

Editorial

Publish in *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology* – Article processing charges are only paid by those who can afford it

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Electronic journals are the basis of a world of purely electronic scientific communication. Just imagine, no more bookshelves and mountains of disorganized paperwork, no more late nights organizing and searching for articles of interest. For most active research-oriented students and scientists this is already a reality, or will be in the near future.

Although most 'top ranked' traditional journals now offer web access to recent publications, and to less or more of their archives, not everyone has the luxury of access through their university, or has his/her subscription paid for, or can afford to pay US \$30–35 for an electronic reprint. Traditionally, journals generated their revenue from individual subscribers, private and/or state owned institutions, page charges from authors, and charges for color illustrations. Consequently, the traditional science publishing industry limited access to scientific publications to scientists in the developed countries while, in many cases, leaving the rest of the world unattended.

Open access to all RB&E article types

When the *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology* (RB&E) [1] electronic journal was launched early this year, we took the avant-garde decision to make all article types (Research, Review, Hypothesis, Methodology and Debate) open access – freely and universally accessible to everyone, either through the RB&E homepage [2], the publisher's homepage [3], and PubMed Central (the NIH's free access archive for research in the life sciences) [4], as well as being listed in PubMed [5]. Just one click, no password is required.

Wide journal scope

The scope of the RB&E is much wider than for traditional reproductive sciences journals, ranging from basic research in reproductive biology and endocrinology to applied research of reproduction in veterinary and human medicine (except Case Reports). Details on journal scope are provided at <http://www.rbej.com>

Funding open access – article-processing charges

Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology is a non-profit electronic journal, managed by volunteering scientists. However, no journal can exist without a publisher. To fund open access, the publisher of the RB&E, BioMed Central, is introducing an article-processing charge of US \$500 for each accepted article [6]. Discounts are available if authors submit their manuscript formatted with Endnote 5/6 or Reference Manager 10. While some may find the charge uncomfortable, many funding agencies are embracing open access by adding such costs to their grants, specifically requiring that the money be used to ensure open access to the published article.

Article processing charge will only be paid by those who can afford it

However, note that the charge will only be paid by those who can afford it. The fee can be waived for authors without budgetary support. And researchers at institutions that have taken membership of BioMed Central [7] will have the charge waived. Overall, then, regardless of one's monetary situation, every scientist can publish in RB&E.

RB&E does not charge for color illustrations

It is important to put the article-processing charge into some context. Unlike some traditional journals, *RB&E* does not charge for color illustrations. In some journals, a color page can cost US \$600–1000, which can inhibit the communication of science given that color has become sine qua non in current research. Being online also eliminates the requirement to condense color photomicrographs into miniatures that lack sufficient resolution and detail. Indeed, you are encouraged to submit charts in color for enhanced clarity, as previous authors have done. Color illustrations are unlimited in the *RB&E*. Examples of high quality color illustrations are given at <http://www.RBEj.com/content/1/1/36>

Peer review policy

The contributors to *RB&E* benefit from fast and professional peer review, resulting in rapid publication of good research – the priority of the *RB&E* peer review policy. In most instances at least three reviewers are involved in the review of research articles. The Editorial Office has more than three hundred registered experts covering various fields of *RB&E* scientific interests.

The review process is strictly anonymous, and the time between on line manuscript submission and Editorial decision is between three to four weeks. *RB&E* allows authors a maximum of two revisions of an article, assuming resubmitted manuscripts show significant improvement.

Like in most peer-reviewed conventional journals, our experience is that more than 95% of submitted articles passing first review require at least one revision. Rejection rate is about fifteen percent. Since the launch of *RB&E*, over fifty articles have been published, and more than sixty additional manuscripts are currently under consideration. Recently, our publisher, when doing an ad hoc review of all BioMed Central journals, noted that "RB&E is producing some favorable data with respect to numbers of articles published and peer review times."

Fastest publication possible

Accepted articles are immediately published in provisional PDF file and in the final form within two weeks, including their access through PubMed and PubMed Central. Hence, for a modest charge, contributors get fastest publication possible.

Authors retain copyright to their work

For less than the single color page charge, contributors also retain, free of charge, copyright to their work [8]. In other words, a whole article can be published freely on the web, associated with the authors' home pages, submitted to interested readers and colleagues, and the article com-

ponents utilized in other publications without a requirement for a request for permission.

World-wide open access

Lack of subscription charges enables an immediate, world-wide, barrier-free, open access to the full text of all article types in *RB&E*. World-wide open access ensures that the articles published in *RB&E* are widely distributed and available compared to the most conventional journals with subscription charges.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for less than the one color page charge in conventional journals contributors get:

- 1) Unlimited number of color charts and high quality color figures without additional charge.
- 2) Fast and professional peer review of manuscripts.
- 3) Immediate publication upon acceptance.
- 4) Copyright to the work.
- 5) World-wide open access to full versions of all *RB&E* publications.

The *RB&E* contributors have already indicated the following: "We have to say that we were extremely impressed by the promptness of the review and publication process." The main goal of the *RB&E* policy is broad distribution of results from excellent research in the reproductive sciences to facilitate education, research, and the exchange of ideas. The *RB&E* electronic journal vision is to serve the scientific community.

References

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