**An Analysis of the Preprint Policies of the Communication Disorders Journals**

**Abstract**

Publicly disseminating scholarly papers as pre-prints has gained momentum in every subject field. The recent pandemic demonstrated the importance of the pre-print as a channel of scientific communication. The pre-prints are getting recognized as the formal component of the publication process. Hence, the publishers must announce a clear policy regarding the pre-prints to the authors. Communication disorders is a combined discipline of audiology and speech-language pathology that deals with speech, hearing, and language sciences and disabilities. There are several journals on communication disorders publishing research from across the world. The publishers in the field include non-profit organizations, learned societies, and commercial publishing companies. Understanding the pre-print policies of communication disorders journals will help the professionals in the area quickly disseminate their research results. The present study aims to analyze the pre-print policies of the major communication disorders journals. The journals indexed in the Web of Science under the subject category 'Audiology & Speech-Langauge Pathology' have been selected as the dataset for the study. Thirty journals are listed in the Web of Science database under the above category. A descriptive analysis of the pre-print policies of these journals are performed by collecting relevant information from their official websites.

**Introduction**

Preprints, the non-peer reviewed scholarly research papers, are fast becoming a formal component of the scientific publication system. The preprint programs was originated in USA by the National Institute of Health in 1961. As a part of the program, the pre-published biology papers were distributed among the ‘Information Exchange Group’. The program was discontinued in 1967 due to the stiff opposition from the publishers (Till, 2001). The modern version of pre-prints geared up in 1991 when physics researchers launched a network server called ‘arXiv’ to share their research papers before publication (Ginsparg, 2021). Following the success of aRxchive, a number of preprint servers have been emerged. In 2013, bioRxve was started in biology and life sciences and medRxvie in health sciences. During the first year of establishment itself, the medArchive received more than 11,000 submissions (Krumholz, et. al., 2020). The need for the rapid dissemination of research findings on corona virus during the 2021 pandemic accelerated the growth of pre-prints diminishing the scope of peer-review process to a good extent (Fraser et. al., 2020; Malički et. al., 2021)

**Meaning and Definition**

From the stage of draft submission to a journal, through peer-review, revision, to the final article publication, a scientific manuscript can have several versions. Of these, the initial version is known as preprint. The pre-print is also known as Author’s Original Manuscript.

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) defined the Author’s Original Manuscript as *“*Any version of a journal article that is considered by the author to be of sufficient quality to be submitted for formal peer review”.

The Committee on Publication Ethics(COPE) defined the pre-print as “scholarly manuscript posted by the author(s) in an openly accessible platform, usually before or in parallel with the peer review process”

Moshontzet al. (2021) broadly defined the pre-prints as scientific documents made available outside of the traditional publisher-managed framework and often disseminated online via trusted repositories.

Bourne et al. ( 2017) defined the it as “complete written description of a body of scientific work that has yet to be published in a journal”

**The present study**

Communication disorders is a combined discipline of audiology and speech-language pathology that deals with speech, hearing, and language sciences and disabilities. There are hundreds of journals on communication disorders publishing research from across the world. The publishers in the field include non-profit organizations, learned societies, and commercial publishing companies. Understanding the preprint policies of communication disorders journals will help the professionals in the area quickly disseminate their research results. The present study aims to analyze the pre-print policies of the major communication disorders journals.

**Related Studies**

Researchers have investigated the preprint policies of the scholarly journals in various fields. Teixeira da Silva & Dobranszki, J. (2019) reviewed the pre-print policies of 14 reputed scientific publishers based on the Sherpa/RoMEO database. The study reported change in publishers’ policy and over a period of one-year, the number of publishers permitting the self-archiving of the pre-prints increased considerably. Malicki et al. (2020) carried out a cross-sectional analysis of 57 pre-print servers based on factors like policies, requirements for submission, and found that 82% of the servers upheld the policy of screening the pre-prints before or after making them publicly available. Specifying the scholarly scope of the manuscript was a mandatory requirement of all the servers analyzed. Choi et al. (2021) studied the status of pre-print acceptance policies of 383 Asian academic society journals in 2020. The data set for the study was taken from the Science Citation Index Expanded. The parameters studied include the acceptance of pre-prints for publication in the journals, , availability of policy on pre-prints and acceptance of pre-prints as references. A mere number of 28 journals reviewed in the study accepted pre-prints and eight journals allowed reference entries for pre-prints and thirty had pre-print policies. Massey et al. (2020) studied the pre-print policies of 100 top-ranked clinical journals across all the fields. The journals were selected based on their impact factor for the year 2018. Eighty six journals allowed preprints, and one journal prohibited it. The remaining 13 journals permitted preprints on a case-by-case basis.

