**An Analysis of the Pre-print Policies of the Communication Disorders Journals**

**Abstract**

Publicly disseminating scholarly papers as preprints has gained momentum in every subject field. The recent pandemic demonstrated the importance of the preprint as a channel of scientific communication. The preprints are getting recognized as the formal component of the publication process. Hence, the publishers must announce a clear policy regarding the preprints 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 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 preprint 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 preprint 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 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.

**Meaning, Definition and Related Terms**

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 preprint 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 preprint as “scholarly manuscript posted by the author(s) in an openly accessible platform, usually before or in parallel with the peer review process”

Moshontz et al. (2021) broadly defined the preprints 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”

**Origin, Development and Recent Trends**

The preprint programs was originated in USA by the national Institute of Health in 1961. As a part of the program, the pre-published papers biology were distributed among the ‘Information Exchange Group’. The program was discontinued in 1967 due to the stiff opposition from the publishers to accept …

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. Following the success of aRxchive, a number of pre-print 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.

**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 preprint policies of the major communication disorders journals.

**Related Studies**

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 preprints 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 preprint 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 preprints and acceptance of preprints as references. A mere number of 28 journals reviewed in the study accepted preprints and eight journals allowed reference entries for preprints and thirty had preprint policies.

**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 preprints
* Availability of an exclusive preprint policy statement for the journal
* Acceptance of preprints for publication
* Conditions for accepting preprints for publication
* Specific locations where preprints can be shared

Instructions for authors, Editorial Policy, Submission information,

**Results and Discussion**

**Written Pre-print Policy Statement:** The 27 journals undertaken for reviewing the preprint policy were published by … publishers which include commercial and non-profit organizations. Out of 27 journals reviewed, … (.. %) had a written preprint policy on their official website. The journals without a preprint policy were, Of these, ….. was the official journal of society

Among the journals who have declared pre-print policy, …… were just following the policy statement of the parent publishing company. The remaining … had own pre-print policies. However, the journals with own pre-print policies just had mentioned it in a one-line statement without proper elaboration.

The journals which did not mention preprint policy were published by…..

M/s Elsevier has a standard policy on preprints applicable for all the journals they publish. However, these may not be applicable to the Elsevier published official journals of societies and non-profit organizations. The website says “…….”

**Acceptance of Pre-prints for Publication**: Of the 27 journals, except …. others mentioned that they accept pre-prints for publication. The four journals which did not mention about the preprints were: ………….The publishers’ websites of these journals also did not mention anything about the pre-prints

**Conditions for publishing pre-prints:** Except … journals, the remaining …. had some conditionsinaccepting pre-prints for publication consideration.They aresummarized and given intable…..However,the conditions were mainly to provide the details where the preprints 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 preprints unconditionally

**Locations/ Platforms for sharing pre-prints:** Themanuscripts submitted for publication in ….. journals may be shared anywhere as per the convenience of the authors.  **Whereas …. Journals specified clearly where to post the pre-prints.** These include pre-print servers,IRs andas the favourite places for posting pre-prints. Only two journals highlighted social media as a preferred platform for sharing pre-prints.

The prevailing preprint policies of the majority of the journals under study are encouraging and supportive of sharing research as preprints. This reiterates the observation of other researchers (. (…..) like that the posting a preprint does not preclude

**Conclusion**

Hopefully, the publishers are on their way to recognize preprints as a formal channel of scientific communication. The authors also need to cooperate with the publishers by providing the correct information about the prepring postings and updating the details as per the guidelines of the journal publishers.

