

Predatory publishing: Awareness of academicians of three dental institutions of North India

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Abstract:The term ‘predatory publishing’ was coined by Jeffery Beall in 2010 for the journals; unprofessionally exploit the open access model for profit. He also developed a list of predatory publishers called as Beal’s list. India emerged as a world’s largest base of predatory publishers followed by U.S.A and Nigeria according to a recent research. Hence the present study was aimed to assess the knowledge and awareness of faculty members of three different dental colleges in India regarding predatory publishing. A cross sectional survey was performed in three different dental institutions with the consent of the ethical board of our Institute. The study was designed in a questionnaire form which was used to assess the awareness and knowledge of dental academicians of three different dental institutes of Jaipur city regarding predatory publishing. In addition printouts of Beall’s list were given to the faculty and asked whether they had already published their papers in the journal given in the list. The data accumulated were grouped and analyzed. Total of 121 faculty members of three different colleges were grouped according to their rank in the department and analyzed. 30.5% of the faculty members were aware about predatory journals. Higher proportions of professors and readers were aware about predatory publishing comparing to senior lecturers. On publication, it was found that 52% of the faculty members published their papers in predatory journals. Adequate knowledge of dental academicians towards this unethical practice is mandatory because predatory journals may take away not only your money but also your prestige and academic reputation.

Keywords:predatory publishers, publication ethics, dental academicians, awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘predatory journals’ was first used by Jeffery Beall [1] in 2010 for the publishers who unprofessionally exploit the open access model for their profit by exploiting the idea of the author paid gold model open access publishing by charging a fee but not providing the promised publishing services in return [2]. A report by Bohannon J [3] and a recently published map by Science [4] revealed; India emerged as a world’s largest base of predatory journals followed by U.S.A and Nigeria.

Dental academicians in India are facing new challenges in an over saturated market, makes newer researchers and academicians pertaining to the dental specialities of becoming the victim of these practices; hence the aim of the present study was to analyze the awareness and knowledge of the dental faculty of different colleges about predatory publishing.

METHODS

This cross sectional survey was carried out with the permission of ethical board of the institution. The faculty (Senior lecturers, Readers and Professors) of three different dental colleges of jaipur city was analyzed. The study was designed in a questionnaire form based on the objectives of the present study include knowledge and awareness. In addition, Beall’s list of publishers was also distributed (found at <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>) in the print format to the participants to make out whether they have published their papers with the publishers listed in Beall’s list of predatory publishers.

The questionnaire was consisted of following parts; the first part consisted of the demographic information of the participants: name, age, gender, academic position, number of research projects involved in.

The second part consisted of four questions as follows:

1) Do you know about 'predatory publishers

Yes

No

2) Have you read about predatory publishers?

Yes

No

If yes, where

Journals

Internet

Newspaper

3) Do you refer Beall's list prior submitting your paper to an open access journal

Yes No

The participants were requested to go through the Beall's list printed version before starting with the third part. The third part consisted of one question as follow.

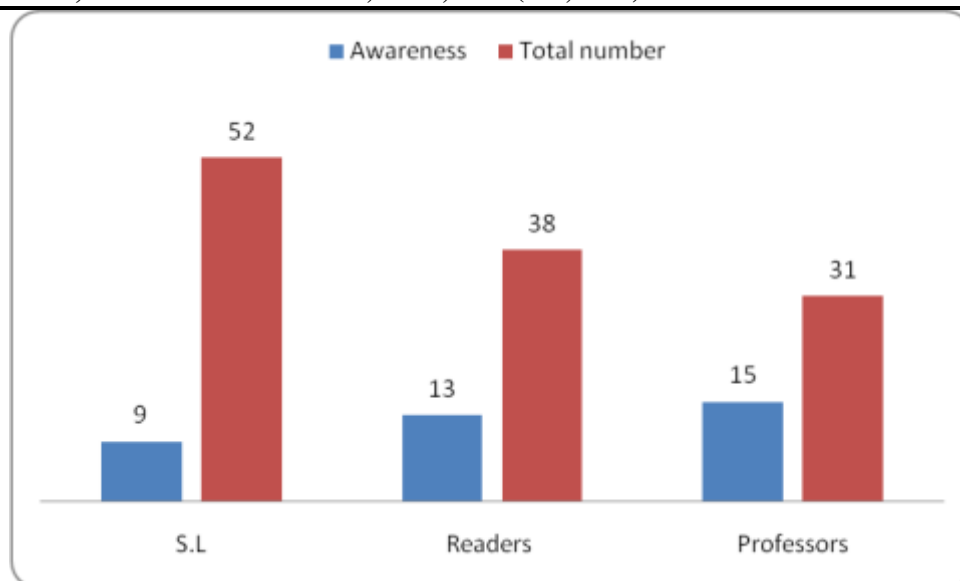
4) Have you published your paper with the publishers and stand alone journals mentioned in the Beall's list? If yes, how many