**Methodology**

The journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database under the category ‘Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology’ were selected for the study. Thirty ‘publication titles’ were listed under the category. Of these, the titles, *Hearing Loss Mechanisms Prevention and Cure, Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology, and* the *Journal of Medical Speech Language Pathology*’ were excluded from the study as: *Hearing Loss Mechanisms Prevention and Cure, Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology* was not a journal, ‘*Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology*’ was not actually belongs to the domain of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, and the *Journal of Medical Speech-Language Pathology* was a discontinued publication. The remaining 27 journals were taken for further analysis. The official websites of each of the 27 journals were checked for the following parameters related to the pre-prints.

* Availability of a written policy statement on pre-prints
* Availability of an exclusive pre-print policy statementfor the journal
* Acceptance of preprintsfor publication
* Conditions for accepting pre-prints for publication
* Specific locations where pre-prints can be shared

**Results**

**Written Preprint Policy Statement:** The 27 journals undertaken for reviewing the pre-print policy were published by 10 publishers, including commercial and non-profit organizations. Of 27 journals reviewed, 23 nos. (85%) had a written preprint policy on their official website. The journals that did not mention a preprint policy on the official websites were, the Journal of Fluency Disorders, Journal of American Academy of Audiology, Journal of Voice, and Noise and Health. Of these, M/s Elsevier publishes the Journal of Fluency Disorders and Journal of Voice on behalf of the International Fluency Association, and the Voice Foundation and the International Association of Phonosurgery, respectively. The journal of the the American Academy of Audiology is the scholarly peer-reviewed journal of the American Academy of Audiology, published in collaboration with M/s Thieme and M/s MedKnow, a commercial publisher publishes the Noise and Health Journal. Of the 23 journals with a declared preprint policy, 14 (61%) were just following their parent publisher’s policy mentioned on the publisher’s official website. The remaining nine journals (39%) had their pre-print policies. However, the journals with their pre-print policies had mentioned it in a one-line statement without providing any detailed description of the policy.

**Acceptance of Pre-prints for Publication**: All the 23 journals with a declared pre-print policy statement on the website accept pre-prints for consideration to publish as journal articles.

**Conditions for considering pre-prints:** The above 23 journalswere checked forthe conditions that they may have for considering pre-prints for publication. It is found that eight journals (35%) accept pre-prints unconditionally, and another ten journals (43%) put forth some conditions for considering the pre-prints. The policy of the remaining five journals (22%) regarding this is unclear. The study also sought whether the Journals permitted posting a manuscript as a preprint after submitting the same to the journal. The majority of the journals (15 nos, 65%) had some conditions for posting the preprints after submitting it to the journal, 4 journals (17 %) had no restrictions, and specifics were not available for 4 (17%) journals. The conditions are summarized and provided in table ....

However, the conditions were mainly to provide the details where the pre-prints were shared with URL and other details. The only odd condition found was with respect to the Journals ……published by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association **(**ASHA) which mandates sharing of ‘pre-prints’ on MEDLINE/PubMed databases, will not be considered. The journal…..accepts pre-prints unconditionally.

**Locations/ Platforms for sharing pre-prints:** Regarding theplatforms or locations where the preprints can be shared, 12 journals (52%) mentioned that they could be shared anywhere, including social media, scholarly collaboration networks, personal websites and preprint servers. Ten journals (43%) specified the locations where the preprints can be shared and one journal (5%), the *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders did not* specify thelocation for sharing preprints. The Journal of Communication Disorders (JCDI) specified to post the preprinttt in the publisher’s owned preprint server SSRN.

