

# Academic Publishing in Nepal

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## ABSTRACT

Globally academic publishing is a high-profit industry. Most of the work associated with manuscripts is carried out by academics for free. The article examines the academic publishing industry in Nepal. Most journals in Nepal are published by institutions or societies. Most do not have article processing charges. The issue of Nepalese authors having to pay for publishing in international journals as Nepal is upgraded to a lower-middle-income country is also mentioned.

**Keywords:** Academic publishing, Article processing charge, Journals, Nepal

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## BACKGROUND

A recent article mentions academic publishing as among the most profitable industries globally, with a profit margin of around 40%.<sup>1</sup> There has been a steady consolidation of publishers and in 2013 the top five academic publishers accounted for over 50% of all papers published.<sup>2</sup> Many researchers are concerned about using funding provided by government agencies or universities for paying article processing charges (APCs) to for-profit publishing corporations.<sup>3</sup> In the United Kingdom the government's objective to protect the country's highly profitable publishing industry is at variance with obtaining a fair publishing deal for research funded by the government and universities.<sup>4</sup>

### Nepal Becomes LMIC

In Nepal, the first scientific journal in medicine, the Journal of the Nepal Medical Association was published in 1963.<sup>5</sup> This was followed by the Journal of the Institute of Medicine and the Journal of Nepal Paediatrics Society. An article provides an overview of scientific publications in Nepal and mentions that private publishers have not entered the business as the market is small and profits are limited. Nepal also benefits from the Research4Life program and free

access to several scientific journals as a group A country.<sup>6</sup> This also made Nepalese researchers eligible for a complete waiver on APC for several global journals. This situation partly changed in 2020 when Nepal was reclassified as a lower middle-income country based on a per capita income of US Dollars (USD) 1090.<sup>7</sup> Open-access publishers like the Dove Press and BioMed Central (BMC) now require researchers from Nepal to pay 50% of the APC which can range from 1100 to 1600 USD.

### Access to and Indexing of Nepalese Journals

Nepal has escaped the corporatization of academic publishing seen elsewhere. There have however, been important strides in publishing. The site Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL, [www.nepjol.info](http://www.nepjol.info)) provides free access to Nepalese journals. Currently, there are 283 journals listed and 29989 articles are available freely online as full text. In addition to Biomedicine, there are also journals from other fields like sociology, education, finance, and banking. Most journals in Nepal are supported by institutions and associations and do not have APCs. The free unrestricted access to published articles is a major motivating factor for researchers.

The NepMed database ([www.nepmed.nhrc.gov.np](http://www.nepmed.nhrc.gov.np)) indexes journals published from Nepal in the biomedical and allied health sciences. Table 1 lists the journals indexed in NepMed. The peer review system has been mostly constructive providing suggestions to authors to improve their manuscripts. However, a matter of concern has been the issue of sustainability. Several of these journals (especially in fields other than Biomedicine) have ceased publication due to various issues, possibly a lack of financial support and institutional support.

Among the challenges are institutions and associations may expect and even pressurize their faculty and members to publish in their journals. There may also be interference from the funders and pressure on editors to accept articles by senior faculty and powerful members. Finding suitable peer reviewers may be challenging and rewarding and recognizing peer reviewers is important.<sup>8</sup> In the Nepalese context, non-financial rewards can be offered.

### Challenges for Nepalese Journals

Most journals are, however, new and do not yet have impact factors. Studies in other countries have shown researchers

often prefer to publish in high-impact journals. This could motivate researchers to publish in international journals that are still free for researchers from Nepal. The authors can request a further reduction in the discounted APCs from other journals. With an increasing number of submitted manuscripts to Nepalese journals, competition for publication will increase. Also, many journals are not published in a timely manner though the situation is improving. The duration from submission to publication can also be long though this has increased consistently even for international journals.

With the passage of time, Nepal's per-capita income should steadily increase, and waivers may become less common for researchers based in the country. Strengthening the existing system of journals within the country, providing free, unrestricted access to the published articles, further developing quality assurance, and indexing systems and wider acceptance of these publications for academic posts and for promotion can propel scientific research forward. Preprint servers and a system of community peer review could also be considered.

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**Table 1:** Information about Nepalese biomedical journals indexed in NepMed

SN	Name of Nepalese Biomedical Journal (Abbreviation)	Website/weblink
1	Birat Journal of Health Sciences (BHJS)	<a href="http://bjhsnepal.org/">http://bjhsnepal.org/</a>
2	Europasian Journal of Medical Sciences (EJMS)	<a href="https://www.europasianjournals.org/">https://www.europasianjournals.org/</a>
3	Grande Medical Journal (GMJ)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/GMJ">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/GMJ</a>
4	International Journal of Occupational Safety and Health (IJOSH)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/IJOSH">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/IJOSH</a>
5	Janaki Medical College Journal of Medical Science (JMCJMS)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jmcjms">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jmcjms</a>
6	Journal of Advances in Internal Medicine (JAIM)	<a href="http://www.ijmedicine.com">www.ijmedicine.com</a>
7	Journal of Bp Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (JBPKIHS)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jbpkihs">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jbpkihs</a>
8	Journal of Chitwan Medical College (JCMC)	<a href="http://www.jcmc.edu.np">www.jcmc.edu.np</a>

