SPOTTING PREDATORY PUBLISHERS
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Open access publishing

The changing nature of the publishing industry

• Open access publishing goal: enabling free online access to peer-reviewed scholarly research.
• Achieved by: shifting the cost of access to subscribers to authors.
• Author pays a publication fee: covers the cost of making journal content freely available online.
• Open access ≠ low quality.
• Good examples of open access publishers: PLoS journal group & BioMed Central group.
• Open access publishing has significantly altered the financial model for journal publishing.

(Kearney & The I.P.P.P.C, 2014)
Predatory publishers’ unethical & unscholarly tactics

Predatory publishers are adept at creating the impression of scholarly trustworthiness, some of these practices include:

- Using journal titles & logos which are very similar to highly respected publications.
- Fabricated journal impact factors, e.g., fictional Index Copernicus Value
- Fabricated editorial boards. Often using well-known names on journal mastheads or as honorary editors, without the knowledge or consent of these scholars.
- Basing corporate operations in countries that afford protection from the legal repercussions of copyright violation.
- Promises of ‘rapid review’ and acceptance for publication, enabled by minimal to non-existent review processes.
- Journal webpages disappearing, along with articles previously posted.

(Kearney & The I.P.P.P.C, 2014 and Shamseer et. al., 2017)
Email invitations

How they Find You

• Search staff profiles, Google scholar profiles, ORCID accounts.
• Trawl conference proceedings
• Monitor thesis submissions in Institutional Repositories
• Monitor other open access publications
• Often target research students and early career researchers
Targets & consequences of predatory publishing

Predatory publishers frequently send flattering, individualized email solicitations. Inexperienced authors may fall prey to their enticements.

However, these authors may find that this publication causes a career roadblock, when a promotion panel recognizes the lack of credibility of a journal.

Even worse, their articles can suddenly disappear or cause legal problems. The copyright can be signed away to non-existent, unsearchable publishers making contractual agreements unenforceable.

(Kearney & The I.P.P.P.C, 2014)
# Guidelines for Evaluating the Integrity of a Nursing Journal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to Ask</th>
<th>What to Look For</th>
<th>Red Flags</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is the editor in charge of journal content?</td>
<td>The editor's status in the discipline can be confirmed. Direct contact information for the editor is provided.</td>
<td>The editor has no verifiable role or standing in the discipline.</td>
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<td>There is no contact information, or replies to inquiries come from an unrelated source.</td>
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<td>What is the journal's process for assuring quality of content?</td>
<td>A clear description of the process for review of manuscripts is posted. The names and duties of editorial advisory or review panel members are listed. Published articles indicate a submission-to-publication time consistent with distribution for peer review.</td>
<td>You cannot determine who is involved in the review process.</td>
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<td>Published articles show turnaround time of less than a week.</td>
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<td>Article content is implausible.</td>
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<td>Does the journal have sound business and publishing practices?</td>
<td>Information about requirement &amp; amount of author processing charges, if any, is clear and easily accessible. The journal's editor is a member of the COPE. Any published impact factor is verifiable in JCR. Listed in the Directory of Nursing Journals.</td>
<td>The journal name or logo is an imitation of another journal.</td>
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<td>Website and/or email communication in weak English.</td>
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<td>Email solicitations include incomplete or deceptive information.</td>
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(Keamey & The I.P.P.P.C, 2014, p. 3)
Determining the legitimacy of OA journals

Sources to confirm positive journal credibility

• Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) journal list
  http://journalfinder.library.uws.edu.au.ezproxy.uws.edu.au
  (WSU staff only) or http://lamp.infosys.deakin.edu.au/era/

• Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) http://doaj.org/

• Member of Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)
  https://publicationethics.org/members

• Directory of Nursing Journals
  http://nursingeditors.com/journals-directory  a collaborative
  effort between INANE and Nurse Author & Editor

• Publisher is a member of Open Access Scholarly Publishers
  Association (OASPA)
  https://oaspa.org/membership/members/

Where is the journal indexed?

• Is the journal indexed anywhere?

• Check Ulrichs database, Google & Google Scholar?

• Non indexed journals are less visible to the international
  research community.

(Craft, 2016 & Kearney & The I.P.P.P.C, 2014)
Journal red flags

Negative indicators of journal quality

- Presence of misspellings and/or broken English on the journal’s webpage or in email communications.

- Publisher direct marketing/spamming, particularly from a non-professional email address like gmail.

- Lack of clear & readily available info about the journal such as a website, journal scope statement, contact info, author instructions, digital preservation info & policies relating to peer review, retraction & copyright.

- Very short turnaround time between peer review & publication.

- Look at journal back issues table of contents info, journals that repeatedly publish issues with the same lead author are often questionable.

- Fake editorial boards based on info gathered from real faculty profiles, or editorial board is non-existent, or the same as all other journals by that publisher.

- Is the entire journal freely available online immediately on publication? WSU does not encourage paying a fee for an individual article to be made open access in a subscription journal.

- An article processing fee is requested only after your paper is accepted. Or article processing fee is very low < $150 USD.

- Name of the journal does not reflect its origin (eg International journal of…but all editors and papers from Korea).

- Scope of interest includes non-biomedical subjects alongside biomedical subjects

(Craft, 2016 & Shamseer et. al., 2017)
Journal green flags

Positive indicators of journal quality

• Clearly defined info about the journal including: scope, audience, any fees, preservation policy, copyright policy, retraction policy & peer review policy.

• Examine the journals editorial board, look for affiliations with established scholarly societies or academic institutions.

• Presence of an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number).

• Passes the WSU Library Open Access Publishing Checklist

(Craft, 2016)
Most important when choosing a journal

Researchers need to use their own good judgement, when considering publishing with an unknown journal.

It is critically important to carefully evaluate and research before committing to a publication venue.

As a general rule, if in doubt about the quality of a journal, don’t publish in it.

Withdrawning a publication can be tough
Attempting to retract a submitted article with a predatory publisher can very difficult. Particularly if a contract has already been signed. If you do publish in a predatory journal, you cannot publish in more reputable journal later.

Utilise your support networks
If you are unsure about the validity of a journal consult with your supervisor, colleagues and librarian.

(Craft, 2016)
WSU staff need more help?
Contact Melissa Burley Nursing & Midwifery Librarian
melissa.burley@westernsydney.edu.au Phone: 9685 9331
References


