

# Predatory journals could damage the legitimacy of scientific publishing

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Predatory journals pose a danger that could undermine the quality, integrity, and reliability of published scientific research, a new joint statement from three leading organizations, professional in medical

writing and publication planning, has warned.

The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), European Medical Writers Association (EMWA), and International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) has today released "A Joint Position Statement on Predatory Publishing," which outlines the "serious threat" that predatory journals pose—both to researchers publishing the results of their work and to the peer-reviewed medical literature itself.

If not stopped, the ultimate result of predatory journals—which as defined in the statement, are those which subvert the peer-review publication system for the sole purpose of financial gain with little evident concern for ethical behaviour—will be to "harm" scientific literature.

In seeking a resolution, the authors of the paper—published in *Current Medical Research & Opinion*—call for all potential medical authors to carry out due diligence by examining the reputation of the publications to which they submit, and to send their work only to those journals that provide proper peer review and that genuinely seek to contribute to the scientific literature.

"The conscious and deliberate submission of manuscripts to predatory journals is not ethical," the statement reads. "Medical writers and editors, as well as researchers, have a responsibility to evaluate the integrity, history, practices, and reputation of the journals to which their research is submitted. Legitimate research carried out with the best of intentions might be lost. Dangers to authors also exist in that their reputations can be damaged as a result of having their work published in predatory journals or being unknowingly 'appointed' to their editorial boards. Furthermore, authors may find themselves trapped after submitting an article to a predatory journal. There is a potential risk that some journals might not return submitted manuscripts or will publish a

submitted paper even after an author has protested."

The statement provides a key set of 11 identifiers typical of predatory journals and their publishers. As well as providing a lack of information, and poorly made websites, these include:

- a lack of journal indexing in a recognized citation system such as PubMed or within a legitimate online directory such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
- promises of unrealistically quick peer review, or no information about the process
- claims made of broad coverage across multiple specialties in medicine or across multiple subspecialties in a particular discipline
- a large stable of journals that have been started very recently and/or that contain no or few published articles, or are of obviously poor quality
- an editorial board consisting of members from outside the specialty or outside the country in which the journal is published

Susan Krug, MS, CAE, [executive director](#), AMWA states: "AMWA recognizes the serious threat that predatory publishing poses to medical and scientific literature. This position statement provides a call to action and offers guidance on how to identify and avoid predatory journals."

Barbara Grossman, president, EMWA, added, "EMWA advises that authors should not submit manuscripts to predatory journals. This statement provides support for medical communicators as they share responsibility to carry out due diligence when preparing to contribute to scientific literature."

Robert J. Matheis, Ph.D., MA, president and CEO, ISMPP, said, "Professional medical communicators and publication planners must be

aware of the serious threat predatory publishing poses to scientific literature. ISMPP's participation in this joint position statement is part of our commitment to educating our members about predatory publishing and how to address this significant issue."

Leon Heward Mills, managing director, researcher services, at Taylor & Francis, added, "We have actively supported initiatives such as 'Think, Check, Submit' over a number of years, providing researchers with the tools to identify journals which do not uphold the high standards of quality and integrity that their work deserves. We wholeheartedly welcome this statement, by three such respected organisations, and hope it will further support researchers in identifying and avoiding fraudulent publications."

**More information:** AMWA–EMWA–ISMPP joint position statement on predatory publishing, *Current Medical Research and Opinion* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/03007995.2019.1646535](https://doi.org/10.1080/03007995.2019.1646535)

Provided by Taylor & Francis

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