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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

The most recent stage of the *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine* ☆



La etapa más reciente de la Revista Española de Medicina Legal

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This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the *Revista Española de Medicina Legal* (REML), the scientific organ of the Asociación Nacional de Médicos Forenses (ANMF). It was published from 1974 to 1999 with an editorial break of about 9 years. In 2008, a group of forensic doctors, led by Dr. Francisco Pera, led the ANMF board of directors and, among many other objectives, initiated a new phase in the periodical publication of REML, renewed the editorial board, and contracted Elsevier to edit, print and distribute the journal.¹ Initially, one issue was published in 2008, 2 issues in 2009, 3 in 2010, and finally, 4 issues in 2011, establishing the quarterly publication of REML which continues to this day.^{1,2} Since then, 16 complete volumes and 61 issues of REML have been published, up until September 2024.

An editorial board was set up, made up of legal and forensic medicine professionals from different national and international regions, and an advisory board made up of various professionals from different specialties, in addition to forensic doctors, university professors of forensic medicine, and other prestigious professionals. The aim was for REML to become 'a vehicle for the transmission of scientific knowledge of forensic and legal medicine in Spain and Latin America, with an excellent level of quality, as well as offering continuous

training to professionals'.¹ Rigorous publication standards were established, similar to those of other prestigious biomedical journals, an essential requirement for the journal to be indexed in the various databases.² Likewise, REML submits the articles it receives to a peer-review process which, as with other scientific journals, in forensic and legal medicine is equivalent to a good quality publication.^{2–4} However, in recent years, the various biomedical journals have experienced some problems in recruiting good reviewers, probably due to an increase in the number of manuscripts submitted to scientific journals and the consequent increase in the demand for qualified reviewers.⁵

The development and implementation of new information technologies and online platforms for biomedical journals have been key elements in increasing the visibility and accessibility of REML content.² In addition, REML has been using the Elsevier Editorial System (EES) for online manuscript management since 2011 and the Production Tracking System (PTS) for production since 2012, greatly streamlining and facilitating all editorial management.^{2,6,7}

Subsequently, REML has been included in the powerful international databases Scopus and Science Direct giving authors publishing in the journal high visibility for their articles.² Another major advance was that, since 2016, REML

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editorials, original articles, and reviews have been automatically translated into English, at no cost to the authors, and can be consulted online in the English version of the journal, the *Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine*.⁸ In 2018, REML's publication guidelines were renewed.^{9,10} Finally, from 2023, REML will be published online only in order to remain easily accessible, to maintain its visibility, and to ensure its financial sustainability.¹¹

Therefore, analysing the new phase of REML from 2008 to 2023, we believe that in these 16 years it has been fully consolidated, we have dramatically increased its visibility, we have reached a reasonably high scientific level, and we have met the objectives of achieving knowledge transfer in legal and forensic medicine in Spain and Latin America, and the English-speaking world through the English version of REML, as well updating knowledge and providing quality continuing education in our discipline for all professionals.^{1,2,9}

Between 2008 and 2023, 478 articles were published in REML, with a considerable number of original articles, followed by reviews and editorials (Fig. 1). We should also highlight the publication of 8 monographic issues on different topics in our field during these years, which are listed in Table 1. Finally, if we analyse the contents or topics of the REML articles, forensic pathology and forensic psychiatry are, in that order, the most published areas, as in the historical review carried out by Etxeberria of the first phase of REML (1974–1996), in which 461 articles were published.¹² The most common topics today are the assessment of bodily harm, medical law, and forensic toxicology, similar to those of the first phase of REML, which were forensic toxicology, organisation, and medical law.¹² Over the last 16 years, emerging topics have included medical professional liability, gender-based violence, sexual violence, forensic genetics, forensic odontology, forensic age estimation, child abuse, and multiple victim events.

If we analyse the different topics published in other prestigious forensic medicine journals, such as the *International Journal of Legal Medicine*, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2022,¹³ we find somewhat different results.¹⁴ For example, between issues published at roughly similar dates, 4004 articles were published in 33 volumes of this journal between 1990 and 2022. In terms of topics published, forensic genetics was by far the most common, followed by forensic pathology, forensic toxicology, forensic age estimation and, fifthly, what is known as general forensic medicine (forensic thanatology). There are few

Table 1 Monographic issues of REML (2008–2023).

Nº	Title	Year	Volume	No.
1	Gender-based violence	2010	36	3
2	Suicide	2012	38	4
3	Professional liability	2013	39	4
4	Medical scale of "Baremo" Law 35/2015	2015	41	4
5	Sudden cardiac death	2018	44	1
6	Forensic psychiatry	2019	45	2
7	COVID-19	2020	46	3
8	Multiple victim events	2023	49	2

articles on forensic psychiatry and clinical forensics. Emerging topics include forensic age estimation, forensic anthropology, forensic imaging, and forensic entomology. Thus, we see that some topics are common, but there are others, such as forensic psychiatry in REML and forensic genetics in the German journal, which have a very different prevalence.

Finally, we would like to thank, first of all, the ANMF board for their constant support, the great team at Elsevier for their great professionalism, all our colleagues on the editorial board, the editorial committee, the advisory board, the authors, the reviewers, and the readers of the journal, without whom the publication of REML would not be possible.

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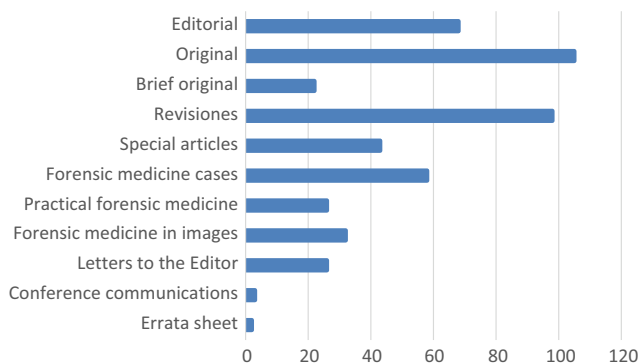


Fig. 1 Type of article in REML (2008–2023).

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