

Are the “leading” journals bad for your health?

Jere Odell

Scholarly Communication Librarian

IUPUI

jdodell@iupui.edu



Three Guineas

Virginia Woolf, 1938



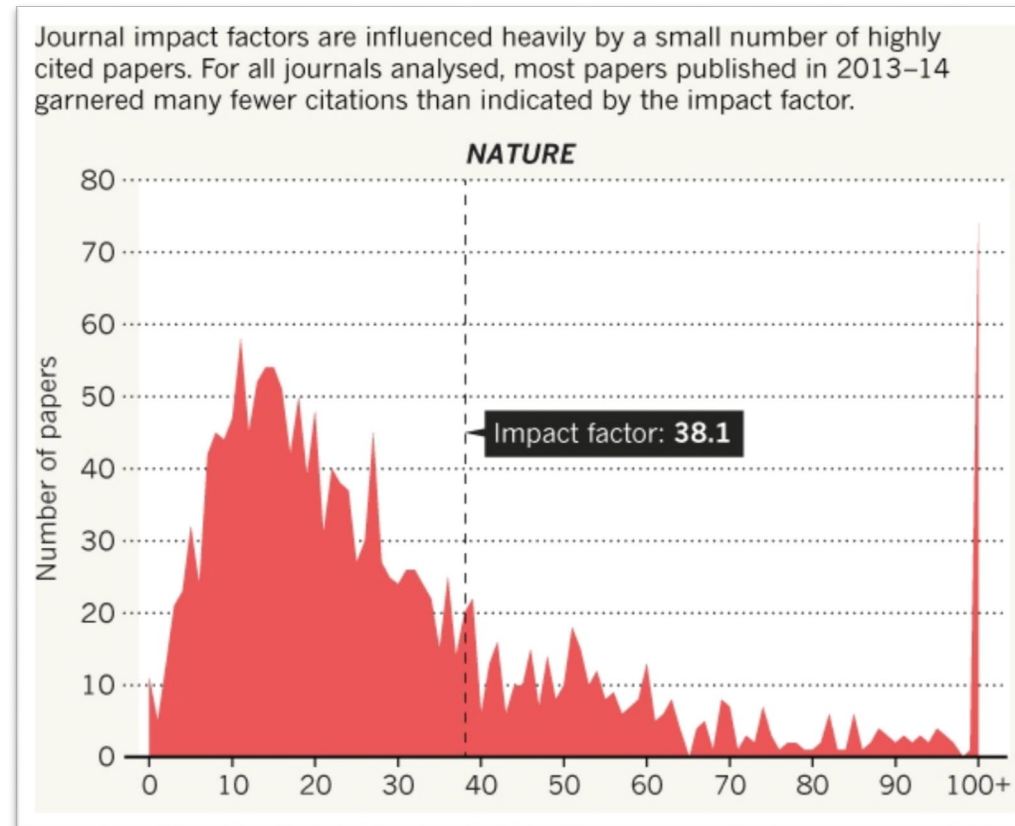
“Behind us lies the patriarchal system, the private house
... Before us lies the public world, the professional
system, with its possessiveness, its jealousy, its
pugnacity, its greed.” pg. 43

Three Accounts



“The question we should ask is whether the communication system and the reputational system of science and scholarship should be one and the same.”

-- Jean-Claude Guédon. Open Access: Toward the Internet of the Mind, 2017:
<https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/boai15/Untitleddocument.docx>



(Callaway, *Nature News*, 2016)

“For those in the global south, as much as citation is valued by authors, the positive influence of the research output on society should be of the greatest value ... how does it improve the quality of life of the citizenry of the world.”

-- Reggie Raju. (2018, February 7). Predatory publishing from a global south perspective. *Library Publishing Coalition Blog*: <https://librarypublishing.org/predatory-publishing-global-south-perspective/>

“[W]e claim that our work as librarians is a positive good, that we’re fighting the good fight by working towards open access as a social justice issue. But librarianship – and scholarly communication – does not exist in a vacuum. Just like cataloging, access services, and technology in all its biases, scholarly communication also has problems with equality. And we’re all complicit in this, myself included.”