A preprint 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 preprints 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

Preprints 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 preprints should be cited in scholarly papers

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

NIH only changed their policy to allow preprints to be cited in grant applications in

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

Recognizing the growing interest in preprints, 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 preprints 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 preprints 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 [preprint 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 preprint policies. Please check the journals Guide for Authors for further information

Manyjournalswillnowconsideranarticlethathasappearedonapreprintserver,andgrant-awardingbodiesonbothsidesoftheAtlanticallowpreprintstobecitedingrantandfel-lowshipapplications

preprints’, ‘working papers’, or ‘manuscript drafts’ depending on the discipline—here we refer to these all as ‘preprints’, 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 preprints in physics, mathematics, and allied fields. SSRN, a preprint service originally for social science research, started in 1994. And, since 2013, more than two dozen preprint services have launched representing a wide variety of topics, indicating growing recognition of this mechanism of communication across all areas of scholarship

Although preprints 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 preprints: 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))

Since1991,physicistsandmathematicianshavebeenusingthearXivpreprintrepositorytocirculatearticlesandideas,totheenvyofmanybiologists.Afternumberoffailedattempts,includingClinMedNetprints(1999–2005)andNaturePrecedings(2007–2012),2 biologyprerintserverswerelaunchedin2013—PeerJPreprintsandbioRxiv(ColdSpringHarborLaboratory)

An original list of 227 journals that publish palaeontological research was constructed based on an exhaustive Web search, followed by crosschecking with the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). We did not use common databases such as Scopus or Web of Sciences, as these reveal a very biased picture of the ‘global’ research landscape (Ciarli et al., 2014; Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016). This list includes discipline-specific journals, but also a number of interdisciplinary ‘megajournals’ that have proven reasonably popular within some areas of the palaeontology community and now represent a huge diversity of potential journals for palaeontologists to publish in. The following data were originally gathered in summer 2017, based on three main sources (Sherpa/ RoMEO; Web search; clarification through email).The information quality in Sherpa/RoMEO was also of varying quality, and often key data were missing, and so the data were checked manually (i.e., by gathering information directly from journal websites) again in February 2019 to make sure they are as up-to-date as possible and are available as supplementary files included in the Appendix

Journal name;

• Whether or not the journal permits sharing of

preprints;

• Whether or not the journal permits sharing of

postprints;

• Whether there is an embargo period or not

(where there is more than one option, this represents

a different embargo based on a different

repository type);

• Whether or not the publisher version (VOR) can

be shared;

• Whether or not an option for ‘gold’ OA exists

(i.e., instant availability at the point of journal

publication; including ‘hybrid OA’);

• What the article processing charge (APC) for

the gold option is (zero denotes ‘diamond’ OA);

• Source of information from Sherpa/RoMEO;

• Source of information from main website;

• Sherpa/RoMEO colour status;

• 2017 Source Normalised Impact per Publication

(SNIP, source:

http://www.journalindicators.com/methodology)

(n=182);

• 2017 impact factor (n=163); and

• Publisher

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 preprints to their workflows. The open access (OA) publisher, PeerJ, began offering preprint 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 preprints landscape between 2013 and 2019: “the academic community is now well-served with other preprint 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 preprints, in which immedi-ate release of author submissions as preprints 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**

The policies of the scholarly journals on pre-prints and other article forms have previously been investigated in various fields. Teixeira da Silva and Dobránszki (2019) studied the preprint policies among of 14 reputed scientific publishers and the change in policies over a period of one-year. The study was based on the Sherpa/RoMEO database.

Elsevier

##### John Wiley

##### Karger

##### SAGE

##### Springer

##### Taylor & Francis

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

**References**

Malički, M., & Jerončić, A. (2020). Preprint servers’ policies, submission requirements, and transparency in reporting and research integrity recommendations. *JAMA,* 324(18),1901–1903. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.17195

Choi , Y. J., Choi, H. W., & Kim, S. (2021). Preprint acceptance policies of Asian academic society journals in 2020. *Science Editing*, *8*(8), 10–17.

Bourne, P. E., Polka, J. K., Vale, R. D., & Kiley, R. (2017). Ten simple rules to consider regarding preprint submission. *PLoS Computational Biology, 13*(5): e1005473. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005473>

Committee on Publication Ethics. (2018). Discussion document on preprints. London: Committee on Publication Ethics. Available from: https://publicationethics. org/node/38176

*medRxiv*: the preprint server for health sciences. Accessed September 27, 2020. <https://www.medrxiv.org/>

*bioRxiv*: the preprint server for biology. Accessed September 27, 2020. <https://www.biorxiv.org/>

arXiv.org. Accessed September 27, 2020. <https://arxiv.org/>