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## **Predatory Journal**

Predatory journals are open-access journals that publish articles online with little or no peer review, low academic standards, and little credibility. They exist to publish scholarly journal articles for authors who require publications for their curricula vitae. Predatory journals profit from author fees, often from authors who cannot afford the fees required by more reputable pay-for-publication journals.

### **Identifying a predatory journal / Characteristics of predatory journals**

- Predatory journals use spam e-mail to solicit articles
- They have a fast and often fake peer review process
- They supply false information about their locations. Many of them misrepresent their true headquarters locations, claiming they are based in London or New York when they are really based in Pakistan or India, etc
- Many now also make false claims about having impact factors or being included in prestigious academic indexes.
- The title of the journal is overly generic, covering several subject areas
- Grand words or claims are used on the journal's website instead of verifiable facts
- Fake or unverifiable metrics are used to promote the journal
- The journal's editor is not identified,
- There is no institution or university linked to the editor, editorial staff, and/or review board members,
- The journal shares the exact editorial board with other journals.
- The papers already published in the journal are poorly organised
- There are blatant errors in the content, language, or formatting of some of the published papers
- In any case, don't mix up the matter of Article Processing Charges (APCs) with predatory journals. Predatory journals will almost certainly ask you to pay an Article Processing Charges APC, but good open access journals may also do so
- Such journals often charge a fee for fast publication but have poor publishing practices, fail to carry out legitimate peer review, and fake their inclusion in important indexes.
- There is no retraction policy.
- The Article processing/publication charge is very low
- The contact email address is non-professional and non-journal affiliated (e.g., @gmail.com or @yahoo.com).
- Predatory journals recruit fake editor

### **The Temptation: Consider this scenario:**

A researcher is under pressure to publish. He has done some research, but it's not enough to write an original research article. To find a way out, he develops a research paper by copying information from various published papers. He sends it to a predatory journal and pays the money asked by the journal. And the journal publishes the paper quickly. The journal does not send the researcher any peer review comments, but the researcher doesn't care. All he wants is a publication. Very soon, he has published several such papers and he can get promoted!

This is the temptation that predatory journals exploit. Some researchers in developing countries feel that it's simply too difficult to do research because of various limitations, and they turn to predatory journals.

But no matter what one's circumstances may be, publishing in a predatory journal is wrong. Why? Well, any of the following can happen:

- ✓ University authorities in developing countries are becoming more aware of predatory journals. If any of their institution's researchers publish in a predatory journal, those researchers may be warned or penalised.
- ✓ A researcher who writes a grant proposal may need to present a list of publications. If reviewers at the funding organisation see that the researcher has published in predatory journals, they may immediately reject the application.
- ✓ It's ultimately a matter of credibility. Researchers who publish in predatory journals risk losing their credibility, and other problems can follow.

### **If you get duped: Ways out of Published Paper in Predatory Journal**

Many researchers do not deliberately publish in predatory journals. They are duped or lulled into believing that those journals can be trusted. They get shocked when they come to know that their publications in such journals are useless and only make them look bad.

If you find yourself in such a situation, write to the editor of the predatory journal and ask your paper to be withdrawn from the journal. But it's possible that such a request will be ignored.

What you can certainly do is remove that publication from your CV and any online profile. And consider telling your university authorities that you have erroneously published your paper in a predatory journal and do not wish to claim any credit for it.

### **Ways to spot a Predatory Journal:**

- Always check the website thoroughly
- Check if the journal is a member of DOAJ, COPE, OASPA or STM
- Check the journal's contact information
- Research the editorial board
- Take a look at their peer review process and publication timelines
- Read through past issues of the journal
- Don't trust email invites and 'Call for Papers' (unless you recognise the sender)
- Be sceptical of 'international' or 'global' journals, and those with a wide scope
- Double-check claims of prestigious indexing and impact factors
- Read the 'Aims and scope' or 'About' page – check the journal understands your field
- Check who is publishing the journal – are they a credible scholarly organisation?
- Check your reference lists – familiarise yourself with good journals in your field

### **Think. Check. Submit.**

It is best to critically evaluate any journal before you submit your work instead of relying on a list of suspicious journals or approved journals. It can be very difficult to keep such lists free of bias and updated at all times.

In 2015, the Think. Check. Submit. campaign was launched to help researchers choose the right journal for their research. By going through the [Think. Check. Submit. website](https://thinkchecksubmit.org/) (<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>), you will be able to develop your skills in identifying trustworthy journals.

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## TIPS ON IDENTIFYING PREDATORY JOURNALS AND CONFERENCES

### AVOID

- 1** Borderline journals with low h-indices even if they are listed in good databases such as SCOPUS. This will reduce the odds of the journal getting blacklisted later
- 2** Invitations from conferences with overly generic names (e.g., Global Conference on Science, Engineering, and Biotechnology.)
- 3** Extremely large conferences that combine different fields (e.g., arts, science, and history)
- 4** Responding to invitations from emails with free email accounts (e.g., conf2019@gmail.com)
- 5** Attending a conference with relatively unknown speakers, unclear agenda, and unclear peer review or anti-plagiarism policies
- 6** Conferences promising a quick turnaround time for papers, offering large number of rewards, or sounding like tourist events

### CHECK

- 7** Background and work history of the journal and that of the editor-in-chief
- 8** Geographical variety and profiles (qualifications, reviewing experience, etc.) of the reviewers/editors
- 9** Whether the organizers of the conferences are professional societies/well-established organizations
- 10** Visit [enago.com/academy/?s=predatory](https://enago.com/academy/?s=predatory) for detailed insights



STOP

A large, semi-transparent octagonal sign with the word "STOP" written in bold, white, capital letters. The sign is positioned in the background of the "CHECK" section.

# How to Spot a Predatory Journal



## Always check the journal website thoroughly

Yes No

- Does the website have spelling and grammatical errors?
- Does the journal ask for a fee upon submission rather than after acceptance?

## Check if the journal is a member of DOAJ, COPE, OASPA or STM

Please state: \_\_\_\_\_

- Does the journal advertise membership to any of the following organisations? [DOAJ](#); [COPE](#); [OASPA](#); [STM](#).

If the journal is not listed, contact the organisations directly for further advice

## Check the journal's contact information

Yes No

- Does the contact information match the advertised nationality of the journal?
- Can their address be verified?
- Do emails arrive during the correct working hours for that region?

## Research the editorial board

Yes No

- Is the journal referenced in the editors professional institutional profile, LinkedIn page or Research Gate?
- Is there geographical diversity among the editorial board members?

## Do they have a peer review process and publication timelines?

Yes No

- Does the journal carry out peer review steps?
- Is it stated how long the peer review process will take?

## Read through past issues of the journal

Yes No

- Can you find past issues of the journal?
- Are the articles true to the journal's advertised speciality areas?
- Do articles have many errata?

## Additional Considerations

Yes No

- Is there an option for Open Access? (Not all journals have this option but is a good indicator of a reputable journal)
- Does the journal have a Facebook or Twitter page? If so check for posts