Nature Scientific Reports. Fast-tracking fees history and concerns.

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Abstract

Nature Scientific Reports has adopted is piloting fast-tracking for a fee. Four years ago, I noticed that several journals had adopted such a policy. I raised a number of concerns, such as What happens if the fast-tracking period elapses and a reviewer hasn't gotten their review in yet? Will the decision about the manuscript be made without that review? How is the additional money used? Does any go to reviewers?

Keywords

Cognitive Neuroscience (Subfield)

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Nature Scientific Reports ~~has adopted~~ is piloting fast-tracking for a fee.

Four years ago, I noticed that several journals had adopted such a policy. I raised a number of concerns, such as

- What happens if the fast-tracking period elapses and a reviewer hasn't gotten their review in yet? Will the decision about the manuscript be made without that review?
- How is the additional money used? Does any go to reviewers?
- Does the action editor know when a particular manuscript is being fast-tracked? Do the reviewers? To avoid monetary influence, both should be blind to this, but that seems impossible if these things are to be expedited.
- Will articles which benefited from fast-tracking be indicated in a note associated with those articles? Without such a policy, all articles in the journal may be sullied, at least in the minds of cynics.
- Are the fees worth risking the appearance of favoritism for money, the disadvantage in speed to scientists with fewer resources, and the possible loss of public trust in science?

We started a petition against the policy, and our complaints seem to have led to the demise of the policy at a few journals. For details, see my previous posts on the topic.

I suggest that the tag #fastTrackFee be used on social media to discuss this.