Can we save open access publishing?

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Open access publishing: the good, the bad, and the ugly

The Good

The Bad

The Ugly

by ROB WORD
Why I care about this topic

I am a researcher and I like to get my work published
I am a consumer of research and like to access others’ work
I serve on the editorial boards of regular as well as OA journals

- Lancet Infectious Diseases (Elsevier)
- Int J of Tuberculosis and Lung Dis
- J Epi Global Health (Elsevier)
- Expert Rev Molecular Diagnostics
- PLoS Medicine
- PLoS One
- EBioMedicine (Elsevier)
- Scientific Reports (Nature)
Conventional pay-wall publishing

Publishers own the rights to the articles in their journals.

Anyone who wants to read the articles must pay to access them.

In addition, many journals now levy “page charges”.

Anyone who wants to use the articles in any way must obtain permission from the publisher and is often required to pay an additional fee.

Can be super expensive (high profit margins for publishers: as high as 35%!)

Researchers and consumers in low/middle income countries struggle to access research

With dwindling budgets, even established universities are struggling to provide access...

http://www.plos.org/about/open-access/
Harvard University says it can't afford journal publishers' prices

University wants scientists to make their research open access and resign from publications that keep articles behind paywalls

The memo from Harvard's faculty advisory council said major publishers had created an "untenable situation" at the university by making scholarly interaction "fiscally unsustainable" and "academically restrictive", while drawing profits of 35% or more. Prices for online access to articles from two major publishers have increased 145% over the past six years, with some journals costing as much as $40,000, the memo said.

More than 10,000 academics have already joined a boycott of Elsevier, the huge Dutch publisher, in protest at its journal pricing and access policies. Many university libraries pay more than half of their journal budgets to the publishers Elsevier, Springer and Wiley.
We researchers often do all the work (write, review, edit), and yet we ourselves do not own the work and need to pay?

Does this model make any sense?
Nobel winner boycotts top science journals

Randy Schekman, professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Randy Schekman says his lab will no longer send papers to Nature, Cell and Science as they distort scientific process.
What is OA publishing?

Open Access stands for unrestricted access and unrestricted reuse.

free immediate access to, and unrestricted reuse of, original works of all types. Authors agree to make articles legally available for reuse, without permission or fees, for virtually any purpose. Anyone may copy, distribute, or reuse these articles, as long as the author and original source are properly cited.

http://www.plos.org/about/open-access/
## Spectrum of access

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<th>Access</th>
<th>Reader Rights</th>
<th>Reuse Rights</th>
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Benefits of OA publishing

**Accelerated discovery.** With open access, researchers can read and build on the findings of others without restriction.

- Open Access articles are cited 2.5 to 5 times more than articles that users' institutions must pay to access online (Brody et al.)

**Space for negative findings**

**Public enrichment.** Much scientific and medical research is paid for with public funds. Open access allows taxpayers to see the results of their investment (e.g. CIHR open access policy).

**Improved education.** Open access means that teachers and their students have access to the latest research findings throughout the world.

**Unlimited space** to put data out (e.g. PLoS policy on making data available online).

**Amplifier effect** – others can repost/reuse

http://www.plos.org/about/open-access/
The publication of negative, null and inconclusive results is important to provide scientists with balanced information and avoid the duplication of efforts testing similar hypotheses, which waste valuable time and research resources in the process.

*PLOS ONE* considers all work that makes a contribution to the field, independent of impact. This includes negative findings which are valuable to the community in cases where the result is illuminating in the context of previous work.

[www.ploscollections.org/missingpieces](http://www.ploscollections.org/missingpieces)
Amplifier effect

Tuberculosis control needs a complete and patient-centric solution

Whether or not these public service or education-based good business, when these depend on providing a complete and patient-centric solution. Usually, patients with tuberculosis are not offered a complete solution that is patient-centric after a referral from an affected and a large share of the treatment success is associated with the patient-centric solution. An ideal solution would be to identify the patient they meet the International Standards for Tuberculosis Care (ITSC), and not only the diagnosis and treatment, but also in the entire patient's treatment journey. The patient-centric solution focuses on the patient's needs and provides personalized care. It is important to emphasize the importance of patient-centric care because it is not only beneficial to the patient but also to healthcare providers, who can improve their overall effectiveness and efficiency. A patient-centric approach can also help in improving patient adherence to treatment, which is critical for effective tuberculosis control. In conclusion, the patient-centric solution is vital for the successful control of tuberculosis.
Rise of OA publishing
How Much Science Is There?

