

Frontiers in Public Health

Journal: Frontiers in Public Health **Publisher:** Frontiers Media S.A. **ISSN:** 2296-2565 **Open Access:** Yes (Gold OA, author-pays model) **Impact Factor (2025):** ~4.5 **Scope:** Multidisciplinary journal covering all aspects of public health, including epidemiology, health policy, global health, occupational health, and digital health.

□ Strengths

- **Wide visibility and rapid publication:** Articles are freely available and often indexed quickly, which can help disseminate findings in real time.
- **Multidisciplinary reach:** Encourages submissions from across fields (economics, epidemiology, digital health), which fosters cross-sector dialogue.
- **Thematic flexibility:** The journal accommodates emerging public health topics (COVID-19, AI in health systems, climate change) more readily than traditional outlets.

⚠ Critical Weaknesses

1. ****Editorial Volume vs. Rigor****

- The journal publishes **hundreds of articles per month**, which raises serious concerns about editorial selectivity. - The review process is often **accelerated** and **editor-driven**, with an emphasis on “collaborative” review that may discourage rejection and encourage compromise.

2. ****Thematic Inflation and Policy-Friendliness****

- A large portion of articles serve more as **policy cheerleading** than critical analysis — praising reforms, digital tools, or systems with **little concern for unintended consequences** or **confounders**. - **Quantitative noise** is common: statistical methods are used to dress up simplistic or tautological claims.

3. ****Lack of Conceptual Depth****

- Many papers use high-volume administrative data to draw **shallow conclusions** (e.g., “costs decreased” or “efficiency improved”) without exploring mechanisms, clinical nuance, or ethical trade-offs. - **Qualitative understanding** — the kind that actually informs patient care or structural reform — is often missing.

4. ****Pay-to-Publish Model and Conflicts of Interest****

- As with all Frontiers journals, authors pay **article processing charges (APCs)** to publish. - This

model may create **perverse incentives** for editorial teams to **accept more articles** to sustain revenue. - Guest-edited Research Topics are often **populated by contributor networks**, not necessarily by independent or critical peers.

Summary Table

Aspect	Assessment
Scientific Rigor	Variable; many papers lack mechanistic depth
Peer Review Quality	Rapid, often superficial, author-friendly
Editorial Selectivity	Low; high acceptance rate and article volume
Use of Statistics	Often decorative, lacking causal validation
Role in Academia	Growing in volume, declining in prestige
Best Use Case	Preliminary studies, policy opinions, or data visualizations
Risk	Dilutes scientific discourse by blurring the line between science and advocacy

Final Verdict

Frontiers in Public Health embodies the paradox of modern open-access publishing: **accessible but inflated, fast but shallow, prolific but uncritical**. While it serves as a platform for public health communication and visibility, it often falls short of **scientific rigor, critical depth, and editorial integrity**.

Researchers — especially clinicians and decision-makers — should approach its content with **discerning skepticism**.

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