9	Journal of College of Medical Sciences-Nepal (JCMS)	<a href="http://www.cmsnepal.edu.np/jcms.html">http://www.cmsnepal.edu.np/jcms.html</a>
18	Journal of Diabetes & Endocrinology Association of Nepal (JDEAN)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jdean">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jdean</a>
19	Journal of Gandaki Medical College-Nepal (JGMCN)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jgmcn">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jgmcn</a>
20	Journal of General Practice and Emergency Medicine of Nepal	<a href="http://www.jgpeman.com">www.jgpeman.com</a>
21	Journal of Health and Allied Sciences (JHAS)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/JHAS">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/JHAS</a>
22	Journal of Institute of Medicine Nepal (JIOM)	<a href="http://www.jiom.com.np">www.jiom.com.np</a>
23	Journal of Karnali Academy of Health Sciences	<a href="http://www.jkahs.org.np">www.jkahs.org.np</a>
24	Journal of Kathmandu Medical College (JKMC)	<a href="http://www.jkmc.com.np">www.jkmc.com.np</a>
23	Journal of Kist Medical College (JKISTMC)	<a href="https://journal.kistmcth.edu.np/index.php/JKISTMC/index">https://journal.kistmcth.edu.np/index.php/JKISTMC/index</a>
24	Journal of Lumbini Medical College (JLMC)	<a href="https://jlmc.edu.np/index.php/JLMC">https://jlmc.edu.np/index.php/JLMC</a>
25	Journal of Nepal Health Research Council (JNHRC)	<a href="http://www.jnhrc.com.np">www.jnhrc.com.np</a>
26	Journal of Nepal Medical Association (JNMA)	<a href="http://www.jnma.com.np">www.jnma.com.np</a>
27	Journal of Nepal Paediatric Society (JNPS)	<a href="http://www.nepas.org.np">www.nepas.org.np</a>
28	Journal of Nepalese Society of Periodontology and Oral Implantology (JNSPOI)	<a href="http://www.nspoi.com">www.nspoi.com</a>
29	Journal of Nobel Medical College (JONMC)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/JoNMC">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/JoNMC</a>
30	Journal of Nepalese Prosthodontic Society (JNPS)	<a href="http://www.jnps.com.np">www.jnps.com.np</a>
31	Journal of Pathology of Nepal (JPN)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jpn">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jpn</a>
32	Journal of Patan Academy of Health Sciences (JPAHS)	<a href="http://www.jpahs.edu.np">www.jpahs.edu.np</a>
33	Journal of Society of Anesthesiologists of Nepal (JSAN)	<a href="http://www.jsan.org.np">www.jsan.org.np</a>
34	Journal of Society of Surgeons of Nepal (JSSN)	<a href="http://www.jssn.org.np">www.jssn.org.np</a>
35	Journal of Universal College of Medical Sciences (JUCMS)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jucms">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/jucms</a>
36	Medical Journal of Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences (MJPAAHS)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/MJPAAHS">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/MJPAAHS</a>
37	Medical Journal of Shree Birendra Hospital (MJSBH)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/MJSBH">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/MJSBH</a>
38	Nepal Journal of Dermatology, Venereology & Leprology (Njdvl)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/njdvl">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/njdvl</a>
39	Nepal Journal of Medical Sciences (NJMS)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/NJMS">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/NJMS</a>
40	Nepal Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (NJOG)	<a href="http://www.njog.org.np">www.njog.org.np</a>
41	Nepal Medical College Journal (NMCJ)	<a href="http://www.journal.nmcth.edu">www.journal.nmcth.edu</a>
42	Nepal Medical Journal (NMJ)	<a href="http://www.nmj.com.np">www.nmj.com.np</a>
43	Nepal Orthopaedic Association Journal (NOAJ)	<a href="https://noaj.org.np">https://noaj.org.np</a>
44	Nepalese Heart Journal (NHJOURNAL)	<a href="http://www.nhjournl.info/">http://www.nhjournl.info/</a>
45	Nepalese Journal of Cancer (NJC)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/NJC">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/NJC</a>
46	Nepalese Journal of Ent Head and Neck Surgery (NJEHNS)	<a href="https://www.njehns.org.np">https://www.njehns.org.np</a>
47	Nepalese Journal of Ophthalmology (NJO)	<a href="http://www.nepjoph.org.np">www.nepjoph.org.np</a>
48	Nepalese Journal of Radiology (NJR)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/njr">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/njr</a>
49	Nepalese Medical Journal (NMJ)	<a href="http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/nmj">http://nepmed.nhrc.gov.np/index.php/nmj</a>
50	Post-Graduate Medical Journal of NAMS (PMJN)	<a href="http://www.pmjn.org.np">www.pmjn.org.np</a>