

From open-access to ‘predatory’ publishing

Dear Reader,

Nearly every day, we receive as academics emails asking us to publish our latest research findings in newly appearing journals, usually through a personalized message referring to our earlier published work. These journals are mostly online-only open-access pay-to-publish journals. They have no subscribers, usually the journal name closely resembles that of existing leading dental journals, and they often guarantee ultrafast publication with rapid review, if any. This growing phenomenon, known as ‘predatory publishing’, became a recent news item in diverse media in different countries. It was reported that the publication pressure drives academics to publish scientific papers in so-called ‘predatory’ journals, often with a hefty payment (up to 2500 euro!), without (much) peer review, in journals with no or an extremely low impact factor. Similar messages invite us to become a member of the editorial board of such journals or to submit an abstract for and lecture at dental congresses. It seems certain that this is an easy way for all involved (except for the authors, invited editorial board members and lecturers) to make money! Although this is not necessarily illegal, it definitely goes against current scientific practice. Unfortunately, authors are sometimes tricked into publishing in such predatory journals, and can be tempted as they want their paper published fast, especially if it was previously rejected by a classic higher ranked journal, or is required for a looming application for research funding or career promotion.

Did open-access publishing go too far?

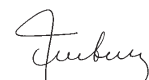
Research funding organizations as well as universities not so long ago took initiatives to actively promote open-access publishing, which they today still favor; their aim is to maximize the impact of the research they fund by making scientific papers openly accessible. Another argument pro public access to scientific literature is that most university research is paid for by taxpayers through government grants, and therefore the community has a right to access the results of that funding. While these arguments may be sound, it is clear that there is also a lot to say against open-access publishing and author-paid fee-based journals in particular. There exists a clear conflict of interest (rejected papers do not generate income!) and a significant risk of damaging the peer-review process and diminishing the overall quality of scientific journal publishing.

For JAD, correct and unbiased (not positive or negative) peer review remains essential to maintain the scientific quality of our journal. JAD even wants to improve its peer-review process. At the recent Associate Editors’ meeting in London (IADR meeting, July 2018), it was decided to reform the editorial board, which has remained unchanged for several years. Researchers and academics that regularly review manuscripts for JAD will shortly be invited to join JAD’s editorial board to enhance the speed and quality of the journal’s review process.

Do not get tricked by predatory journals! We encourage you to keep sending your manuscripts to classic peer-reviewed subscriber-paid journals like the *Journal of Adhesive Dentistry*.



Bart Van Meerbeek



Roland Frankenberger