Scientific publishing has been accelerating—a new paper is now published roughly every 20 seconds. Let’s imagine a bibliography listing every scholarly paper ever written. How long would it be?

If we can fit no citations per page...

...1,000 pages per book...

...and then we start stacking books...

A list of papers published in 1880 would fill 100 pages.

By 1920, the list would be growing by 500 pages per year.

The 1975 section would fill four huge volumes.

Today, we’re up to 15 volumes per year—four volumes every 45 minutes.

...this is what the full list would look like:

All scholarly articles from before 1880 fit in just a few volumes.

1880: Indexes founded

1999: First issue of Nature

2000: Institute of Physics launches archive of free, online papers

2002: Biomed Central begins charging $1,500 author fee. NIH agrees to pay author fees for open-access publication.


2005: UK Medical Research Council requires free access within 6 months.

2007: European Union requires that papers be made freely available within 12 months.

2008: NIH requires that papers be made freely available within 12 months.


2011: Europe plans to require free access within 6-12 months.

How Open Is It?

Since the advent of the Web, much of scientific publishing has been moving to open access. According to Science-Metrix, open access reached a tipping point around 2010: More than 50% of new research is now made available free online.

Open-access papers

As journals move to open access and digitize their archives, old papers from every period move up here...

...in addition to the flood of new papers being published here directly.

25% of open-access papers are freely available on publication.

The rest become free within 12 months on journal websites or other repositories.

Traditional Publication

Traditional journals appear.

In 2009, Paul Ginsparg launches ArXiv for physics, mathematics, and computer science.

Free and fast online journals appear.

Movement to Open Access


Free and fast online journals appear.

By 2013, open-access journals have become the dominant form of journal publishing.
Some major OA publishers
Just as Amazon is forcing book publishers to consider new business models

Book Publishers Scramble to Rewrite Their Future

BY EVAN HUGHES 03.19.13 6:30 AM

The transformation of the book industry

Disappearing ink

Readers have never had it so good. But publishers need to adapt better to the digital world

How the E-Book Is Reinventing the Book Business

By Jeff Kagan
E-Commerce Times
02/09/12 5:00 AM PT

The e-book revolution is changing the book publishing space quickly and completely. Whether you lead, follow, or are lost in the chaos of this new revolution is the only question. Readers love it. They have the choice of buying the old-fashioned way at a store, buying a book online, or buying an e-book instantly.

Amazon Signs Up Authors, Writing Publishers Out of Deal

By DAVID STREITFELD
Published: October 16, 2011

154 Comments
OA has forced traditional publishers to evolve....

Some journals now make all content OA after a certain period of time.

They agree to make some content OA, if authors pay a charge (or if the work is funded by NIH, Wellcome Trust, HHMI, etc).

They agree to let authors post an accepted version of the manuscript on websites/archives.

They have floated new OA versions of their journals.
Lancet Global Health: first fully OA Lancet journal...
BMJ Global Health (just launched)
Be among the first.

Introducing *Science Advances*, a digital open access journal from AAAS, the publisher of *Science*. *Science Advances* features well-executed, important research across the entire range of scholarly pursuits including computer, engineering, environmental, life, mathematical, physical, and social sciences. We rapidly publish high-quality research, focusing on work with the potential to make significant advances in any relevant field.
Scientific Reports: first OA journal from Nature
The Bad
Concerns

Article charges that authors or institutions have to pay
Payment for publication could create conflicts of interest - financial incentive for journals to publish more articles
About quality of OA journals
No gate-keepers to protect journal reputation and integrity
Sustainability of OA journals
## Article-processing charge

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<td>EBioMedicine (Elsevier) [No IF]</td>
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“The data from this sting operation reveal the contours of an emerging Wild West in academic publishing,” John Bohannon
Methods used for the sting

Fake paper took this form: Molecule X from lichen species Y inhibits the growth of cancer cell Z. To substitute for those variables, Bohannon created a database of molecules, lichens, and cancer cell lines and wrote a computer program to generate hundreds of unique papers.

Between January and August of 2013, he submitted fake papers at a rate of about 10 per week: one paper to a single journal for each publisher (total of 304).

If a journal rejected the paper, that was the end of the line. If a journal sent review comments that asked for changes to layout or format, he complied and resubmitted.

If a review addressed any of the paper's serious scientific problems, he sent the editor a "revised" version that was superficially improved, but without changing any of the fatal scientific flaws.

