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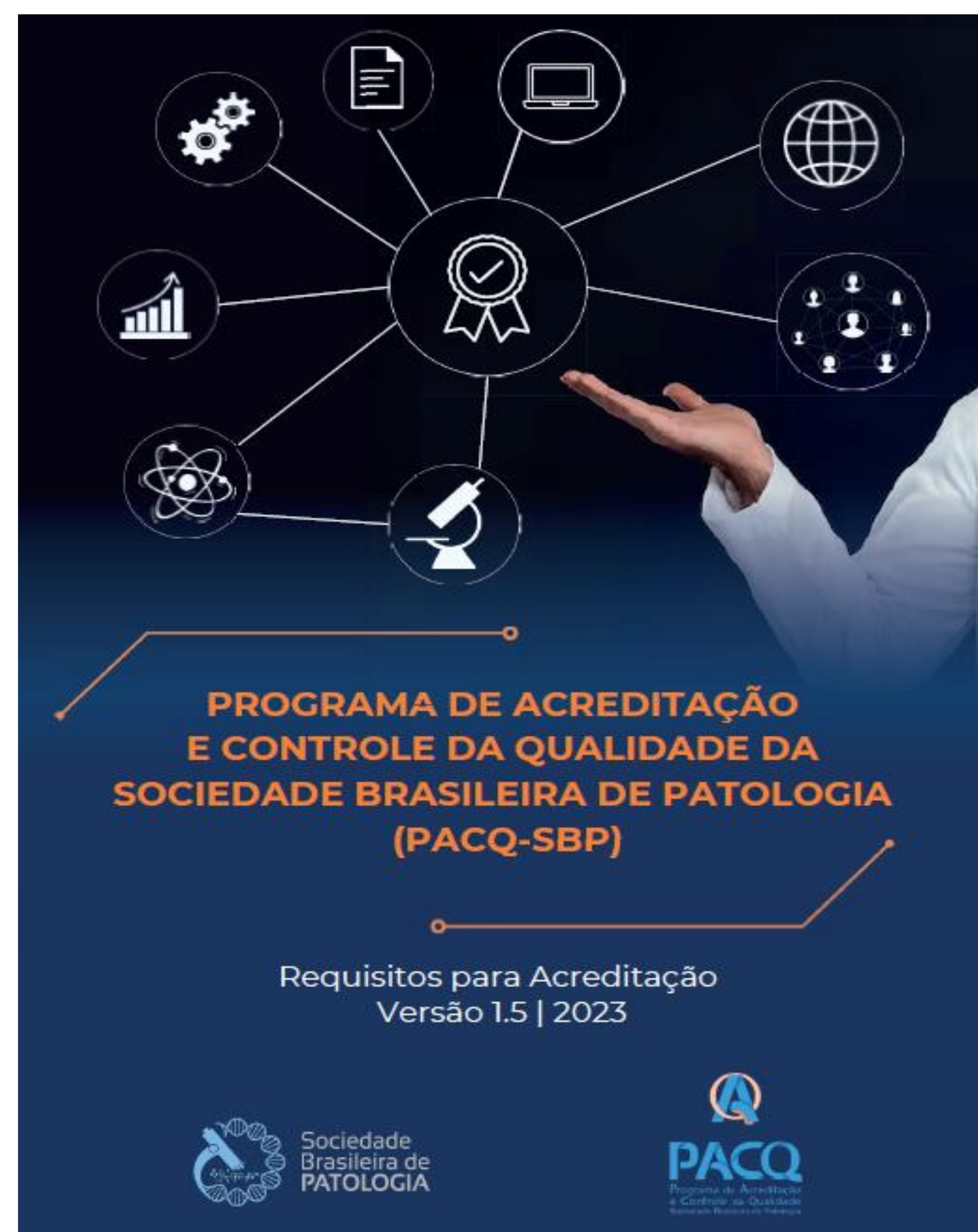
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INTRODUCTION

The global healthcare system is undergoing a significant transformation with the objective of enabling the delivery of patient-centred, safe and collaborative care. Among the various proposed initiatives to improve the culture of safety, a facility-based accreditation programme is an effective means of supporting efforts to construct care based on the consumer journey and from a patient perspective. The Accreditation and Quality Control Program from the Brazilian Society of Pathology (PACQ-SBP) standards have been in use since 2016. Despite periodic review, there has been a continued need to delve deeper into learning and implementing standards that will enhance patient safety and the journey of safer biologic samples through improved anatomic pathology laboratory processes and workflow. This will also promote a better understanding of the role of pathologists and all stakeholders in the patient's care journey.

METHODS

A joint committee of experts, constituted by the PACQ Accreditation Commission in collaboration with committed professionals and institutions, conducted a collaborative standards review between the years 2021 and 2023. This entailed the creation of documents, minutes and reports, the identification of potential avenues for improvement and areas of concern, the development of interactive drafts, and the piloting and testing of these drafts. In order to facilitate a comprehensive review, a range of sources were consulted, including current regulatory laws, national and international scientific guidelines, World Health Organization recommendations, standards of recognised organisations, bibliographic references, suggestions through public consultation, research feedback and experiences of accredited institutions and auditors, as well as input from invited experts.



RESULTS

The review of PACQ standards was conducted in three phases, encompassing multiple tasks: planning the review methodology, examining the evidence base and each standard, developing new materials, constructing field trial methodologies, and drafting, trialing, and refining new standards. The process also included assisting and training institutions, as well as PACQ professional staff. This approach was interactive and inclusive, actively seeking feedback and enhancing opportunities for widespread consultation through various channels, which contributed to a broader acceptance of the standards. Concurrently, there was concern about potential barriers to standard implementation, including cost and resource limitations, lack of incentives from external or internal organizational policies and culture, and other forms of negative pressures. The final document was organized into principles and requirements that facilitate the implementation of internal quality programs and support both internal and external institutional organization by sectors, in accordance with the biological sample journey. These requirements emphasize governance and organizational management, human resource management, continuous improvement, patient safety and risk management, equipment and supplies management, and the management of documents and records. The laboratory workflow was structured into pre-examination, analytical, and post-analytical management phases.

CONCLUSION

The Quality Accreditation Program in Pathology (PACQ) is the first Latin American-based accreditation program for Anatomic Pathology laboratories and related fields. It was established to encourage laboratories to enhance their technical, educational, and administrative processes, as well as to promote a better understanding of the roles of pathologists and all stakeholders in the patient care journey. After three years of program implementation, it has become evident that the standard review process necessitates collaboration from a diverse range of committed professionals, requiring considerable resources and expertise. Furthermore, this process has proven to be time-intensive. The PACQ accreditation commission has also observed that a collaborative and inclusive process can effectively engage stakeholders and promote acceptance of the revised standards. Consequently, the commission encourages accreditation bodies worldwide to design and structure processes, resources, and knowledge necessary for a reliable review of standards, thereby facilitating their incorporation into daily practice.

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