

From the Editor

JOYCE J. FITZPATRICK



Predatory Journals: What Nurse Educators Need to Know

At the 2014 annual meeting of the International Academy of Nurse Editors, journal editors agreed to collectively address the issue of predatory journals, especially those in nursing, in order to better inform our authors, readers, and reviewers.

The world of scholarly publishing is changing as the Internet makes our published work more available more quickly. As I reflected on the changes in publishing and thought about this particular issue, I tried to crystallize the key messages. What follows are thoughts about what every nurse educator needs to know.

First, when in doubt about the nature of the journal that you are targeting for your publication, or a journal that solicits your work, do some homework and ask questions. Ask your more experienced colleagues, so that you understand the differences between *online publications* and *open access publications*. This seems to be a confusing point for many potential authors. Add to this the issue of *predatory journals*.

How does one discover if a journal is legitimate or if it deserves the “predatory” label?

Journals that are published online-only are those that have no print copies. Several high-level nursing journals are in this category, and you can safely submit your papers to them.

Open access publishing refers to unrestricted online access to scholarly publications. Open access journals can be peer reviewed and highly rated. The publishing process itself, that is, the process of making all the information in the journal available at no cost to the public, is not a measure of the quality of the papers that are published. Open access publications do not necessarily charge a publishing fee to authors.

Predatory journals are most often open access journals that require the author to pay a publishing fee. They are *not* legitimate scholarly publications, and

they provide minimal review of the work submitted. You hand in your paper, pay your fee, and your paper is published online.

Those who are particularly vulnerable to predatory journals are new authors and faculty who need their work published quickly, for example, for promotion or tenure. Potential authors may not thoroughly investigate the journal, and the journal title may sound scholarly. In some cases, the title may be very close to the title of a legitimate and well-known journal. Senior scholars have been known to be lured into submitting their names as editorial board members of predatory journals; thus, the editor and editorial board members may have scholarly credentials.

Jeffrey Beall, a librarian known for coining the term *predatory publisher*, has written extensively on the topic. While Beall has at times been criticized by those who strongly support open access publishing, it is important to note that he is not against open access. Rather, he has exposed predatory journals that use an open access model.

Beall has compiled a list of predatory publishers (<http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>) that potential authors are encouraged to review. But Beall's list alone is not sufficient. It is important to do your homework and conduct a thorough investigation of the journal before submitting your work.

Our goal when submitting work to a scholarly publication is to make it available to the scientific community. As publishing models change, we must continue to advance our science through high quality publications.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joyce J. Fitzpatrick'.