After a journal accepted a paper, he sent a standard e-mail to the editor: "Unfortunately, while revising our manuscript we discovered an embarrassing mistake. We see now that there is a serious flaw in our experiment which invalidates the conclusions." He then withdrew the paper.
The invoice arrived with good news: After a science-free review process, one of their journals—the *International Journal of Cancer and Tumor*—accepted the paper. Posing as lead author Alimo Atoa, I requested that it be withdrawn. I received a final message that reads like a surreal love letter from one fictional character to another:

Dear Alimo Atoa,

We fully respect your choice and withdraw your article.

If you are ready to publish your paper, please let me know and I will be at your service at any time.

Sincerely yours,
Grace Groovy

—John Bohannon
Reactions to the ‘sting’

Effort by *Science* to discredit OA; The sting operation, *Science* said in its promotion, “exposes the dark side of open-access publishing.”

Author did not sample non-OA journals (so, no control group)

Author deliberately over-sampled low-quality journals (e.g. Beall’s list) and does not provide a fair sample of OA journals
The Ugly
Some well known predators...
A new predator emerges...

Caveat Researcher: Open Access Spawns ‘Predatory Journals’

By Douglas McCormick
Posted 9 Apr 2013 | 19:12 GMT
Dear Dr. Madhukar Pai

Reference: Invitation for Photon Innovations-2013

It is my great honor and pleasure to invite you to submit your most recent research and ideas to The Journal of Veterinary Science, world’s leading journal in the domain. The peer reviewed international journal offers fast review within approx 12 days. Published articles are made available online with free access to target multinational audience in your domain. With high impact index 4.18 journal is accepting leading research in the domain of Veterinary Science. Photon encourages innovative scientists and engineers from all over the world to share their ideas on international platform. Photon Innovations-2013 is a highly versatile Global Project connecting world’s top most academicians, engineers and scientists towards filtration of World’s Path Breaking Research Articles and Discoveries. The Global Project awards the scientists with Photon Innovations 2013 Award who demonstrates the calibre to transform and catalyze the domain. Their names would be announced and published on Photon Beam in 2013 with affiliations and respective countries. We appreciate your time and efforts towards submitting us a world class manuscript. You may choose variety of Photon Journals as below and may also nominate compatible researchers for Photon Innovations-2013 Award. With the passion, you can submit your manuscripts at photonjournal@yahoo.com

You are kindly requested to confirm your participation with acknowledgement.

Looking forward

Kimberly Engstrom
Editorial Office
The Journal of Veterinary Science
Photon
https://sites.google.com/site/photonfoundationorganization/home/the-journal-of-veterinary-science

Last Date: 31st December, 2013
Dear Madhukar Pai,

Reference: Invitation for Photon Innovations-2013

It is my great honor and pleasure to invite you to submit your most recent research and ideas to International Journal of Pharmacy, world’s leading journal in the domain. The peer reviewed international journal offers fast review within approx 12 days. Published articles are made available online with free access to target multinational audience in your domain. With high impact index 4.43 journal is accepting leading research in the domain of Pharmacy. Photon encourages innovative scientists and engineers from all over the world to share their ideas on international platform. Photon Innovations-2013 is a highly versatile Global Project connecting world’s top most academicians, engineers and scientists towards filtration of World’s Path Breaking Research Articles and Discoveries. The Global Project awards the scientists with Photon Innovations-2013 Award who demonstrates the calibre to transform and catalyze the domain. Their names would be announced and published on Photon Beam in 2013 with affiliations and respective countries. We appreciate your time and efforts towards submitting us a world class manuscript. You may choose variety of Photon Journals as below and may also nominate compatible researchers for Photon Innovations-2013 Award. With the passion, you can submit your manuscripts at photonjournal@yahoo.com

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You are kindly requested to confirm your participation with acknowledgement.

Looking forward

Kimberley Lopez
Editorial Office
International Journal of Pharmacy
Photon
https://sites.google.com/site/photonfoundationorganization/international-journal-of-pharmacy
Dear Dr. M. Pai,

Savvy invites experts and researchers of scientific field to join them as editorial board members in the *Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy Research* provide an authoritative setting for the publication of high quality internationally-relevant research with respect to the field of psychology and psychotherapy. The goal of this journal is to provide a platform for doctors and academicians all over the world to promote, share, and discuss various new issues and developments in psychology related problems.

The journal strives to publish work deemed by peer reviewers to be a coherent to scientific knowledge and to provide with the research, which constitutes a useful contribution to the field of psychology and psychotherapy. Journal Aim and Scope covers research areas like Cognitive Psychology, Health Psychology, Functional Psychology, Counseling Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Personality, Psychopharmacology, Psychopathology, Social psychology, Engineering psychology, Sports Psychology.

