

Guide to Avoiding Predatory Journals

Purpose of this Guide

This guide seeks to:

1. Provide an overview of what a predatory journal is
2. Identify the signs of a predatory journal
3. Provide guidance on how to avoid a predatory journal.

What is a Predatory Journal?

Predatory journals have been defined as journals “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.”¹ Predatory journals are exploitative academic publishing models that charge large publishing fees to academics prior to checking the academic’s publications for quality or legitimacy.² They will exploit academics financially with the false promise of publication in a reputable journal and can do damage to an academic’s career and reputation.

Common Characteristics of Predatory Journals

The following characteristics are common of predatory journals and should alert an individual that they must conduct further research into a journal’s legitimacy before submitting work to be published.

- Accept publications quickly with little to no peer review or quality control.
- Include fake publications or papers.
- Use aggressive solicitation to academics.
- Lack of transparency regarding operational procedures.
- Notify academics of article fees after their article has been published.
- Include a list of academics as members of editorial boards without their permission.
- Appoint fake academics to editorial boards.
- Mimic the name or web site style of more established journals.
- Mention that they are indexed by academic social network sites (such as ResearchGate)

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03759-y>

² <https://predatoryjournals.org/>

How to Avoid a Predatory Journal

Before submitting a published work to a journal, an academic should refer to PredatoryJournals.org's list of publishers and journals that have been identified as predatory through the following link:

<https://predatoryjournals.org/the-list>

Academics may also use the following best practices before engaging with a journal they believe could be predatory:

- Inquire about the peer review process for that journal.
- Cross check any previous works produced by the journal on the internet to ensure they are real.
- Contact listed members of the editorial board to ensure the journal's credibility.
- Research listed members of the editorial board to review their credentials.

If you have any questions or are concerned that you have been invited to a predatory conference, please contact the Office of the General Counsel.