

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

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

This reviewer does support the very concept of this Commentary and supports it in all its viewpoints, except that reviewers of the paid journals should also be compensated accordingly by their publishers. Such an action shall not only be an indirect promotion of the APC-based open-access policy, but the entire publishing system will possibly be corrupted because many reviewers will tend to give milder review comments to get the papers published as a mark of obligation to the journals. There are many other ways to reward a reviewer, if not monetarily.

The current system of APC does not encourage innovation and novelty coming out of unfunded research because, to get one's ideas published, one must pay a hefty sum of money. Moreover, authors from many of the poorer nations cannot afford to pay even a reduced APC offered by the publishers. In fact, to help authors of these countries, many established publishers have introduced a policy of "full waiver" and "partial waiver" for the World Bank-classified economically 'low-income' and 'lower-middle-income' countries, respectively, but there are many other countries whose economic status is not as good, and authors of these countries too cannot afford to pay even this partially waived APC. Many journals do write that they would consider waiving the APC at the time of paper submission, but often the 'full waiver' is limited, and the amount of the partially waived fee many a time is too much to pay.

The motive of the commentary to criticize the established journal publishers is genuine. Not many years ago, all these publishers used to criticize predatory journals, but time has changed, and they themselves now seem to have adopted the same model as those of the predatory journals, which this reviewer believes is unethical. They claim they maintain a strict review system, but there are instances where they have employed influencers who keep on interfering with the handling editors and reviewers during the review process to get an article accepted. This is the reason that many authors believe their papers will be published once they pay a hefty APC.

One may observe that most of the fully open-access journals have a high impact factor (IF) compared to similar journals adopting the 'hybrid' model. While the higher impact may be attributed to more people being able to read the journal articles freely, this reviewer doubts if these high IFs are actually manipulated to attract more authors to submit to these journals.

As the commentary author suggests, to maintain the sanctity of the academic journal publishing industry, the world's learned bodies must reach a consensus on whether to allow fully open access journals through APC. But the problem is that the APC itself is highly variable and varies somewhere between \$500 to more than \$6000 per article, with page

restrictions in many journals. If a publisher can archive an article permanently with an APC of \$500, why not others? And if this is not business, then what is it? The author may like to discuss this aspect also in his commentary.