Protect Your Professional Life: Beware of Predatory Publishers and Conferences

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Objective: To raise pediatric hematology/oncology nurses awareness of predatory publishing and conference practices so that they can avoid the pitfalls of these nefarious practices.

Disclosure:
Presenters are the editor and assistant editors for APHON’s Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing
Predatory Publishers & Conference Sponsors

Authors, Readers, Presenters, Attendees…. Beware!
What are predatory publishers?

Some history….

- Predatory publishers are defined as “those that unprofessionally abuse the author-pays publishing model for their own profit” (Beall, 2013)

- “Beall’s list highlighted the issue of predatory journals, but faced criticism over transparency and legal threats from listed titles. It ceased operation in 2017.” (Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
Confusing…

• Predatory journals have found a way to:
  ▪ Join COPE (the Committee on Publication Ethics),
  ▪ Be included in curated indexes such as Web of Science, or
  ▪ Be listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
Creating a definition

- 32 scholars
- 10 countries
- 12 hours of discussion
- 18 questions on Delphi survey
- 3 rounds ..........

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
"Predatory journals and publishers are 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."
4 Key Characteristics:
1. False or Misleading Information
   - Journal’s website & communications have contradictory statements
   - Fake impact factors
   - Misled about relationships with professional associations
   - Misrepresent editorial board
   - Misrepresent rigor of peer review

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
4 Key Characteristics: 2. Deviate From Best Editorial & Publication Practices

- Standards for Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing are issued by the DOAJ, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, COPE and the World Association of Medical Editors.

- Examples:
  - Not have a retraction policy
  - Unprofessional-looking web page — with spelling or grammar mistakes

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
4 Key Characteristics:

3. Lack of Transparency

- Fail to provide their contact information
- Lack details about article processing charges.
- Editors and editorial boards members often can’t be verified

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
4 Key Characteristics:

4. Aggressive, Indiscriminate Solicitation

- Flattering language
- Urgent need for forthcoming journal
- Request for articles outside author’s expertise
- Mentioning author’s past publications

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
But….. What about……..

• Journal quality and intent to deceive? A journal could be legitimate but under resourced so poor quality, but doesn’t intend to deceive

• Quality of peer review? Is important but impossible to assess

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
Why is this important? Why care?

- Collect millions of dollars in publication fees that are ultimately paid out by funders such as the NIH
- Publish plagiarized manuscripts stealing other scholars work
- Publish unproven science – damaging both consumers and scientists
- Damage professional reputations
- Are a global threat

(Grudniewicz et al., 2019)
How BIG is this problem?

Cabell’s Scholarly Analytics (https://blog.cabells.com/; 7/ 2020)

1. 13,500 predatory journals listed in the Predatory Reports database; this shows a growth of ≈2,000 journals a year

2. 1/3 of list (> 4,300 journals are medical (including multidisciplinary)

3. There are over 5,300 journals listed in Predatory Reports with an ISSN (40%); ISSN can be copied, faked, or simply made up. Having an ISSN is not a guarantee of legitimacy for journals
What are predatory conferences?

• Use same model as predatory publishers; make money
• Planned (poorly) by for-profit commercial companies; no connection to professional organizations/societies
• Have broad titles; include many topics
• Promise big-name key note speakers
• Held in tourist destinations
• Charge high conference fees plus sometimes speaking fees for presenting abstract or for publishing it
• Prey on academics needing to present their research
Mackenzie (2019) reported on attending a predatory conference in Edinburgh but far from city center.

- Nametags & registration papers in disorganized piles, 1 staff person manned the desk.
- Keynote scheduled for 2 lectures – gave one and left for airport.
- Schedule kept getting moved up – mid-afternoon presentations occurred in late morning.
- Heterogenous topics with no theme or organization.
- Planning committee not present; when contacted some denied being on the committee.
- Introduced speakers & no one came forward.
What can you do?

Be informed!
How do I spot a predatory conference?
A light-hearted example of a Predatory Conference

https://youtu.be/_uv8Ej4CEoQ
Some ways to spot predatory conferences

- The email invitation is full of over-the-top praise for your work and phrases not common in scholarly communication ("We've noted your vast contributions to the field").

- There are misspellings on the Web site and few details about the conference content.

- The group sponsoring the conference is not well known.

- The sponsor is associated with a publisher of predatory journals.

- The conference name is very similar to another conference held by an established organization or professional society.

- The conference scope appears to be quite broad and not specific to your specialty.

(Simpson, 2019)
Dear Dr. Kristin Stegenga,

We hope you and your loved ones are doing well.

We have read your abstract of the article titled "The Why Behind the Questions: Question-asking in Parents of Children Newly Diagnosed With Cancer - A Report From the Children’s Oncology Group", and we believe it would be of great interest to the attendees of our "Annual Pediatrics and Neonatology Summit (APN Summit-2020)" scheduled from December 02-04, 2020 at Boston, USA.

**APN Summit-2020 activity is approved for Maximum of [15] AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s).**

We would like to know if you, or someone from your team, would be available to present the similar work at APN Summit-2020 organized by United Scientific Group (A Non-profit Scientific Organization).

