

Scientists defrauded by hijacked journals

November 4 2015, by David Bradley

Scientific progress is being hindered by the emergence of a relatively new kind of fraud – the hijacked scientific journal, according to researchers from Iran and Poland. They describe the problem and its detrimental effects on science in the International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning.

Mehdi Dadkhah of the Foulad Institute of Technology, in Isfahan and Tomasz Maliszewski of the Pomeranian University in Slupsk explain that hijacked journals are launched by fraudsters purely for financial gain. These journals deceptively steal the names and numbers of reputable, but perhaps less well known journals and charge authors publication charges under the pretext of being an [open access](#) publisher, but they are not authentic.

The issue has been raised by researchers before, with the first hijacked journal detected in 2012. However, say Dadkhah and Maliszewski, has not been widely recognised as a serious problem until now as the numbers of authors being duped by hijacked journals climbs. In one sense, the propositions to authors that come from these fraudulent journals is akin to the "phishing" attacks most of us receive in malicious emails that claim to be from our bank, retailers or other online organisations. Despite their being lists of exposed journals new ones appear on a daily basis ready to dupe the unwitting scientist keen to publish in what they assume is a legitimate journal.

One of the major knock-on effects of these journals is not only that the careers of individual scientists can be affected negatively, but the

international scientific ranking of a whole nation could be downgraded as more hijacked journals are exposed. The team emphasises that many scientists are now aware of so-called predatory journals. They point out that, "There is a significant difference between them...hijacked journals are not academic journals at all, they use fake websites to make their fake journals appear authentic." These journals are a sham and not to be confused with those that are simply aggressive in their commissioning of paying authors having piggybacked on the current publicity surrounding [open access journals](#).

With increasing pressure on academics to perform well in the scientific literature it is obvious that the inexperienced or naive might be tempted by a flattering email from what they see as a genuine [journal](#) only to discover later that they were duped and their hard-earned grant money is lost. Given that there are 170 countries ranked in Group E in terms of scientific performance based on their publication record. The existence of hijacked journals can only exacerbate this problem. The message needs to be spread widely to the academic community and beyond.

More information: Hijacked journals - threats and challenges to countries' scientific ranking. *Int. J. of Technology Enhanced Learning* 2015 - Vol. 7, No.3 pp. 281 - 288

Provided by Inderscience Publishers

Citation: Scientists defrauded by hijacked journals (2015, November 4) retrieved 17 March 2026 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-11-scientists-defrauded-hijacked-journals.html>

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