

Predatory and hijacked journals

Predatory and hijacked publishing is unethical. Neither model provides the transparent policies expected from legitimate peer-reviewed journals. They fraudulently offer rapid publication for a fee. Hijacked journals use duplicate or fake websites that impersonate legitimate ones. Authors, funders and institutions therefore need to be vigilant.

Indicators of predatory or hijacked publishing

There are many indicators which suggest that a journal could be a predatory or hijacked one.

Authors should be wary of the following:

- Guarantee of acceptance
 - Very fast peer review times (often a matter of days)
 - Acceptance of papers without modification
 - Poor production quality – typos, grammatical errors, nonsense sentences
 - Hidden or unclear author fees
 - Journal name is the same or very similar to that of another
 - Journal contact is with non-professional email addresses
 - Odd organizational mailing addresses (e.g. PO box or residential address)
 - False information about indexing, metrics, membership of scholarly publishing organizations and so on
 - Fake editorial boards without affiliations or contact addresses
- Hijacked journals may use a legitimate journal's exact title, ISSN information and other meta-data.
 - Fraudulent claims that legitimate academics/experts are board members
 - Editors non-specialist in the field or deceased
 - Scant provision of the aims and scope of the journal
 - Scant guide for authors
 - Lack of ethics policies and declarations, for example with regard to authorship roles, funding or conflicts of interest
 - Weak websites and submission systems
 - Lack of information about copyright and user licenses
 - Publication of papers on a wide range of subjects
 - Lack of expressions of concern/retraction of articles

Predatory publishers may not withdraw published articles even when requested by authors.

Predatory publishers may ignore requests by academics to remove their names from editorial board listings.

Further information

Clarivate. Hijacked journals: what they are and how to avoid them <https://clarivate.com/blog/hijacked-journals-what-they-are-and-how-to-avoid-them/>

COPE. Predatory behaviour in publication ethics <https://publicationethics.org/news/predatory-behaviour-publication-ethics>

Think. Check. Submit <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/journals/>