A healthy 30-year-old Latin American woman presented at the gynecology outpatient clinic for an annual check-up. Among her clinical antecedents of interest were the following: sex worker and habitual use of vaginal douches and oral contraceptives. No itching, burning, or vaginal discharge was reported.Speculoscopy was found to be within normal limits. A cervicovaginal sample was collected using a wooden spatula and cytobrush, smeared onto a glass slide (conventional cytology), fixed with cytospray, and stained using the Papanicolaou method.

Microscopic examination revealed the presence of a cylindrically-shaped body that was approximately 280 µm long and 90 µm thick [Figure 1]. Under high magnification, it was possible to distinguish between two groups of crowded squamous cells, a well preserved segmented body with several oval, blue-colored structures that were clearly visible at one end. These structures were arranged in parallel lines, and their sizes ranged from 12 to 8 µm. A noninflammatory background was observed. After careful examination, the observed structure was tentatively catalogued as the abdominal fragment of an arthropod, possibly a copepod (Cyclopoida order), a member of a subclass belonging to the subphylum crustacean. This conclusion was reached after noting the following features: a short, cylindrical, segmented body, abdominal segments without appendages, and an egg sac attached to the body (blue oval structures). In gynecological screening cytology, unusual contaminants are occasionally observed on the smears (e.g., microscopic arthropods such as mites and lice). In some cases, these microorganisms may be derived from running tap water, both in cytological samples (intrinsic contamination) and after the staining procedure (extrinsic contamination).

Copepods are a group of microscopic crustaceans found in marine and freshwater habitats. Their bodies are usually short, cylindrical, and segmented. They consist of a head, a thorax, and an abdomen. In many adult female species, the ova appear enclosed inside twin transparent egg sacs attached to the female’s genital segment next to the caudal appendages. Their presence in human stool samples from patients suffering from perirectal abscesses has been reported. Moreover, in some uncommon diseases, such as sparganosis and dracunculiasis, copepods seem to be involved in vector transmission via contaminated drinking water.

To our knowledge, this is the first time that a contaminant with the described characteristics has been described on a cervicovaginal smear.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

Rafael Martínez-Girón, Cristina Martínez-Torre
1. Department of Anatomic Pathology and Cytodiagnosis, Institute of Piedras Blancas-Asturias, Piedras Blancas-Asturias,
2. Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Salamanca, Campus Miguel de Unamuno, Lic. Méndez Nieto, Salamanca, Spain.

Address for correspondence: Dr. Rafael Martínez-Girón,
CFGS Anatomía Patológica y Citodiagnóstico,
Institute of Piedras Blancas-Asturias, Avda Principal 33, 33450-Piedras Blancas-Asturias, Spain.
E-mail: rmartinezgiron@hotmail.com

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Sir,

"Publish or perish" is the modern-day adage for all researchers and medical teachers. Career advancement, respect among peers and juniors, or just the joy of seeing one's name in print are all drivers for present day rush for publications. No wonder the number of journals and publishers has multiplied over the last decade. Is this good from the viewpoint of scientific advancement?

Scientific growth in any discipline is dependent upon free sharing of ideas without any restrictions or bias. A truly democratic set up would allow all findings including negative results to be published freely and shared between researchers, lay persons, enthusiasts, teachers, and students. The online mode of publication has indeed made this possible. It has resulted in more interdisciplinary collaboration as information on diverse topics is available on the click of a mouse. The only barrier to this is the cost of publication. The other barrier is elitism among top journals.

Two oft repeated terms in the world of publishing are predatory journals and open access publishing. Open access means a shift from the conventional subscription-based model of journal publishing. The onus for paying for publication is shifted to the author or research funding agency or author's institution.

It is widely assumed that open access publications have higher visibility which translates to more citations. However, it also opens up the possibility of abuse by predatory journals which have no peer review systems in place. These journals do more harm than good by merely web hosting content which is not reviewed and make money at the cost of the author. It is imperative that young researchers and faculty are adequately informed about these.

Jeffery Beall, a University of Colorado librarian who listed the potential, possible, probable predatory journals and publishers at his website recently discontinued his controversial site. However, it is not difficult to identify a predatory journal. They promise a very quick time between submission and publication making a proper peer review almost impossible, use fake impact factors, and there is usually a lack of transparency regarding the location of the headquarter of the publisher. They send spam mails to authors praising them for their previous work.

Open Access Mega Journals (OAMJ) is a relatively recent phenomenon driven by a school of thought which favors publishing everything as long as it is technically sound. Four key characteristics of OAMJs are-large size, broad scope, Gold OA business model and a peer review policy that focuses only on scientific soundness of research.

This "author pays" model does not allow novelty or significance of the article to come in the way of its publication. F1000Research is one such open access initiative which publishes signed referee reviews alongside each article. All articles published are accompanied by data on which the reported results are based.

In conclusion, the key challenge for medical journal publishing today is to encourage and support open access without falling into the trap of predatory publishing.

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Nadeem Tanveer
Department of Pathology, University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India
Address for correspondence:
Dr. Nadeem Tanveer, Department of Pathology, University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi ‑ 110 095, India.
E‑mail: ntobh104@yahoo.co.in

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