

WESTERN SYDNEY  
UNIVERSITY





# SPOTTING PREDATORY PUBLISHERS

# CONTENTS

- 01 Setting the scene for predatory publishers
- 02 Predatory publishers' unethical & unscholarly tactics
- 03 Targets & consequences of predatory publishing
- 04 Guidelines for evaluating the integrity of a nursing journal
- 05 Journal red flags & green flags

# 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  $\neq$  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, eg 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.C, 2014)



## Guidelines for Evaluating the Integrity of a Nursing Journal

Questions to Ask	What to Look For	Red Flags
Who is the editor in charge of journal content?	The editor's status in the discipline can be confirmed. Direct contact information for the editor is provided.	The editor has no verifiable role or standing in the discipline.  There is no contact information, or replies to inquiries come from an unrelated source.
What is the journal's process for assuring quality of content?	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.	You cannot determine who is involved in the review process.  Published articles show turnaround time of less than a week.  Article content is implausible.
Does the journal have sound business and publishing practices?	Information about requirement & 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.	The journal name or logo is an imitation of another journal.  Website and/or email communication in weak English.  Email solicitations include incomplete or deceptive information.



# 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  
[https://library.westernsydney.edu.au/main/sites/default/files/pdf/Open\\_Access\\_Journal\\_Publishing\\_Checklist\\_2017.pdf](https://library.westernsydney.edu.au/main/sites/default/files/pdf/Open_Access_Journal_Publishing_Checklist_2017.pdf)

(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.

**Withdrawing a publication can be tough**

Attempting to retract a submitted article with a predatory publisher can be very difficult. Particularly if a contract has already been signed. If you do publish in a predatory journal, you cannot publish in a 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](mailto:melissa.burley@westernsydney.edu.au) Phone: 9685 9331**



## References

- Craft, A. R. (2016). Is This a Quality Journal to Publish In? How Can You Tell? *Serials Review*, 42(3), 37-239. doi: 10.1080/00987913.2016.1196844.
- Darbyshire, P., McKenna, L., Lee, S. F., & East, C. E. (2017). Taking a stand against predatory publishers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 73(7), 1535-1537. doi: 10.1111/jan.13004.
- Kearney, M. H., & The, I. P. P. P. C. (2015). Predatory Publishing: What Authors Need to Know. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 38(1), 1-3. doi: 10.1002/nur.21640k.
- Shamseer, L., Moher, D., Maduekwe, O., Turner, L., Barbour, V., Burch, R., . . . Shea, B. J. (2017). Potential predatory and legitimate biomedical journals: Can you tell the difference? A cross-sectional comparison. *BMC Medicine*, 15(1). doi: 10.1186/s12916-017-0785-9
- Western Sydney University Library. (2017). *Open access publishing checklist*. Retrieved from [https://library.westernsydney.edu.au/main/sites/default/files/pdf/Open\\_Access\\_Journal\\_Publishing\\_Checklist\\_2017.pdf](https://library.westernsydney.edu.au/main/sites/default/files/pdf/Open_Access_Journal_Publishing_Checklist_2017.pdf)

WESTERN SYDNEY  
UNIVERSITY

