

# Authors from wealthy countries cannot all pay publishing fees

By [Loren B. Byrne](#)

Open-access publishing requires authors to pay article-processing charges (APCs), which particularly disadvantage researchers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs; see [Nature 623, 472–473; 2023](#)). APCs can also pose a challenge for some scholars in high-income countries.

This often-overlooked group includes academics who, like me, are based at small, less-resourced institutions, such as primarily undergraduate universities and community colleges. Many of us engage in research, especially to support undergraduate education, and must publish peer-reviewed articles to receive tenure, promotion and merit-based awards. For those without grant money to meet publishing costs, the APC for one open-access article can exceed the entire annual institutional allocation for professional-development expenses, money that is also needed for learned society memberships, conferences and research supplies. Shrinking library budgets mean that many small institutions cannot pay APCs or community-action publishing fees.

More publishers need to follow the lead of the American Chemical Society (see [go.nature.com/gxy2a](#)) and Wiley's multi-institution Open Access Accounts (see [go.nature.com/48wdx](#)), which waive APCs for those at undergraduate institutions. Such initiatives will create more equitable publishing opportunities for institutions of all sizes.

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## Competing Interests

The author declares no competing interests.