Predatory Publishers: What to Know and How to Avoid Them
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What Are Predatory Publishers?
Predatory publishers exploit the emerging acceptance of open-access academic journals by making it attractive to publish (especially in a publish or perish world). They aggressively solicit articles from faculty and researchers with the intent of exploiting authors who need to publish their research findings in order to meet promotion, tenure or grant funding requirements.

The ultimate goal of these publishers is to make a profit - not to promote scholarly research. They have no concern for the quality of work published and typically lack the peer-review process that legitimate journals provide. Articles are often accepted without any changes. They have unethical business practices (such as charging exorbitant author publishing fees).

Predatory conferences are a similar type of scam. These conferences appear to be legitimate scientific events, but in reality provide only a few presentations, or combine a wide range of topics into a single conference.

Why is it important for future doctors and pharmacists to learn about predatory publishing?
- Predatory publishing damages the reputation of the biomedical and pharmaceutical fields due to a lack of comprehensive peer review. It helps create a rise in pseudo science and perpetuates bad research.
- Legitimate publishers are committed to preserving published work. Predatory publishers are focused on making money, and do not care about preserving the articles they “publish”. Papers can disappear from a journal’s website at any time, making it difficult to prove a paper was ever published.
- Predatory publishers often claim their journals are indexed in popular databases such as Scopus, PubMed, or Web of Science, when in fact they are not. It is easy to verify these claims by doing a journal search in these databases.
- Publishing in a predatory journal can harm your reputation, the reputation of your institution, and your career advancement.

For More Information
For students and staff of the Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine and Touro College of Pharmacy, contact the library for assistance. https://tourocom.touro.edu/sirko-library/

Predatory Conferences:
- http://libguides.harlem.touro.edu/c.php?g=808730&p=5774144
- Lara Lasner-Frater, Electronic Resource Librarian lara.lasner-frater@touro.edu
- Susan Lesser, Evening Librarian susan.lesser2@touro.edu

Case Studies
MedCrave’s “Urology & Nephrology” published the above article about “Uromystiasis”. The paper was sent in under the name “Dr. Martin van Nostrand”. It was scheduled for peer review and was accepted with minor revisions three days later. The author was asked to pay $799.

Sounds legitimate, except it is a Seinfeld episode called “The Parking Garage” in which Jerry makes up a disease called “Uromystiasis Poisoning”. In other episodes, Kramer pretends to be Dr. Martin van Nostrand. Searching either “Uromystiasis Poisoning” or “Dr. Martin van Nostrand” in Google would immediately bring up results that this is from Seinfeld.

Some common characteristics of predatory publishers are:
- Webpages contain bogue journals.
- Images appear distorted or fuzzy.
- No ISSN.
- Dead webpages that are difficult to contact.
- Promise of rapid publication.
- Unclear or deceptive publishing fees and copyright policies.
- Fake names are listed on the editorial staff. Names of prominent scholars are included as editors without the knowledge or consent of these individuals.
- Published articles are plagiarized, completely fake, are scientifically unsound, or of low quality.
- Websites contain many grammatical, spelling and formatting errors. An example from Medcrave is, “Construction for a written scientific manuscript needs deep study and writing the scientific facts with the top level of accuracy”.

Conferences for a written scientific template provided by: “posters4research.com”

How to Spot a Potential Predatory Publisher
Predatory Publishers tend to be savvy and employ tricks to seem legitimate. One such trick is to use a name similar to a legitimate journal. For example, “American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education” is a legitimate journal while “American Journal of Pharmacy and Health Research” is potentially predatory.

A website containing tips to confirm a journal’s credentials.

Not all Open Source is the Same
Just because a journal is open access or charges a fee does not mean it is predatory. Many prestigious high impact journals are open access (such as the PLOS journals). The graphic below illustrates the difference.

References


About Predatory Journals
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