The conference includes most influential pioneers, highly-cited researchers, most acclaimed speakers, informative panels and some of the best networking you'll find in the field of pediatrics and neonatology. It is an initiative to bring multi-disciplinary focus on a range of Pediatrics specialities such as; cardiology, infant nutrition, child abuse and mental health, infectious diseases, neonatology and perinatology, vaccines etc.

For speakers list and preliminary program: [https://pediatrics.unitedscientificgroup.org/](https://pediatrics.unitedscientificgroup.org/)

We are of course aware that the situation regarding COVID-19 is a cause for apprehension. We are prepared to offer virtual participation options, for anyone who are unable to travel.

Dr. Kristin Stegenga, please let us know your availability and interest to send you further details.

Stay safe and healthy. Thank you.

Warm regards,
Yashika Thakur

*for Organizing Committee: APN Summit-2020*
Dear Kristin Stegenga,

Greetings of the day!

Would you like to attend as a speaker at our 29th World Nursing Care Congress to be held from September 22-23, 2020 at webinar?

Abstract submission is open, to learn more: Nursing Care Summit 2020.

We look forward to welcoming you to our very exciting conference in webinar.

Your earliest confirmation of this mail will be highly appreciated.

Warm Regards
Frank Turner
Program Manager || Nursing Care Summit 2020
Phone/WhatsApp: +61-731-236-047
Clicking on the link in the previous email brings us here…
Scientific Program

Note: Please click on a Speakers name/Title to view speaker’s bio and full presentation information
The Nursing Congress 2020 (in association with Canadian Academy of Sciences, CAS)
Global Review on Next Gen Nursing & Human Well-being
Application of 7 Paths to Lasting Happiness for Nursing & Healthcare Professionals
May 28-30, 2020, Orlando, USA
Location: Double Tree by Hilton Orlando at Sea World

Hi K Kristin,

Greetings!

We would like to know your interest to join Nursing Congress 2020.

Conference Program: https://exceleve.com/nursing/preliminary-program.php

DAY1: Scientific Program | DAY2: Scientific Program | DAY 3: Local Tour

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Keerthi
Program Director
Nursing Congress 2020
Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at Sea World
e: contact@exceleve.com

Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing
Contrast  →  APHON

Conference

• Professional association with valid website
• Rigorous process for reviewing abstract submissions by members; review has criteria
• Presentations organized by topic/theme
• Planning committee identified; present
• Contact information provided
• Conference handouts available to attendees before and after conference
How to Spot Predatory Journals

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND
Background: Open Access
Why should nurses worry about this?

Randomly selected articles (n = 358) from previously identified predatory nursing journals were reviewed for structural content and eight quality indicators.

• Two-thirds (67.4%) of the articles were published between 2014 and 2016 (big rise in publications in predatory nursing journals).

• The majority (75.9%) of the articles were research reports. Most followed the IMRAD presentation of a research report but contained errors, or the study was not pertinent to the nursing discipline.

• Take home message: Nursing research published in predatory journals may appear legitimate by conforming to an expected structure.
  ▪ lack of quality is apparent, representing inadequate peer review and editorial processes.

• Poor quality research erodes the scholarly nursing literature.

(Oermann et al, 2018)
Open Access Journal of Biomedical Science (OAJBS)

Dear Dr. Kristin Stegenga,

May you wrap a rainbow of joy in your heart and have a very special Good morning!!

We have launched a New Issue (Volume 1 Issue 4). We need an article to be published in this issue. Is it feasible for you to submit any article in this instance?

Await to receive your article.

With appreciation,
Jessica Williams
Assistant Managing Editor
Greetings from *Journal of Comprehensive Nursing Research and Care* (ISSN 2581-3846)

I trust everything is fine from your end.

We would like to inform you that, your unbound support towards the scientific community is highly appreciated.

Based on your expertise and contribution towards the scientific community, we would like to request you to share your research and submit an article towards the next issue of 2020 volume.

We will be glad to have an article from you for our next issue of 2020 volume. You can submit any type of article. The deadline of submission is on or before 30th July.

Hope you will definitely consider and share your valuable articles towards the journal. The publication fee is only $210USD.

Please feel free to contact us for any further queries.

I am eagerly waiting for your response.

Yours sincerely,
Deepika
Managing Editor
B

- Baishideng Publishing Group
- Basha Research Corporation (BRCORP)
- Basic Research Journals
- Bell Press
- Bentham Open
- Best Journals
- Better Advances Press
- Betty Jones & Sisters Publishing
- Binary Information Press
- Bio Accent/Bioaccent
- Bio Core/Biocore
- Bioflux Society
- Biohelikon
- Biohouse Publishing Group
- BioInfo Publications
- BioIT international Journals
- Biological and Chemical Publishing
- BioMed Press
- BioMed Research
- BioMedSciDirect Publications
Contrast *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*

- Complete Contact Information in print journal and online
- Focused topic area
- Editorial Board recognizable. Contact information present
- Peer Review Process present and clearly defined
- Information regarding open-access and standard publishing options available
Checklist for potential predatory journal