-- Charlotte Roh. "Scholarly Communication in a Time of Change: Considering the Impact of Bias, Diversity, and Traditional Publishing Structures as Scholarly Communication Moves to New Platforms and Systems (Talk Transcript)" California Academic Research Libraries (2018):
<http://works.bepress.com/charlotteroh/43/>





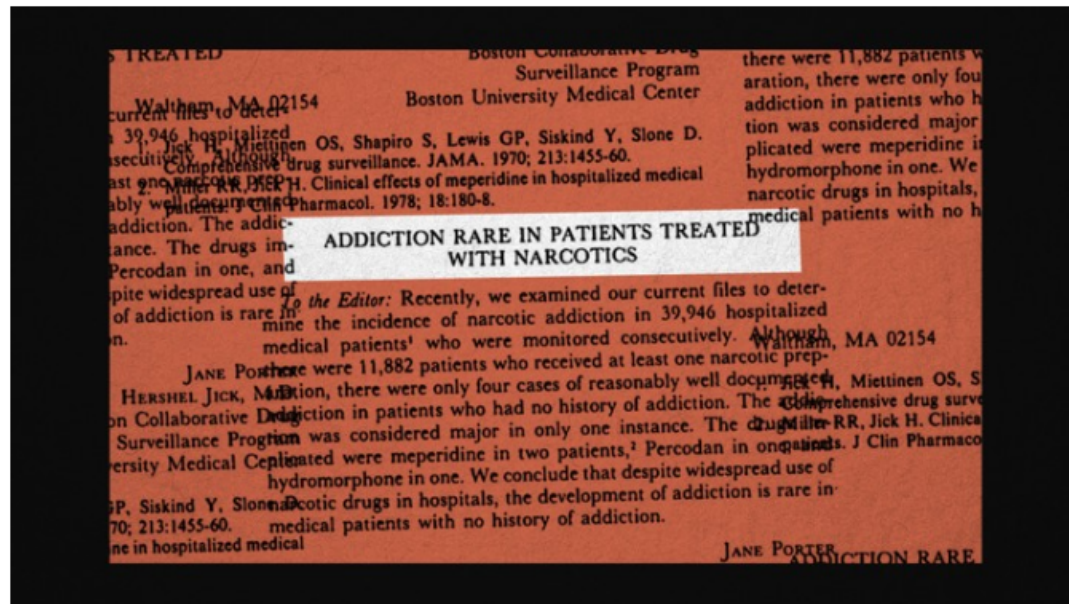
Image of highway accident used without permission.

HEALTH

The One-Paragraph Letter From 1980 That Fueled the Opioid Crisis

Because it was published in the most prestigious U.S. medical journal, its influence snowballed in a dangerous way.

SARAH ZHANG JUN 2, 2017



NEJM / KATIE MARTIN / THE ATLANTIC

What do you do when a letter in a prestigious medical journal has been so routinely mis-cited it's taken on a life of its own? Like when pharmaceutical

“*The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* is the world’s leading medical journal”



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the NEJM website. On the left is the NEJM logo and the text "The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE". In the center is a yellow "SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW" button with a right-pointing arrow. On the right is a user profile icon. Below the navigation bar are three featured content boxes: "PERSPECTIVE Measles in 2019 — Going Backward" with a bar chart icon, "NEJM SPECIAL SERIES New technology." with a blue and green graphic, and "EDITORIAL NEJM Knowledge+ Pain Management and Opioids — A New Adaptive Learning Module". Below these is a section titled "CORRESPONDENCE" with the article title "A 1980 Letter on the Risk of Opioid Addiction". At the bottom left of the screenshot, the date "June 1, 2017", the citation "N Engl J Med 2017; 376:2194-2195", and the DOI "DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc1700150" are displayed.

