

PHILOSOPHY

FORMAL PEER REVIEW MAY COME TO AN END

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[The Absurdity of Peer Review. What the pandemic revealed about... | by Mark Humphries | Jun, 2021 | Elemental](#) June 2021

I was reading my umpteenth news story about Covid-19 science, a story about the latest research into how to make indoor spaces safe from infection, about whether cleaning surfaces or changing the air was more important. And it was bothering me. Not because it was dull (which, of course, it was: there are precious few ways to make air filtration and air pumps edge-of-the-seat stuff). But because of the way it treated the science.

You see, much of the research it reported was in the form of pre-prints, papers shared by researchers on the internet before they are submitted to a scientific journal. And every mention of one of these pre-prints was immediately followed by the disclaimer that it had not yet been peer reviewed. As though to convey to the reader that the research therein, the research plastered all over the story, was somehow of less worth, less value, less meaning than the research in a published paper, a paper that had passed peer review.

I expect the business of scientific publishers is slowly coming to an end. Maybe others also?

The solution to scientific publishing might be going back to writing books instead of papers. Can't decide if I'm joking. There're too many papers published, books will be of higher quality (take time & effort). Urgent results could be pre-printed & discussed in conferences.

— Oded Rechavi (@OdedRechavi) [October 31, 2021](#)

We will need of course peer evaluation but maybe not in the sense that scientific publication is being suppressed by peer review of some elite journals. Some arXiv type PDF deposit plus some elife/twitter/pubpeer score would be fully sufficient. For me and maybe also for many other people in the field.

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