Evaluating predatory journals

With thanks to Lucia Schoombee, Elsevier

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What is predatory journals?

Predatory publishing

The term "predatory journal" was coined in 2010 by American librarian Jeffrey Beall and refers to Open access publishers publishing articles with little or no real peer review. ... But charging APC Focus is on financial gain/profit

Unethical publishing

Excessive publication by editorial board in own journal High article intensity by same author (more than 2 articles in same issue) Co-author cartels
Predatory journals are on the rise

‘...the journals dumped more than 420,000 articles into the market in 2014, up from 53,000 in 2010.’

Authors from Africa and Asia make up 76.7%

Attributed to:
Abuse of OA system
Research evaluation practices
Pressure to publish internationally

Source: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/10/01/study-finds-huge-increase-articles-published-predatory-journals
Characteristics of Predatory journals


- The scope of interest includes non-biomedical subjects alongside biomedical topics
- The website contains spelling and grammar errors
- Images are distorted/fuzzy, intended to look like something they are not, or which are unauthorized
- The homepage language targets authors
- The Index Copernicus Value is promoted on the website
Characteristics

- Description of the manuscript handling process is lacking
- Manuscripts are requested to be submitted via email
- Rapid publication is promised
- There is no retraction policy
- Information on whether and how journal content will be digitally preserved is absent
- The Article processing/publication charge is very low (e.g., < $150 USD)
- Journals claiming to be open access either retain copyright of published research or fail to mention copyright
Characteristics

• The contact email address is non-professional and non-journal affiliated (e.g., @gmail.com or @yahoo.com)
• The editorial board is very small or “coming soon”
• A single publisher releases an overwhelmingly large suite of new journals all at one time
• The journal says an issue will be available at a certain time, but the issue never appears.
• The journal title notes a national or international affiliation that does not match its editorial board or location
• There are fundamental errors in the titles and abstracts
• The content of the journal varies from the title and stated scope
Speak to your information specialist
http://www.library.up.ac.za/contact/infospecialists.htm
for assistance