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Editorial

Predatory or Fake Journals: a real threat to the credible publishers

Fake or predatory journals have mushroomed during the recent past and become a real treat to the credible journals and publishers. The “online open access” policy, when introduced a decade ago, was welcomed by the scientific community as a positive step in the dissemination of knowledge especially to regions with financial constraints. Fake journals are a byproduct of this policy and the industry is a lucrative business now.

This industry thrives on the “publish or perish” culture particularly seen among academia and novice and over enthusiastic academics are the victims of this immoral industry. Questionable journals share certain common characteristics helping somewhat easy recognition. These journals publish anything and everything for a fee and have a rapid review process. Mr. Jeffrey Beall, a research librarian in the University of Colorado, maintains a registry of fake journals “Predatory open access journals” using some attributes they share.

Fake journals have no address or contact information other than the corresponding email address. They are not linked to a recognized institution or organization. Submission guidelines are nonspecific and review process is unclear. These features question the credibility of a journal.

The prime duty of a journal is to disseminate accurate and valid scientific information to the relevant audience. Some prestigious journals, however, have a limited circulation, primarily due to high subscription cost. Fake journals have recognized this weakness and entice potential authors with rapid review process and wider visibility of their work. Academics require maintaining a high degree of suspicion in order to avoid becoming victims of this immoral industry.

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