

EDITORIAL

Warning Signs of Predatory Open Access Journals And Pseudo Solicitations: Advice to Avoid Literature Pollution

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We are bombarded with numerous emails daily requesting to submit a paper, become a member of the editorial board, or attend a meeting. It implies that there should be a defect in the publishing business model that allows predatory journals to creep in and outnumber legitimate ones. Conventionally, the cost of publishing was covered by subscription (subscription-based). Budapest Open Access Initiative (1) was the first to declare open access to scholarly published articles in 2002, followed by the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing and Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities in 2003 (2, 3). The author-payer model is now called gold open access, in which the author is charged when the paper is accepted for publication.

One advantage of the author-payer model is free to access the content, including those in developing countries where access to current research is desperately needed. Another advantage is the open-access citation effect (OACE), in which these articles receive more citations than papers published in journals behind a paywall. However, the disadvantage is that the more papers a publisher accepts for publication, the more money it earns. Here comes the corruption recipe - the defect in the business that predators head up. There is a spectrum of distorted payment models, which we classified as journals not publishing the paper at all after receiving the money, journals that publish without a peer review, and journals with no academic value because of the poor peer-review and editorial policies [Table 1].

Jeffrey Beall, the American librarian, coined the term predatory journals in 2010 and published the name of the predatory publishers and journals on his blog (4). Common characteristics of these publishers are numerous grammatical and spelling errors on the website and the frequent use of "Call for paper" in a large font prominently displayed on their web pages.

Electronic solicitations are sent to request paper

submission, editorial board membership, and conference speaker invitations. Some journals state that they are indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and have the logo on the website, but they are not. The valid list can be accessed via the <https://doaj.org> link (5).

Hijacked journals are fake or duplicates of a legitimate journal, e.g., "Education journal" is the hijacker of "Education" (6). The hijackers often vanish after the name is published publicly. Some publishers infringe by taking the other journals' titles to target their contributors. For instance, Clinical Case Reports, an open-access journal by Wiley, has reported that the new Hilaris Publisher launched a new open-access journal under the name of Journal of Clinical Case Reports and continuously targeted the contributors of Wiley journals (7).

Some warning signs for questionable publishers and journals are as below:

1. The publisher does not state its headquarters location or misrepresents its actual location.
2. Listed addresses of the publishers were either unsearchable or led to residential or empty lots.
3. The publisher's website contains significant typographical and grammatical errors or otherwise looks unprofessional (8).
4. The publisher's journal portfolio is extensive, with over 100 titles, many of them new and or with little content.
5. Papers in the publisher's journals are poorly copyedited.

Table 1. Distorted author-based payment models

	Group 3	Group 2	Group 1
Publish	No	Yes	Yes
Peer review	No	No	Yes
Academic value	No	No	No

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities. The page features a blue header with the journal title and a 'Submit Your Paper' button. Below the header, there is a 'Call for Papers' section with a '24x7 working' claim. A 'Free provider email' annotation points to the email address 'ijemh.editor@gmail.com'. A 'Scientific Journal IF' annotation points to the 'Impact Factor 5.95' claim. A 'Not indexed in DOAJ' annotation points to the 'Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)' listing. The page also includes a 'Fast publication' section with a 'Fast Track Publication within 48 Hours' claim and a 'Common request' section with 'CALL for PAPER' and 'CONTACT US' buttons. A 'Broad spectrum name' annotation points to the journal title. The current issue is listed as 'Current Issue MARCH, 2022' with a URL: <http://www.ijemh.com/current-issue.php?issueid=25>.

Figure 1. Example of a solicitation from a predatory open access journal.

6. The publisher's email addresses are from free providers such as gmail.com, yahoo.com, etc.

7. Review time is quoted as <1 month.

8. The median article processing charges (APC) was \$420 for predatory journals and \$2,900 for legitimate journals (9).

9. The journal's name may start with "British journal of..." or "American journal of..."

10. The name covers a broad spectrum of topics, e.g., the International Journal of Engineering, Management, and Humanities [Figure 1].

11. Yellow highlighted text in the emails.

12. Claiming to be a member of the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and have the logo on the website, but they are not.

13. Claiming a high impact factor using similar initials, e.g., ISI: International Scientific Indexing vs. Institute for Scientific Information vs. Indian Scientific Index.

14. Bold notice of a high impact factor based on the Index Copernicus, which is worthless and was criticized because it is a paid option to become indexed, evaluation methodology is suspected, and included many predatory journals (10).

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