- Is there complete contact information for the journal?
- Is the scope multidisciplinary with wide-ranging unrelated fields?
- Is there an Editorial Board
  - Do you recognize the members as leaders in the field?
  - Not sure? Contact a few and see what their experience with the journal is
Checklist continued

- Author fee policy? (Always find out up-front)
- Quality of the manuscripts in the journal
- Delineated peer review process?
- Indexing in appropriate services?
  - ICV indexing
- Retraction policy?
- Pitching authors?
Helpful Resources

- https://nursingeditors.com/
- https://predatoryjournals.com/publishers/
- https://guides.mclibrary.duke.edu/beinformed
Evidence from Predatory Sources
Predatory Publishers/Journals and Evidence

• “These journals are increasing rapidly in number and have the potential to alter the results of research syntheses.” (Ross-White et al., 2019, p. 107)

• “Predatory journals provide readers with content that has not been properly vetted and is often of poor quality. Citations to articles from predatory journals, which occur with some regularity in legitimate journals, risk providing misinformation to readers.” (Likis, 2019, p. 523)
Literature on predatory publishers and evidence

“Despite being explicit that he used the term “predatory” with caution, it is the name most frequently used to describe a nebulous concept of research journal publishers who use unethical business practices, minimal or no peer review, or limited editorial oversight to publish articles that are below a minimally accepted standard of quality” (Ross-White et al, 2019)
Predatory Publishers and Systematic Reviews

• **Systematic Review:** A systematic review attempts to identify, appraise and synthesize all the empirical evidence that meets pre-specified eligibility criteria to answer a specific research question (Cochrane Library)

• Ross-White et al., 2019 examined the inclusion of articles from a known predatory publisher (who owned 459 journals) in systematic reviews.
  - 62 of these journals published 120 articles that were cited by at least 1 systematic reviews
  - In total, 157 systematic reviews cited an article from 1 of these journals
Predatory Publishers and Scrutiny of Peer Review

- Bohannon (2013) authored a spoof paper on the anticancer properties of “a chemical extracted from lichen” to test the peer review of open-access journals

- Submitted 304 versions (containing easily identifiable fatal flaws, major errors, impossible future directions) to open-access journals
  - 167 from the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) list
  - 121 from Beall’s list
  - 16 listed by both
How many of the 304 submitted were accepted for publication?

- 157 (52%) accepted!!
- 98 rejected
- Other 49 journals: 29 no longer around, 20 “still under review”
- Journals from Beall’s list: 82% accepted the paper
- DOAJ - 45% accepted the paper
Predatory Nursing Journals

- Oermann et al (2019) aimed to evaluate papers published in predatory nursing journals
  - Identified 127 predatory nursing journals
  - Included in the review: journals that had published at least 100 articles
  - Final sample size: 7 predatory nursing journals that they evaluated
What they found

- 814 citations from papers published in predatory nursing journals – cited in 141 nonpredatory nursing journals
  - Mean (SD) years between publication and citation: 2.95 (1.68)
  - Many papers were cited numerous times
  - 85 review papers (significant review of original research) published in nonpredatory nursing journals cited predatory articles
Further findings

- 141 nonpredatory nursing journals
  - 47 had published 1 paper that cited a predatory article
  - Other journals published numerous papers (e.g., a clinical practice journal published 77 papers)
  - Authors of articles with citations from predatory nursing journals
    - USA: 250 (31%)
    - Australia: 100 (12%)
  - Articles with PMID: (65%) vs. without PMID: (35%) – no significant difference in # of citations
  - Articles with a Journal Impact Factor vs. without PMID: no significant difference in # of citations
Literature Search: Cautions

- Use caution when searching Google Scholar and PubMed Central (Ross-White, 2019; Oehrmann, 2019)
  - The quality control of these databases are not rigorous
- PubMed database: Uses PubMed Central and MEDLINE
  - MEDLINE - journals included meet rigorous criteria.
  - Recommend using journals that are MEDLINE indexed journals

Systematic review of basic oral care for the management of oral mucositis in cancer patients and clinical practice guidelines

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Affiliations  + expand

PMID: 31286232 DOI: 10.1007/s00520-019-04848-4
A review of basic oral care for the prevention of oral mucositis in cancer patients and the guidelines

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PMID: 31286232 DOI: 10.1007/s00520-019-04848-4
Conclusions

• Open access is not the problem, lack of peer review is (Oehrmann, 2019)
  ▪ Quality of paper
  ▪ Accuracy of data
  ▪ Validity of findings
• Dissemination of questionable/inaccurate findings
• Potential effects:
  ▪ Clinicians making decisions about evidence-based practice (based on systematic reviews) – potential harm to patients
  ▪ Families relying on evidence from predatory journals
Links

• Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) journals: [https://doaj.org/](https://doaj.org/)

References


• Cochrane Library. (n.d.) About Cochrane Reviews. [https://www.cochranelibrary.com/about/about-cochrane-reviews](https://www.cochranelibrary.com/about/about-cochrane-reviews)


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