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Hey Readers!

Welcome to this edition of the **JPLogue**, today we'll be revealing our greatest strength at Jaypee Journals: how we have earned the trust of the scholarly community. At Jaypee, our team actively engages with editors through regular, in-person meetings to tackle challenges and generate innovative ideas to enhance the reader experience. These face-to-face interactions allow us to bring expert guidance and fresh perspectives into our publications, ensuring continuous improvement. As Peer Review Week, (September 23–27, 2024) just concluded, we are dedicating this issue of JPLogue to a relevant and timely topic: **Open Peer Review**. In this edition, we'll explore its relevance to researchers, especially early-career professionals, by examining its potential to promote transparency, improve feedback quality, and build a more collaborative research environment.

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**Open Peer Review – Navigating Transparency and Accountability**



As said here we'll explore one of the most transformative movements in scholarly publishing—**Open Peer Review (OPR)**. As peer review remains a basis of academic publishing, OPR is emerging as a key element of the broader **open science movement**, reformatting how we evaluate research articles.

Journals like BMJ and PLOS have already embraced OPR in different capacities, hoping to improve transparency, accountability, and the overall quality of scientific communication. However, OPR remains a topic of debate.

Here, we'll explore the pros and cons of OPR, especially from the perspective of early career researchers (ECRs). How does it shape their experience as authors and reviewers?

### Understanding Open Peer Review

Unlike traditional blind peer review, where reviewers' identities are confidential, OPR focuses on transparency. This model encourages a collaborative review process, at its core, OPR removes the mask of anonymity between reviewers and authors. It covers a variety of models, including:

- *Open identities* (both author and reviewer names are visible)
- *Open reports* (publication of the review alongside the article)
- *Open participation* (allowing a wider audience to contribute)
- *Open pre-review manuscripts* (manuscripts made available before peer review)
- *Open final version commenting* (post-publication discussions on final papers)

OPR aims to improve accountability, reduce bias, and promote dialogue that can ultimately enhance research quality. Journals that embrace OPR often publish review reports and author responses, allowing

the public to gain insight into the peer review process. However, as with any shift in established processes, OPR has its pros and cons, particularly from the perspective of those just starting out in their academic careers.

### Key Benefits of Open Peer Review



1. **Enhanced Transparency and Accountability:** When both the reviewer and author identities are known, reviewers tend to provide more thoughtful, constructive feedback. It ensures accountability and eliminates the possibility of hidden biases. Any personal conflicts of interest can be openly disclosed, improving the fairness of the process.
2. **Shorter Review Times:** By allowing pre-review manuscripts to be uploaded to platforms like arXiv or bioRxiv, OPR facilitates early feedback and reduces the time between submission and publication. Additionally, authors can avoid repetitive cycles of rejection and re-submission by having their work openly reviewed from the outset.
3. **Educational Value:** Open reports and reviewer discussions can serve as educational resources for early career researchers (ECRs). These materials provide insight into the peer review process, offering examples of how to frame constructive criticism, respond to feedback, and refine their own work. OPR can thus become a learning tool that fills the gaps where formal peer review training is lacking.
4. **Increased Reviewer Recognition:** Reviewers often contribute a significant amount of time and expertise to their assessments without formal recognition. OPR changes that by giving reviewers credit for their contributions, often through digital object identifiers (DOIs) for their reports. This recognition can enhance their professional standing, particularly for ECRs who are acting as reviewers, OPR can be a valuable opportunity for them. With the publication of review reports,

young researchers can demonstrate their expertise and gain recognition for their contributions. Some platforms even offer the possibility of assigning DOIs to review reports, providing a tangible record of the reviewer's input that can support career advancement.

OPR allows reviewers to receive credit for their contributions, which is often overlooked in traditional peer review. This not only boosts their academic profiles but also incentivizes more thoughtful reviews.

5. **Improved Research Quality:** The transparency in OPR allows for the of inconsistencies or potential ethical issues more easily. Public scrutiny of the review process holds both authors and reviewers to higher standards, identification ultimately enhancing the credibility of published research.
6. **Encouraging Open Science:** Most important OPR aligns with open access, ensuring that the entire research process— from data collection to peer evaluation—is available for public scrutiny. This openness promotes reproducibility and trustworthiness.

