

Predatory journals

The publication of research results within legitimate journals is fundamental to the advancement of scientific knowledge and is the common goal for academics and researchers. However, the existence of predatory journals threatens the validity and dissemination of evidence-based medical knowledge and practice.¹

The concept of predatory scientific journals was coined by Jeffrey Beall² and refers to those publications that exploit the model of open journal access and try to deceive both authors and readers. They usually have unethical practices and an aggressive campaign to recruit authors, offering a very short peer review process (which usually does not exist) and charging fees for the article to be published in a very short time frame. A way of presenting itself is mimicking itself by being named in a similar way to prestigious journals; their contents have grammatical errors, their electronic sites are of poor quality and show exaggerated impact factors that do not correspond to the reality of the journal.³ In their editorial committee they have leaders in research fields and prominent figures that support the journal; However, most of the time these persons are unaware of the existence of these publications. It is natural to consider that, if these journals do not comply with the strictness of the publication processes, the results presented in their publications are debatable or at least unreliable.

When the reasons for these are investigated, first is the rapid development of science and the principle of incommensurability of scientific knowledge, described by Kuhn,⁴ that requires new forms of communication due to the exponential accumulation in each of the fields of knowledge. New strategies are needed every day to disseminate research results. On the other hand, among researchers, academics, clinical and scientific professors, there is pressure to publish, whether it be paying (This is the model that promotes the new movement of Open Journal Access- which is legitimate and necessary, and is revolutionizing the form of scientific communication).⁵ Different unscrupulous people with interests beyond the sciences who seek to benefit from the ignorance of authors and readers in relation to these processes and only seek economic benefit have identified these opportunities and needs.

It is the duty of the scientific community to identify and recognize this phenomenon, because in the two sides where doctors usually stand in front of scientific journals can be deceived. If it is on the authors side who submit the results of their research work, apart from any economic damage that may exist, this may have an effect on their

academic career, because the journals are not being recognized or duly refereed or qualified and the effort can be lost by not having the recognition of the scientific community.⁶ On the other hand, readers should have criteria to identify publications that may contain results of research that have not been carried out with the appropriate scientific rigor, or may even contain falsified data. It is important to remember that the results of clinical investigations will be apply with patients, and is part of the responsibility as doctors / ophthalmologists, to have criteria to know what conclusions are taken from scientific reading. Is worth to mention that even to read, interpret and apply the results of properly indexed and reputable journals, a critical judgment is required that includes not only from the specialty context, but also epidemiology, biostatistics and methodology; journals with tradition, reputation, and prestige are generally supported by medical associations, universities, or other centers with well-established reputations.

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