

# Review of: "Publish or perish: time for a rethink?"

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

The article aims to describe the impact of "Publish or Perish" habits on biomedical research, and to suggest possible improvements. In particular, authors underline several drawbacks produced by the consequent information overload, such as: the lowering of research quality; reproducibility crisis; spread of plagiarism; huge amount of irrelevant information for the clinical practice; diffusion of predatory journals.

Although causes and consequences of the "Publish or Perish" habits are widely analyzed in today literature, they deserve to be studied further in depth. In this particular work, the authors correlate the affirmation of the "Publish or Perish" model with the diffusion of the Open Access publishing.

Unfortunately, this hypothesis is not sufficiently supported by solid evidences and data in the article. Furthermore, authors often support their arguments referring to partial and dated information, especially those related to the editorial market (that are dated before 2018). Some of the arguments used by authors appear to be contradictory. For instance: how researchers would be encouraged to publish more papers in open access journals by paying expensive APCs, instead of keep submitting their articles for free in a subscription based journal? How the possibility for the researchers to keep the copyright on their work, or the opportunity to make it available without any restrictions, favour the editorial concentration? Is this editorial concentration a consequence or a cause of the birth of Open Access movement?

My impression here is that authors built their hypothesis on a biased knowledge of the Open Access and Open Science panorama. Probably authors are considering (or they are referring to) Open Access exclusively as the option offered by subscription based journal, which allows researchers to open their articles under the payment of APCs. This is a well-known phenomenon called "double dipping" (you pay twice: APC to open an article, and a subscription to read the others). It can be considered another consequence of the "Publish or Perish" model, instead of being a cause. At the same time, it seems that authors tend to assimilate the full Open Access journals to predatory publishing.

Which is very far from what Open Access and Open Science actually are.

On the contrary, aspects that profoundly affected the affirmation of "Publish or Perish" habits in medical research are barely mentioned in this article. One among others is the obsession for citation metrics (such as Impact Factor and H-Index) in research assessment, as a condition to access funds or career progressions. This pushes researchers to publish more and more and more, often not with the intent to reach the best citation rate, but simply to keep their job.

In conclusion: this work is of potential interest, and deals with an enormous problem in today science, which surely deserves new perspectives and improvements.

For this reason I would encourage the authors to keep working on it and to:

- deepen the knowledge of fundamental concepts and dynamics of Open Access and Open Science
- consider all the aspects that caused and consolidated the publish or perish habits over time
- expand and update the bibliographic references

Maybe the following readings may be useful to the authors (I have no conflicts of interest related to the following bibliographic references):

1. Besançon, L., Peiffer-Smadja, N., Segalas, C., Jiang, H., Masuzzo, P., Smout, C., Billy, E., Deforet, M., & Leyrat, C. (2021). Open science saves lives: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 21(1), 117. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-021-01304-y>
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4. Pooley, J. (2021). Surveillance Publishing. SocArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/j6ung>
5. UNESCO. (2021). UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54677/MNMH8546>