

# The Brazilian Journal of Oncology: a beacon of excellence in open access within the expanding universe of cancer research

*Brazilian Journal of Oncology: um farol de excelência no acesso aberto do universo em expansão da pesquisa sobre câncer*

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The global landscape of cancer research has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years. The increasing number of cancer cases worldwide<sup>(1)</sup> has fueled an unprecedented surge in cancer research publications.<sup>(2,3)</sup> This explosion of knowledge is underpinned by an equally significant shift towards open access publications, reflecting a commitment to making scientific discoveries accessible to all. However, amidst this laudable trend, a challenging issue appears: the high costs associated with publishing articles can amount to as much as \$1,500 per article. Additional charges for colored images surpass the predetermined maximum page limit, and the inclusion of supplements may also be factored into the overall publication cost.<sup>(4)</sup> In this dynamic environment, the Brazilian Journal of Oncology stands as a potential remarkable change, offering a beacon of hope through its commitment to open access, affordability, and independence as a journal belonging to a group of reputable Brazilian cancer organizations, such as the Brazilian Society of Clinical Oncology (SBOC), Brazilian Society of Surgical Oncology, Brazilian Society of Pediatric Oncology (SOBOPE), and Brazilian Society of Radiotherapy (SBRT).

As the volume of cancer research publications continues to grow, there has been a welcome shift towards open-access publishing. Open-access journals make scientific research freely available to anyone with an internet connection. This approach democratizes access to vital information, ensuring that knowledge is not confined to the boundaries of academic institutions or is hidden behind paywalls. Researchers, healthcare professionals, and the public benefit from the dissemination of scientific findings without financial constraints.<sup>(5)</sup>

Hua's et al. (2017)<sup>(5)</sup> research revealed that, within the field of oncology, 58% of scholarly papers released in 2014 were available for free on the Internet by 2016. A significant discovery from their study was that open-access articles garnered slightly more citations than their paid counterparts.

The financial model underpinning many open access journals often entails high publication fees to be paid by authors of scientific articles. The fee for publishing an article in an open access journal or a hybrid open access journal ranges from \$1,500 to \$5,000, and this open access fee can sometimes be charged in addition to the publication fee.<sup>(4)</sup> These fees can place a significant burden on researchers, especially those from resource-constrained regions or institutions.<sup>(4,6,7)</sup> Funding for open access publications may not always be readily available, leading to disparities in access to publication opportunities and potentially hindering

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the equitable dissemination of knowledge, limiting the diversity of voices in the scientific community. This economic barrier discourages researchers from sharing valuable insights into the literature.

In this context of increasing cancer research publications and the associated financial challenges of open access, the Brazilian Journal of Oncology has emerged as a potentially important alternative. This journal distinguishes itself in several ways, which are crucial to the current scenario.

First and foremost, the Brazilian Journal of Oncology is dedicated to the principle of open access. Providing free access to articles aligns with the global movement to democratize scientific knowledge. Regardless of their geographical location or institutional affiliation, researchers can freely access and contribute to this valuable resource.

Importantly, this commitment to open access was not accompanied by publication fees in the Brazilian Journal of Oncology. The journal recognizes the financial constraints that many researchers face and does not impose publication costs. This affordability is a significant advantage, ensuring that talented researchers from around the world can share their findings without financial hindrance.

The Brazilian Journal of Oncology is affiliated with four reputable Brazilian cancer societies. This affiliation underscores the journal's dedication to independence and avoidance of conflicts of interest. Such independence is critical for maintaining the ethical integrity of scientific research, ensuring that the publication process remains focused on the quality and significance of the research, rather than commercial interests.

Ethical issues in scientific publications have been meticulously upheld by this journal. However, we have recently strengthened our commitment to the recommendations of esteemed institutions, such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME). This commitment has been reinforced by our recent indexing in DOAJ and forthcoming indexing in other databases. Our website has been restructured, and great care has been taken from the moment articles are submitted until their publication, involving all participants in the peer-review process.

A growing concern for authors, scientific institutions, and governments is the presence of predatory journals, which compromise the integrity of scientific research by sidestepping proper peer-review processes and disregarding the principles of good scientific practice. While researchers in medical oncology and hematology are becoming increasingly

aware of this issue, there is still a lack of widespread recognition and standardized methods for identifying these predatory journals. This underscores the urgent need for educational campaigns to address the challenges and problems associated with predatory journal practices in oncology.<sup>(8)</sup>

In a world where concerns persist regarding the influence of corporate interests in scientific publishing and the prevalence of predatory journals, publications such as the Brazilian Journal of Oncology are symbols of integrity. Researchers and readers are confident that the content presented in these journals is driven by a commitment to advancing knowledge and improving patient outcomes.

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