

Beware the predatory ego.

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Some days ago it was reported that four “scientific” journals have accepted a paper entitled “*Mitochondria: Structure, Function, and Clinical Relevance*” by authors Dr. Lucas McGeorge and Dr. Annette Kin (Available at: <http://www.origo.hu/attached/20170725midichlorian-kamu-cikk.pdf>).

The paper makes clear reference to the midichlorians, making a play of words with the mitochondrias. The last section of the paper refers to potential relevance to aging:

“Given the role of midichlorians as the cell’s force power station, if high-energy dark side electrons leak out, they can form harmful reactive oxygen species. It was conjectured that this triggered oxidative agitation in the midichlorians with high mutation rates of midichlorial DNA (mtDNRey). Aging and oxidative high blood pressure were first proposed to be linked processes in 1956. The midichlorial free radical theory of aging was later developed. A number of changes can occur to deathstars during the aging process.[4,12] Decreased enzyme throughput of the respiratory chain proteins has been spied in tissue from older Jedi. Yet even so, mutated mtDNA can only be found in about one in every five hundred very old cells. Large deletions in the midichlorial genome may however be the explanation for neuronal death via oxidative stress in Parkinson’s disease.[27,28]”

The fact that these kind of crazy situations occur is clearly related to the emergence of predatory journals.¹ The predatory journals use the open-access model in order to charge you for publishing your paper, but there is no peer-review, no relevant indexing, nor other services to improve the quality or visibility of your paper.

Some people might think that this is a consequence of the “publish or perish” imposed all over academia. In some cases this is probably true, but most of academics living in the “publish or perish” jungle clearly know what the valuable journals to publish their research are. Thus, there are other reasons to pay a predatory journal, maybe a predatory ego.

How to recognize a predatory journal? It is hard to define a set of features in order to be certain. But there are some typical features: they spam you for no reason, they are not indexed in relevant databases, they promise fast peer-review and publication, and they offer great discounts for article processing charges (APC).

I get spammed from “open-access journals” inviting me to publish in agriculture, art, history, physics and many other unrelated areas to my research scope. The spamming is highly frequent such as five to ten mails per week. Thus, there is no justified reason to receive these e-mails,

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but to sell² “a chance to publish my valuable research” in agriculture.

Most of these journals are indexed in many databases, but none of them are familiar to your research scope. In many other cases they mention an “impact factor”, but this is not a genuine impact factor from Thomson Reuters (ex ISI) nor CiteScore from Scopus. Please consider that having an ISSN is not a mark of quality.

If you have some experience in the “publish or perish” jungle you know that peer-review and publishing time in almost all cases take more time than you have. Normally, the peer-review and publishing takes some weeks or months. In the predatory journal peer-review and publishing time is less than a week, two days, or some hours; probably because there is no peer-review.

Many of the serious open-access journals charge you the APC, and rarely offer you discounts. But predatory journals offers you 50%, 75% or 95% discount. Check if

the spamming insists on the great offer.

As I said, my opinion is that most of academics in the research community are capable of distinguishing a serious from a predatory journal. However many of those in the perimeter of this community are not capable of doing so, but they want publish. I have known some people that publish in these predatory journals, and in most of cases the predatory journal is the perfect opportunity to release and publicize their predatory ego... “Watch me, I have a publication in an International/World/Galactic journal”.

Unrelatedly, our average time from submission to first decision is 11 days, and to acceptance/online-publication is 19 days. Furthermore, we have no article processing/publishing charges, and we provide free-of-charge translations from Spanish to English. But we make serious peer-review (2 to 5 reviewers) and our contents are indexed by Scopus, DOAJ, LILACS, DIALNET, among other relevant databases.

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