

Scientists' awareness of predatory journals

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Abstract:

Open Access (OA), free online availability of scientific information, was supposed to solve the access crisis caused by high subscription prices. But since the early 2010s an unethical practice has endangered OA – some individuals and organizations have started publishing low quality journals, using article processing charges (APC) as cost model, but not controlling quality of the papers they publish (i.e. not peer reviewing manuscripts). Those journals are usually called “predatory” journals, or questionable journals, or pseudo-journals. Because of the lack of peer review, there is a high possibility of finding unethical behavior in the published papers, e.g. falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, guest or ghost authorship. The aim of the study was to find out about Croatian scientists' awareness of those journals. An online questionnaire was sent to scientists at two Croatian faculties. We received 56 responses. The results showed that majority of scientists (60%) have heard about “predatory” journals but are not sure how to identify them; 29% have never heard of those journals; 95% think they have never published in a “predatory” journal; 13% have at least one colleague who has published in a “predatory” journal. Besides short theoretical frame, the poster will show five charts with the data from the survey. The sample of the survey is small but the results indicate the lack of OA information literacy skills. Croatian scientists are not aware of the danger that “predatory” publishers have on the development of science. The OA information literacy skills should include knowing how to find and how to evaluate OA information. The most important participants in educating scientists about “predatory” journals are academic libraries.

Keywords: Academic libraries, open access, peer review, predatory journals, scientific communication.