**Discussion**

The prevailing policies of most journals on communication disorders under study are encouraging and supportive of sharing research in the form of preprints. The five journals that did not mention any preprint policies on their websites were society publications. Of these, two journals, *Journal of Fluency Disorders and Journal of Voice* are Elsevier publications. M/s Elsevier has a general pre-printing policy for all the journals they publish. However, official journals of societies and non-profit organizations are exempted from that policy. The website of M/s Elsevier website says “Some society-owned titles and journals that operate double-blind peer review have different preprint policies”. Providing the details of the preprints posted including the platforms and locations of posting is a mandatory requirement for the many of the journal publishers to consider the preprints for publication. This is a realistic and necessary requirement. In fact, the authors should voluntarily share the details of preprint postings and related document the journal editors while submitting the manuscript. The Publishers-operated preprint servers are becoming common today. *Lancet* for example offers an optional provision for posting the manuscript to the journal owned preprint server during the submission stage. Similarly, Elsevier owned the preprint server SSRN, and encourage authors to pst the preprints. However, directing the authors to post the preprints to specific preprint servers may be avoided. This reiterates the observation of other researchers (…..) like that the posting a pre-print does not preclude

**Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the pre-prints are here to stay. Transparent and unambiguous policies from the part of the journal publishers and strict adherence to the submission guidelines from the authors will surely foster the preprint scientific literature. The present study was an attempt to analyse the preprint policies of the communication disorders journal. Except a few cases, the communication disorders journals reviewed in the study are in favour of preprint publication of research. However, lack of explicitness in policy statement was observed in a number of journals. The study was limited to the journals in the field indexed in the web of science database. Despite its limitations, the present study is the first known attempt to understand the status of pre-print publications in communication disorders.

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# About arXiv

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Hopefully, the publishers are on their way to recognizing pre-prints as a formal channel of scientific communication. The authors also need to cooperate with the publishers by providing the correct information about the preprint postings and updating the details according to the journal publishers' guidelines.

A pre-print is any “complete written description of a body of scientific work that has yet to be published in a journal” (Bourne et al., 2017). This can include data, poster presentations, or even completed manuscripts that haven’t been submitted for peer review.

The pre-prints are often not indexed by mainstream

bibliographic services.

there is a strong imperative for the

palaeontology research community to ensure that

there is broad-scale access to the research that

they produce

medRxiv

One of the first in this new wave was the discipline-based server, bioRxiv – set up by the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in 2013 to cover the life sciences

RePec

arXiv,

SSRN

Pre-prints are also increasingly indexed in large scholarly databases and search engines (*e.g.*, PubMed, Crossref, Lens, Dimensions, Microsoft Academic), and major manual referencing

styles have issued guidance on how pre-prints should be cited in scholarly papers

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a large increase in the posting of pre-prints, as well as scrutiny and the number of comments they received on both social media platforms

NIH only changed their policy to allow pre-prints to be cited in grant applications in

March of 2017; and some journals only very recently allowed pre-prints to be cited in articles

Recognizing the growing interest in pre-prints, NLM is today launching the first phase of the [NIH Preprint Pilot](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/about/nihpreprints/), which will test the viability of making pre-prints searchable in [PubMed Central (PMC)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/) and, by extension, discoverable in [PubMed](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/), starting with COVID-19 pre-prints reporting NIH-supported research on [June 9, 2020](https://nlmdirector.nlm.nih.gov/2020/06/09/the-nih-preprint-pilot-a-new-experiment-for-a-new-era/).

In fact, recognizing the value of such work, NIH is now doing a [pre-print pilot](https://nlmdirector.nlm.nih.gov/2020/06/09/the-nih-preprint-pilot-a-new-experiment-for-a-new-era/) to include discoverability of that research via PubMed and PubMed Central.

