

**For Researchers who are:**

Considering submitting a paper to a journal

Being asked to perform a peer review

Supervising graduate or postdoctoral students

# Beware of Predatory Journals



## What They Are and How to Avoid Them

Involvement in predatory journals can damage your academic credibility and reputation as a researcher.

### What are predatory journals?

Predatory journals are low-quality academic journals that do not conduct proper peer reviews and publish papers only to obtain submission fees from authors. They exist solely to make money. Recently, the tactics of such journals have become increasingly sophisticated making it increasingly difficult to identify them.

While journals that publish an article for a fee can be very convenient and appealing to researchers seeking to advance their careers rapidly, please consider the risks entailed in such an approach. To protect your academic careers and those of your students,

**it is vital that you and the students you supervise do not become involved with predatory journals in any way, such as authors, reviewers, or supervisors.**

# The Way of Deception is More Sophisticated

## 01 No Perfect List

A list of “suspicious journals” is typically used to identify predatory journals. In contrast, there are lists of “safe journals.” Checklist tools can also be used to verify the trustworthiness of journals. It is common for journals to be considered as less dangerous if they are included in well-known databases.

Unfortunately, such lists, tools, and databases cannot be trusted completely. As predatory publishers have become increasingly sophisticated in their deception, they have formalized their editorial and peer-review policies to ensure their journals get included in “safe” lists. There is a case in which contributors are asked to cite the journals to which they contribute to give the appearance of a high citation count and boost the journal's reputation.

**There is no perfect list to identify predatory journals.**

It is important to make a comprehensively informed decision about which journal to submit to without relying too much on lists and by gathering information from a wide range of sources.

## 02 Journal Spoofing

Fake journal websites falsely use names and ISSNs (international standard serial numbers) of existing journals. The sites impersonate existing journals to fraudulently receive article processing charges from the authors. Journals of small publishers and academic societies are the most common targets.

## 03 Author Spoofing

A case of “A paper not written by me has been published in an academic journal by my name” has been posted on a social networking service, causing a stir. It is presumed that the study in question was created using generative AI. Although the intent of fabrication has not been clarified, some believe that a journal's publisher may be manipulating the impression of its quality by pretending to publish the work of a well-known researcher.

### Attention!

### Predatory Conferences

In addition to predatory journals, please be aware of predatory conferences that similarly aim to only obtain participation fees. These conferences do not provide participants with useful information. Presentations may not be subject to proper checks. There may be no active discussions. In the worst case, they may suddenly be cancelled with no refund for the participation fee. An increasing number of online predatory conferences have been reported.



# Experiences

## —The Actual Risks of Predatory Journals—

Kyoto University Library Network has received numerous reports from researchers on campus who have “almost got involved” or “got involved” with predatory journals. Some of the actual experiences are as follows.



I submitted a paper and it was accepted **without any editing**.

I was requested to write a paper **under the name of a prominent researcher**, but it was fake.

I accidentally submitted a paper to a predatory journal, and **when I asked them to retract it, they did not respond**.

I realized **my co-author had submitted our paper to a predatory journal** after it had been published.

After contacting the journal once, I was subjected to **persistent solicitation emails**.

The peer review period was too short (ten days), and I felt that **they did not really review my paper**.

I rejected a low-quality paper; however, **the editor ignored my review and published it without revision**.



I heard that someone at another university submitted a paper to a known predatory journal that **caused problems with the award of their degree**.

When I accepted guest editorship, I was given email addresses by numerous researchers and **was asked to send them solicitation emails**.



# Check Before Submission & Peer Review

01



## Ask Other Researchers

Ask researchers in the same or similar fields about the journal's reputation and determine whether involvement with the journal would be beneficial to your research career. Are there any comments about the journal's quality on social networking sites?

02



## See the Official Website

Google the journal's official website. Do not use a link in the invitation email. Is the peer review period too short? Is there anything suspicious about the website logo, such as poor image resolution or a distorted layout?

03



## Read Previous Articles

Read previous articles published in that particular journal. Do they match the scope of coverage stated on the official website? Does the quality of the articles indicate that the journal is worthy of publishing your research?

04



## Check the Editor's Profile

Are the editors listed on the official website that you have heard of, or researchers in the field that you want to contribute to? Does the editor's official website (e.g., the website of their university) clearly state that he/she is an editor of the journal?

**If you have any doubts at all, it is not appropriate to submit.  
Please judge carefully.**

**The Library welcomes questions  
and provides information about predatory journals.**

If you have any "suspicious" or concerning cases, please let us know using the form on the right. The library will investigate and provide feedback based on the above points.

\*Only for those who belong to Kyoto University

## Predatory Journal Inquiry Form



<https://www.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/form/1380548?lang=en>