As a professional who has devoted my life to dentistry, treating patients, teaching at a university and contributing to my branch of science, I am growing older, gaining experience and analyzing things from different perspectives. After reflecting on and evaluating my more than 25 years of clinical practice, my role as a teacher and mentor to many students, and my current knowledge, I wonder where to from here.

The knowledge in dentistry is changing rapidly based on different premises. The academic institution has made it clear that randomized clinical trials and meta-analyses are at the top of the pyramid of scientific knowledge. There are some journals that rarely accept a manuscript that does not have in its title the magic words “randomized clinical trial”; yet, there are thousands of systematic reviews and meta-analyses on any meaningless aspect of the literature, meta-analysis based only on those randomized clinical trials. Sometimes, journals publish some meta-analyses based only on one or two manuscripts, which is simply a repetition of the same conclusion of the manuscript. Interestingly, there is even a coincidence in the authorship of both manuscripts, a kind of misconduct in science.

When analyzing the bibliometric aspects of our science, in the context of science, dentistry is almost nothing in comparison with other disciplines; it is like a small star in the Milky Way. However, we are trying to resemble the disciplines of older brothers, forgetting the strength of our own science. As dentists, we are required to contribute the best for patients, reinforcing clinical aspects, based on knowledge and evidence. We are health care providers. Our editors, journals and reviewers, and we ourselves must become aware of this, support deeper clinical research that undoubtedly contributes to better feedback in all fields for our patients and avoid many of those manuscripts that are only aimed at greater impact factors, h-indexes or citations, increasing the ego and visibility of some authors and institutions, with no benefit for the real readers of our journals and the final destination of our research: our patients.

As a professor, as a researcher, assuming my share of mea culpa, I begin to be fed up with diving into the literature looking for important manuscripts that bring light and knowledge to our community, but remaining unsatisfied. I begin to wonder, dentistry, quo vadis?

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