

# PUBLICATION AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY: DOES IT MATTER WHERE YOU PUBLISH YOUR RESEARCH?

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## KEY WORDS

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The content of this workshop has high relevance to anyone involved in academic research and publishing. Despite several recent publications with excellent guidance aimed at students (Eaton 2018), academics, researchers and publishers (Binning et al., 2018; COPE, 2017, 2019; Moher et al., 2017a), the vast industry of academic publishers, journals, conferences and events that are either fraudulent or of questionable value and quality, continues to thrive and proliferate (Macháček and Srholec, 2021).

In the dual interests of both caution and convenience we will use the abbreviation PPJs+ (potentially predatory journals plus) in this abstract to encompass all aspects of this phenomenon.

Some of the researchers who publish in and disseminate through PPJs+ do so knowingly, as a speedy way to boost their publication count, typically to satisfy perverse incentives for promotion, to qualify for a bonus (Moher et al., 2017b; Rui, 2015) or to remain in their current precarious teaching job (Glendinning et al., 2018). However, many students and researchers, and both experienced and inexperienced academics, make use of PPJs without appreciating the full implications (Sanders, 2021). Sanders highlights that those with limited understanding have no idea how to recognise a PPJ, nor do they understand the risks to themselves and others from patronising them. Indeed, despite the

popularity of some PPJ blacklists (such as Beall's list [2021] and Cabells Predatory Report), it is well understood that, for various reasons, no blacklist can include all PPJs (e.g., emergence of new PPJ+, disagreements about how to categorise). Conversely, white lists are also problematic as many journals with questionable publishing practices are included in reputable citation indexes, such as Scopus or even Web of Science.

To be clear, the risks from PPJs+ include, but are not confined to: diverting public funds into the pockets of unscrupulous fraudsters, damaging individual and institutional reputations by claiming credit for publications in discredited journals, waste of personal effort and research by publishing in a journal that is poorly curated and inaccessible to other researchers, devaluing public trust in science if a research paper is not adequately peer reviewed, misleading other researchers attempting to build on unreproducible or fake results. However, a word of caution is in order here, it must be noted that some of the points listed in the previous sentence can also apply to papers published in highly ranking reputable journals.

It is well understood, including from recent analysis conducted by Macháček and Srholec (2021), that publishing in PPJs+ and citation of articles published in PPJs+ are more prevalent in some

countries, such as Balkan countries, Russia, Italy, China, India (Abalkina 2021; Glendinning et al., 2018; Moher et al., 2017b), than in others. However, this is a truly global problem, no country is immune, therefore helping to address PPJs+ is the responsibility of everyone involved in academic research.

It is clear that more needs to be done to stem the high demand for such services. The most obvious first step is to raise awareness, starting with people already interested in and committed to academic and research integrity. Accordingly, the ENAI working group IN\_A\_DIP (Integrity in academic dissemination and publishing) is focused on improving understanding of this phenomenon by designing materials and running workshops to highlight this

phenomenon and the dangers and consequences to research and academic publishing globally.

This workshop will introduce the ENAI working group IN\_A\_DIP and the focus of its work. Links to useful materials will be provided that are available for free. Practical examples of how PPJs+ operate, deceive and market their services will be used to highlight how to distinguish between genuine and disreputable services.

This is a vast subject area, so we will not have time to cover everything of interest, but we will try to leave participants with something they can directly use for their own benefit or teach to their students. The expectation is that what is learnt from this workshop will spark an interest in finding out more.

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