

## EDITORIAL ARTICLE

### [Translated article] Publish at any Price?

### [Artículo traducido] ¿Publicar a cualquier precio?



How much would you be willing to pay to see your article published: If your answer is between 1,500 and 2,000 Euros then you are in luck. You could get your article published and you would not have to wait too long. It would take less than 15 days from your submission to the first decision on the manuscript. Once accepted, it would be published in less than 3 days. From an academic viewpoint, will this publication be of any use to you? Probably not. Maybe you should think about how to better invest your money or your institution's money.

In the last 15 years there has been a significant increase in the emergence of open access journals, particularly those known as golden early access, i.e. those in which the study is published immediately on the publication's website after payment of the article processing charge (ACP, article processing charge).

The agency ANECA<sup>1</sup> has analysed 7 golden open access publishers with a total of 429 journals indexed in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) in 2019, publishing 216,093 articles. Unfortunately, Spanish research ranked fifth in the world in publications in these publishers between 2017-2019, which entailed an approximate expenditure of almost 50 million Euros in ACP for a total of 25,463 articles.

Many of the journals of these publishers essentially use self-citations to artificially influence their impact factor, as this is a quality index reflected in the Web of Science.

Journals have been detected that deviate from the standard publication behaviours (self-citations, article review time...) despite having a high impact factor reflected in the JCR. This leads us to think that perhaps the evaluation of the impact factor alone is not enough, and other indices reflected in the JCR should be introduced, such as the impact factor without self-citations (which corrects for self-citations or article Influence (which corrects self-citations and citations)).

The most widely used form of research evaluation in Spain is the sexenios. To obtain a sexenio in research requires the evaluation by a committee of five publications chosen by a researcher over a period of 6 years, providing evidence of their impact, with the impact factor being one of the most commonly used measurements. The articles chosen for sexenio evaluation in research published in open access journals increased by 231% in the period 2014-2020, from 3% to 11.6% of all contributions. Given the vulnerability of the impact factor ANECA proposes to make a more thorough evaluation of those publications in journals that deviate from standard behaviours. This would include, for example, evaluating peer review documents to access times, review rounds, reviewers' comments and authors' responses). With the use of these analyses perhaps the journal's rating could change quartile and not get a good rating from the committee. And even if this analysis was not satisfactory, they would propose to analyse the content of the article itself.

Open science (Open Access) is not in essence perverse, but on the contrary, it is the direction that should be followed, as publicly funded research should be open to everyone. Similarly, applying transparency to all aspects of the scientific process (resources, data, methods, peer review, access to publication...) is also the most advisable way forward. However, continuing to publish in those open access journals that deviate from publication standards should be discouraged.

If you have 1500 or 2000 Euros, perhaps the best thing to do is to invest them in a good statistician who can help you design a good study that you can submit for publication to a journal that meets publication standards, even though its impact factor may be lower. Perhaps with a proper assessment of other impact factors, the assessment of that journal will be better and may help you more in your academic career than open access journals with a high impact factor, but obtained through questionable practices.

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## Reference

1. Bibliometric analysis and impact of open-access publishers in Spain. [https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aneca.es%2Fdocuments%2F20123%2F48615%2F210930\\_Openaccess.pdf%2Fec4d9d10-4704-f72e-1ae4-e1ce26f80b58%3Ft%3D1666942928086&data=05%7C01%7Cctorrens%40psmar.cat%7C0de5cd92d18a4b82364d08db3a652e2c%7C8199a5fd709c4036980e3c5f6009b8ca%7C0%7C0%7C638167978901045455%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBtIl6lk1haWwiLCJ](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aneca.es%2Fdocuments%2F20123%2F48615%2F210930_Openaccess.pdf%2Fec4d9d10-4704-f72e-1ae4-e1ce26f80b58%3Ft%3D1666942928086&data=05%7C01%7Cctorrens%40psmar.cat%7C0de5cd92d18a4b82364d08db3a652e2c%7C8199a5fd709c4036980e3c5f6009b8ca%7C0%7C0%7C638167978901045455%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBtIl6lk1haWwiLCJ)

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Carlos Torrens  
*Parc de Salut Mar de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain*  
E-mail address: [86925@parcsalutmar.cat](mailto:86925@parcsalutmar.cat)