The Coalition for Responsible Sharing (CfRS) was formed in October 2017 by a group of society, not-for-profit and commercial publishers and information analytics businesses to engage with article-sharing platforms and scholarly collaboration networks which undertake, contribute to or otherwise allow or encourage unauthorized posting of publishers’ copyrighted content.

Elsevier is a signatory to the [STM Voluntary Principles](https://www.stm-assoc.org/2015_06_08_Voluntary_principles_for_article_sharing_on_scholarly_collaboration_networks.pdf) for article sharing on Scholarly Collaboration Networks and a member of the [Coalition for Responsible Sharing](https://www.responsiblesharing.org/).

Some society-owned titles and journals that operate double-blind peer review have different pre-print policies. Please check the journals Guide for Authors for further information

Many journals will now consider an article that has appeared on a preprint server, and grant-awarding bodies on both sides of the Atlantic allow preprints to be cited in grant and fellowship applications

pre-prints’, ‘working papers’, or ‘manuscript drafts’ depending on the discipline—here we refer to these all as ‘pre-prints’, using the emerging standard term

Mechanisms for more formal dissemination emerged in the early 1990s with arXiv, a repository that now hosts more than 1.3 million pre-prints in physics, mathematics, and allied fields. SSRN, a pre-print service originally for social science research, started in 1994. And, since 2013, more than two dozen pre-print services have launched representing a wide variety of topics, indicating growing recognition of this mechanism of communication across all areas of scholarship

Although pre-prints only recently rose to prominence, they were first introduced in 1961 as part of a US National

Institutes of Health project called the Information Exchange Groups ( Cobb  M﻿.  The prehistory of biology pre-prints: a forgotten experiment from the 1960s. ﻿ *PLoS Biol*. 2017;15(11):e2003995. doi:[10.1371/journal.pbio.2003995](http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.2003995))

Since 1991, physicists and mathematician s have been using the arXiv preprint repository to circulate articles and ideas, to the envy of many biologists. Afte rnumber of failed attempts, including ClinMedNetprints(1999–2005) and NaturePrecedings(2007–2012),2 biology prerint servers were launched in 2013—Peer J Preprints and bioRxiv (ColdSpringHarborLaboratory)

One of the first in this new wave was the discipline-based server, bioRxiv – set up by the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in 2013 to cover the life sciences – which has been a focus of discus-sion and debate (Abdill &Blekhman, 2019; Luther, 2017; Vale, 2015). However, there are a considerable number of other disci-plinary servers, including several set up by the Center for Open Science, such as SocArXiv, engrXiv and PsyArXiv (all of which were launched in 2016), as well as platforms such as ESSOAr, set up by the American Geophysical Union in 2018. At the same time, national servers have been launched, includ-ingChinaXiv (for China), IndiaRxiv (for India) and INA-Rxiv (Indonesia) (Mallapaty, 2019). Funders of research have also set up platforms that enable the sharing of articles before peer-review, including, in 2016, Wellcome Open Research, for Wellcome-funded researchers. In addition, a number of journal publishers have added the dissemination of pre-prints to their workflows. The open access (OA) publisher, PeerJ, began offering pre-print services in 2013, MDPI in 2016 and Cambridge University Press in 2019. Whilst the first of these has now closed its server, significantly it cites its reason for doing so as the change in the pre-prints landscape between 2013 and 2019: “the academic community is now well-served with other pre-print venue options” (PeerJ, 2019). A number of jour-nals, primarily in biomedical sciences, have adopted a dif-ferent model, and now deposit submissions from authors in bioRxiv on behalfof authors (where the author agrees to this). Journals practising this model in bioRxiv include Proceed-ings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), titles pub-lished by PLOS and many published by Frontiers (bioRxiv, n.d.). The F1000Research publishing platform has promoted anovel publication model involving pre-prints, in which immedi-ate release of author submissions as pre-prints is followed byopen peer review, with revised versions of a paper(alongside author responses to reviewer comments) published in the journal as they are made.

**Previuos Studies**

Elsevier

##### John Wiley

##### Karger

##### SAGE

##### Springer

##### Taylor & Francis

##### Wolters Kluwer Health - Lippincott Williams & Wilkins