



Combating predatory journals and conferences: a global overview

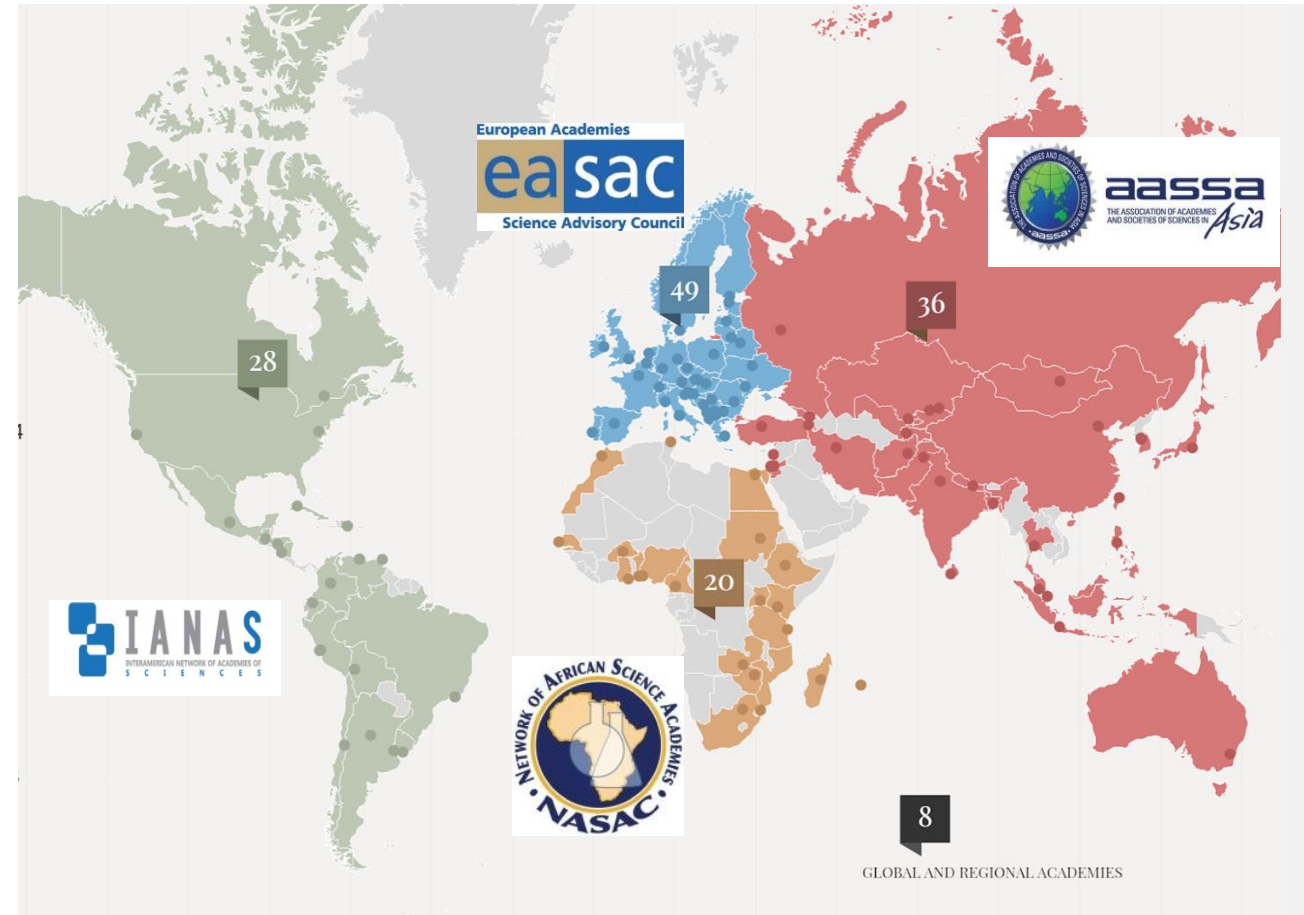
Professor Ana Maria Cetto and Dr Marcos Regis da Silva
IAP Working Group members

The InterAcademy Partnership (IAP)

A global partnership of over 140 national and regional merit-based academies of science, engineering and medicine

Strategic Priorities

- ❑ build the capacity of academies;
- ❑ provide independent, authoritative **advice** on global, regional and national issues;
- ❑ **communicate the importance of SEM** in terms of research, education, literacy, public discourse and outreach.