In conclusion, we found that a five-sentence letter published in the *Journal* in 1980 was heavily and uncritically cited as evidence that addiction was rare with long-term opioid therapy. We believe that **this citation pattern** contributed to the North American opioid crisis ... Our findings highlight the potential **consequences of inaccurate citation** and underscore the need for diligence when citing previously published studies.



MEDICINE AND SOCIETY

No Free Lunch — What Price Plan S for Scientific Publishing?

Charlotte J. Haug, M.D., Ph.D.

March 21, 2019

N Engl J Med 2019; 380:1181-1185

DOI: 10.1056/NEJMms1900864

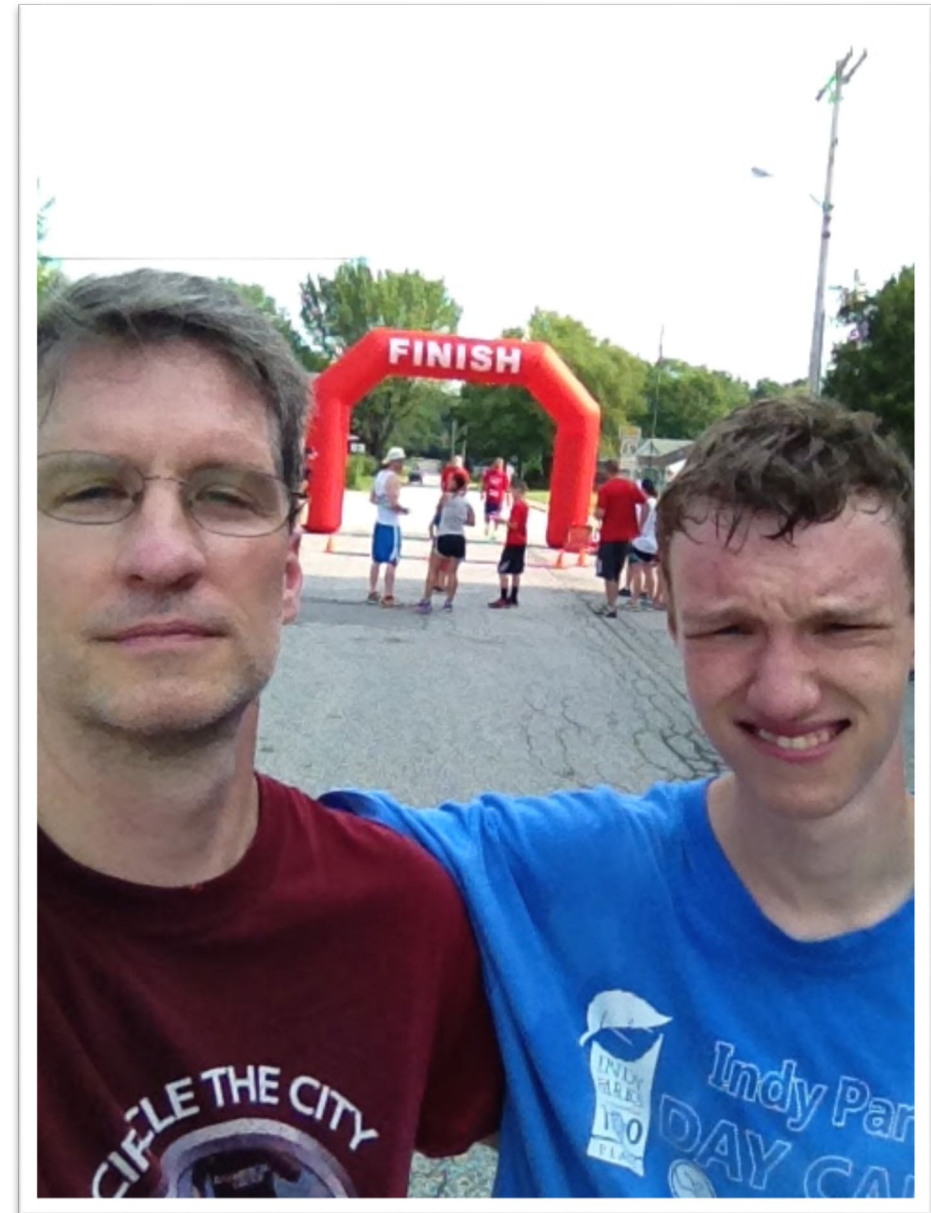
Editors

Debra Malina, Ph.D., Editor

“In 2001, we were optimistic We had never heard of **Internet trolls, fake news, fake science, fake journals, or fake peer review**. And we couldn’t imagine a “**dark web**” where **child pornography** was distributed anonymously, where **terrorist organizations** such as ISIS could recruit new members, where identities and property could be **hidden and stolen** and could **influence elections** and threaten the concept of democracy.”

“Many scientists want their work to be vetted and endorsed by third parties with **a reputation for quality and independence**; such an endorsement comes from many sources, including long-established journals.”





“*The Lancet* is the world's leading independent general medical journal”



ScienceDirect

☰ Outline  Download Share Export

THE LANCET

Volume 351, Issue 9103, 28 February 1998, Pages 637-641



Early Report

RETRACTED: Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children

