Predatory publisher

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Predatory publishers are entities that exploit the open access publishing model for profit without providing the standard editorial and publishing services expected of legitimate academic journals. These publishers often prioritize revenue over scholarly integrity, leading to questionable practices and poor-quality publications.

Characteristics of Predatory Publishers Lack of Peer Review: They often claim to perform peer review but either skip this crucial process or conduct it superficially. Aggressive Solicitation: They frequently send unsolicited emails to researchers, urging them to submit papers or join editorial boards. Rapid Publication: They promise quick publication times, which can be unrealistic and indicative of inadequate review processes. High Fees: They charge high Article Processing Charges (APCs) without providing corresponding value in terms of editorial services or journal reputation. Misleading Information: They provide false information about impact factors, indexing services, and affiliations with reputable organizations. Fake Editorial Boards: They list fake or unqualified individuals on their editorial boards, sometimes without the listed individuals' knowledge or consent. Poor Website Quality: Their websites often have unprofessional design, numerous errors, and lack transparency regarding editorial policies and processes. Identifying Predatory Publishers Researchers can use several strategies to identify and avoid predatory publishers:

Journal Metrics and Indexing:

Verify if the journal is indexed in reputable databases like PubMed, Scopus, or Web of Science. Check the journal’s impact factor and other metrics from recognized sources like the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Editorial Board Verification:

Investigate the qualifications and affiliations of the editorial board members. Contact listed members to confirm their involvement with the journal. Peer Review and Publication Practices:

Assess the journal’s peer review process and publication timeline. Be wary of journals that promise extremely fast publication times or have unclear peer review policies. Reputation and Publisher Background:

Look for reviews and experiences shared by other researchers regarding the journal. Research the publisher’s history and check if they are included in blacklists (e.g., Beall’s List, though now defunct,

is archived and used by some as a reference). Fees and Transparency:

Analyze the transparency of APCs and other fees. Ensure that the fee structure and what it covers are clearly stated on the journal's website. Consequences of Publishing with Predatory Journals Academic Reputation: Publishing in predatory journals can damage a researcher's reputation and credibility. Impact on Career: Publications in predatory journals are often not recognized by academic institutions, which can negatively affect tenure and promotion prospects. Research Integrity: The lack of rigorous peer review means that work published in these journals may not be scientifically sound, impacting the overall body of knowledge. Funding and Collaboration: Researchers may find it difficult to secure funding or collaborations if their publication record includes predatory journals. Best Practices to Avoid Predatory Publishers Seek Advice: Consult with colleagues, mentors, and librarians about the legitimacy of a journal before submitting.

Use Trusted Lists and Tools:

Use directories and lists of reputable journals like the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Employ tools like Think. Check. Submit., which provide checklists to assess the trustworthiness of journals. Publish in Established Journals:

Favor well-known and established journals in your field. Consider journals published by reputable academic societies and professional organizations. By being vigilant and conducting thorough evaluations, researchers can avoid predatory publishers and ensure that their work is published in legitimate, respected journals that contribute meaningfully to the scientific community.

Junior Neuroradiology investigators face a rapidly expanding universe of potential journals for manuscript submission. Each journal possesses many unique features, including scope/breadth of research focus, willingness to accept specific types of articles (for example, Review Articles, or Case Reports), status of indexing on major academic indices, scholarly relevance (usually defined as Impact Factor) and access type (Open Access, subscription, or Hybrid Access). An uninformed choice of target journal can burden not only Editors and Reviewers but also increase the effort and frustration level of relatively inexperienced investigators and ultimately result in a worthy manuscript not getting published. In order to assist Junior Neuroradiology investigators in optimizing journal selection for manuscript submission, we provide a Primer that includes background information on all the journal features listed previously. We also provide detailed tabular data for all Radiology, Neuroradiology, and associated Neuroscience Clinical Journals that follow proper academic standards as a quick and useful reference guide for optimal journal selection [1)]

Predatory journals (PJs) publish research with little to no rigorous peer review in exchange for money. It is unclear what proportion of researchers is vulnerable to PJs and which factors are associated with vulnerability. The aim of this study was to evaluate the vulnerability of African neurosurgery researchers to PJs and identify their correlates.

Methods: A 3-part electronic survey in English and French versions was distributed via social media to African consultants and trainees from November 1 to December 1, 2021. Bivariable relationships were evaluated with $\chi 2$ test, Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman ρ correlation, odds ratios, and 95% confidence intervals. A P value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results: There were 101 respondents to the survey (response rate 56.1%). Respondents had mean age of 34.9 years, 82.2% were male (n = 83), 38.6% were consultant neurosurgeons (n = 39), and 33.7% were from Central Africa (n = 34). Of respondents, 66 had published ≥ 1 articles in the past, and 13 had published at least 1 article in a PJ. A PJ had contacted 34 respondents via e-mail, and 8 respondents had reviewed articles for a PJ. The Think. Check. Submit initiative and Beall's list were familiar to 19 and 13 respondents, respectively. Publication in PJs was correlated with the respondent's age (R = 0.23, P = 0.02) and total scholarly output (R = 0.38, P < 0.01).

Conclusions: Young African neurosurgery researchers are vulnerable to PJs primarily because they are not familiar with the concept of PJs or how to identify them [2)]

Scientific research can offer the joy of discovery. For many graduating neurosurgeons, often, a seminar, class, or instructional module is their first and only formal exposure to the world of conducting research responsibly, to write down and report the results of such research. The pressure to publish scientific research is high, but any young neurosurgeon who is unaware of how predatory publishers operate can get duped by it and can lose their valuable and hard-fought research. Hence, we have attempted to provide an overview of all potentially predatory neurosurgery publications and provide some “red flags” to recognize them.

Methods: A suspected list of predatory publications was collected via a thorough review of the Neurosurgery journals listed in 4 major so-called blacklists, i.e., Beall's list, Manca's list, Cabell's blacklist, and Strinzel blacklist and then cross-referenced with UGC CARE whitelist to remove any potential legitimate journals. All journals with a scope of the Neurosurgery publication were searched using terms in the search bar: “Neurosurgery”, “Neuroanatomy”, “Neuropathology”, and “Neurological disorder/disease”. Since all predatory journals claim to be open access, all possible types of open access journals on Scimago were also searched, and thus a comparison was possible in terms of publication cost and number of legitimate open access journals when compared with predatory ones. In addition, methodologies by which these journals penetrate legitimate indexes like PubMed was investigated.

Results: A total of 46 predatory journals were found and were enlisted along with their publishers and web addresses. Sixty of the 360 Neurosurgery journals listed on Scimago were open access and the fee for the predatory journals was substantially lower (< $150) when compared with legitimate journals ($900-$3000). Six types of open access types exist while a total of 26 red flags in 7 stages of publication can be found in predatory journals. These journals have penetrated indexes by having similar names to legitimate journals and by publishing articles with external funding which mandate their indexing.

Conclusion: These 46 journals were defined as predatory by 4 major blacklists, and none of them was found in the UGC Care white list. They also fulfill the 26 red-flags that define a predatory journal. The blacklist detailed here may become redundant; hence “whenever in doubt” regarding a journal with “red-flags”, the authors are advised to refer to whitelists to be on the safer side. Publishing in predatory journals leads to not only loss of valuable research but also discredits a researcher among his peers and can be hindrance in career progression. Some journals are even indexed on PubMed, and they have sophisticated webpages and high-quality online presentations [3)].

1)

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