Project

2020

Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences



Policy for Science

OVERVIEW

PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS

RESOURCES



the interacademy partnership

GORDON AND BETTY
MOORE
FOUNDATION

National academies plan assault on predatory journals

By Robin Blisson

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Research Europe | 30 July 2020

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World

Academies to target predatory journals

Project aims to map global impact of bad practices in publishing and scale up interventions

Robin Blisson

An international project to determine the scale of predatory publishing practices is looking to harness the authority of national academies to turn the tide on profit-driven, bad-faith journals taking advantage of researchers.

Predatory journals offer rapid publication of research papers but often lack robust peer review, and their main aim is to collect fees from researchers. There is also an increasing trend for predatory conferences that present like standard scientific meetings but lack quality control over presentations and charge extortionate attendance fees.

"A lot of people either don't know this is an issue or think it's just an issue for the developing world," said Teresa Stoepler, executive director of policy at the InterAcademy Partnership. The global network counts more than 140 science, engineering and medical academies among its members, including the European Academies Science Advisory Council, the National

Academy of Sciences in the United States, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the African Academy of Sciences.

"We really don't know the extent of the problem globally, but it seems to be widespread and has potential to damage individual careers and reverberate throughout the research enterprise," said Stoepler.

Many previous initiatives to combat predatory journals have focused on creating blacklists or whitelists, including the widely used but now defunct list by American librarian Jeffrey Beall.

"Very quickly your working group decided that it didn't want to create another checklist—they are already numerous and difficult to maintain," said Tracey Elliott, project director at the InterAcademy Partnership, following the first meeting of the working group in late June.

Instead, the InterAcademy project will survey researchers around the world at different stages of their careers, and look at scaling up and adapting interventions, such as training programmes on good practice for early career researchers, to combat predatory practices.

By the end of 2021, the team behind it hopes to produce recommendations for research institutions, policymakers, publishers and funders.


Elliott said funders in particular are a key lever in combatting predatory practices. "In some cases they are funding poor quality research which is wasteful at best," she said.

Stoepler said unethical practices have increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, with even legitimate, non-predatory publishers being overwhelmed by the volume of submissions.

In June two medical journals, the Lancet and the New England Journal of Medicine, retracted papers, including one that had halted international trials of the experimental Covid-19 drug hydroxychloroquine, due to questions over the data underlying them.

"Some of the information that's getting out there to policymakers on Covid-19 is alarming," said Elliott. "Whether the articles are retracted or not, they are still there in the public domain."

Another study will look at research evaluation practices and how they may exacerbate the growth of predatory journals and conferences emphasising publication at all costs.

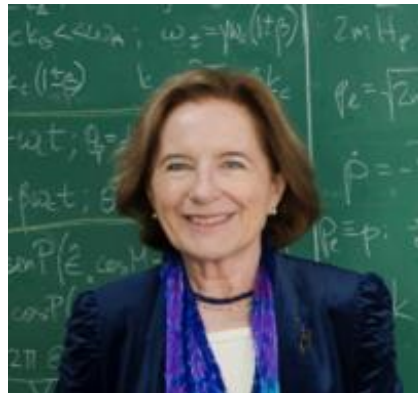
"We are challenging a well-established system, and in addressing research evaluation we would be challenging it even more," said Elliott. 



"Some of the information getting out there to policymakers on Covid-19 is alarming."

