

Medical Science Potential Predatory Journals in Reputed and Counterfeit Indexing Databases: An Assessment

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ABSTRACT

Getting a journal indexed reflects high-quality scientific integrity, which differentiates it from a non-indexed journal. Quantitative analysis of indexing status of a randomly selected sample of 121 predatory journals listed on <https://beallist.net/standalone-journals/> was carried out to ascertain their presence in various reputed bibliographic databases. The study's findings divulge that the presence of predatory journals in bibliographic databases is not significantly widespread. However, some indexing databases such as Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) and PubMed reflect slightly greater values than anticipated and need to be scrutinized and reviewed regularly. Further, the study found that these journals incorporate many metrics under indexing/abstracting information which are not in a true sense suitable to be categorized as indexing abstracting databases. Further, Index Copernicus, Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF), National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), Global Impact Factor (GIF) are the most used counterfeit indexing services by the journals.

KEYWORDS

Beall's List, Bibliographic Databases, Journal Evaluation, Open Access, Predatory Journals, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science

INTRODUCTION

Predatory publishers are considered bad for science and science communication because they are repositories for bogus research, cited by other authors. These unprincipled publishers exploit the open-access (OA) model by falsifying the process of peer-review. Their motivation is to procure evaluation and publication fees (Shen & Björk, 2015; Masic, 2017; Beall, 2015). Publishers with unknown headquarters locations, sending spam emails, calling for papers, compromising peer review, and oversight plagiarized context are defacing the landscape of scholarly communication.

There are several strategies and techniques employed by predatory journals that give them false respect, which entraps young and early career researchers who are enthusiastic about publishing quickly for their educational benefits. Falling into the trap of predatory publishers is a colossal loss of

various types of resources. Furthermore, it also results in the loss of research that could have resulted in the progression of the science.

Moreover, not only the early stage but the reputed researchers also publish in fraudulent journals for the development of their resumes and curriculum vitae, increase the numbers of their publications for obtaining jobs, finance additional studies, and qualify for grants and promotions across various academic careers (Duc., Thong., & Masic, 2020).

Though a good score of scientists tries their best to publish their work in quality journals indexed in high reputation databases with striking metrics, several predatory journals slither in the trustworthy repositories, like PubMed, PubMed Central, MEDLINE, SCOPUS, and Web of Science. Here starts the troublesome phenomenon in academia, which is of significant concern.

The predatory journals have been observed to give an imprint of being associated with reputed databases like Web of Science (WoS) or Scopus. A parallel race run by a contemporaneous industry is that of predatory metrics, false indexing databases, and conferences designed to capitalize on similar opportunities is a concerning issue. Predatory databases copy names authorized by the mainstream sites like Index Scientific Journals, using the acronym ISI to match the actual ISI WoS. Therefore, a journal claims to be listed in ISI but refers to the pay-per-listing site rather than the actual site. Citation metrics by these databases are drawn through Google Scholar and have undefined/unexplained methods. The fee is the only factor for the inclusion of a journal in these predatory platforms. An additional fee is an indication of adhering a false 'Impact Factor' to the journals that claim these databases and present themselves as indexed in significant and valuable scientific databases.

Other manifestations of trickery and distraction, or ingenuousness, are evident from the fact that the journals present ResearchGate and Mendeley as indexing databases or claim Thomson Reuter Researcher IDs, Scopus Researcher IDs, and ORCID accounts as a characteristic of a journal. Thus, it is essential to identify low-quality journals that creep in the reputed databases and the journals that have adopted a mechanism to get indexed by counterfeit indexing databases and present these databases as an excellent base to trap the authors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indexing acts as a pointer towards journal articles. It helps researchers and authorities to link their views with older and novel works. Indexing confirms retrieval of records faster and lays the foundation to categorize and provide a gist of the content. It helps in the understanding location of the researchable matter, coordination of research keywords, and provides discrimination in the research works (Soergel, 1994). The research performance and impact (validity, visibility, and readership) of articles are usually dependent on their indexing in leading databases that maintain publication ethics. Readers of scientific output use these databases to stay abreast of the latest trends and popular authors in their respective fields (Popoola, 2008). Journal administrators use Indexing and Abstracting databases to get their publications included in them. Journal visibility and recognition are improved when indexed in prominent databases (Shrestha., Subedi., Shokati., & Chaudhary, 2018). According to Lawlor (2003), not only the success and citation count of journals are measured and provided by A&I databases, but also the benchmarking criteria of universities academicians are based on the publications indexed in them. The inclusion of journals in A&I databases represents an aspect to include genuine science (Subramanyam., Krishnamurthy., & Asundi, 2017). Citation analysis and data collection for scientometric studies can be obtained from A&I databases. However, it is found that predatory journals with the aid of pseudo protective platforms like reputed A&I services and reputed organizations ensure their continuity of preying on the scientific spheres.

Various studies confirm that citation databases are exposed to fraudulent journals. Thus, the credibility and significance of the citation databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and the Web of Science, on which all scholars rely as credible research articles, are now being questioned. (Gasparyan et al., 2017; Fernández et al., 2016; Cortegiani et al., 2020; Manca et al., 2018; Manca et al., 2017;

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