



Editorial

Predatory journals—a cautionary tale for veterinary authors

Dear members and readers,

As veterinarians, we think of predators as *animals* that hunt, kill, and devour other animals. As authors and editors, we need to think of predatory *journals and publishers* as enterprises that steal from, lie to, and hurt the scientific enterprise and the authors who fall into their clutches. As readers, our members and subscribers need to know that the scientific literature, as a result of predatory publishing, is littered with misinformation, non-peer-reviewed articles purporting to provide scientific evidence to improve the health of our patients, duplicate publication, content stolen from legitimate authors, and other insults to the scientific record.

As of 2021, Cabells' Predatory Reports database indicated that there were approximately 15,000 predatory journals.¹ This reflects an even greater increase in predatory journals from 10,000 in 2018 to 12,000 in 2019. No one knows exactly, but the number of legitimate scholarly journals is estimated to be around 30,000. The cost of predatory journals to the scientific community is staggering: hundreds of thousands of articles with questionable or nonexistent peer review dumped into the scholarly market, never mind the financial loss to the authors.

Case in point: a few months ago, a veterinarian in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached out to me asking for help. The journal to which she'd submitted a summary of her life's work in honeybee advocacy and research—a "cheap" open access journal, *EC Veterinary Science*, published by E-Cronicon—had taken her \$490 while misleading her into thinking the article would be indexed in PubMed and that the journal had an impact factor of 1.624. Unfortunately, she had assigned the copyright in her paper to the publisher (in open access journals, the Creative Commons license allows authors to retain copyright, and hence control, of their published work).

To avoid this fate, as authors we should avail ourselves of the Think. Check. Submit service (<http://thinkchecksubmit.org/>) to help us identify trusted publishers.

How can you tell if the journal you're thinking about submitting to, or becoming an editor or reviewer for, is legitimate and aboveboard? You have to do some homework before you push the Submit button:

- Do you recognize any members of the editorial board?
- Have you or your colleagues read any papers in the journal?
- Is it really indexed by Pubmed? Check at https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/serfile_addedinfo.html,

the Clarivate Master Journal List, or Scopus.

We were not surprised that searching for *EC Veterinary Science* returned zero search results.

- Does it really have an impact factor? Check Clarivate's Master List of Journals at <https://mjl.clarivate.com/search-results> to find out. Needless to say, *EC Veterinary Science* was not found.
- Ask your institution's or your alma mater's librarian. Librarians are at the heart of the open access movement and keep informed about which journals are reliable and which are not.

We couldn't help our author in Bosnia and Herzegovina solve her problem, although we are providing a link to her important work on honeybees so you can read her article: <https://ecronicon.org/assets/ecve/pdf/ECVE-07-00500.pdf>.

We hope she'll submit an article to *AJVR*, which checks all the boxes for a trustworthy and ethical journal. *AJVR*'s article processing charge (APC) of \$1,200 is the lowest of any of the nonpredatory journals in veterinary medicine and is significantly lower than the APC of *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* or the megajournal *PLOS ONE*. In addition, *AJVR* does enormously effective social media, and in the past year, since Dr. Sarah Wright came on board as an Associate Editor with an emphasis on our journals' social media, *AJVR* has risen to #15 of 2,071 in the veterinary science journal Altmetric rankings. That kind of visibility drives downloads, web traffic, and citations. And it's free to our authors. Our speed to publication is second to none—fast review, fast online publication, fast results for our authors. Of course, the same is true for *JAVMA* authors—*JAVMA* actually sits at #3 of 2,071 veterinary science journals!

Thank you for supporting *your* journals. We look forward to hearing your comments and to reviewing your next submission!

Respectfully,

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1. Linacre S. Mountain to climb. Cabells. September 1, 2021. Accessed May 10, 2023. <https://blog.cabells.com/2021/09/01/mountain-to-climb/>