

Preprints

A preprint is a version of a scholarly paper made publicly accessible prior to submission to a peer reviewed journal. However, there are questions over Preprint quality as they are not yet peer reviewed. New platforms, such as Wellcome Research look to address this with Preprints being made available and then openly peer reviewed. But there is confusion over the different versions once peer reviewed and if the Preprint will be peer reviewed.



Preprint Myths

- “Being scooped”. It is thought that making the paper available before publication allows another researcher to use your findings and publish these into a research article before you. However, Preprints provides a date stamp on when research was made available, reducing the likelihood that you will be ‘scooped’ by other researchers.
- “Findings won’t get published if a preprint”. Many research articles start off as Preprints. Nowadays, many of the large publishers have their own Preprint server so they can link the final published version to the earlier Preprint.
- “Preprints are not peer reviewed and there is no quality assurance”. Preprints are produced by academics and need to meet the same level of quality as a published article. They have the advantage that the research is written in the words of the author without revision.

Why use Preprints

Preprint servers are often operated by academic organisations and do not charge for hosting. Preprint services relevant to health research include:

- [bioRxiv](#) (pronounced "bio-archive") for preprints in the life sciences
- [MedRxiv](#) preprint server for health sciences
- [OSF Preprints](#)

As well as getting your research out in the public sphere quicker, Preprints can allow research which produces null or negative results, to be more widely distributed. They reach a larger audience as Preprints are open access and available to anyone. They also stimulate discussion and enable feedback to be quickly incorporated into a revised output, helping to identify problems and make corrections prior to formal publication.

Gates and other funders are looking to move away from paying for Gold open access and Preprints are a way of meeting open access mandates.

Although there is still a question over the scientific robustness and quality of Preprints, this is changing as more quality assured platforms emerge to ensure these outputs are at the highest level to share with the highest audience.