Dr AJ Wakefield FRCS ^a, SH Murch MB ^b, A Anthony MB ^a, J Linnell PhD ^a, DM Casson MRCP ^b, M Malik MRCP ^b, M Berelowitz FRCPsych ^c, AP Dhillon MRCPsych ^a, MA Thomson FRCP ^b, P Harvey FRCP ^d, A Valentine FRCP ^e, SE Davies MRCPsych ^a, JA Walker-Smith FRCP ^a

Show more

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(97\)11096-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(97)11096-0)

The New York Times

Over 20 Million Children a Year Miss Out on First Dose of Measles Vaccine



Two doses of the measles vaccine are necessary for children to be protected from the disease, and for a whole community to be safe 95 percent immunization coverage is required.

Sascha Steinbach/EPA, via Shutterstock

By Iliana Magra

April 25, 2019



“No longer the abjected ‘refrigerator mother,’ today’s ‘autism mom’ is supposed to be a child-saving hero, The discourse, however, remains one of covert parental guilt: **if your child becomes an autistic adult, it’s your fault because you failed to do enough to save him or her.**”

Waltz, M. M. (2015). Mothers and Autism: The Evolution of a Discourse of Blame. *AMA Journal of Ethics*, 17(4), 353–358.

<https://doi.org/10.1001/journalofethics.2015.17.4.mhst1-1504>.

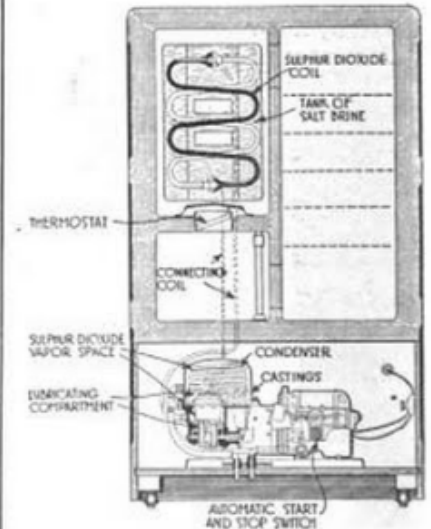
How Would You Like to Be the Iceman?



This ice-making refrigerator does away with the iceman and the unsanitary drip-pan

64

the liquid (sulphur dioxide) is used over and over again without loss, being made to circulate by the small pump in the base. The specially designed two-cylinder piston pump is driven by an electric motor.



