

Review of: "[Commentary] To Publish Scientific Journals: For Some, the Big Business of the Century"

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The author's discussion of the paradox, wherein authors pay substantial fees while reviewers work for free, is thought-provoking. Aczel et al. (2021) found that the total time reviewers globally worked on peer reviews was over 100 million hours in 2020. The estimated monetary value of the time US-based reviewers spent on reviews was over 1.5 billion USD in 2020. The referees play an under-appreciated but critical role in the publication process, using their expertise to constructively critique a piece of work for the benefit of the larger scientific community. The author brings forward personal experience as an Editor-in-Chief, adding credibility and an insider perspective to the discussion. However, the suggestion that reviewers should be compensated opens the floor for further discussion. Some studies have found that rewards are not necessarily effective, as in some cases they may actually discourage the most intrinsically motivated and competent reviewers.

The author also mentioned that "too many manuscripts are being reviewed by colleagues with limited expertise (including pre- and recent post-docs) since it is really hard for expert colleagues to accept to review". But I'm wondering whether novel young reviewers also have their own strengths in reviewing. For instance, they may be the ones who are actually conducting research and reading the most updated literature compared with their supervisors.