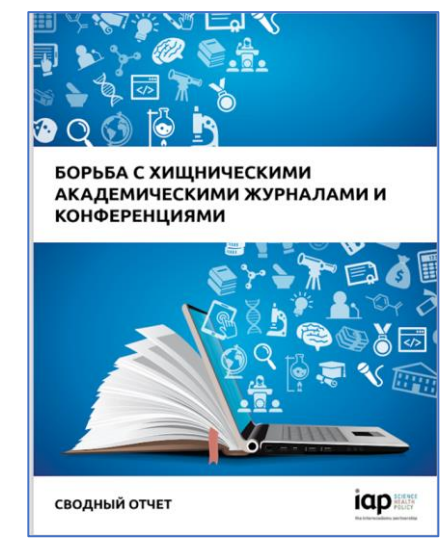
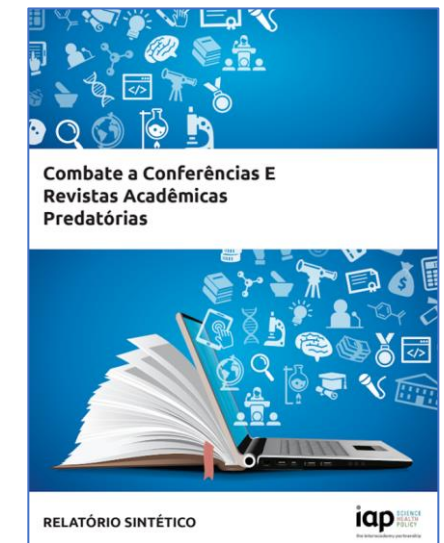
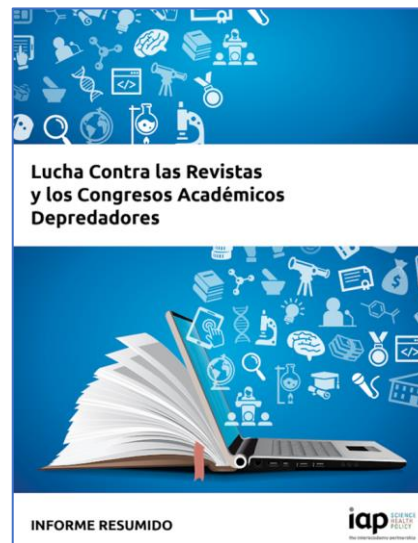
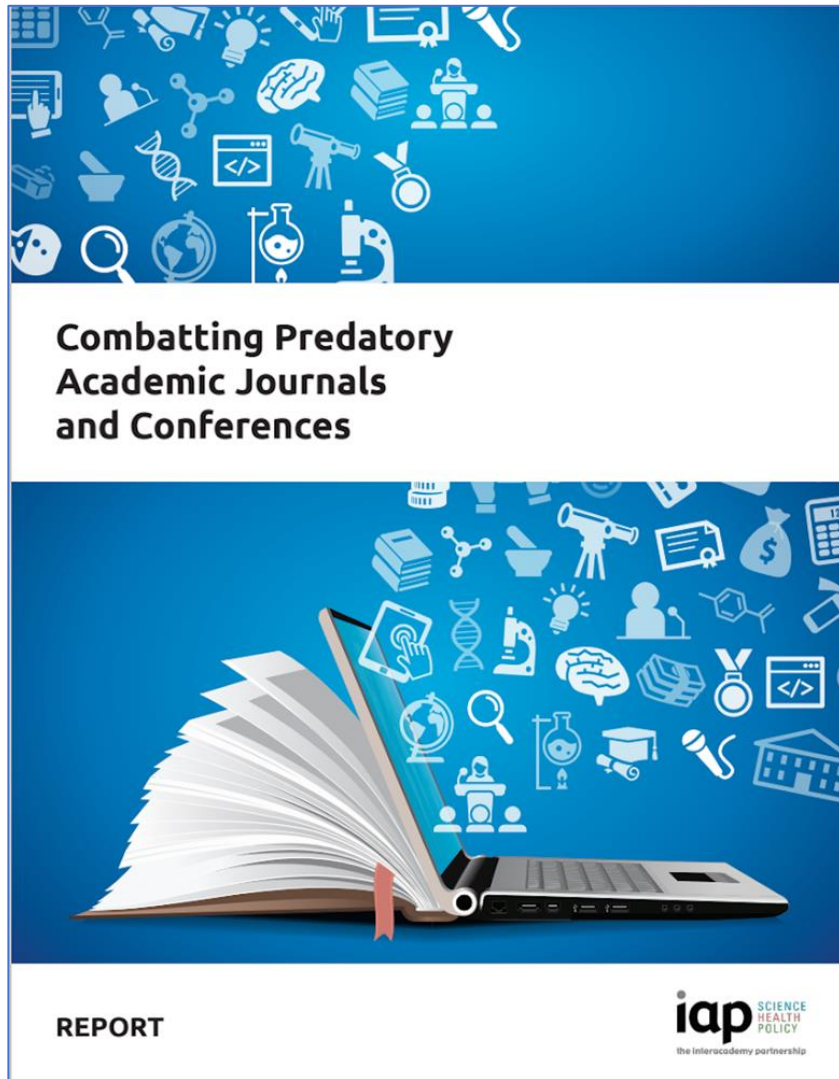
Tracey Elliott, project director at the InterAcademy Partnership

Report authors



"Combatting predatory academic journals and conferences"

