



ASOCIACIÓN NACIONAL
DE
MÉDICOS FORENSES

Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine

Revista Española de Medicina Legal

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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Spanish Journal of Legal Medicine: An online-only journal[☆]

Revista Española de Medicina Legal solo en formato online

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In 2023, it is now 15 years since the Revista Española de Medicina Legal (REML) commenced a new phase. In May 2008, a new board of Directors of the National Association of Forensic Doctors (ANMF) returned to the project to publish what is, historically, the internationally important Spanish language legal and forensic medicine journal.¹ During these years, the REML has remained focussed on its aim of disseminating information about the Hispano-American medical–legal world. It has also undergone changes to maintain its quality and adapt to how biomedical journals are evolving, always guided by the prestigious international biomedical publisher, Elsevier. During these 15 years, the REML has reacted to important contemporary developments in the medical–legal world, and has published editorials and monographs on highly interesting subjects. These topics include gender violence,² suicide,³ sudden cardiac death,⁴ forensic doctor demographics,⁵ the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic,⁶ the legal and forensic medicine speciality,⁷ or the recent monograph on event with multiple victims, published in 2023.

In December 2021, a new board of directors of the ANMF was formed, and one of its objectives was to ensure the economic sustainability of the REML, which is mainly financed by the ANMF and its federated associations. After a few months of negotiations with Elsevier, a new agreement was reached that is more advantageous economically for the ANMF. In this, the REML is now solely published in online format, as has already occurred with a great many other publications. As well as the economic aspect, this new format also has ecological advantages, and it also simplifies management to a certain extent for deliveries, postal addresses, changes, and incidents, etc. Thus, although the journal is no longer available on paper, the new online format involves no substantial editorial changes as it is still an indexed journal with content that is accessed by subscription (except for the members of the ANMF and federated associations, for whom it is free). Within the current context of biomedical publications, it should be underlined that publication in the REML is free for authors, and its functioning, sections, standards for authors, and

[☆] Please cite this article as: Barbería E, Martin-Fumadó C, Xifró A, Gómez-Durán EL, Arimany-Manso J, Pujol-Robinat A. *Revista Española de Medicina Legal* solo en formato online. *Revista Española de Medicina Legal*. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.reml.2023.09.003>.

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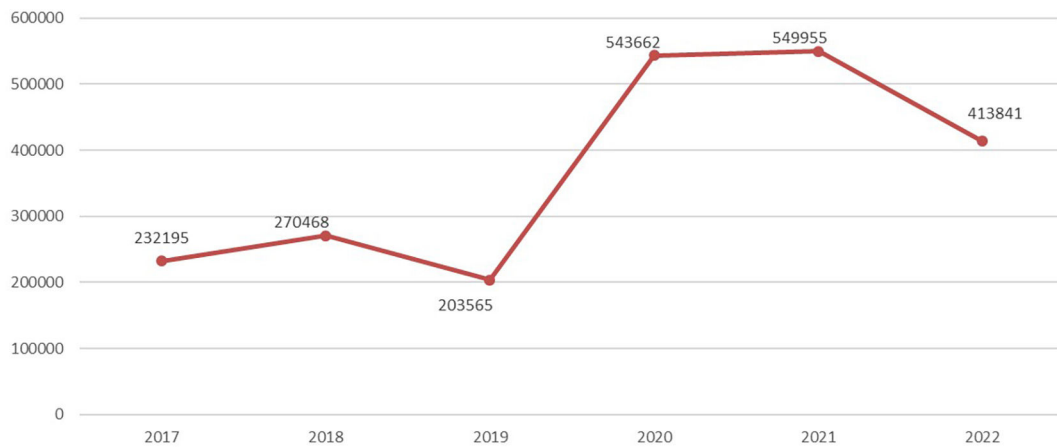


Fig. 1 The development of visits to the Revista Española de Medicina Legal from 2017 to 2022 (Source: Elsevier).

regularity all remain the same. The current editorial team will maintain the quality of its contents, and we would encourage all medical–legal professionals to send us their studies, research, case studies, or reviews.

As we did in previous editorials,⁸ we would also like to offer information about developments in the REML during 2021 and 2022. In 2020, the REML obtained excellent results, with 247 000 visits to its website and almost 300 000 visits in Science Direct due to positive reactions to the open monograph on medical and legal aspects of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. It should be remembered that Elsevier España gave priority to publishing papers on COVID-19 and created a COVID-19 resources page showing all of the published initiatives giving open-access to papers in journals. All of this took place within the context of other international initiatives such as the Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Initiative, which made the contents of the REML monographs available within PubMed Central (PMC).⁹

These excellent data continued in 2021, especially in terms of the REML website with 300 000 visits. With a slight increase of 1.1%, 2021 set a new record for visits to REML contents, with 549 955 visits. As could be expected, in 2022,

data underwent a downward correction in comparison with 2020–2021, although development was highly positive (with a 103.3% increase over pre-pandemic figures) (Fig. 1).