1 – 5

5 – 10

≥ 10

A total of 121 questionnaires and printouts of Beall's list were distributed to the faculty members of three different dental institutes. The faculty members were grouped according to their academic positions; Senior lecturers, Readers and Professors.



Graph-1: Distribution and awareness of participants according to their academic ranks.

Table-1: Participant's response to different variables

Variables	No of participants with positive response	Senior lecturers (n =52)		Readers (n=38)		Professors (n=31)	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Have you read about predatory publishers?	37	9	17.3	13	34.2	15	48.3
Source of knowledge							
1) Journal	11	2	22.2	4	30.7	5	33.3
2) Internet	26	7	77.7	9	69.2	10	66.6
3) Newspaper	0	0		0		0	
Do you refer Beall's list before submitting your paper to an open access journal?	17	2	10.5	7	24.1	8	30.7

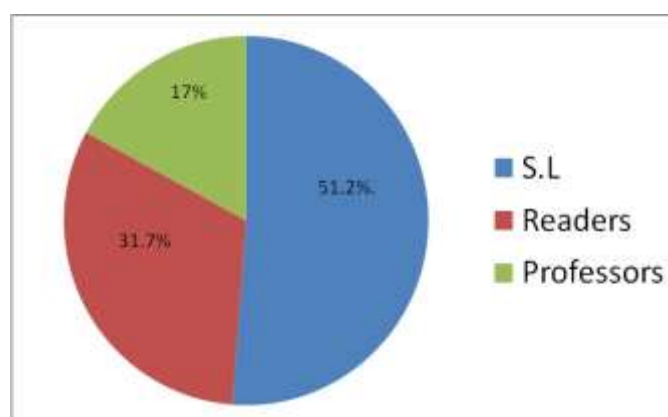


Chart-1: Distributions of the participants published their paper with predatory publishers

RESULTS

The study comprised of 121 participants of three dental colleges of Jaipur city in India. The participants were grouped according to their academic positions. On the assessment of awareness regarding predatory publishers; it was found that 37(30.5%) participants knew about predatory publishers with higher proportions of professors followed by readers

and senior lecturers. (Graph 1) on source of knowledge 26 (70.2%) participants reported internet as their source of knowledge and 11 (29.7%) participants reported journals as a source of knowledge no participant reported newspaper as their source of knowledge. On academic positions; proportions of senior lecturers were higher to be reported internet as their source of knowledge followed by readers and

professors, journals were reported by higher proportions of professors as their source of knowledge followed by readers and senior lecturers. Only 17(45.9%) participants reported to be referred Beall's list before submission of paper to an open access journal. (Table 1)

After reading the print format of Beall's list thoroughly, 63(52%) participants accepted that they have published their papers in predatory journals with the higher proportions of senior lecturers followed by readers and professors (Chart 1)

DISCUSSION

The term predatory publishers came to an existence in 2010, when Jeffery Beall used it for the journals exploiting open access model for their profit [1]. The number of predatory publishers was increased in 2012. It is estimated that 1 – 10 % of all the open access articles are published in these journals [2]. Predatory journals are defined as the journals whose primary goal is 'to generate profits rather than promote academic scholarship'[5, 6]. Based on present study results, only 30.5% of faculty members of three different dental institutions were aware of predatory publishers. The participants who knew about predatory journals also knew about Beall's list. This proportion is quite higher when compares to the study by Christopher and young [7] who reported 16.9 % respondents were aware of the term predatory journals. This is the first study which assesses the awareness of dental academician regarding predatory journals. I hope that this study will increase awareness of dental faculty regarding this unethical practice.

CONCLUSION

The awareness of Indian dental academicians regarding predatory publishing is poor. Workshops and continuing dental education (C.D.E) programs should be conducted to increase awareness regarding predatory publisher and also to differentiate between legitimate and non – legitimate journals. A guideline should be included regarding the differentiation between legitimate and non legitimate journals in post graduate curriculum by dental council.

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