

Impact of Predatory Journals on Academic Publishing: **A Perspective View**



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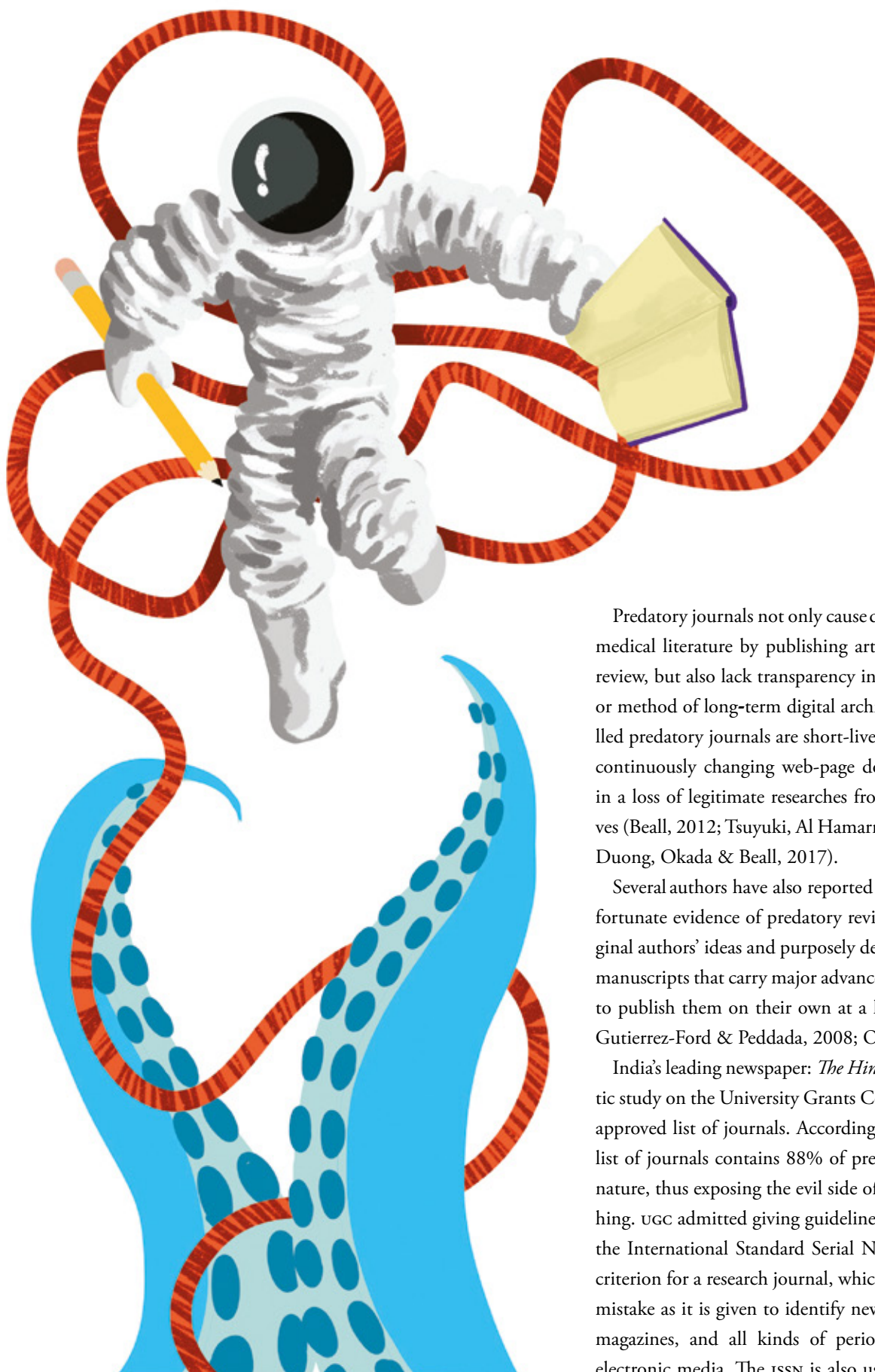
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In earlier times, authors used to feel immense gratification for publishing their work in peer-reviewed journals to satisfy their urge to uplift scientific knowledge by contributing to it and achieving fame. But the academic field's rapidly changing scenario and cut-throat competition have converted this urge to need of publication for proving higher competency among colleagues. The recent amendment in guidelines by the Medical Council of India (MCI) and the Dental Council of India (DCI) to make publications mandatory for appointments and promotions of medical teachers led to the phenomenon known as predatory publishing (Kumar & Saxena, 2016).

Merriam Webster's dictionary elaborated the term: predatory, referring to anything that is inclined or intended to injure or exploit others for personal gain or profit. Likewise, it refers to biomedical journals that solicit and prey young researchers or academicians with legitimate research, looking to quickly publish without a thorough review process. These journals for immediate personal gain or financial profit publish articles at the earliest without peer reviewing and charge high amounts in the name of article-processing charges (APCs) for open access (OA) articles, without meeting the standard publishing criteria.