The interior of the plant, showing the refrigerating apparatus in detail



Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*

“I do not regret publishing the original Wakefield paper. I worked at the Royal Free from 1988 to 1990 and met him on many occasions. He is a committed, engaging, and charismatic clinician and scientist. He asks big questions about diseases - what are their ultimate causes? - and his ambition often brings quick and impressive results.”

-- Horton, R. C. (2003). *Second opinion: doctors, diseases and decisions in modern medicine*. London: Granta Books.

“I don't know whether they are strong enough to withstand the tailwinds behind **Plan S or visions that seek to eliminate primary research from journals entirely**. I believe ... *The Lancet* stands for something important, something worth protecting and strengthening.”

-- Horton, R. (2018). Offline: The future of scientific knowledge. *The Lancet*, 392(10162), 2337.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)33039-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)33039-3)



- Health
- Safety
- Quality
- Patient
- Financial
- Operational
- Governance
- Public Health
- Ethical & Legal
- Professionalism
- Multicultural





Qualitative Health Research

2017 Impact Factor: 2.413

2017 Ranking: 10/98 in Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary Information Science & Library Science | 7/42 in Social Sciences, Biomedical

Source: Journal Citation Reports®, 2018 | Product; Indexed in PubMed: MEDLINE

Editor

University of Utah, USA

DESCRIPTION

AIMS AND SCOPE

ABSTRACTING / INDEXING

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Qualitative Health Research provides an interdisciplinary forum to enhance health care and further the development and understanding of qualitative research and practice. The journal is an invaluable resource for researchers and academics, administrators and others in the health care service professions, and graduates who seek examples of qualitative methods.

Paywall



Photo used with permission from Indiana University Center for Bioethics



EAHRJ: The Basis for Better Health Policy and Practice

The EAHRJ promotes and facilitates:

- Application of knowledge from research to strengthen national and regional health policy and practice
- Development of human resource capacities and skills
- Exchange and dissemination of health research information
- Advocacy of evidence generated from health research

Keep up-to-date

Sign-up to receive notifications
when new editions are published

About

The East African Health Research Journal (EAHRJ) is a no-fee, open-access, peer-reviewed journal established by the [East African Health Research Commission \(EAHRC\)](#) of the East African Community.

Current Issue

About The Lancet Global Health

REGISTER

SUBMIT

About the journal

Each monthly open access issue of *The Lancet Global Health* features original research, commentary, and correspondence. The journal focuses on the health of marginalised groups within and across countries, including maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health; non-communicable diseases; mental health; and health policy.

All original research is subjected to *The Lancet*'s rigorous editorial and statistical peer review, and edited by experienced technical editors to the highest standards. Research is indexed/abstracted in MEDLINE/PubMed, Scopus, and in the *Journal Citation Reports*TM.

