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Short Communication

# Don't Get Caught in the Wrong Journal Trap: Insights for Young Researchers

Purva Gulrandhe[1], Waqar M. Naqvi[2]

[1] Department of Physiotherapy, Ravi Nair Physiotherapy College, Datta Meghe Institute of Higher Education and Research, Sawangi (M), Wardha, India

[2] Department of Physiotherapy, College of Health Sciences, Gulf Medical University, Ajman, UAE

**ABSTRACT**

This paper focuses on the importance of publishing research in indexed journals and the challenges encountered because of predatory publishers. This emphasizes the significance of qualitative health research and the use of evidence-based research approaches. The process of selecting indexed journals for publication is discussed, highlighting the benefits of credibility and recognition. The prevalence and detrimental consequences of predatory journals have been addressed, emphasizing the need for awareness and caution. The situation of scientific publication around the world is examined, noting the high presence of predatory journals and their impact on researchers' reputation and academic progress. Recommendations are provided to identify and avoid predatory journals as well as the need for increased education and accountability in the research community.

**Keywords:** Publication, Research, indexed journals, predatory journals, guidelines

## INTRODUCTION

Journals are the primary means by which scholars communicate with other research groups within specialized disciplines and the general public [1]. Publications serve as the foundation for evidence-based practice, which aims to provide the most efficient patient care possible while also improving professional knowledge [2]. The concept of qualitative health research is a distinct process that has its origins in qualitative research, emphasizing different techniques and standards. Qualitative health studies aim to define, investigate, and clarify the spectrum of health illnesses and topics unique to healthcare or policy contexts. Specific research methods, such as qualitative analysis, conceptual analysis based on ethnography, and case studies, are employed in empirical health research [3]. The Evidence-Based Research approach is used to establish or plan comprehensive studies, validate research proposals, and serve as a foundation for treatment to enhance clinical outcomes and control costs, and to keep up with emerging technology and information advances. Various projects have been launched to promote and encourage Evidence-Based Research strategies, with many publications now requiring a detailed explanation when discussing the significance of a new study [4]. The EQUATOR Network provides invaluable guidelines for researchers to enhance the quality and transparency of their studies. These guidelines are specifically developed to improve the reporting of different types of research designs, including randomized controlled trials (CONSORT), systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA), observational studies (STROBE), and qualitative research (COREQ). Researchers who follow these guidelines contribute to a stronger and more reliable body of scientific knowledge.

### Ladder to Publication

The manuscript must provide a concise and comprehensive account of the research. Well-reported studies are more valuable because thorough documentation helps editors, the peer-review process, and the audience appreciate the researcher's methods [5]. Citing related scientific papers is the basic tenet of published author research. Fully fledged research must document the techniques used to collect data and include the framework, motive, and justification for data generation and understanding [6]. Data citations are a systematic means of grounding scientific observations in a manuscript on the facts that support research [7]. Peer reviews conducted by experts in the field help improve articles and guide researchers. This serves as a method to screen for scientific evidence [8]. Peer review is an agreement between an author and editor on how a piece of research can be included in the literature [7]. Articles are frequently rejected for a number of reasons. One typical reason is poor research quality, which occurs when a study lacks thorough methodology, unreliable data, or inadequate analysis. Another reason for rejection is improper language usage, which includes

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**Corresponding Author:** Waqar M. Naqvi **E-mail:** dr.waqar@gmu.ac.ae

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grammar and writing style. Plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in rapid rejection, whether deliberate or inadvertent. Failure to follow the target journal's particular guidelines, such as formatting requirements or word restrictions, can result in article rejection. To maximize their prospects for successful publication, researchers must address these concerns thoroughly.

**Choosing a Proper Indexed Journal for Publication**

Choosing an indexed journal to publish a manuscript can be a difficult and perplexing process [1]. Journals indexed in PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science maintain moral and respectable industry standards, employ peer review and publishing methods, and provide reliable research publications through both paper-version subscription journals and online publications. Thorough peer review procedures from scholars in the community are a staple of trustworthy publishers [9]. Publishing indexed journals lends credibility to research papers. Top medical journals seek articles with a direct impact on healthcare practice, as they can be widely cited, thus increasing the journal's impact and reach. While scientific accuracy is essential, clear and precise writing can also affect acceptance [10]. Publishing in indexed journals has several advantages for researchers, including gaining recognition from renowned scholars, preserving research work in a secure online library, elevating an institution's research standing, and facilitating career growth through research and travel grants.

