

The background of the slide features a close-up photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with dark coffee, sitting on a wooden surface. In the foreground, a spiral-bound notebook with lined pages is open, and a bright blue pen lies diagonally across it. A laptop is partially visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

Predatory Publishers: Welcome to the grey zone

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**Coffee Lecture
#13**

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- Understand what a predatory journal is
- Know how to recognize predatory publishers and protect the scientific value of your work

A very short history of academic publishing

Until the 80s

- Paper journals

Late 90s

- e-journals
- OA movement

00s

- Diffusion of OA Gold
- Appearance of predatory publishers

What they are?

- Almost 400 academic articles on predatory publishing published in the last 20 years [1] and still no simple definition.
- “[Publishers] which publish **counterfeit journals** to exploit the open-access model [...] They aim to dupe researchers, especially those inexperienced in scholarly communication. They set up websites that closely resemble those of legitimate online publishers, and **publish journals of questionable and downright low quality**. Many purport to be headquartered in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada or Australia but really hail from Pakistan, India or Nigeria.” [2]
- “Predatory journals and publishers are entities that **prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship** and are characterized by **false or misleading information**, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a **lack of transparency**, and/or the **use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices**.” [3]

The grey zone

Criteria	Legitimate	Predatory
Adherence to industry standards	High	Low
APC information	Upfront and clear	Unclear or absent
Contact information	Easily available	Difficult to retrieve or absent
Editorial board	Verifiable, renowned	Unverifiable, unknown
English quality (emails, website)	Well-curated	Sloppy
Impact metrics	Scopus	None or unknown
Indexing	DOAJ, PubMed, WoS	None or unknown
Industry associations memberships	COPE, OASPA	None or unknown
ISSN	Ok	Missing or made up
Peer-review process	Clear	Unclear
Quality of editorial work	High	Low
Unsolicited emails	None or rare	Common practice

Ok, I get it. But I really need to publish...



Risk to undermine your CV



Diffusion of
pseudoscience/alternative truth



Waste of public money

- Compass to Publish – Liège Université Library (<https://app.lib.uliege.be/compass-to-publish/>)
- Directory of Open Access Journals (<https://doaj.org/>)
- Think, Check, Submit (<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>)
- Quality Open Access Marker (<https://www.qoam.eu/journals>)
- Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association (<https://oaspa.org/>)
- COPE - Principles of Transparency (<https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing>)
- ISSN Portal (<https://portal.issn.org/>)
- Still in doubt? Get in touch with the EPFL Library: publishsupport@epfl.ch

- [1] Cobey, Kelly D., Manoj M Lalu, Becky Skidmore, Nadera Ahmadzai, Agnes Grudniewicz, and David Moher. 'What Is a Predatory Journal? A Scoping Review'. *F1000Research* 7 (23 August 2018): 1001.
<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.15256.2>.
- [2] Beall, Jeffrey. 'Predatory Publishers Are Corrupting Open Access'. *Nature* 489, no. 7415 (13 September 2012): 179.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/489179a>.
- [3] Grudniewicz, Agnes, David Moher, Kelly D. Cobey, Gregory L. Bryson, Samantha Cukier, Kristiann Allen, Clare Arden, et al. 'Predatory Journals: No Definition, No Defence'. *Nature* 576, no. 7786 (December 2019): 210–12. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y>.

Thank you !

go.epfl.ch/coffee-lectures

Contact & credits

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