

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PREDATORY/DECEPTIVE JOURNALS?

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BOUNDLESS

Declarations

No conflicts of interest to declare

Predatory journals, also known as ‘undesirable’, ‘deceptive’, ‘fake, or pseudo-’ journals, pose a real challenge for the academic community and the public.

"Predatory Journals are those that charge an article processing charge (APC) to authors, yet do not have the hallmarks of legitimate scholarly journals such as peer review and editing, editorial boards, editorial offices, and other editorial standards... the motive is financial gain".

From Ferris LE & Winker MA. Ethical issues in publishing in predatory journals. *Biochemia Medica* 2017; 27(2); 279-84.

Most likely everyone here has had some contact from one of these journals (or publishers)

- **Unsolicited emails asking you to submit a manuscript (or be on the editorial board, etc.)**



Dear Ferris, Lorraine E.; Winker, Margaret A

Warmest greetings!

We get to know your valuable article with the title *Ethical issues in publishing in predatory journals* which has been published in *Biochemia Medica*, and the topic of the paper has impressed us a lot.

The paper has drawn attention and interest from researchers and scholars specializing in related fields.

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You can click the link below to get more information about us:

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Dear Lorraine E. Ferris, Margaret A Winker

Warm greetings!

Your article with the title *Ethical issues in publishing in predatory journals* which has been published in *Biochemia Medica* has left a deep impression on us.

The paper has attracted attention from researchers and scholars specializing in related fields.

Aiming at advancing the development of scientific community, *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Medical Sciences* provides specialists in various scopes with good access to the latest scientific researches. Given the advance, novelty, and possible extensive use of your research results, **we sincerely invite you to send other unpublished articles that have similar topics to the journal. Your further research on this article is also welcomed.**

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More information, please refer to:

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What are the characteristics associated with predatory journals?

Distort who they are and what services they offer

Goal is financial profit, not scholarly excellence

- Lack peer review (so anything submitted is published)
- Fail to provide editorial services or meet editorial standards
- Article Processing Charge yet no standard “services” are provided except publication

Spectrum of Predatory Journals

- Lack transparency about the Article Processing Charge (APC)
- Deceive people about its indexing and impact factor
- Do not archive
- Deceive people by hijacking journal websites or have a website that looks a lot like a legitimate journal
- Deceive people about the editorial offices, editor, editorial board, etc.

- Some are easy to detect and some are very sophisticated
 - Processing fees upfront
 - Lists of the editor and editorial board
 - Instructions to authors are sophisticated
 - Instructions to reviewers listed
 - Clues --- publisher is known as a predator; only one paper came up in the search; submitting to an email address

- Many authors publish in these journals without knowing its predatory (or discover it too late)
- Many academics have their name “taken” and used to legitimize these journals (e.g. added to the journal’s editorial board, named as an editor, etc without consent). Or they find out too late it is not a legitimate journal



- Some authors publish in these journals because of the quick turnaround to acceptance and guaranteed publication
- Some academics agree to be on editorial boards or names as editors for financial and/or professional gain

Predatory publisher article search

- According to the Ottawa Citizen, CIHR has not (January 2018) identified any of its funded research as appearing in a predatory journal
- However, the Citizen indicated in Jan 2018 that one large predatory publisher (OMICS) has a search engine for all its papers, and many Canadian researchers appear in the search results, including those with CIHR funding



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Open Access Journals

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Peer Reviewed Open Access Journals

Journals by Subject

Agri and Aquaculture	Geology & Earth Science
Biochemistry	Immunology & Microbiology
Bioinformatics & Systems Biology	Informatics
Biomedical Sciences	Materials Science
Business & Management	Mathematics

Clinical & Medical Journals

Anesthesiology	Neurology
Cardiology	Nursing
Clinical Research	Nutrition
Dentistry	Oncology
Dermatology	Ophthalmology



- We performed a search in 2018 of the OMICS database for articles authored by U of T-affiliated faculty:
 - 128 articles found by 78 different corresponding authors
 - 40 corresponding authors from U of T; 38 corresponding authors from a U of T-affiliated hospital
 - 11 authors published more than one article
 - 6 from U of T, 5 from the affiliated hospitals
 - one affiliated hospital researcher had 17 articles in OMICS publications alone



Of the 78 different corresponding authors:

# articles	1	2	3-5	17
# corresponding authors	67	5	5	1

Ottawa Citizen

- The Citizen submitted a junk manuscript to an OMICS journal in 2016; the manuscript's title contained two words that weren't even real. The article was accepted and published.
- The Citizen then notified OMICS that the article was fake- OMICS retracted it after agreeing that it did not meet their standards



Predatory Conferences

- The Citizen proceeded to resubmit the identical manuscript for an OMICS-sponsored conference, and it was accepted (again)
- Once accepted they were asked to pay \$1500 USD to have it included in the conference program
- We contacted one of our own faculty members who was listed as a conference organizing committee member

2017 Nature study by Moher et al

- Looked at 1907 articles from 220 predatory journals, which collectively studied 2 million human subjects and 8,000 animals
- Only 40% cited ethics approval by ACC/REB vs 70-90% in mainstream journals
- Top two countries for authors were India and USA
- 73% of studies did not list funding sources; 17% of studies were funded by NIH
- Authors estimate that data from >18,000 funded biomedical studies are contained within poorly accessible predatory journals

