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# *Predatory journals practices: A case study*

See the attached PowerPoint presentation to see the complete example.

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## About this document

This document is a real-life example illustrating importance of the values of academic integrity in professional life. It was created as a part of *Toolkit for cross-sector cooperation in terms of academic integrity* within Erasmus+ project.

It is a ready-to-use case study accompanied with didactic notes and discussion questions and/or other tasks for the audience. Find more case studies in [ENAI database of educational materials](http://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/all-materials/?key-words%5b%5d=real-life-example).

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# *Predatory journals practices: A case study*

# *Basic information*

* **Target audience**: Higher education students (any level of studies).
* **Summary**: To alert scholars, especially novice authors, about unethical behaviour from journals and to recommend procedures and policies to be followed.
* **Objective**: To offer some guidance for authors and highlight the treats from disreputable journals/editors.
* **Length:** Between 90 to 120 minutes.

# *Abstract*

Novice authors, such as pregraduated, MSc or PhD students, may face some difficulties when trying to publish their academic work. Being inexperienced authors, they can be seduced by predatory journals and end up with serious problems. Recommended procedures on how to avoid/resolving this type of ethical issues should be brought to light before students submit their academic work on their own. In this case study, the student was an easy target for the disreputable journal. Not only he ended up facing a dilemma about how to respond to this type of abusive behaviour by the journal but alsoseeing his work available on-line without the authors permission.

# *Workshop outline*

* Introduction tothe theme (10 minutes)
* Reading the study case (5 minutes)
* Division of the students in groups
* Discussionof the options in groups (30 minutes)
* Discussion of the options between groups (45 minutes)
* Final discussion (20 minutes)
* Take home message

# *Learning outcome/Message of the case*

The quality of scientific literature is increasingly threatened by a flood of inconsequential publications. It is mandatory to address this problem and provide guidance to all scholars that contribute to scientific publications. Students, most of all, since they are the most vulnerable, need recommendations for protecting their scientific work from predatory journals.

# *Material*

* The attached presentation to be project to the audience.
* The last pages of this document: the study case and handouts for discussion.

# *Teaching methods*

Workshop and interactive lesson.

# *Didactic/teachers notes*

The theme of the workshop is presented and the students are allowed to read the study case.

Students, working in small groups, are then asked to think about the case and to discuss it in the group. Posteriorly, the teacher will ask each group to present their ideas to the class and then allow the discussion between groups.

After the case study has been presented and discussed, the students should be asked about what they learned with this life example what lessons they take from the workshop.

# *The study case: a real life example*

A medicine master’s student wrote an article as his master’s thesis. After finishing the writing of the article, the tutor and the student decided to submit the work toJournal X. It was the first time the student was submitting an article to a journal. He went through the journal’s website that was linked to an open platform to proceed with the submission. He proceeded with the submission of the work, which initially returned as “incomplete”, since he did not select the name of the journal. He then edited the submission adding the journal previously selected by his tutor, however the platform added a new submission. The next day, he woke up with numerous calls and WhatsApp messages on his personal cell phone. The first one was from journal Y. It stated that he did not assign a journal to his submission and they “kindly requested to submit his work to Y”. The student assumed that he made a mistake the previous day and the submission to X had not been accepted. Since journal Yrequirements for submissions were similar to the ones from X, he submitted his work to Journal Y. After having done this, Y promptly responded saying that he had simultaneously submitted his work to X. They requested the student to send an e-mail to both journals explaining that he had made a mistake by submitting his work to X. Innocently, he proceeded according to this suggestion. One week later, he received from journal Y his work first reviews. Some days later, when the student was reading the section “author guidelines” in the journal website, he noticed thatthe journal required article processing charges in the amount of 1700€ in case of publication. Additionally, the article withdrawal chargeswas 30% of that amount (without charge only in the first 7 seven days after submission). This information was new to the student, and he immediately declined the revision on the submission platform. Additionally, he sent an email to journal Y editor apologizing for the time and resources wasted, but explaining that he was a student and did not have the financial means to meet these charges. He graciously asked the editor if he could cancel his submission. The next day, the ‘’Editorial Assistant’’ send the student a personal message on WhatsApp. He asked him to reconsider his decision and stated they would be willing to give him a discount on the article processing charges. The next day, they sent him another message saying: ‘’We are waiting for your response. Otherwise we have to keep your article on hold.’’. He decided to write another e-mail to the Editor asking more details about those Article Withdrawal Policies and asking a discount over the final price. Rapidly they sent him a response with the price he had to pay (420EUR) and informing that he hadonly one week to pay. Already with the recommendation of his teaching institution, the student did not contact journal Y any further. Two days later, the student noticed that the journal placed the original article (without any corrections nor the authors permission) in their online page, and immediately requested the retraction of the article. They answered that the article would not be retracted from the website until the amount requested was transferred. The student then pressed charges for the abusive and unauthorized use of the authors work.

# *Discussion*

The main questions to address are as follows:

* Should novice authors submit their scientific work without supervision or should they mandatorily be supported in that task by their tutors?
* There is the increase need to provide support for scholars, namely tonovice authors, so they can develop skills in order to distinguish reputable from disreputable editors
* The lack of ethical principles and behaviours by predatory publishing
* Collect data about questionable journals/ editorials and spread such information between scholars