

# ISSUES ON PREDATORY JOURNAL

Prepared by: PERTANIKA UPM

## What's with the predatory journal?

Even though the percentage is small, the effect is nevertheless significant to academia. Either the authors wrongly submitted the articles to the predatory journals and were caught in the fraudulent act, or they were intentionally published, we wouldn't know unless thorough research in our context is done to analyze the issue.

The findings were reported by Machacek and Srholec and published in *Scientometrics*, entitled "Predatory publishing in Scopus: Evidence on Cross-Country Differences." However, the article, published on 7th February 2021, was later retracted on 6th September 2021 for some issues raised by the Editor-in-Chief.

Nevertheless, we cannot deny that some of our Malaysian researchers have published their works in predatory journals. Nature Paper's article "Predatory Journals: No Definition, No Defense," defines these journals and publishers as "the entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices."

According to predatoryjournals.com "the journals were published without meeting the peer review requirements, and they collect huge publication fees. In addition to that, some journals have been fraudulently rebranded and constitute as their own by a predatory journal or publisher. predatoryjournals.com has provided lists of these hijacked journals."

## How to identify them?

Predatory journals provide false or misleading information on their organization. The editorial board consists of people who do not have valid credentials. Even worse, the individuals listed as their editorial board members or peer review panels have no idea that their names have been misused. The publishers cut and paste the academician academic profiles, thus claiming they are a team. Their website contents and design are mimicked to make their website look presentable and professional.

If we look at their office address, it states that they are in a particular country, but the contact details are in another.

In addition to that, predatory journals do not follow established academic standards for publishing. Their Journal Impact Factor or other citation metrics are misleading or refutable. They are not being transparent on the peer review process and do not provide editing services. Furthermore, the article selection is not stringent. Low-quality articles unrelated to the journal's scope are also accepted.

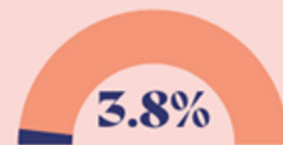
Usually, publishing a volume of journal articles will take roughly six months to a year. The process of selecting articles, peer review, and editing already take time. Before being published online or printed, the journal must go through the prepress process of layouts, designs, and proofreading. However, the predatory journals often provide a quick turnaround within a month.

Other than that, predatory publishers also compel researchers to commit their article's copyright at the time of submission so that they cannot publish elsewhere.

Malaysia rank **4th** of 20 countries for predatory journal articles



Malaysia rank **15th** of 20 countries for predatory journal articles in Health Sciences' field



Malaysia rank **1st** of 20 countries for predatory journal articles in Physical Sciences' field



## How do they fish for articles?

They send soliciting emails, phishing in style with grammatical errors. It is the same *modus operandi* to get scholars to be on their editorial board. Once they are in, they will never leave. Scam emails are easy to identify and block.

But some are very professional, and their offers are enticingly legit. As a result, many researchers are lured into the deep honeyed trap without even suspecting it.

## How to avoid being devoured by the predator?

It is a rule of thumb to check the publisher's website meticulously, page by page, especially their editorial board members and peer review panel. It does not hurt if we contact one of the members for due diligence. Go through the peer review process and publication timelines. Are the publication fees clearly stated? Read their past issues to sift for quality. In addition, verify whether the journal is a member of reputable organizations such as the DOAJ, COPE, OASPA, or STM.

The fastest method to cross-check the journal's legitimacy is to run through Beall's List of Predatory Publishers and Predatory Journals, "Predatory Reports" by Cabell's International, Scopus Discontinued List of Journals, WoS/JCR Suppression List of Journals, and Predatoryjournals.com.

## Why you should avoid submitting to predatory journals?

Many were unsuspecting since the predatory journal used identical names to credible and reputable journals. Some of our young researchers are not aware of predatory journals' existence. They are still naive about the quality and nature of those journals. There are instances where others submitted the articles without permission. And not surprisingly, some are deliberate, although their part is small.

Unfortunately, some acts are deliberately done for the sake of quantity to meet their Key Performance Indexes/Indicators (KPI). In addition, predatory journals do not vet the published articles, thus allowing some researchers to publish anything that fancies them.

Journal articles on health issues and medical pose a grave danger to the public seeking a second opinion. Other consequences include the risk of losing one's academic reputation. An appointment or conferment to the researchers could be withdrawn once the researchers mislead the criteria for such engagement. They are also being held responsible for indulging in unethical publishing and wasting APCs (Article Processing Charge). Furthermore, predatory publications have scientific ramifications by tampering with and reducing evidence, diminishing the scientific integrity and credibility at the expense of research fundings.

The nonexistence of effective and practical policy to curb publication in predatory journals is also a contributing factor. On top of that, researchers themselves should value their works and avoid being victimized academically. The classic law of demand and supply says that there is no supply when there is no demand. Thus, researchers must stop contributing, citing, becoming their reviewer, or playing any part in their editorial board to stop them.

The legit publishers and journal authors should also utilize the copyright law to protect their articles from being published elsewhere without permission. If any of the researchers stumbled upon any suspecting publishers, they should contact the independent group Stop Predatory Journals. They are actively updating the list of predatory journals to safeguard any researcher worldwide from falling victim. We should practice #kitajagakita in the academic world too.

