Description

“Megajournal” is a category of open access journals that have a selection criteria smaller than most other peer-reviewed journals. Megajournals contain articles from a wide variety of disciplines; they are a potpourri of many subjects, not a narrow slice of a big area. They are the opposite of specialty journals. Promoters of the term megajournal usually also tout quick response times, rapid publication, and open access to readers free of charge.

Megajournals: New Concept or Old Hat?

Megajournals are nothing new. Nature is a megajournal, so is Science and the Journal of the American Chemical Society (JACS). All of these have outstanding reputations. On the other hand, the Journal of Organic Chemistry (JOC) is more specialized in its content, but equally respectable. It will be unfair say that a megajournal is better or worse than a specialty journal; a decision to publish in one or the other is often comes down to the audience an author is trying to reach. When I was a graduate student I considered subscribing to JACS or JOC. One group member recommended JOC, saying it was a better choice for an organic chemist, since JACS had “a bit of this and a bit of that.” Another group member preferred JACS saying, “JOC keeps you up-to-date on organic chemistry; JACS keeps you up to date on all chemistry.” I ended up subscribing to both.

The Danger of Megajournals

There is nothing wrong with megajournals in principle, but be wary of publishers that misuse the term. Some wrongly use the term to cover up the fact that the journal has low standards of quality and they will publish pretty much anything. Look beyond the hype and read the policies. If a journal has peer reviews for “technical correctness only” and not for novelty or impact on the field, then this could be a sign of danger. In this case, a researcher should inquire further into the reputation of the journal and skim through several issues to confirm that the journal is up to international standards. Self-proclaimed megajournals are mostly online open access publications that charge the author a certain fee to publish their paper. This is not a problem if the journal is a good quality one, if not, the it may be closer to a paper mill scam than a reputed publication.

Megajournals: Good or Bad for a Researcher’s Career?

There is no polite way to answer this question; it simply depends on the quality of the journal. Publishing in a high-quality megajournal will be good for a researcher’s career, while publishing in a low quality megajournal may not do much good.

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Selecting Journals

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