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We would like to have your complete educational information and the relevant work experience as well as your designation or position. In other words introduce yourself and provide us some of your previous journals or articles reviews, if any.

We are looking forward to receive your CV.

Best regards

Dr. Saiqa Mushtaq
Publication Manager
Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy Research
Pohlanbon 5801 Wild Lilas Dr. East Petersburg PA , 17520 , USA.
Tel: +1 610 999 4532
Email: info@savvysciencepublisher.com
Dear Professor,

I am Ivan Sun, an editor of Academic Research Publishers (ARpub: www.arpub.org). It’s my great honor to write to invite you to be an Editorial Board Member of Advanced Management Science.

First of all, I’d like to introduce Academic Research Publisher (ARpub) to you. ARpub is a publisher found in California, US since 2012. Now it owns 5 international journals with International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), and these journals covers the area of management sciences, microbiology, manufacturing engineering, biopharmaceutics sciences and mechanical engineering.

Secondly, Advanced Management Science has already published some papers in 2013. In 2014, this journal will publish 4 issues, and mainly accept the papers relating to strategy, entrepreneurship, innovation, information technology, and organizations as well as all functional areas of business, such as accounting, finance, marketing, operations, empirical research, analytical modeling, scholarly papers, distinguished review articles, comments, and notes. The editor-in-chief of this journal is Prof. Xiaoxia Huang, from Beijing University of University of Science and Technology, Beijing, China. Her research focuses on Financial Management, and published more than 20 excellent papers on international journals. Advanced Management Science is an open access journal, papers published on this journal could be seen and download by everyone for free, which could make your study and research well-known easier. Also the printed journals will contain your name on the edition board part.

Thirdly, We have paid attention on your study on management science through your paper from the Science Citation Index, which reflects the Control Theory and Its Application. We really appreciate the originality and innovation in your study.
Dear Dr. Pai, M,

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You are requested to send a recent passport size photo (to display at our website) and your C.V, Biography (150 words), Research Interests for our records.

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Thanks & Regards,

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At least somebody adores my research!

Dear Dr. Madhukar Pai,

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Epidemiology: Open Access is an open access, peer-reviewed journal that provides an illuminating overview on Epidemiology and Health in general and their increasing role in the diagnosis, characterization, therapy of various marked diseases and conditions in particular.

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It would be great if you could submit the manuscript on or before February 16th 2015. Manuscripts can be submitted through online at www.editorialmanager.com/biomedicaljournals or you can submit through email: editor.epidemiology@omicsonline.net / editor.ecr@omicsinc.com

If it is not feasible for you in January, then please let us know your feasible time to contribute.

We look forward to hear a positive response from you soon.
India accounts for a third of the predatory OA journals

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- 2 weeks: $3,000
- 4 weeks: $2,800
- 8 weeks: $2,600

What are the ethical aspects of paying more in order to get an article published faster? If an author pays a higher amount, does this increase a paper's likelihood of being accepted?

http://scholarlyoa.com/2013/11/07/want-a-faster-review-pay-for-it/
Investment you need to make, to start a fake OA journal: $1000 + a garage + one staff

$500

$200

$100

$200
Meet the one-man army against predators

WORLD VIEW  A personal take on events

Predatory publishers are corrupting open access

Journals that exploit the author–pays model damage scholarly publishing and promote unethical behaviour by scientists, argues Jeffrey Beall.
Beall’s List of Predatory Publishers 2015

by Jeffrey Beall, January 2, 2015 Each year at this time I formally release my updated list of predatory publishers. Because the list is now very large, and because I now publish four, continuously-updated lists, this year’s release does not include the actual lists but instead includes statistical and explanatory data about the lists and links to them.

Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers: This year, 2015, marks the fifth annual release of this list, which is also continuously updated. The list this year includes 693 publishers, an increase of 241 over 2014.

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<tr>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>225</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>693</td>
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Number of predatory publishers, 2011-2015
International Journal of Medical Sciences and Health Care
USA and UK Based Research Journal

Home
Vision
Encouraging medical research methods with innovations and discovery

Mission
International Journal Of Medical Sciences and Health Care (IJMSHC) is to facilitate the equitable dissemination of high-quality health research; to promote international dialogue and collaboration on health issues; to improve clinical practice; to provide the quality information on health issues; and to expand and deepen the understanding of health and health care.