- Since financial gain is their goal, these journals will stop publishing if it is not a profit-making venture
- Need to educate authors and others about predatory journals and take steps for those who knowingly contribute to these journals so that we can put them out of business

- Educating the academic community includes helping them to identify these journals
- Sometimes the demarcation between legitimate open-access journals and predatory journals is not clear
- New journals or journals from low/middle income countries sometimes can be wrongly identified as predatory



Three approaches to identifying predatory journals

1. Lists of potential, possible and probable predatory journals (Jeffrey Beall)
2. Lists of legitimate journals (Directory of Open Access Journals - DOAJ)
3. Checklist for authors (Think. Check. Submit and University of Toronto checklist).



Choose the right journal for your research

Home

Think

Check

Submit

About

Languages

FAQ



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IDENTIFYING DECEPTIVE PUBLISHERS: A CHECKLIST

Deceptive publishers (also commonly referred to as "predatory journals") are for-profit entities that purport to publish high quality academic research, but who do not follow accepted scholarly publishing best practices. Their ultimate goal is to make money, not publish quality research. A deceptive publisher may acquire the copyright to your research but never publish. A deceptive publisher may publish your work, but then disappear, resulting in there being no public record of your published article.

The aim of this checklist is to assist you in avoiding publishing your work in a low-quality deceptive publication. *Being associated with a deceptive publisher can lead to financial loss as a result of inappropriate fees, or be harmful to your reputation and that of your institution, even possibly impeding promotion and tenure.*



If any of the following statements are true, **do not submit your work**. These are tactics commonly used by deceptive publishers:

- Publication is guaranteed
- You received a spam-like unsolicited email invitation to publish work (Note: these are different in nature than emails received from organizations or societies you belong to or have published with in the past)
- The articles published in the journal do not match the journal's title and stated scope

Common Practices of Deceptive Publishers

While there is no single criterion that points to whether or not a publication is legitimate, the following are some of the typical practices used by deceptive publishers. An accumulation of negative indicators can point to a deceptive publisher.



PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Much of this information can be found in author guidelines or instructions. This information should be clearly presented and address quality control processes, style/formatting, copyright, and other journal policies (such as corrections and retractions).

- Publication is guaranteed
- The time of submission to publication is unexpectedly short
- The peer review process is unclear, lacking information, or not apparent
- There is minimal information about the various steps in the process from submission to publication
- The journal requires copyright transfer during the submission process
- Copyright is typically transferred after the acceptance of manuscript. Most open access journals will apply a Creative Commons (CC) license to the research that allows for reuse and remaking. In many cases, the author will retain copyright. If a journal isn't using CC licenses, terms of use and reuse should be clear.
- The journal does not follow a regular publication schedule



ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGES (APCs)

Many open access journals ask for Article Processing Charges (APCs), and this is an acceptable practice. Legitimate journals will always ask for payment after acceptance, and their fees are clear and easily available.

- APC payment is required before acceptance
- APCs are generally paid post-acceptance but pre-publication. You should not be asked to pay for an APC before the peer review process begins. These charges should be clearly listed on the publisher's website.
- It is unclear what fees will be charged
- In some fields, a modest submission or membership fee is charged at the time of manuscript submission. These fees fund editorial or peer review. In other cases there are post-acceptance fees, which might include page, colour or figure charges. The amount and purpose of any additional fees should be clearly outlined on a journal's website or policies. Look for unconventional charges like "handling fees". If you aren't sure, check with colleagues about accepted practices.



WEBSITE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

- The journal's name is easily confused with another better known journal in its field
- Confirm that the publication's ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) matches the title and country of publication that is listed at issn.org
- The publisher cannot be easily identified or contacted
- Consider looking for contact information including a telephone number and mailing address and check to see that the contact information aligns with the journal's other claims (i.e. the telephone number area code matches where the journal is based, the mailing address is not a private residence). Most publishers will have a general email account you can contact; be wary of email addresses that may be non-professional or have no affiliation with the journal (i.e.: a Gmail or Yahoo email address).
- The journal website looks amateurish or unprofessional
- You may find that the journal's website is poorly designed and difficult to navigate, including dead links, as well as spelling and grammatical errors. While many legitimate journals may be poorly funded and lacking professional websites, errors and broken links are indicators that warrant a closer look at the journal.



SCOPE OR SUBJECT MATTER

- The journal lacks a well-defined scope, subject area or mission
- Journals generally have a clearly defined scope and focus on a fixed set of topics.
- The articles published do not match the title and stated scope and/or the journal title
- For example, a nursing journal that publishes geology papers.



