communication, but also the gradual erosion of trusted spaces for reflective, context-aware scientific discourse.

At the same time, this moment presents an opportunity for society journals to demonstrate their genuine commitment to serving the academic community. Society journals are uniquely positioned to tackle the limitations of metric-driven evaluation by advancing publishing models grounded in academic responsibility rather than commercial interests. The JSCML exemplifies this approach through its firm commitment to so-called Diamond Open Access, operating without publication fees (Article Processing Charges) for authors and without subscription costs for readers.

By eliminating financial barriers on both sides of the publication process, the journal actively fosters equitable access to knowledge sharing and consumption, thereby reinforcing the purpose of science as a public good. This aligns closely with the ongoing Open Science transition and embodies the principles articulated in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, particularly its core values of quality and integrity, collective benefit, equity and fairness, and diversity and inclusiveness. It also demonstrates that quality, transparency, and sustainability do not need to be competing objectives; they complement each other when scholarly publishing is guided by academic values.

By prioritising rigorous peer review, editorial independence, and the contextual evaluation of research outputs, society journals contribute to a more equitable and responsible culture of research assessment, fully in line with influential international initiatives such as the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), which seeks to move away from simplistic metrics towards evaluation frameworks that are more just and meaningful. In this context, JSCML has the opportunity to play an important role in supporting the goals and commitments of the Portuguese CoARA National Chapter, thereby contributing to advancing a modern future-oriented research system in Portugal.

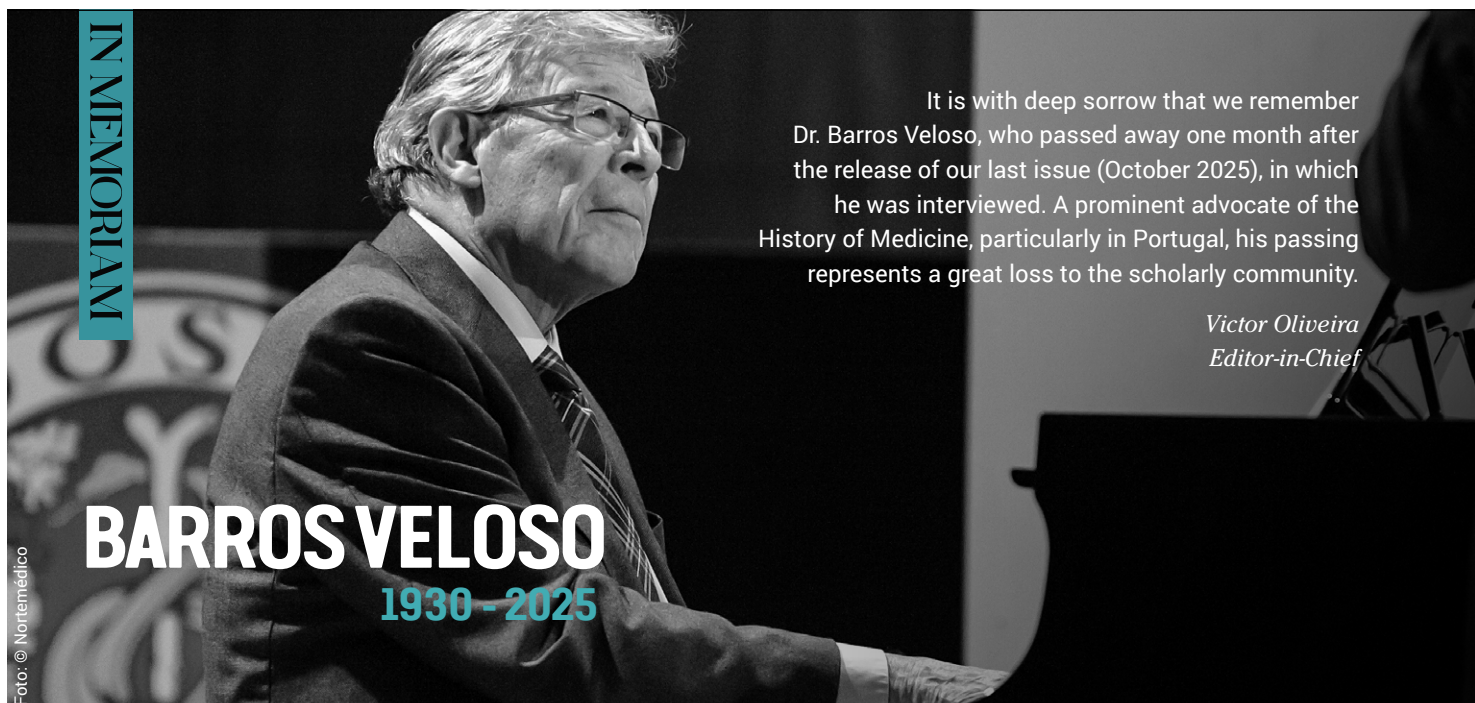
“

For JSCML, enhancing its relevance does not mean replicating commercial publishing strategies or competing on the basis of impact metrics.

Through its editorial practices and publishing model, JSCML prioritises scholarly quality, integrity, and societal value in assessing research. For JSCML, enhancing its relevance does not mean replicating commercial publishing strategies or competing on the basis of impact metrics. Rather, it involves reclaiming its historical position as a central channel for the dissemination of biomedical knowledge, grounded in scientific integrity, openness, and service to the research community. In doing so, the journal not only builds on its historical legacy, but also actively fosters a more plural, fair, and sustainable future for scholarly communication.

In this context, JSCML warmly invites the scientific community, especially early-career researchers, to actively engage with its pages. By submitting original research, critical reflections, and diverse perspectives, authors can take part in a collective effort to strengthen the role of a community-led society journal committed to openness, quality, and integrity. Through this shared engagement, the journal aspires to reinforce its position as a trusted platform for the dissemination of knowledge that propels biomedical science forward and improves people's health and well-being.

Susana Oliveira Henriques
Member of the Editorial Board, JSCMed



IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sorrow that we remember Dr. Barros Veloso, who passed away one month after the release of our last issue (October 2025), in which he was interviewed. A prominent advocate of the History of Medicine, particularly in Portugal, his passing represents a great loss to the scholarly community.

Victor Oliveira
Editor-in-Chief

BARROS VELOSO
1930 - 2025

Foto: © Nortemédico