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With kind regards,

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After retirement from Football, what next for David Beckham?
How to spot a predator?

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Meetings That Flatter, but May Not Deliver

The e-mails come from Amber, Rainy, Dora, and Arlene. "How are you doing now?" some begin. "Hope this e-mail finds all the best on you." Flattering and solicitous and written in bewilderingly mangled English, the e-mails have the hallmarks of spam offering carousal pleasure—except they are actually far tamer. They are invitations to attend scientific meetings in China organized by a company that bills itself as the "World Leading Provider of Intelligence Exchanges in Life Sciences."

BIT Life Sciences, based in Dalian, a seaside city in Northeast China, stages conferences on a staggering array of topics, from vaccines and biodiversity to diabetes, cancer, cloud computing, HIV/AIDS, and algae. The meetings, which are often billed as an "Annual World Congress," sometimes coin names for new disciplines, such as "Endobiotics" and "Drug Designology." BITeomics, the parent company, says it has 400 employees and holds at least 70 conferences a year that "tens of thousands of people" have attended since 2001.

Welcome to the bizarre world of what some call "predatory" conferences: scientific confabs, sometimes sparsely attended, that seem to come into being primarily to make money. Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado, Denver, who monitors a subset of open-access journals that he calls "predatory," sees a similar phenomenon in BIT conferences. "They have the same conflict of interest as predatory publishers," he asserts. While predatory journals charge fees to publish papers, these conferences make money through registration fees that are bundled with charges for accommodation, meals, and program materials. (Typical bills run in the $2000 range. BIT, which stands for Bio Integration Technology, also has a subsidiary that offers to help book air flights, hotels, and tours.) "The more papers they accept, the more money they make," Beall says, as people with accepted talks are more likely to attend. While most scientific conferences have a similar financial equation, the vast majority are organized by nonprofits with members drawn from the scientific community, rigorously peer review submissions, and strictly limit the number of presentations. "Predatory" conferences, on the other hand, Beall says, "are accepting papers that may not be valid science. They bear the imprimatur of science even though they never go through the same quality control."

While BIT Congress claims to be "the largest-scale conference company in Asia Pacific," it has competition in what Beall says is an expanding industry. "They're just one in the landscape," he says. He has also taken aim at the OMICS Group, a company based in India that stages conferences and publishes open-access journals that Beall considers "predatory" (see p. 468). OMICS strongly objects to being deemed "predatory" by Beall and has threatened to sue him for $1 billion.

In an e-mail to Science, Francis Wang, who works in the business development office of BIT Life Sciences, rejected the charge that the company stages predatory meetings and lowers the quality of scientific discourse. His business, he stated, is information sharing: "We are a bridge to the professional world." Wang explained that the firm does not use spam or robots to send out e-mail invitations, and noted that only about 40% of participants use its travel subsidiary's services. He suggested that some of the criticism occurs because BIT Life Sciences reaches out to up-and-coming researchers. "We will try very hard to create more platforms to give young experts or junior scientists more visibility and encourage their motivation to engage in the competition in professional world," Wang stated.

Derek Lowe, a medicinal chemist at Vertex Pharmaceuticals in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has ridiculed BIT Life Sciences invitations on his blog, noting that he believes he's been invited to speak at meetings because he can breathe, speak, fill a slot on a schedule, and presumably pay the registration fee. "This stuff reminds me of the Who's Who business model," Lowe says. "You can be in this book of luminaries if you'll just pay for the book."

A typical e-mail from BIT begins by offering a slot to give an oral presentation or chair a session at a meeting that may not even intersect with your expertise. It will add that the program coordinator has invited you for your "invaluable experience and knowledge" or maybe because "you are an outstanding expert and have enjoyed great fame." The note will list other "world-class experts" and renowned speakers who have attended BIT conferences, including Nobel Lau-
Be particularly wary of these...

IEEE conferences in China
So, can we save OA?

In principle, OA publishing has to be a good thing

- Everyone likes their research to be read, and all major funders mandate that
- If OA is forcing traditional publishers to get out of their greed mindset, then that is a good thing
- Self-archiving should be used more to increase access

The challenge is operationalizing OA and ensuring that it stays credible and sustainable

- *PLoS Medicine* is now an OA alternative to high-impact general medical journals (e.g. NEJM, Lancet) and has established its reputation
- *PLoS ONE* is now the largest OA publication and appears to be sustainable
“In an academic world ever more infiltrated by fraudsters, con artists and pirates, one can still trust the content and academic integrity of scientific society journals and long-standing corporate publishers. They protect against article and journal cloning, identity theft, bogus journals, forgery, author substitution, fake metrics, and prevent outright intellectual property theft.” K Tomaselli
Some closing thoughts...