**Predators to Researchers**

Scientific publications are still in the developmental phase. Therefore, it is crucial to protect them from predatory journals and publications. Extreme caution should be exercised when choosing journals [11]. Jeffrey Beall, a Scholarly Communications Librarian at the University of Colorado-Denver, is recognized for popularizing the term "predatory open access publishing." With a focus on scholarly open-access publishing, Beall dedicated his efforts to studying and identifying journals and publishers that exhibited potential predatory practices. From 2012 to 2017, he maintained a widely recognized and influential blog called Scholarly Open Access. Through this platform, Beall provided valuable insights, analyses, and critiques of questionable publishing practices. Predatory publishers are fraudulent and deceptive and target researchers, especially those new to academic research. Their primary goal is profit, tricking authors to pay for publication without providing genuine peer review or editorial services and prioritizing benefits over reliable research. Assessing the credibility of unfamiliar journals can be challenging for authors because common citation directories often do not list poor-quality journals, making it difficult for other researchers to find their work [12]. Publishing in fraudulent journals puts valuable studies at the risk of being discarded. Predatory journals pose a global challenge by accepting submissions and publishing without conducting necessary content reviews such as plagiarism checks or ethical assessments. They often publish low-quality papers and have inadequate peer-review processes [13]. Naive and inexperienced researchers are often trapped by the promise of a baffling 'impact factor' and swift approval, disregarding the detrimental consequences of publishing in fraudulent publications [14]. Predatory publications differ ethically, from market-driven approaches to publication costs and time, distorting their identity and services, lacking academic publication community guidelines and best practices, and discrediting authors' scientific work. Regulations and best practices are lacking in predatory publications, including revisions and corrections, procedures for addressing research fraud suspicions, scanning for plagiarism, updating research ethics, removing ghost and guest authors, and declaring financing and conflicts of interest [15]. Promoting genuine scientific research activities is essential for scholars, universities, editors, and publishers. Research studies have had a significant impact on faculty recruitment, progress, and incremental advancement in universities [16]. Publishing research papers leads to beneficial scientific collaborative relationships and recognition for researchers in the health care sector. However, many healthcare sector researchers, students, and professionals are unaware of the legitimate publishing forums. Publishing in fraudulent journals renders their studies useless, and their outcomes are lost to the scientific community [11]. This not only demotivates young researchers, but also denies them proper credit. Fraudulent publications often disappear, resulting in the loss of genuine and valuable papers and unethical misuse of the review process [17].

**Situation across the world**

The healthcare sector's publications in the world have steadily increased in predatory journals over the last decade. Deceptive metrics such as Scientific Journal Impact Factor, Global Impact Factor, and Universal Impact Factor have influenced esteemed scholars. Healthcare sector researchers should avoid publishing in journals sponsored by these metrics. Researchers are not exempt from the temptation to publish in fraudulent journals. Researchers should exercise self-control and refrain from publishing valuable studies after receiving appealing spam emails from publishing companies. The consequences of publishing in predatory journals include tarnished academic reputation, potential demotion of academic faculty, and the risk of institutions with researchers publishing in predatory journals being blacklisted [18]. Predatory journals publish many articles, contributing to the publication of misleading research results. They often conduct lower-quality randomized clinical trials with faster peer review processes [19]. Authors can employ various techniques to protect their valuable research from being published in predatory journals, such as looking for grammatical mistakes and spelling errors in official emails, ensuring clarity about the peer-review process on journal websites, and clearly stating publication fees. Researchers should check whether the journal is indexed in the sources they utilize, such as MEDLINE for biomedical journals. Email timestamps and phone numbers should align with the country of origin. Publishers' identities can be verified using checklists such as The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), SCImago Journal Rank, National Library of Medicine (NLM) Catalog, and Stop Predatory Journals [12]. The tradition of predatory publications must be addressed, and institutions of higher learning should raise awareness of this issue. It should be included in both undergraduate and graduate courses to increase student awareness. Those intentionally submitting their work to such publications would have consequences [20]. Raising awareness among young and inexperienced researchers about

the potential implications of predatory publishing is crucial [17]. When conducting research and seeking publication, it is crucial for researchers to rely on recognized databases from research institutes and universities such as PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. These databases serve as reliable sources of scholarly information and play a vital role in validating the credibility of journals. Researchers should cross-check whether the journal they are considering for publication is included in these databases. Unfortunately, some predatory journals falsely claim to be indexed in these databases on their websites, deceiving unsuspecting researchers. Therefore, it is essential to exercise caution and verify the authenticity of such claims independently.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, publishing research in indexed journals plays a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and in advancing scientific discourse. The selection of proper journals is essential to ensure the credibility and impact of research findings. However, the presence of predatory journals poses a significant challenge, particularly for young researchers. It is imperative that researchers, universities, editors, and publishers take proactive measures to promote genuine scientific research and protect researchers from predatory practices.

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