Predatory publishers lure young, inexperienced researchers for submission of their work to their journals by aggressive email advertising. They are often found to be seen cloning existing legitimate journals by using a look-alike title, a cloned webpage and email ids, copied names of editors of the editorial board and even displaying fake and bogus impact factor citations and indexing (Richtig, Berger, Lange-Asschenfeldt, Aberer & Richtig, 2018).



Predatory journals not only cause degradation of biomedical literature by publishing articles without peer review, but also lack transparency in publishing policy or method of long-term digital archiving. Thus, so-called predatory journals are short-lived in nature due to continuously changing web-page domain that results in a loss of legitimate researches from vanished archives (Beall, 2012; Tsuyuki, Al Hamarneh, Bermingham, Duong, Okada & Beall, 2017).

Several authors have also reported unethical and unfortunate evidence of predatory reviewers stealing original authors' ideas and purposely delaying or rejecting manuscripts that carry major advances and innovations to publish them on their own at a later date (Resnik, Gutierrez-Ford & Peddada, 2008; Oleinik, 2014).

India's leading newspaper: *The Hindu*, run a systematic study on the University Grants Commission's (UGC) approved list of journals. According to it, UGC's white list of journals contains 88% of predatory journals in nature, thus exposing the evil side of predatory publishing. UGC admitted giving guidelines, which indicated the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) as a criterion for a research journal, which indeed was a big mistake as it is given to identify newspapers, journals, magazines, and all kinds of periodicals—print and electronic media. The ISSN is also used for bar-coding

and library classification, ordering, and distribution purpose, but it does not reflect on the quality of the journal, periodical, or monograph (Prasad, 2018; Patwardhan, 2017).

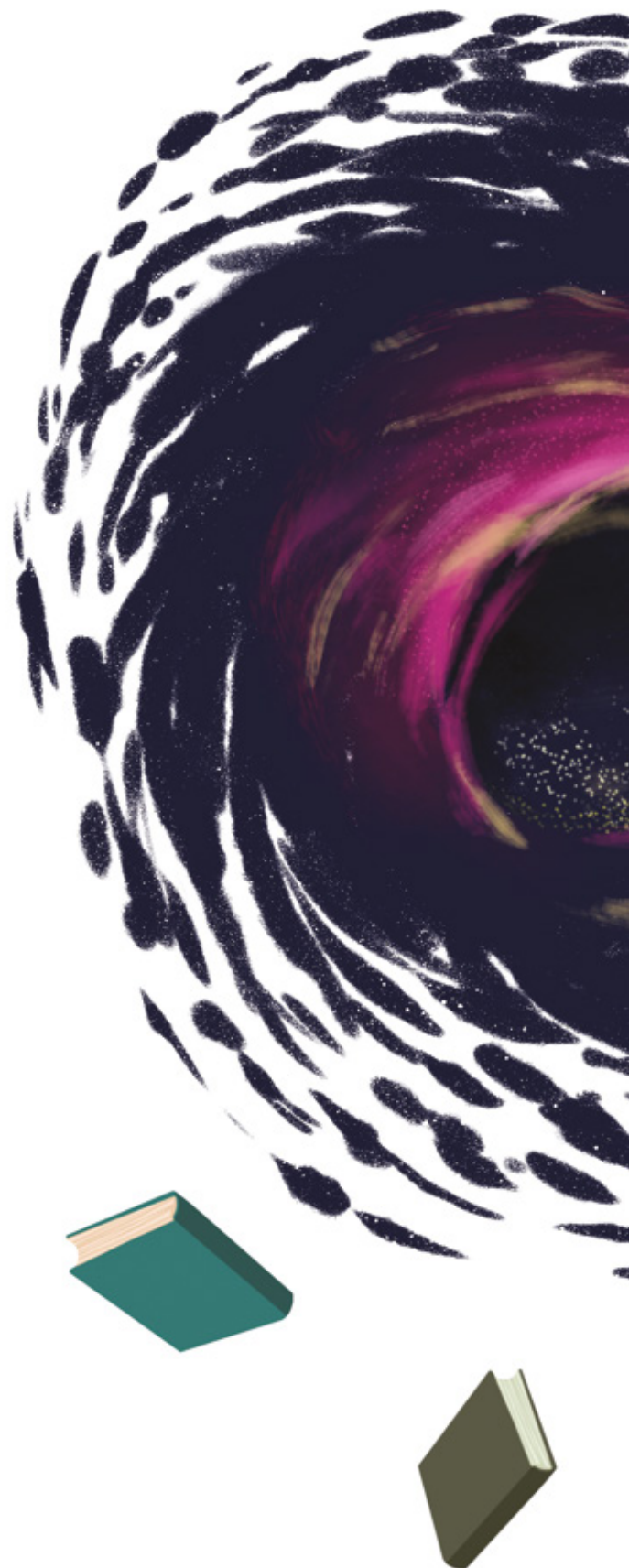
Now a legitimate and curious question arises: What can be done to stop these predatory journals from destroying biomedical science? In order to achieve knowledge about predatory journals, scientific literacy is essential. To distinguish legitimate OA journals from the predatory once, one can take steps described in the *Think. Check. Submit* initiative or look for the journals indexed in DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), which provides Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to all the articles published in high-quality, OA, peer-reviewed journals. Last, but not the least, one may look for journals that follow standard ethical policies that are recommended or advocated by reputed organizations such as WAME, the COPE, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), the Council of Science Editors (CSE) and provide each article with a printed and embed machine-readable CC licensing information and which allow the authors to hold the copyright without restrictions or hidden policies (DOAJ, 2019).