Regardless of OA versus pay-wall publishing models, good peer-review (with all its flaws) and editorial oversight is key to ensure quality

- Even with this, there will always be a range of quality and readers and researchers need benchmarks to guide them
- While ‘black lists’ (e.g. Beall) are useful, perhaps it is time for ‘white lists’ of high quality OA publications

The emergence of predatory journals is a testament that OA is popular and here to stay; while credible researchers should not fall for them, these journals will always have a market
An October 4 paper in Science based on a “sting” operation by John Bohannon, science writer at Harvard University reveals the pitfalls in open access scientific publishing. Bohannon has done for selected open access scientific journals what Alan Sokal did to academic journal Social Text. Submitting a paper outlining (entirely made up results of) the anticancer properties of a chemical that had been extracted from a certain lichen to 304 open access journals, he found that the majority of them actually accepted the paper. 157 journals accepted the paper, 98 rejected it and of the remainder, 20 journals said the paper was still being reviewed and 29 journals appeared to be derelict.

What is news for us is that about one-third of these (64 to be precise) were based in India!
Dear Dr. Madhukar Pai,
You are so reputed name in medical field that we salute you. I have already requested my office not to disturb you. But my office boys when searching for good authors, always find your name and i.e. why you get mails.
I am very sorry. I was in Canada in Oct.14 and whenever I come next, I will try to see such a reputed personality of course with your kind permission and appointment. From next time, even if you get any mail, just delete it and do not be angry. It is not good for your patients.
Further I will sincerely request you to contribute one manuscript to us to help we Indian people. If possible, please do it otherwise just our bad luck.
Kind regards and best wishes,
Shankar

On Wed, Jan 28, 2015 at 3:59 PM, Madhukar Pai, Dr. <madhukar.pai@mcgill.ca> wrote:

Mr Shankar-

Stop sending these emails. What you are doing is spam and not acceptable.
Others are waging their own campaigns...

Dear Colleagues,

As I communicated to you on January 15, 2014, our department has used a metrics document to permit more objectivity in faculty performance evaluations. This document (attached) is now being revised for the new academic year. Your suggestions and comments are appreciated.

I take the opportunity to alert our faculty to one alarming trend, namely, the 'epidemics' of predatory publishers and conference organizers, which has reached a level that is now threatening the credibility of the published record in scientific research. Our metrics document already alerted on pages 5-6 to the dangers of this trend. It is likely that every one of you has received spam email from such publishers and event organizers. Please ignore these emails and do not reply to them. Many of these publishers and organizers are being held accountable by NIH for trademark or copyright infringement, use of scientists’ names without permission, and other dishonest tactics. Their goal is to lure junior scientists to submit their papers or attend their conferences. Senior scientists have also fallen prey to these entities.

The open access concept in academic publishing has created a new business model that is socially just and benefits from the low cost of electronic publishing. While the main open access publishers (PLoS, Biomed Central, etc.) are well known and established as credible repositories of superior science, there has been enormous growth among those that want to copy this model exclusively for profit with no regard to the quality of what they publish. There were only 18 predatory publishers in 2011. This number had increased to 23 in 2012, to 225 in 2013, and to 589 as of mid-July 2014. This is more than all of the serious academic publishers combined.

As chair, I closely oversee the academic promotions process of our faculty members, which allows me to read every CV and teaching dossier submitted to the department. I have noticed that some of our faculty have claimed to their credit publications in predatory journals and attendance to conferences organized by the same organizations. Some have also accepted roles as editors or editorial board members of these journals. If they actually knew what passes for science in the journals to which they lent their name to add credibility to the publisher, they would immediately disallow their association with them.

A list of predatory publishers is continuously updated by University of Colorado. The link is http://scholarlyc.com/publishers/.


Please do not fall victim to predatory publishers and conferences. If you are inclined to submit a paper to any journal by one of the publishers listed in the above link think again and submit elsewhere. If you were invited to present at a conference and your registration fees were not at least waived by the organizer then chances are that this conference is not one that you will want to attend. Reputable conferences are the ones by the learned societies and organizations you and your peers admire and respect. If you have accepted to serve in an advisory capacity (editor, board member, scientific program member) to one of these entities please recuse yourself from that role. You should not use your name...
Thank you!

Questions?

madhukar.pai@mcgill.ca