

Cardiothoracic and vascular surgery is not immune to predatory publishing

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Open access publishing (OAP) is a relatively new concept that provides to the reader, published scientific work at no costs – they are free to read, copy, download, save and distribute. As far as it is freely available to everyone, articles published in this process have more impact, the feature which is attractive for both the authors and the journals. In OAP, usually fees are driven from the authors. Many researchers find article publication charge (APC) to be acceptable and legitimate given wider dissemination, immediate availability and deeper percolation of information that OAP brings with it [1]. Legitimate OAP—which has widely progressed scientific communication—uses all the ethical and professional practices associated with the best scientific publishing [2].

Predatory journals and publishers are defined as exploitation of the OAP process that bypasses the classical scientific peer review model and, for an APC publishes any submitted paper, regardless scientific value. The rate of predatory publishing is growing, according to a report, published by Cook et al, in the last four years, it has grown 600%. Unfortunately, this fraud publishing is often confused with OAP, whereby scientific work is free and can be re-used for any purpose. Every genuine product of scientific work deserves full assessment and justice by a thorough, unbiased complete peer review process, the chance to revise manuscripts based on the supportive critics of editors and reviewers and ultimately presenting it in a legitimate journal with known, flawless, adequate academic performance. Anything less this is regarded as a compromise [3].

“At the Edorium Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery, we ensure all researchers that nothing—at all nothing; can compromise our reviewer and editorial standards.”

Daily, researchers receive several emails request to publish their manuscripts in predatory journals, review submitted paper for them, or join their editors. Most academic authors simply delete the emails, but some engage their traps. A recent analysis of biomedical journal authors showed that researchers in predatory journals are mostly the juniors and affiliated to the developing countries, especially Middle and South Asia. Beginner authors may not be aware of predatory publishers and journals. Differentiating them from legitimate journals perhaps may be difficult for prospective authors. That is why mentors and senior faculty should interfere and support novice researchers in choosing a genuine journal for their scientific work [1]. Researchers from developing countries are more likely to be the prey. This is expected because authors in these countries are under the same pressure to publish papers as those in developed countries but often lack the support, guidance, and mentorship that is provided to authors in high income countries. Usually, cost poses little barrier to the authors as these publishers usually charge low enough APC [2]. In this way, predatory publishers are working to undermine the core business of generating evidence on which clinical practice and public health strategy depend to improve global health. The journals also pollute the scientific promotion which is practiced in universities and academic institutions. Beall once stated that the weak or absent scientific peer review process mean that predatory publishers can be regarded as “reservoirs of author misconduct” including fabrication, plagiarism, and figure manipulation [4]. These journals and publishers could disappear in any minute and with it would be lost all the previously published articles which could have been legitimate. Defeating these non-scientific publishers will not be an easy work. As far as they can get money they will continue, and if reply to their requests declines they will simply re-send it again and again.

Predatory publishing is also harming small and newly emerging scholarly journals and publishers, because in

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most of the time, they have some features of predatory journals although they are fully legitimate and genuine publishers using OAP business style [5]. Unfortunately, cardiothoracic and vascular surgery is not immune to predatory publishing. Currently more than 20 journals entitling cardiothoracic and vascular surgery mentioned in the list of possible, probable and potential predatory journals and publishers [4]. These journals are capable to contaminate the literature with fabricated, falsified, poorly reviewed research data. Authors of review and meta-analysis studies must be aware of these fraud papers while reviewing the literature.

The problem of predatory publishing is that they are diverse, growing and changing their strategy from now and then. The demand side therefore should have an action. First of all, awareness of the problem should be raised. Reputable journals and publishers have to play a role: publication on this problem should be done by all journals. Unfortunately few of them have published anything [2]. According to the last revision of the “Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly work in Medical Journals” from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) the author has the responsibility to deal with predatory publishing, researchers should evaluate the history, practices, integrity and reputation of the publishers and journals to which they submit their work. Although there is no fixed character, there are some features that should raise suspicion: journal name with a diverse field, unheard journal, similarity of journal names other genuine journals; amateurish websites, fraud impact factors, acceptance within short duration of time sometime within 1–2 weeks; editorial board with fake nonexistent professionals, and seeking manuscripts through repeated unsolicited emails [5].

Predatory publishing is a problem that unequally harms people in developing countries. At Edorium journal of cardiothoracic and vascular surgery, our viewpoints are to encourage authors be aware of predatory publishing and avoid themselves being part of scientific pollution created by fraud publishing. It is crucial that scientific societies, reputable publishers and funders in developing countries offer full support.

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Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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