

## The Case Against Open Access Journals

Rudy J. Castellani<sup>1</sup>, Mark A. Smith<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

<sup>2</sup>Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Technological advances in information processing have spawned open access publishing, which ostensibly allows for free communication among scientists in the spectrum of disciplines. Moreover, the expansion in open access journals, which is now alarming to the point of guaranteeing the failure of many, has been accelerated by government mandates requiring that publishers of state supported work make that work available to the public after a defined, and often short, period of time. The anti-free market nature of this new mandate, the interest by some proponents of open access publishing to undermine commercial publisher profitability per se, and the “author pays” model of financing among many open access journals, has raised concerns from many in the scientific community. Prominent among the concerns is the erosion of the peer review process (which is axiomatic with the massive proliferation of journals), betrayal of a public who assumes that high quality peer review is an integral part of science, the unfair disadvantage to developing nations, and the lack of recognition of the impracticality of a “one size fits all” model. Echoing, the Royal Society position, “Careful forethought, informed by proper investigation of the costs and benefits, is necessary before introducing new models that amount to the biggest change in the way that knowledge is exchanged since the invention of the peer-reviewed scientific journal 340 years ago. Otherwise the exchange of knowledge could be severely disrupted, and researchers and wider society will suffer the resulting consequences.”