Reputation and Impact

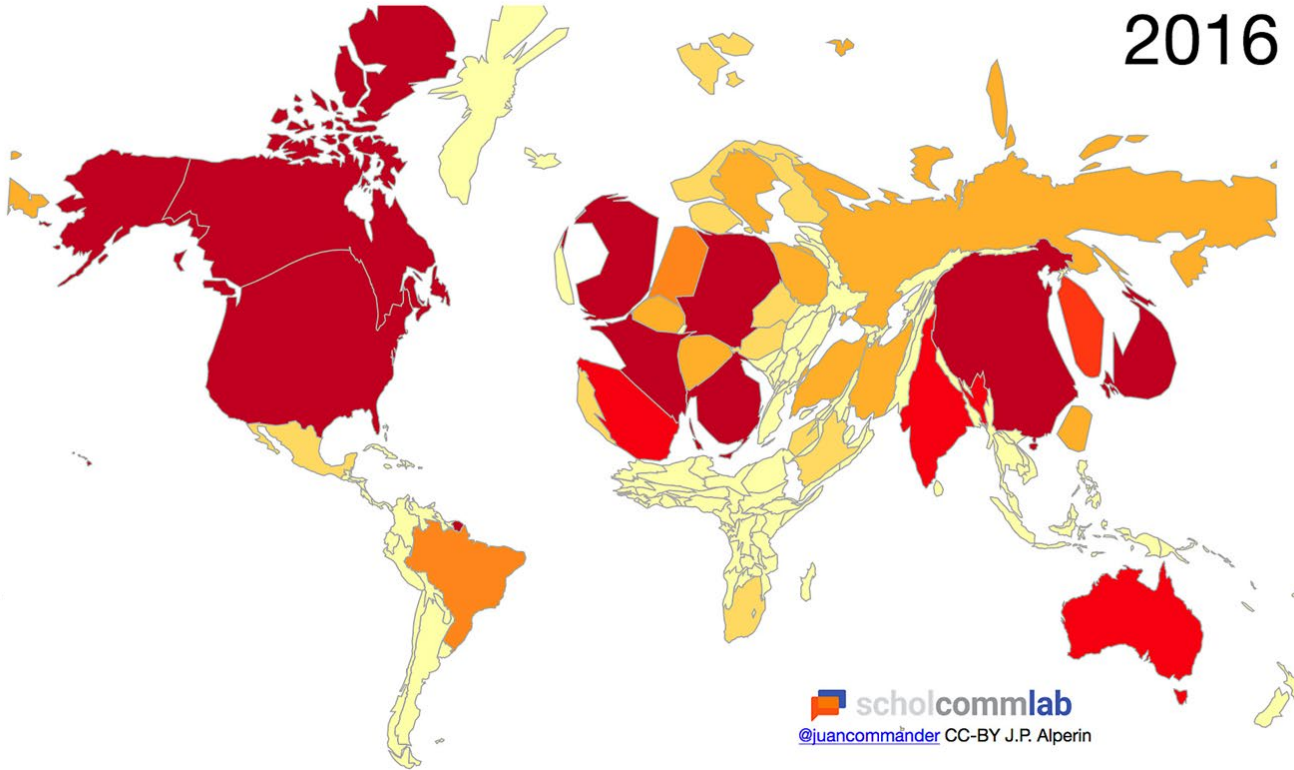
The Lancet Global Health has an Impact Factor of 18.705 and ranks first amongst all journals indexed in the Public, Environmental & Occupational Health subject category (2017 *Journal Citation Reports*TM, Clarivate Analytics 2018).

\$5,000.00 APC



World scaled by number of documents with authors from each country in Web of Science

2016



“SciELO and Redalcy ..., despite the fact that both services are open-access. **Many North American scholars have never even heard** of these meta-publishers or the journals they aggregate. Their content is largely hidden, **the neighborhood remote and unfamiliar.**”

“Thus, **commercial publisher platforms are nice neighborhoods** for scholarly publications. On the other hand, **some open-access platforms are more like publication favelas.**” -- J.B.

<https://blog.scielo.org/en/2015/08/02/motion-to-repudiate-mr-jeffrey-bealls-classist-attack-on-scielo/>