INDEXING, IMPACT FACTOR AND ARCHIVING

- The journal is not indexed where it claims to be nor where you would expect to find the subject content
- This is verifiable information. Consider the databases that you use to find research (e.g. Scopus, Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts, or PubMed, etc.). Is the journal included in these indexes? Note that Google Scholar, SHERPA/ReMeD, ORCID and scholarly networking sites like ResearchGate are not indexes.
- Claims about impact factors are not verifiable
- Deceptive publishers may list fraudulent metrics such as the "Global Impact Factor" (GIF), Index Copernicus, or "Universal Impact Factor" (UIF). These are not based on recognized methodologies.
- Recognized metrics include Clarivate's Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and Elsevier's CiteScore among others. The University of Toronto Libraries offers licensed resources such as Journal Citation Reports and Scopus to verify this information. Visit the [Research Impact & Researcher Identity](#) guide for more information. Not all journals are indexed in these resources and newer journals may not have journal level metrics available.
- The journal website does not provide access to previously published volumes or has volumes that are incomplete.



AFFILIATION/PUBLICATION ETHICS AND POLICIES

- The publisher is not a member of a recognized scholarly organization
- Deceptive publishers may falsely represent their affiliations. It is best to verify stated affiliations via the website of the organization a journal claims to be affiliated with. The following are some recognized organizations:
 - AJOL (African Journals Online)
 - COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics)
 - DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)
 - ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors)
 - INASP (International Network for Availability of Scientific Publications for journals published in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Central America and Mongolia)
 - OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association)
 - WAME (World Association of Medical Editors)



EDITORIAL BOARD

Please note it can be very difficult to verify who is on an editorial board, so it is good to cross-check to ensure the information is accurate.

- Members of the editorial board do not mention the journal on their own websites or public CVs
- There is no information about the editor or editorial board on the journal's website

DO NOT CONFUSE JOURNALS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH WITH DECEPTIVE JOURNALS

When deciding whether to publish in a journal, please remember that some of the same criteria used to disqualify deceptive publishers can also disqualify journals from the global south.¹

In low- and middle-income countries, journal publishers may not have access to the resources to create impressive websites, register an ISSN, or maintain their own email server. A lack of resources should not disqualify these journals from your consideration if they are publishing high-quality research. A careful review of the journal's articles and a discussion of the journal with your colleagues or supervisor will always be your best guide.



NEED FURTHER GUIDANCE OR SUPPORT?

- Talk to your supervisor and colleagues.
- For more information and resources visit <http://oneresearch.library.utoronto.ca/deceptivepublishing>
- Consult your Liaison Librarian.



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¹ The global south refers to "all nations classified by the World Bank as low- and middle-income that are in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. It does not include low- and middle-income nations in Eastern Europe, including the Russian Federation". From Mittin, D., Satterthwaite, D. (2013). *Urban Poverty in the Global South*. London: Routledge, 13.



A global nonprofit voluntary association of
editors of peer-reviewed medical journals

Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing

WAME has collaborated with the **Committee on Publication Ethics**, the **Directory of Open Access Journals**, and the **Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association** to develop the following Principles. The Principles are available on the Web sites of all the participating organizations.

Date of Publication: January 15, 2018



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- WAME, COPE, DOAJ and OASPA have membership criteria they use to access whether a journal is suitable for membership.
- These organizations have published the principles they use for membership.

Some issues faced by editors/publishers of legitimate journals

- No editor or editorial office to contact about issues and no oversight/governance
 - article already published in a legitimate journal now published in a predatory journal (plagiarized paper)
 - the predatory journal uses the legitimate journals old domain name (claims the URL and puts up a site that mimics the legitimate journal)
 - name of the journal mimics the legitimate journal name

Institutions

Need to educate their faculty and trainees about:

- existing tools to identify predatory journals
- ethical and professional issues in contributing to predatory journals
- develop consequences for contributing to predatory journals

- Working with the library to put up web resources on both the research and library sites
- Webinar on predatory journals
- Consultation service for authors who have been deceived

Authors

- Use some type of systematic process to decide, as best you can, if the journal is legitimate
- Educate and support trainees in avoiding predatory journals
- Do a periodic google search on your name to see if your identity has been used by a predatory journal

Get me off Your Fucking Mailing List

David Mazières and Eddie Kohler

New York University

University of California, Los Angeles

<http://www.mailavenger.org/>

Abstract

Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list. Get me off your fucking mailing list.

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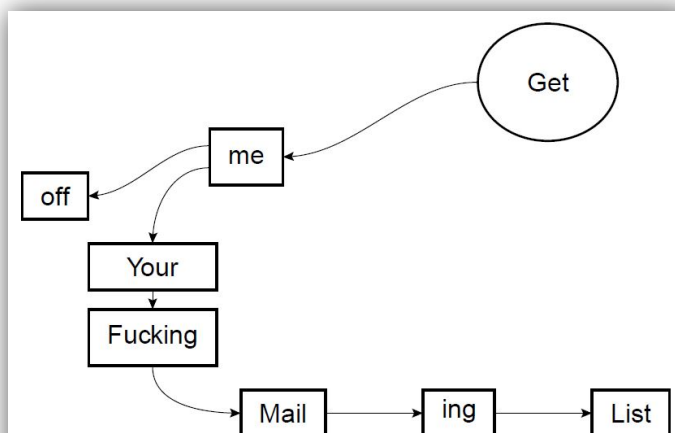


Figure 1: Get me off your fucking mailing list.

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