

FROM THE SUCCESS OF "PREDATORY" JOURNALS TO THE LOSS OF CREDIBILITY OF PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Many of us are literally flooded with e-mails asking us to submit our research articles to phantomatic scientific journals that nobody has never heard of. I personally receive a few dozen e-mails per day that are automatically trashed, together with invitations to join editorials boards or to attend unheard-of international conferences on topics far removed from my field of expertise. These are from the so called **"predatory" journals**, which Wikipedia currently defines as follows: "Predatory publishing is an exploitative academic publishing business model that involves charging publication fees to authors without checking articles for quality and legitimacy, and without providing editorial and publishing services that legitimate academic journals provide, whether open access or not." In other words, if somebody wishes to get academic traction fast, they can submit papers on real (or fake) research to these types of journals, which will then "review" them in a matter of a couple of days. Some of the reviewers may provide a list of their own papers to be cited in the Reference list, and the following day, the manuscript will be accepted (and published online as it is, without any editorial correction) after payment of a modest fee in the range of a couple of thousand Swiss Francs.

Some of the typical characteristics of predatory journals are (freely adapted from Wikipedia):

- aggressive and unsolicited invitations to submit manuscripts for publication or serving on editorial boards, while making it clear that the editor has absolutely no idea about your field of expertise;
- unrealistic promises regarding the speed of the peer review process, suggesting that the journal peer review process is minimal or non-existent and without quality control;
- listing academics as members of editorial boards without their permission, and appointing fake academics to editorial boards;
- mimicking the name or web site style of more established journals;
- making misleading claims about the publishing operation, such as a false location;
- citing fake or non-existent impact factors or spurious "alternative" impact factors;
- providing impact factors in spite of the fact that the journal is new (which means that the impact cannot yet be calculated);
- including articles totally outside stated scope of the journal;
- fundamental errors in the titles and abstracts, or frequent and repeated typographical or factual errors throughout the published papers;
- notifying academics of article fees only after papers are accepted.

More and more academics are tempted by this "fast-track solution", and are actually submitting their research to these journals, thus impoverishing the credibility of their and others' research. The reputation of the scientific community was already plagued by poor research quality and research done for the wrong reasons, so do we really have to stand by watching its further deterioration, or should we at least try to speak out

against this unacceptable new trend? Who is benefitting from poor quality and heavily biased research?

We, at **CLINICAL TRIALS IN DENTISTRY**, despite being a fledgling journal, will not accept such compromises. We shall try to provide a review process that is as fast as possible, but with the intent of actually improving the quality of reporting. We will reject manuscripts that are outside the scope of the journal or demonstrate unfixable flaws or dubious data.

We have chosen to follow the editorial line suggested by DG Altman in 1994: **"We need less research, better research, and research done for the right reasons"**. Meaning we are not going to publish articles just for the sake of it. Instead, we shall focus on those we judge to be methodologically sound and clinically reliable.

We hope you appreciate our efforts and enjoy our output.

Marco