



Predatory Publishing

What Nurse Executives Need to Know

Karen S. Hill, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, FAAN

Editors attending the 2014 meeting of the International Academy of Nursing Editors have coalesced to provide information to our readers regarding a recent trend in the publishing world, predatory publishing.

Jeffrey Beall,¹ an academic librarian and blogger, has coined the term “predatory publishers.” The editors attending the 2014 INANE meeting committed to raise awareness regarding possible inadvertent submissions by well-intended nurse authors and researchers to these journals as well as the citation of questionable manuscripts in future publications.²

Author Affiliation: Editor-in-Chief, *The Journal of Nursing Administration*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Chief Operating Officer/Chief Nursing Officer, Baptist Health Lexington, Kentucky.

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Correspondence: Dr Hill, 2208 Sweetberry Ct, Lexington, KY 40513 (jonaeditor@gmail.com).

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Conditions Created by Open Access

Open-access publishing is a relatively recent occurrence with the goal of removing restrictions to the online access of peer-reviewed scholarly research. *The Journal of Nursing Administration (JONA)* began offering open access to our authors during the summer of 2014 along with other well-respected scholarly journals. Although this trend may have created the conditions under which these new predatory publishing practices are flourishing, open access is not, in itself, the problem. Options for authors or their funders under open access include paying a fee to expedite the processing of an article for immediate open access and various levels of delayed public access for specific types of articles. The open-access movement has significantly altered the conventional financial model of many journals. Whether a manuscript is submitted with the intent of open access does not influence the level of review or acceptance with *JONA*. I want to make this clear because I do occasionally get e-mails from authors asking to pay to have their articles accepted.

While journal owners and publishers historically relied on subscriptions and content licenses or

advertisements for revenue, most open-access publishing options are fee based. Many research-granting bodies have strongly advocated for unrestricted access to the findings from funded studies, and some have willingly funded open-access publication costs as a means to make results widely available. Beyond the open-access options being adopted by mainstream publishers, the ease of digital publishing and exploitation of this new publishing business model have led to a myriad of new journals, each actively competing for authors and revenue. The editors who are member of INANE are focused on nursing publications; however, these shifts in publishing are not a trend isolated to any single discipline or nationality. Instead, with profit as the driving force, these “predatory” publishers engage in a range of disturbingly unethical and un scholarly practices.

Predatory Motivations and Practices

Typical practices of predatory publishers include promises of rapid review and acceptance for publication, minimal to nonexistent review processes, a fabricated editorial board, and mimicry of legitimate journal titles. These publishers often send



flattering individualized e-mail solicitations to potential authors inviting them to submit manuscripts for their journals. I personally have received these “invitations” for small, non-peer-reviewed columns I wrote over 20 years ago!

Conversely, the named editor may be someone with no qualifications or credibility in the field and may simultaneously administer a range of journals. In the rush to provide rapid review and acceptance for publication, these editors may review submissions single-handedly or rely on a single employee “peer” to bless the manuscript and deem it publishable. The result is a “review process” unfettered by actual expert critique as is the practice with *JONA*. This expedited process may be evident in the eventual published document, with the date of submission, review, and acceptance all occurring in close proximity. I consider the process of publication with *JONA* fairly efficient. From submission to publication can take from 5 to 9 months, based on the volume of manuscripts submitted and my workload.

When the motivation of a journal is profit, the focus is fixed on pleasing the author as the primary source of revenue. Predatory publishers therefore target senior scholars to build the journal’s credibility and to help attract unsuspecting or naive authors. Other targets include those whose academic pressures to publish may blind them to the nefarious nature of what allows a journal to bring a manuscript to print in record time. Unfortunately, aspiring authors caught up in the promise of rapid publication may unwittingly find that (a) their career progress is tainted by the lack of credibility of their selected publishing venues, (b) they are liable for unexpected additional fees once their paper has been

published, or (c) their previously published papers suddenly cease to exist or reside in legal limbo, with the copyright signed away to a nonexistent publisher and inaccessible through established search mechanisms, because contractual arrangements for these publications may be unenforceable.

The threat of publishing less than credible work in healthcare publications is even more serious, as the pseudo-science and poor scholarship published by predatory journals could conceivably result in harm to patients and the health information-seeking public.

The INANE Call to Action

The INANE community, representing editors of credible and reputable nursing journals, would like to encourage nursing authors to use Beall’s¹ list of predatory publishers at Scholarly Open Access as a reliable resource. We also would encourage potential authors to consult the Directory of Nursing Journals,³ a collaborative effort between INANE and *Nurse Author & Editor*, for journals that have been reviewed and vetted within our community. A 3rd useful resource is Thomas Long’s⁴ blog on nursing writing, which includes a compilation of recent reports on predatory open-access journals and scholarly conference scams. As an additional reference, I am adding a table¹ produced by INANE as Supplemental Digital Content 1, which lists considerations and red flags summarized from internationally reputable organizations, <http://links.lww.com/JONA/A379>.

In writing this editorial, I am joining the INANE community in hopes to encourage educators, mentors, scholars, and clinical practitioners to join in a campaign to help our colleagues understand emerging

hazards on the path to publication. We encourage those who oversee institutional promotion and advancement processes to ensure that (a) their members are well mentored with respect to the publication records they are building, and (b) their review committees have the knowledge required for fair assessment of work across the spectrum of publication modalities. Above all, we seek to serve the emerging science, knowledge sharing, and authorial careers of our discipline by ensuring that nurses are making wise publishing choices.

The INANE members, including myself, are committed to sustaining the high standards we have come to expect in the published body of nursing knowledge, across the full spectrum of theorizing and philosophizing, science and evidence building, clinical applications, education, leadership, social advocacy, and policy engagement, even as we embrace the new possibilities for publishing in the digital universe. Open access is both an exciting opportunity and an intriguingly disruptive force in the publishing world. It is unfortunate that it has been exploited in this predatory manner. As the editor-in-chief of *JONA*, I am committed to continuing the highest publishing standards and integrity in our processes from submission to final product.

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