

P13

**Open access journals: transparent science or shady business?**J. Richter<sup>1</sup>, M. Botelho<sup>2</sup>*<sup>1</sup>Institute of Tropical Medicine and International Health, Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin, Germany, <sup>2</sup>Institute of Investigation and Innovation, Porto University, Porto, Portugal***Imagine**

Imagine - you are a young European scientist. You submit your excellent article – the reviewers are enthusiastic – but your institution does not have a budget for publishing your article. – you have a family to nourish - well, do you have some 700 to 2.500 USD to pay for publishing your article yourself? The only chance you might have would be to apply to waiving. Maybe you have a friend in the Sudan who will act as first author instead of you in order to get the work published for free because scientists from developing countries have better chances not to be obliged to pay for publication costs.

Imagine - you are a lateral thinker. You are not supported by an academic institution or your head of department or. E.g., Albert Einstein did not receive any funding from his first employer, the Swiss patent office, for publishing his scientific articles. Would he have had the money to publish his pioneering work in an open access (OA) journal?

Imagine – somebody has to pay for the publishing costs. If your institution pays, this means that, eventually, the taxpayer pays the fees.

Imagine - you have to rush towards an airport and you need to take a taxi. After the ride you explain to the taxi driver that he should pay you the fare instead of you paying him, just the condition scientists accept with OA journals now?

**Consequences**

The more OA journals will predominate, the more science will be biased towards who can afford to publish. Moreover, OA journals are easy to access by everyone. This means that the impact and citation factors will increase more easily as compared with subscription journals.

It is not clear what the money requested by OA journals is destined for. The highly specialized academic reviewers usually are not paid for their work. There are no printing costs. Perhaps this is the reason why OA access journals spring up like mushrooms and inundate email of academics by publication offers?

**What can be done?**

As a first step, in order to correct the scientific bias caused by this situation, we propose to adjust the impact and citation factors of articles published in OA journals. That could be done by dividing these factors by a defined proportion of the publishing fees and would thereby also contribute to discourage predatory OA journals. Further correcting measures to take must, in our opinion, be urgently addressed and discussed by the scientific community to prevent science from becoming just a business affair.