### RESOURCES

- Abad-García, M. F. (2019). Plagiarism and predatory journals: A threat to scientific integrity. *Anales de Pediatría*, 90(1), 57.e1–57.e8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anpede.2018.11.006>
- Abdul, A. E. (2017). Academic writing and publishing in India: Is quality a touchstone? *Jurnalul Practicilor Comunitare Pozitive*, 17(1), 13–24.
- American Psychology Association. (2016). How to avoid predatory publishers (Vol. 47, No. 4). APA. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/04/predatory-publishers>
- Bond, B. B., Brown, S. D., Stewart, D. W., Roane, D. S., & Harirforoosh, S. (2019). Faculty applicants' attempt to inflate CVs using predatory journals. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 83(1), 7210. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7210>
- Chen, L. X., Wong, K. S., Liao, C. H., & Yuan, S. M. (2020). Predatory journal classification using machine learning. In 2020 3rd IEEE International Conference on Knowledge Innovation and Invention (pp. 193–196). IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICKII50300.2020.9318901>
- Claude Moore Health Sciences Library. (2021). Publish and measure your research findings: How to avoid predatory journals. <https://guides.hsl.virginia.edu/researchimpact/journals>
- Cobey, K. D., Lalu, M. M., Skidmore, B., Ahmadzai, N., Grudniewicz, A., & Moher, D. (2018). What is a predatory journal? A scoping review. *F1000Research*, 7, 1001. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.15256.2>
- Committee on Publication Ethics. (2019). Predatory publishing. COPE. <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.6>
- Demir, S. B. (2018). Predatory journals: Who publishes in them and why? *Journal of Infometrics*, 12(4), 1296–1311. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2018.10.008>
- Elmore, S. A., & Weston, E. H. (2020). Predatory journals: What are and how to avoid them. *Toxicologic Pathology*, 48(4), 607–610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192623320209209>
- Gades, N. M., & Toth, L. A. (2019). How to avoid becoming easy prey for 'predatory' journals and why it matters. *Comparative Medicine*, 69(3), 164–166.
- Glasson, V. (n. d.). 6 ways to spot a predatory journal. <https://rxcomms.com/blog/6-ways-spot-predatory-journal/vglasson/>
- Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., Cobey, K. D., Bryson, G. L., Cukier, S., Allen, K., Arden, C., Balcom, L., Barros, T., Berger, M., Buitrago-Ciro, J., Cugusi, L., Donaldson, M. R., Matthias, E., Graham, I. D., Hodgkinson, M., Khan, K. M., Mabizela, M., Manca, A., ... Lalu, G. M. (2019). Predatory journals: No definition, no defence. *Nature*, 576, 210–212. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y>
- Harvey, H. B., & Weinstein, D. F. (2017). Predatory publishing: An emerging threat to the medical literature. *Academic Medicine*, 92(2), 150–151. <https://doi.org/10.1097/acm.0000000000001521>
- Kisely, S. (2019). Predatory journals and dubious publishers: How to avoid being their prey. *BJPsych Advance*, 25(2), 113–119. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2018.56>
- Kratovichil, J., Plch, L., Sebera, M., & Koritšková, E. (2020). Evaluation of untrustworthy journals: Transition from formal criteria to a complex view. *Learned Publishing*, 33(3), 308–322. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1299>
- Laine, C., & Winker, M. A. (2017). Identifying predatory or pseudo-journals. *Biochimica Medica*, 27(2), 285–291. <https://doi.org/10.11613%2FBM.2017.031>
- Macháček, V., & Šrholec, M. (2021). Predatory publishing in Scopus: Evidence on cross-country differences. *Scientometrics*, 126, 1897–1921. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03852-4>
- Manca, A., Cugusi, L., Cortegiani, A., Ingoglia, G., Moher, D., & Deriu, F. (2020). Predatory journals enter biomedical databases through public funding. *BMJ*, 371, m4265. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m4265>
- Manca, A., Moher, D., Cugusi, L., Dvir, Z., & Deriu, F. (2018). How predatory journals leak into PubMed. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 190(35), E1042–E1045. <https://doi.org/10.1503%2Fcmaj.180154>
- Menon, S. (2021, March 7). Bringing an end to predatory journals. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2021/03/07/bringing-an-end-to-predatory-journals>
- Musick, Chad. (2015). 8 questions and answers about predatory journals: Protecting your research, reputation, and funding from theft and fraud. <https://thinkscience.co.jp/en/articles/predatory-journals>
- Rathore, F. A., & Memon, A. R. (2018). How to detect and avoid predatory journals. In *Scientific writing: A guide to the art of medical writing and scientific publishing* (pp. 312–325). Professional Medical Publications.
- Stop predatory journal. (n. d.). About. <https://predatoryjournals.com/about/>
- Strong, G. (2019). Understanding quality in research: Avoiding predatory journals. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 35(4), 661–664. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334419869912>
- Vakil, C. (2019). Predatory journals authors and readers beware. *Canadian Family Physician*, 65(2), 92–94.
- Vogel, L. (2017). Researchers may be part of the problem in predatory publishing. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 189(42), E1324–E1325. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.109-5507>