Experiences With Open Access Journals: A Survey of Publication Professionals

Abstract

Objective: This survey explored publication professionals’ experiences with open access (OA) and traditional journals, including encounters with publishers on Beall’s List, which identifies those with questionable practices, although debate exists about their characterization as predatory.

Methods

Analysis included the following:

- On average, ratings of attributes for clients, internal teams, and authors are shown.
- Respondents perceived greater awareness of OA journals among publication professionals or clients than authors. These results suggest further education in recognizing quality OA journals is warranted.

Results

- Of 166 survey recipients, 58 responded, including 7 Client Solutions personnel and 51 medical writers (36 with OA experience and 15 without). If respondents with non-OA journal experience reported working with print journals with a hybrid or optional fee-based OA offering.
- Prioritization of journal attributes (average rankings among 57 respondents) are shown in Figure 1:
  - Respondents reported that their clients’ highest priorities were
  - Impact factor (57/57 [100%]), acceptance rate (57/57 [100%]), and submission to publication time (57/57 [100%]).
  - Respondents reported that their internal teams’ highest priorities were
  - Indexed in PubMed (25/27 [92.6%]), acceptance rate (25/27 [92.6%]), and impact factor (17/27 [63.0%]).
  - Respondents reported authors’ highest priorities as acceptance rate (50/51 [98.0%]) and impact factor (28/51 [54.9%]), by traditional OA sectors encompass a wide spectrum of journal stature, characteristics of their websites,2 and prior OA experience.

Introductions

- Open access (OA) journals and publishers have proliferated rapidly in recent years. There is a time lag between new journals (launching and the research community’s characterization of their quality) (Aggarwal indexing and impact factor acquisition).

Objective

- This survey explored publication professionals’ experiences with OA and traditional journals, including encounters with publishers on Beall’s List.

Methods

- We developed and administered a 27-question online survey.
- Respondents were asked 5 questions regarding OA perceptions and prioritizing journal attributes: professional medical writers without OA experience answered 9 questions about OA, traditional, and hybrid journals.
- Medical writers without OA experience answered 9 questions about traditional journals and 3 questions about hybrid or optional OA in traditional journals.
- Respondents identified up to 3 OA journals of respondents perceived OA publishers to be less rigorous or prestigious.
- Respondents reported their clients’ highest priorities were acceptance rate (57/57 [100%]), submission to publication time (57/57 [100%]), and impact factor (57/57 [100%]).
- More than one OA journal was reported OA publishers were identified OA journals were compared with Beall’s List.
- Respondents reported that their internal teams’ highest priorities were indexed in PubMed (25/27 [92.6%]), acceptance rate (25/27 [92.6%]), and impact factor (17/27 [63.0%]).
- Respondents reported authors’ highest priorities as acceptance rate (50/51 [98.0%]) and impact factor (28/51 [54.9%]).
- Respondents with non-OA journal experience reported working with OA journals (13/26 [50.0%] and 19/25 [76.0%], respectively).
- More than one OA journal was reported OA, open access.

Conclusion

- Awareness of Beall’s List among internal teams, clients, and authors as perceived by OA respondents is shown in Figure 4.
- Most OA respondents perceived OA journals to be less rigorous or prestigious.
- Moderate or high awareness of Beall’s List was perceived to follow a gradient of internal teams >> clients >> authors. No OA respondents considered authors to be very aware of OA journals.

Conclusions

- Surveyed publication professionals encountered problematic behaviors from 26% of selected OA journal publishers.
- OA respondents perceived perceived peer review quality as similar between traditional and OA journal experiences.
- Respondents perceived great Beall’s List awareness among publication professionals or clients than among authors.
- These results suggest further education in recognizing quality OA journals is warranted.

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References


Figure 1. Average Ratings of Attributes for Clients, Internal Teams, and Authors

Figure 2. Peer Review Characteristics of (A) Traditional and (B) OA Journals

Figure 3. Prevalence of Problematic OA Publishers

Figure 4. Perception of Beall’s List by Internal Teams, Clients, and Authors Among OA-Experienced Professional Medical Writers (n=57 Respondents)


Disclosure

The authors are employees of Envision Pharma Group, a medical communications and technology company with service offerings in medical publications.

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