RESEARCH



Tuesday, April 09, 2019 | by Ken Budd, special to *AAMCNews*

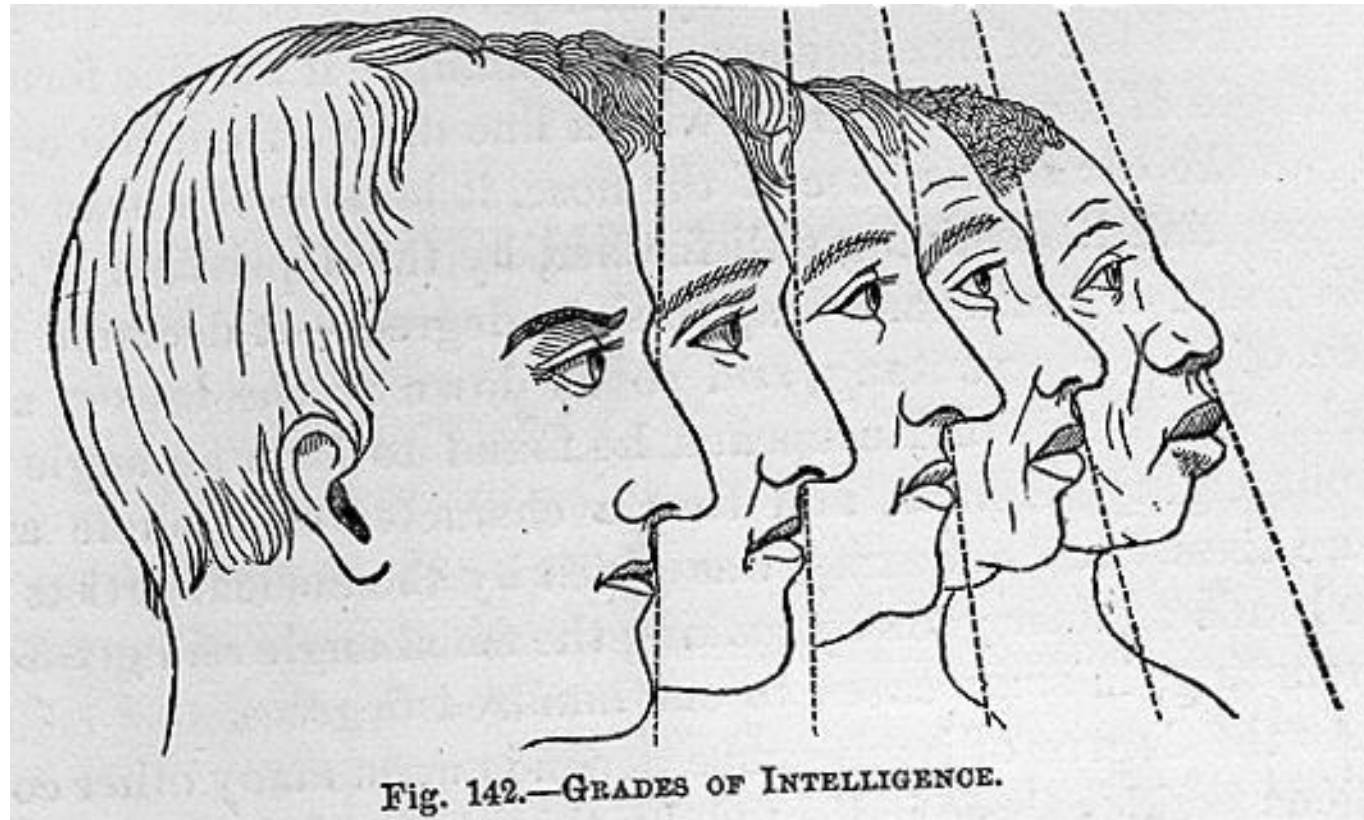
The problem of predatory journals

The number of illegitimate journals is exploding — and they could hurt your career. Here's how to avoid falling prey.

Eroding science

Open access could soon become more prevalent. For example, in September 2018, 11 agencies that award around \$8.8 billion in annual research grants announced that **they would require the scientists they fund to make their papers free to read upon publication, starting in 2020. The initiative, called Plan S, comes from funders in 11 different European countries.**

Evidence-based decisions?



Seiberth, S., Yoshioka, J., & Smith, D. (2017). *Measuring Prejudice: Race Sciences of the 18-19th Centuries*. Retrieved from: <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/measuring-prejudice/>

Meanwhile ... Is this an “exploding” problem?

IUPUI Articles 2017 (excluding Medicine)	
Trusted?	Items
Yes	1080 (98.3%)
No (appears to be disreputable)	14 (1.3%)
Maybe	5 (.5%)
Total	1099

Journal requires APC and makes false claims about indexing, etc.

