Editorial

Open access articles deliver real value to the veterinary community—and to our authors

Dear colleague,

“Open access” may be an unfamiliar term to many of our members. Briefly, an open access article can be read by anyone in the world with an internet connection—without a paid subscription. There are technical aspects too—authors do not sign over copyright to an organization or publisher, other people can reuse and distribute the work anywhere they want, and typically, authors pay a publication fee, often funded by a college, university, or granting agency, in lieu of libraries paying a subscription fee. Open access was first introduced for journals in the 1990s and represented a dedicated effort to ensure that the research paid for by government agencies like the National Institutes of Health would be freely available to the taxpayers who had funded the research.

Today, open access is prevalent, and recognized increasingly as contributing to global dissemination of science and information. The Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org) lists 7.8 million articles and over 17,000 peer-reviewed, open access journals, 115 of which cover veterinary medicine. One of my first initiatives as Editor-in-Chief was to propose converting our research journal, the American Journal of Veterinary Research (AJVR), to full open access, meaning that our member and nonmember individual and library subscribers no longer need to pay to access our cutting-edge research content. We also converted AJVR from a monthly printed publication to an online-only journal, hosted on our completely revamped journals platform, http://avmajournals.avma.org. We established publishing fees at $1,600 for nonmember authors and $1,200 for AVMA member corresponding or first authors. The publishing fees are among the least in the veterinary literature and the delta between the two fees is the cost of membership, providing member benefit to repeat authors.

In tandem, we completely revamped the journal’s editorial board and began marketing intensely for manuscript submissions. And it is working! To date, we have published 158 articles in AJVR this year, up 68 from the same period in 2021. The change to open access has been extraordinarily well received by researchers, faculty, students, and practitioners everywhere.

The JAVMA also offers opportunities for open access publication. It remains a subscription-based journal (members receive it monthly as an AVMA member benefit) but is defined as “hybrid”; that is, for specific articles, authors can pay the publishing fee, retain copyright, and enjoy worldwide dissemination of their findings.

Our strategic editorial development plan includes increasing the number of high-quality randomized control trials (RCTs; ie, a paper describing a study that randomly assigns patients into an experimental or control group). Good RCTs bring evidence to our clinical decision-making, are very popular, and receive high downloads and citations. We will of course provide tailored and intensive social media campaigns, including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and interviews on our Veterinary Vertex Podcast.

Through the end of 2022, we are offering authors of newly submitted RCTs for either AJVR or JAVMA a 50% discount on article publication fees: $600 for members and $800 for nonmembers.

We promise rapid review and, if your paper is accepted, rapid publication online in AJVR and online and in print for JAVMA. Our average time from submission to publication is consistently less than 100 days for both journals! We will also provide you with feedback you can use in your CV on citations, social engagement metrics, and downloads.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss a possible RCT submission. You can find detailed instructions for RCTs in the Instructions for Authors: https://avmajournals.avma.org/page/JAVMA-Article-Structure-Original-Research.

Respectfully,

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