

Letter to the Editor:

Comment on Predatory Journals

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The wrong and deceptive method of inviting authors to publish research in open-access journals with false metrics and no stability has become a source of income for many publishers all over the world. Such journals are termed 'predatory' gold open-access models for profit earning. Jeffrey Beall contributed to the Editing, Writing & Publishing Section of the *Journal of Korean Medical Science* by sharing his thoughts on how to detect these fake publishers and protect the scientific community from them (1).

Eager to publish authors and those wanting immediate good results fall in the trap. J. Beall clarifies that the predatory publishing is so fast that the authors have no time for a second thought. Within a few days, their articles can be posted on the predatory journals' website, with the authors receiving an invoice for transferring a shocking amount of money. The authors are caught in a mesh as their online articles cannot be withdrawn easily. If they decide to withdraw they will have to pay additionally. As a result, the authors lose a large sum of money. Those who publish in the predatory journals face a challenge of wasting their efforts since the websites of the journals may disappear any time. The authors of the predatory journals are the victims from all angles.

"Another problem predatory journals have made possible is the publication of pseudo-science," writes J. Beall. As the submissions are not checked and reviewed, the information in the published articles can easily pollute the existing knowledge base and proved theories, and readers can be tricked to accept the unauthentic results. The authors can be victimized as they will never appreciate the sanctity of research and will not realize that false and unproven results harm the scientific community.

J. Beall has also reflected on promoting unapproved newly discovered drugs by publishing related research and trials in the predatory journals. The sole aim of such articles is to make

a profit for the drug manufacturers and the journal owners. The authors are defamed when caught. It amounts to deception in the world of science. The authors should understand that the basic policy of every scientific journal is to promote health care through honest and well conducted research, with the results being approved by peer reviewers and other scientists.

J. Beall warns the readers about predatory conferences, which are also tricks to make money. The conference organizers are linked with the fake publishers. Both predatory conferences and journals exploit the researchers' eager to publish.

Dishonest people can resort to any means. Often websites of authentic journals are hijacked or fake counterfeits are created. These again earn money by publishing articles after imposing heavy charges.

Every author should be careful in selecting a journal for getting his/her article published. Good journals have a lengthy process of accepting articles for publication. Each submission passes through peer review, technical checks, and scanning for text similarity. The final, readable version of a manuscript is posted online after passing through all the necessary processes. It then may attract downloads and citations.

Why do authors still support predatory journals? The answer is obvious. Most authors are under pressure to publish. They need articles for academic promotion, better jobs, and for decorating their CVs with long publication lists. Getting published in an established prestigious journal requires enormous research efforts, clear understanding of research and publication ethics, and good writing skills. Even great submissions to established journals can be rejected or sent back to authors for revision or complete overhaul.

To save time, some authors may wish to spend money and fall into the trap of the predatory journals, advertising in an attractive manner. Research is a tedious process, and its publication requires professional skills and honesty. A good researcher should never be in a hurry to publish as rightly said, "Good articles are not written. They are re-written..." (2). The target journal should be selected carefully. Hard work is always rewarded, and truth always surfaces to the top. Predatory journals face an early death besides a bad name.

DISCLOSURE

The views expressed in this letter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy and position of any Pakistani association or organization.

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