No evidence of dishonesty, but below threshold for “trusted” (e.g., not in the DOAJ)



In what ways does our work build and limit the well-being of our communities?

Where do we invest our money, expertise, and time?

Some things to consider doing a little better in 2019:

- Stop using the phrase “predatory journals”
- Begin divesting from the reputation economy
- Invest a bit more of your budget in open & equitable infrastructure
- Build global & diverse collections
- Hire a diverse workforce
- Stop doing free- or conflicted-labor for corporate publishers (boards, focus groups, product testing, editing, reviewing,)
- Be up front about the flaws of the impact factor and other journal ranking systems
- Intentionally read and cite authors beyond your comfort zone
- Make your own work open & reward your colleagues for doing the same

“We can best help you prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods ... not by joining your society but by remaining outside your society” Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*. pg. 143



Questions?

Jere Odell
jdodell@iupui.edu

References

- Alperin, J. P. (2018, September 8). *World scaled by number of documents with authors from each country in Web of Science: 2016*. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.7064771.v1>
- Budd, K. (2019, April 9). The problem of predatory journals. *AAMCNews*. Retrieved from <https://news.aamc.org/research/article/problem-predatory-journals>
- Callaway, E. (2016). Beat it, impact factor! Publishing elite turns against controversial metric. *Nature News*, 535(7611), 210. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2016.20224>
- Guédon, J.-C. (2017, March 17). Open Access: Toward the Internet of the Mind. Retrieved from <https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/boai15/Untitleddocument.docx>
- Haug, C. J. (2019). No Free Lunch — What Price Plan S for Scientific Publishing? *New England Journal of Medicine*, 380(12), 1181–1185. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMms1900864>
- Horton, R. (2018). Offline: The future of scientific knowledge. *The Lancet*, 392(10162), 2337. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)33039-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)33039-3)
- Leung, P. T. M., Macdonald, E. M., Stanbrook, M. B., Dhalla, I. A., & Juurlink, D. N. (2017). A 1980 Letter on the Risk of Opioid Addiction. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 376(22), 2194–2195. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc1700150>
- Magra, J. (2019, April 26). Over 20 Million Children a Year Miss Out on First Dose of Measles Vaccine. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/world/europe/children-measles-vaccine.html>
- Motion to repudiate Mr. Jeffrey Beall's classist attack on SciELO. (2015, August 2). Retrieved April 26, 2019, from *SciELO in Perspective*: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190405102043/https://blog.scielo.org/en/2015/08/02/motion-to-repudiate-mr-jeffrey-bealls-classist-attack-on-scielo/>
- Raju, R. (2018, February 7). Predatory publishing from a global south perspective. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from *Library Publishing Coalition Blog*: <https://librarypublishing.org/predatory-publishing-global-south-perspective/>
- Roh, C. (2018). Scholarly Communication in a Time of Change: Considering the Impact of Bias, Diversity, and Traditional Publishing Structures as Scholarly Communication Moves to New Platforms and Systems (Talk Transcript). Presented at the California Academic Research Libraries. Retrieved from <https://works.bepress.com/charlotteroh/43/>
- Seiberth, S., Yoshioka, J., & Smith, D. (2017). Measuring Prejudice: Race Sciences of the 18-19th Centuries. Retrieved from: <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/measuring-prejudice/>
- Waltz, M. M. (2015). Mothers and Autism: The Evolution of a Discourse of Blame. *AMA Journal of Ethics*, 17(4), 353–358. <https://doi.org/10.1001/journalofethics.2015.17.4.mhst1-1504>.
- Woolf, V. (1938). *Three guineas*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.
- Zhang, S. (2017, June 2). The One-Paragraph Letter From 1980 That Fueled the Opioid Crisis. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/06/nejm-letter-opioids/528840/>