

Paying for Visibility: Assessing the Cost Effectiveness of Publishing Open Access Dermatology Journals

Author: Kenny Ta

Background: The introduction of open access (OA) models in academic publishing aims to make research freely accessible. However, the costs and impact on journal prestige need further investigation in dermatology. Objective: The study aims to understand the cost-efficacy of OA publications in dermatology journals, empowering researchers to maximize article influence while minimizing costs. Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional study of 144 dermatology journals from Scimago, with 106 meeting the inclusion criteria. Journals were categorized as hybrid or complete OA. Metrics such as CiteScore, H-index, SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), and 2-year Impact Factor were extracted for 2022. The average of these metrics defined the impact score. Cost data, including article processing charges (APCs), were collected from journal websites. Cost-effectiveness was calculated as the impact score divided by the total OA publishing cost. Results: The median cost to publish OA in hybrid journals was significantly higher than in full OA journals ($P < 0.05$), with hybrid journals exhibiting higher median impact scores ($P < 0.05$). A positive correlation ($R = 0.66$) was observed between OA publishing costs and impact scores. The Journal of Drugs in Dermatology was the top cost-effective paid journal. In contrast, the Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology was the top free OA journal. Conclusion: Hybrid journals offer higher average impact scores but substantially higher OA publication fees than fully OA journals. There is a moderate correlation between OA cost and journal impact score, indicating higher fees are associated with more prestigious journals. Authors should consider financial implications when maximizing visibility and scholarly impact.