Description

Open access journals operate on a fee based business model. The author pays the publisher a fee and in return the journal reviews his manuscript for quality, offers editorial advice, and ultimately publishes the paper for free dissemination to all who wish to read it. There is nothing wrong with this business model. Unfortunately, the proliferation of open access journals has attracted the attention of some who are not interested in advancing knowledge, only in making a fast buck.

Predatory Publishers

The worst of these con men publishers don't publish papers at all. They simply take the money and disappear. Almost as bad are the publishers that don't screen manuscripts at all. They will publish anything for a fee—good, bad, indifferent, plagiarized. They offer no real editorial advice. Their journals appear to be real journals complete with a physical publishing location, a masthead, a distinguished staff, and a prestigious sounding journal name. But it's a hoax and a scam. The supposed publishing location in the United States doesn't exist; it's really in Pakistan or Nigeria. The staff names are fabricated, or the names of real scientists are listed without their permission. A scientist who publishes in such a journal will find the paper is worthless, since it is surrounded by so much garbage that no one will take it seriously.

How to Spot Predatory Publishers

These publishing con men are often easy to spot. The content on their websites is poorly written, full of grammatical mistakes and typos, an indication of the quality of their publication. Although their offices are supposedly in a certain country, all phone numbers are in a time zone half a world away. Email responses have date stamps that would be in the middle of the night in their supposed country of origin. Any of these characteristics should be a red flag to any potential manuscript submitter. A researcher may also make a quick search on the internet for postings concerning a journal he is unfamiliar with. If it's a scam there will likely be plenty of angry comments. But the best way to spot a predatory publisher is to read a few issues of the journal it publishes. Is the quality of the papers wildly variable? Are occasional quality papers surrounded by junk? If so, don't submit.

For more information on predatory publishers see the following link:
https://www.nature.com/news/predatory-publishers-are-corrupting-open-access-1.11385

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Submitting Manuscripts

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