Predatory science: Unraveling a secret journey of fake journals and conferences

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Abstract
The fraudulent behavior of predatory journals/conferences through E-mail solicitations and author’s perspective in unknowingly becoming victims of predatory publishing scheme, by being unaware of the fact that the journals in which they are involved are possibly predatory are highlighted here.

Keywords: Predatory, conferences, unsolicited

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Submitted: 03-Dec-2020, Accepted: 31-Mar-2021, Published: 14-May-2021

The fraudulent behavior of predatory journals/conferences through E-mail solicitations and author’s perspective in unknowingly becoming victims of predatory publishing scheme, by being unaware of the fact that the journals in which they are involved are possibly predatory are highlighted here.

Consensus defined predatory journals and publishers as the “entities which prioritize self-interest at the cost of scholarship and are characterized by false information, divergence from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices.”[1]

Unsolicited E-mail invitations were received from a predatory conference organizer asking to participate as a speaker in a conference organized by World Congress on Cancer Research and Therapy, going to be held on March 6, 2021 at Saint Petersburg. In a span of few months, we received another invitation from the same predatory conference organizer asking to participate as a delegate in the World Congress on Medical and Patient Education,[2] going to be held on April 2, 2021 at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, with a mention of archives of Applied medicine journals name on the brochure.[3] To our interest, on the Archives of Applied Medicine journal homepage, we could observe only two volume of publications so far in archives, lack of instructions on funding policy, refund policy, etc., which alarmed us to assume it to be a predatory journal.[3] The Autonomous University of Barcelona websites were checked for any updates regarding the congress and unfortunately, there was no information.[4] These predatory conference organizers even send details of scientific session brochure with a list of speakers, registered participants and name of the venue for reference purpose, eventually misleading us to fall in prey of predatory science.[2]

A series of E-mail references after an extensive search on research gate, about predatory journals/publishers...
and conferences highlighted fraudulent behavior of these predatory organizers.[1] The E-mail messages received from fake conference chairperson P. Jimenez, J. Pack for reference is enclosed [Figure 1].

These predatory journals make huge money by sending fraudulent E-mails asking for registration and even promise to publish conference findings in a reputed journals, as these predatory conference organizers also have sister predatory journals.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, we are forced to conduct online virtual conferences, scientific meetings, and these fake organizers misuse the digital online platform at the time of pandemic and make false claims about conferences and publications in E-mail solicitations. The unethical act of predatory publishers and conference organizers will mislead senior and junior researchers to fall into prey of predatory science. These predatory journals exist and waste our precious time, effort and money.

Senior and junior researchers get easily trapped into such online fraudulent proposals with an act of “publish or perish” system in academic colleges. Predatory science is mushrooming due to over emphasis on quantity than quality in academic institutions. These fraudsters graciously make us the victim to get article published in so called predatory journals as well as invite as a speaker of the bogus conference, resulting in online monetary transactions. The need for the hour is to identify and report these fake online accounts to the cyber crime cell grievances department.

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

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