

PREDATORY JOURNALS. PLAGUE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

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The scientific community is becoming increasingly strangled by all sorts of journals appearing overnight. They don't even meet the minimum standards for scientific publications, and many of them even blatantly violate the ethics of scientific publication. They're called predatory journals.

But what are these predatory journals? If we were to refer to a definition of what a predatory journal is, we would understand that this type of journals are characterized by low standards of peer-review process, lack of transparency in the editorial process and, above all, by deceptive practices aimed at attracting as many authors as possible to pay publication fees. [1 – 3]. A kind of barter: you pay the fee and I publish your article.

Such journals publish articles of very poor scientific quality, many of which may be suspected of lacking documentation or presenting data that is not true or/and impossible to prove. A true mimicry of scientific research.

How do we detect a predatory magazine? Many articles [1-2, 4] that have dealt with this subject urge us to check the following:

- editorial and scientific boards: to see if the people on those lists are experts in the field of the journal.
- peer-review process: to ensure that articles submitted for publication are reviewed.
- editorial policies: to see if they are clear and coherent.
- reputation of the magazine: by querying the main databases. In particular Scopus and Web of Science are very serious databases, and most predatory journals are missing from them. But not all of them.
- another way may be to check the index of predatory journals, such as Predatory Reports² and/or Beall's List³.

Okay, but by checking the above could we determine whether or not a magazine is predatory? The answer is definitely NO. Many of the journals in Web of Science and Scopus are included in the lists mentioned above. Most, if not all, of them have serious editorial policies and editorial and scientific boards. And many of them are present in Q1, both in Scimago and Web of Science rankings. But what makes them predators? High fees and short publication periods? This is where various discussions can take place. Perhaps journals pay their reviewers to get them to review an article in a shorter period of time. Does that mean they are predatory? Perhaps they have more reviewers available so that the peer review

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² <https://predatoryreports.org/the-list>

³ <https://beallslit.net/>

process is quicker. It is not necessarily a short review period that puts a journal in the predatory category, but the way in which these reviews are conducted. If there is high quality and rigor, then it doesn't matter how short the review period is. The large number of scientifically weak articles published after paying a large fee makes a journal predatory. If the fee takes precedence over quality, the journal is predatory.

Predatory journals are a serious threat to the integrity of academic publishing, and researchers should exercise caution when choosing where to publish their research. Authors should carefully investigate the reputation and practices of any journal to which they are considering submitting their work and give priority to submitting their research to reputable journals that place a premium on quality rather than publication fees.

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