As well as its impact on visits and downloads, the monograph edition on medical–legal aspects of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic also significantly influenced citations of the REML. To September 2023, the 9 papers in the monograph had been cited 112 times in Scopus (an average of 12.4 citations per paper). The paper by Lorente Acosta, “*Violencia de género en tiempos de pandemia y confinamiento*”,¹⁰ was quoted 32 times, while in Google Académico, it achieved 178 quotes.¹¹ All of which, together with the good performance by other papers, made it possible to surpass the 200 mark for citations of papers published by the REML in 2022 in the period from 2019 to 2022 (Fig. 2). In 2022, the CiteScore for the REML increased to 1.8, placing the REML in percentile 37 (ranked 122 of 193 journals) and in quartile 3 in the Pathology and Forensic Medicine category of the SJR (Scimago Journal Rank). REML is the 3rd of the 5 indexed journals in this category in Spain.¹²

In the same way, the data corresponding to visits per country normalized in 2021 and 2022, when Spain was once

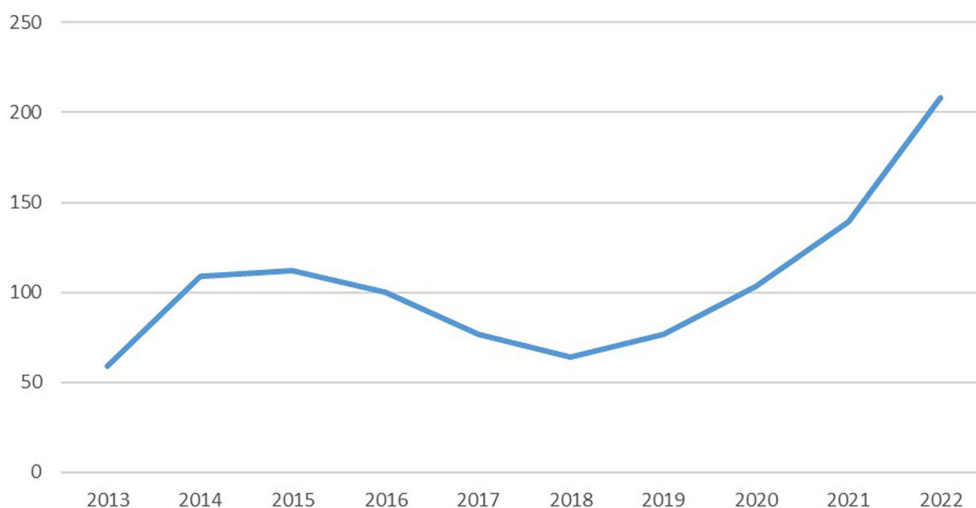


Fig. 2 Evolution of citations of the Revista Española de Medicina Legal according to the Scopus CiteScore (Source: Scopus).

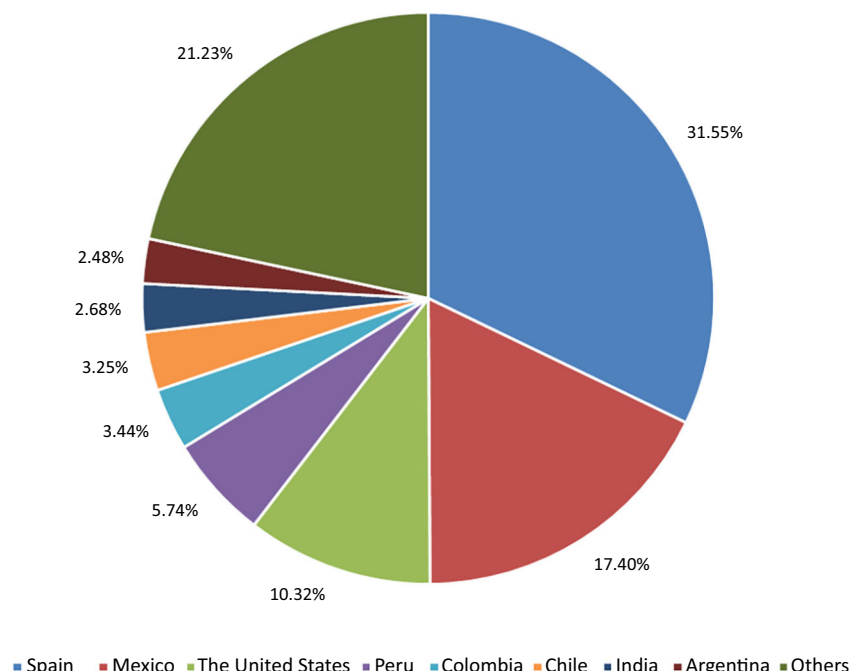


Fig. 3 Distribution of visits to the Revista Española de Medicina Legal in 2022 according to country (Source: Elsevier).

again leading with almost 1 of every 3 visits, followed by Mexico (17.4%) and the United States (10.3%). Fig. 3 shows the distribution of visits per country. The REML continues to receive manuscripts from all over the world, although most especially from Spanish American countries, with a manuscript rejection rate that stands at around 60%.

Lastly, we would like to thank our readers, authors, and revisers for their participation, without which the REML could not exist.

Conflict of interests

The authors have no conflict of interests to declare.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Pepi Pau, Beatriz Mas, Ángeles Hernández, Merche Belmonte, and José Alonso of Elsevier España, as well as all of the other Elsevier personnel with whom the Editorial Committee of the REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE MEDICINA LEGAL has had the opportunity to work.

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