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Biomedical Research Publishing in the Era of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)

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The COVID-19 pandemic is changing many aspects of our daily lives and forcing us to take another look at behaviors we previously didn't think twice about. This is also the case for the biomedical research enterprise, which has already changed tremendously during the start of the digital era.

In response to the uptick in COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 research, there is an even greater need to quickly communicate findings about the virus itself, clinical presentations of the infection and potential therapeutic interventions or practices for prevention. As has always been the case, progress in biomedical research is entirely dependent on effective and timely communication to the wider scientific community. Members of the research community play an integral role in evaluating existing findings and facilitating further discoveries. Library shelves that were once packed with physical scientific journals have been replaced with exclusively online journals of varying quality.

Many of these online journals are only accessible via subscription, which can cost hundreds of dollars for individuals and millions for research libraries and institutions. However, subscription-based access models are being questioned in the face of "open-access" platforms, which do not have any fees attached for those wishing to view publications in the journal. This model is also challenging the peer-review process which allows editors to choose anonymous experts to analyze manuscripts and provide feedback before editors decide whether to accept or reject manuscripts.