### Challenges of Open Peer Review



1. **Fear of Retaliation:** Revealing reviewer identities can discourage blunt feedback, especially when power dynamics are at play. Early-career researchers may feel hesitant to critique senior colleagues, limiting honest discourse. The fear of offending someone who may influence their career can lead to overly cautious or favorable reviews. This dynamic could compromise the honest and critical nature of peer review.
2. **Public Criticism and Confidence Issues:** For early career authors, the openness of OPR can be a double-edged sword. While transparent feedback may seem more constructive, negative reviews—especially those that are publicly available—can dent a young researcher's confidence. The

possibility of facing harsh criticism in a public forum can be daunting, leading some to feel vulnerable as their work, and by extension their reputation, is scrutinized.

3. **Difficulty in Securing Reviewers:** Some studies suggest that reviewers are hesitant to participate in OPR. When names are disclosed, reviewers may feel less comfortable criticizing work openly, particularly if they anticipate potential conflicts with the authors in the future. This reluctance could lead to difficulty in finding suitable reviewers, especially for argumentative or high-profile manuscripts.
4. **Risk of Bland Reviews:** Many editors argue that forcing openness may lead to "bland" reviews, with reviewers focusing only on technical issues rather than offering a deeper critique of the paper's novelty or significance. Some fear that the reviews may start to resemble inflated letters of recommendation rather than honest assessments.
5. **Time and Resource Intensive:** Open interactions between authors and reviewers could lengthen the review process, delaying publication timelines.
6. **Potential Bias:** Knowing the identities of both authors and reviewers could introduce new biases, such as favoritism or leniency towards well-known researchers. Over time, this could damage the objectivity that peer review seeks to uphold.
7. **Privacy Concerns:** Reviewers may be uncomfortable with their comments being made public, raising ethical questions about privacy.
8. **Impact on Underrepresented Groups:** Another concern is how OPR might disproportionately affect underrepresented groups in academia, including women and minority researchers. Open identities could expose these individuals to more scrutiny or bias, compounding existing inequities. Therefore, allowing authors and reviewers to choose whether to reveal their identities could offer a more flexible approach to ensure fairness.

### The Impact on Research Quality

Despite these challenges, OPR has the potential to enhance research quality. The transparency inherent in OPR exposes more research flaws early, while the collaborative nature of the feedback improves the robustness of the findings. As prestigious journals like Royal Society Open Science, Nature Communications, and PLOS continue to adopt OPR, they are paving the way for a new era of peer review—one that values openness, accountability, and the collaborative spirit of scientific inquiry.

### Platforms Embracing Open Peer Review for Transparent Publishing

A variety of platforms have implemented OPR, allowing early-career researchers to engage in a more open and constructive review process. F1000Research, PeerJ, eLife, and Publons are some of the notable platforms adopting OPR to enhance transparency. These platforms publish reviewer identities and comments alongside the articles, allowing for greater accountability and visibility. This approach is helping researchers not only gain quicker insights but also engage with feedback that is openly accessible, enhancing both the quality and speed of scholarly publication.

### Is Open Peer Review the Future?

The shift towards OPR is a natural progression in scholarly communication, driven by the need for greater transparency and accountability. However, its adoption will vary across disciplines and contexts. Whether OPR will become the dominant form of peer review remains to be seen, but its rising fame cannot be ignored.

## Conclusion: A Balanced Approach

While OPR offers several benefits, particularly in terms of transparency and educational value, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Early career researchers may benefit from a more consultative model of review, where editors and reviewers collaborate to produce a single, balanced report. The solution may lie in a flexible, hybrid approach that combines the strengths of both traditional and open review models, tailored to the needs of different disciplines. Journals should consider offering flexible options, allowing authors and reviewers to choose between open and traditional peer review methods based on their preferences and career stage.

In conclusion, while OPR is a promising development, its implementation should be carefully designed to ensure that it supports rather than hinders early career researchers. By balancing transparency with flexibility, the scholarly community can create a more inclusive and fair peer review system that benefits all.

As Jaypee Journals, we remain committed to exploring and adopting practices that enhance the quality, integrity, and trustworthiness of research.

Stay tuned for more insights on developments in open access and scientific publishing.

## Thank you

During the creation of this newsletter, the following websites helped to compile:

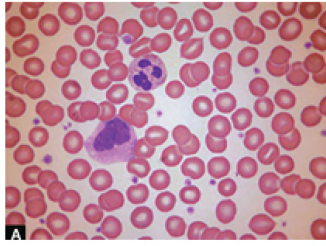
1. *The case for open peer review*
2. *Pros and cons of open peer review*
3. *Benefits and Drawbacks of Open Peer Review | Lex Academic Blog*
4. *Open peer review, pros and cons from the perspective of an early career researcher*
5. *Benefits and Drawbacks of Open Peer Review and Its Impact on Research Quality*
6. *What are the benefits and challenges of open peer review in science?*
7. *Is Open Peer Review Really Open?*

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