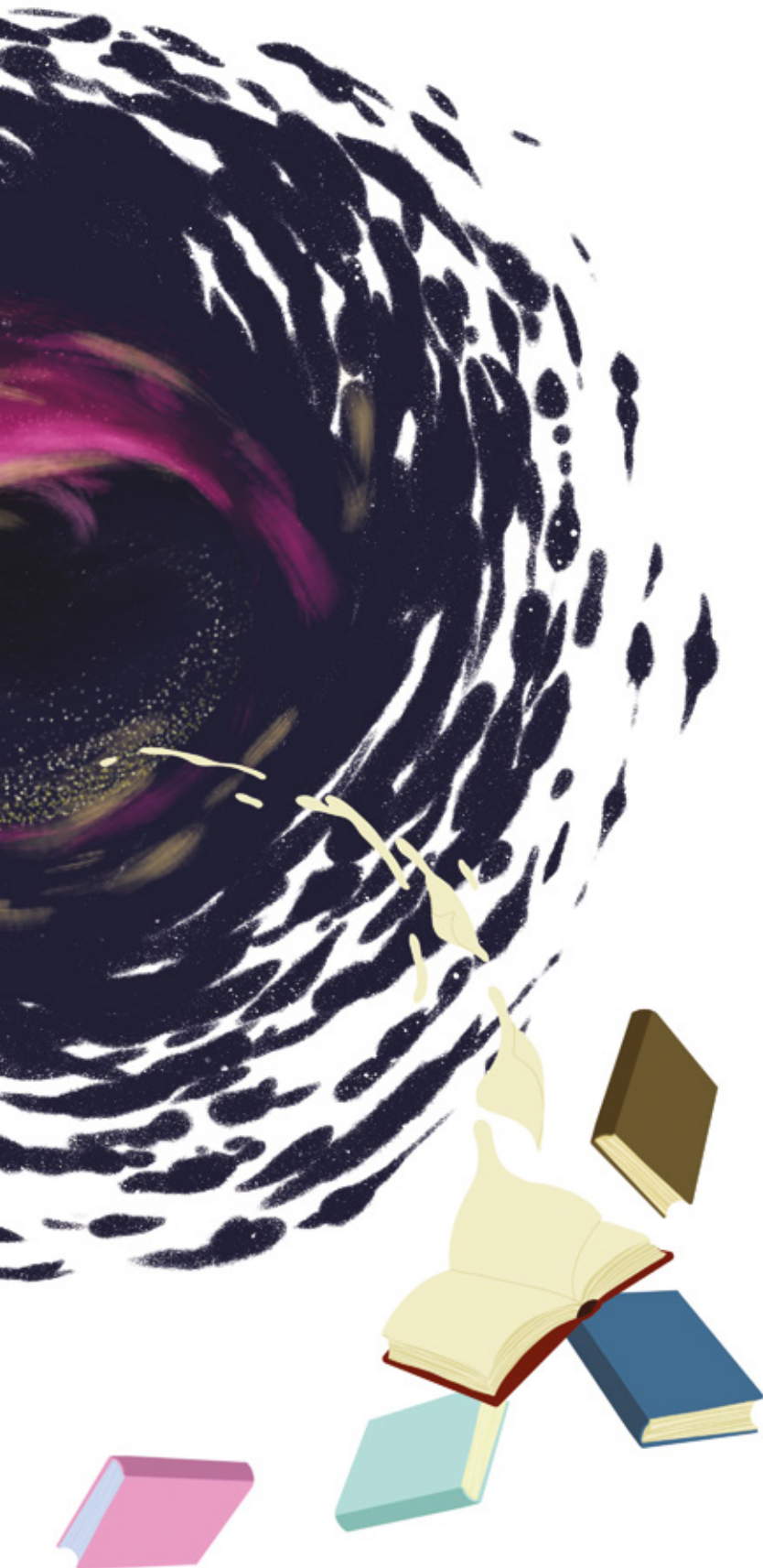
It is the need of time that instead of focusing on banning these publishers or establishing laws against them, scientific literacy and ethics should be created among researchers to make them aware about occult strategies used by these pseudo/predatory publishers. Academic institutions should make mandatory to deliver target specific courses for the postgraduate student, young untrained researchers, and faculty members to delineate legitimate journals from these predatory publishers. Active discussions should be made with politicians and government to ban not only the publishers of these predatory journals but also the individuals involved in such practices.

Through this editorial trend, we hope that academics strive to cultivate a reputation of excellence as researchers whose contributions to knowledge are high in quality and meaningful.

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