BLACK AND WHITE; GREEN, GOLD AND PLATINUM: THE COLOURS OF PUBLISHING!

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It was enthralling to read the thoughts of Beall J, the man who had coined the term “predatory journal” and waged a crusade across continents to bring awareness about such counterfeit to authors, academicians, librarians and millions of others [1]. He had to face flake from the publishers of such journals but stood his ground. Such journals have multiplied exponentially, but people are now aware. But certain novice authors may still be unaware and thus gullible.

In India, the erstwhile Medical Council (MCI) had recognised publications in journals index in the controversial “Index Copernicus”. This led to a large number of journals mushrooming up with indexing in this controversial list [2]. The MCI has been replaced by the National Medical Council (NMC) and the new rules do not recognise the Index Copernicus. The faculty who had published their research in such previous “recognised” journals, cannot revert back. Many of the “published” manuscripts have disappeared from the original websites, but their traces and references remain. Does it mean that all their work (and also a bit of their money) has all gone in vain?

Central Asia has not been safe from such practices. Kazakhstan was the joint leading country in number of predatory publishing in a Scopus based analysis [3]. Kazakhstan has good publication potential otherwise [4]. Awareness about identifying predatory journals can definitely help.

New authors may get confused with open access options. Newer journal will take time to get indexed: there needs to be sustained and dedicated efforts even for archiving in a repository like PubMedCentral (PMC) [5]. For early stage authors it may be difficult to differentiate such early open access journals from purely predatory ones. Table 1 summarizes the different types of open access models. Many journals follow a hybrid model that allows a combination of either subscription and Gold open access. Table 2 contains some elements that may suggest a predatory journal.

The table 2 is neither exhaustive nor fool-proof. Predatory journals may find new ways to circumvent these warnings. When in doubt, it makes sense to consult a senior author, editor or experienced librarian.

Thus, keeping an open mind and inquisitiveness during submission to a new journal is warranted to fall for the trap of a predatory journal. On the other hand, all new

journals are not predatory. Rarely, the fine line between the two maybe blurred and then it is preferable to discuss with an experienced person.

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Table 1. Different publication models

Model	Who pays	Restrictions
Subscription	The reader	Behind a firewall-not “open access”
Green Open Access	Like subscription model; but the author can archive self-copies of the manuscript (before peer-review version) on online repositories	Some journals that allow green Open access, allow it only after a fixed minimum duration like 6 or 12 months
Gold Open Access	Author	None
Diamond/Platinum Open Access	None (cost of journal is borne by the university or society supporting the journal)	None

Table 2. How to suspect if a journal is predatory. Please note that not any of these are fully confirmatory, but has to be interpreted in context.

Element	Implication	Logic	Fallacy
Platinum Open access	Likely non-predatory	The backbone of predatory journals is earning profits	Very early on, they may allow free publication to known authors to earn some reputation
“guarantee to publish”: Some journal promise to publish “after peer review”	Likely predatory	No genuine journal can guarantee publication before the peer review process is completed	-
Promise of publication within fixed time	Likely predatory	No genuine journal can guarantee publication before the peer review process is completed and duration of peer review cannot be predicted from before	Early “submission to acceptance” time does not mean it is predatory. This is average of all submissions but the editor cannot guarantee that the next manuscript will be done in the same time frame
Doubtful submission systems: instructions to email manuscript to generic domain like gmail.com	Likely predatory	In an attempt to make quick money, they may not invest in a proper submission website or specific domain	Currently most predatory journals are too smart. They may have impressive websites.
Mismatch between country of origin and currency for article processing charges	Likely predatory	Self explanatory	-
Editorial board members are not well known and have limited publications themselves	Likely predatory	Self explanatory	Nowadays some predatory journals may rope in a couple of known names to throw authors off-guard. But usually the editor-in-chief will not be very well known
Very board scope: the journal invites manuscripts from different branches of medicine and surgery, dental, biochemistry, and other fields	Likely predatory	They want to get more articles (thus more money)	Some predatory journals maybe limited to specific fields like internal medicine, but unlikely to be specific for a single sub-speciality
Longstanding journal claimed to be established 5-10 years ago but no articles available beyond last few years	Likely predatory	Self explanatory	-

ҚАРА ЖӘНЕ АҚ; ЖАСЫЛ, АЛТЫН ЖӘНЕ ПЛАТИНАЛЫ: ҒЫЛЫМИ БАСЫЛЫМДАРДЫҢ ТҮСТЕРІ!

Түйінді сөздер: жыртқыш журналдар, жариялау этикасы, ғылыми әдебиет

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ЧЕРНЫЙ И БЕЛЫЙ; ЗЕЛЕНый, ЗОЛОТОЙ И ПЛАТИНОВый: ЦВЕТА ИЗДАНИЙ!

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