The report



“Combatting predatory academic journals and conferences”

Fri, 11 March 2022

World academies call for concerted action to combat predatory journals and conferences

A new IAP report sets out recommendations for a global, systemic action plan to address these pervasive and damaging practices

nature

CORRESPONDENCE | 15 March 2022

Predatory journals and conferences — three drivers



INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH

Report: Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences

Decision XXIX/17. Instructs the IAI Directorate... to work with national and international academies of science, scientific publishers, universities and other relevant partners to raise awareness of and prevent the growth of fraudulent and predatory publishing in the Americas



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News from Members and Partners



New IAP report, 'Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences' now available

30 March 2022

Universities anywhere in the world have a vital role to play in combatting the growth of predatory academic practices, including predatory journals and conferences. So says a report published this month by the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the global network of science, engineering and medical academies.

You can download IAP's report "Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences" [here](#), along with a summary report (available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish); the press release is [here](#), and the video of the launch event [here](#).

Twitter post: <https://twitter.com/IAPPartnership/status/1502307569037189137>

LinkedIn post: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/interacademypartnership_world-academies-call-for-concerted-action-activity-6908067430200156160-7UY9



CABELLS

THE SOURCE

MARCH 23, 2022 | MIKE BISACCIO | PREDATORY PUBLISHING

IAP Report Sets Out Plan of Action for Fighting Predatory Academic Practices

"Combatting predatory academic journals and conferences"

Report objectives

- ❑ Define predatory and unethical practices in academic journals and conferences
- ❑ Gauge their prevalence and impact
- ❑ Examine global efforts to-date to combat predatory journals and conferences
- ❑ Understand the primary drivers or root causes
- ❑ Provide concrete recommendations for a GLOBAL STRATEGY to address the problem, that engages all key stakeholders



COMMENT • 11 DECEMBER 2019

Predatory journals: no definition, no defence

Leading scholars and publishers from ten countries have agreed a definition of predatory publishing that can protect scholarship. It took 12 hours of discussion, 18 questions and 3 rounds to reach.



WORLD VIEW A personal take on events



India strikes back against predatory journals

Our foe is determined and adaptable, says Bhushan Patwardhan. A list of credible titles is the latest salvo in the fight against shoddy scholarship.

WORLD VIEW A personal take on events



Illegitimate journals scam even senior scientists

Kelly Cobey has seen a litany of researchers preyed on by predatory journals — and has ideas on how to stop it.

Predatory conferences 'now outnumber official scholarly events'

UK researcher who travelled to predatory conference in Denmark calls for greater awareness of problem



Common features of “predatory” journals and conferences

- ❑ They solicit articles from researchers through misleading practices that exploit the pressure on researchers to publish and present their work.
- ❑ Features include, but are not limited to:
 - rapid pay-to-publish/present models without rigorous (or indeed any) peer review
 - fake editorial or conference boards falsely listing respected scientists
 - fraudulent impact factors or metrics
 - journal and conference titles that are deceptively similar to legitimate ones
 - aggressive spam invitations to solicit articles and abstracts, incl. outside own expertise
- ❑ BUT - these genuinely fraudulent practices continue to evolve and are becoming more difficult to distinguish from low quality, unethical and questionable publishing and conferencing practices.

A spectrum of publishing / conferencing practices



FRAUDULENT

- Rapid and unrealistic service
- Poor or no peer review
- Mimic reputable outlets
- Use researchers' names without permission
- Fake editorial or advisory boards
- Fake programmes
- Generally lie about credentials e.g. impact factor

LOW QUALITY

- Breach good practice
- Low quality peer review
- Aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation
- Inactive editorial or advisory board
- Lack of focus or organisation
- Invitations full of mistakes
- Exaggerate their prestige
- Promised services are poor or lacking

QUALITY

- Thorough peer review
- Strong editorial or advisory board
- Transparent, robust policy to ensure research and operational integrity (practice due diligence)
- Transparent policy for retraction or refund
- Clear about costs
- Take proper action when challenged

Examples of resources already available

A beginner's guide to avoiding 'predatory' journals



Predatory Reports

Specialists analyze over 60 behavioral indicators to keep the community aware of the growing threats and to keep academia protected from exploitative operations.

Get a quote

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Predatory Conferences

Tips on How to Identify and Avoid Predatory Conferences

latindex

Online Regional Information System for Scientific Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal



Choose the right journal or publisher for your research



Landmark survey of researchers

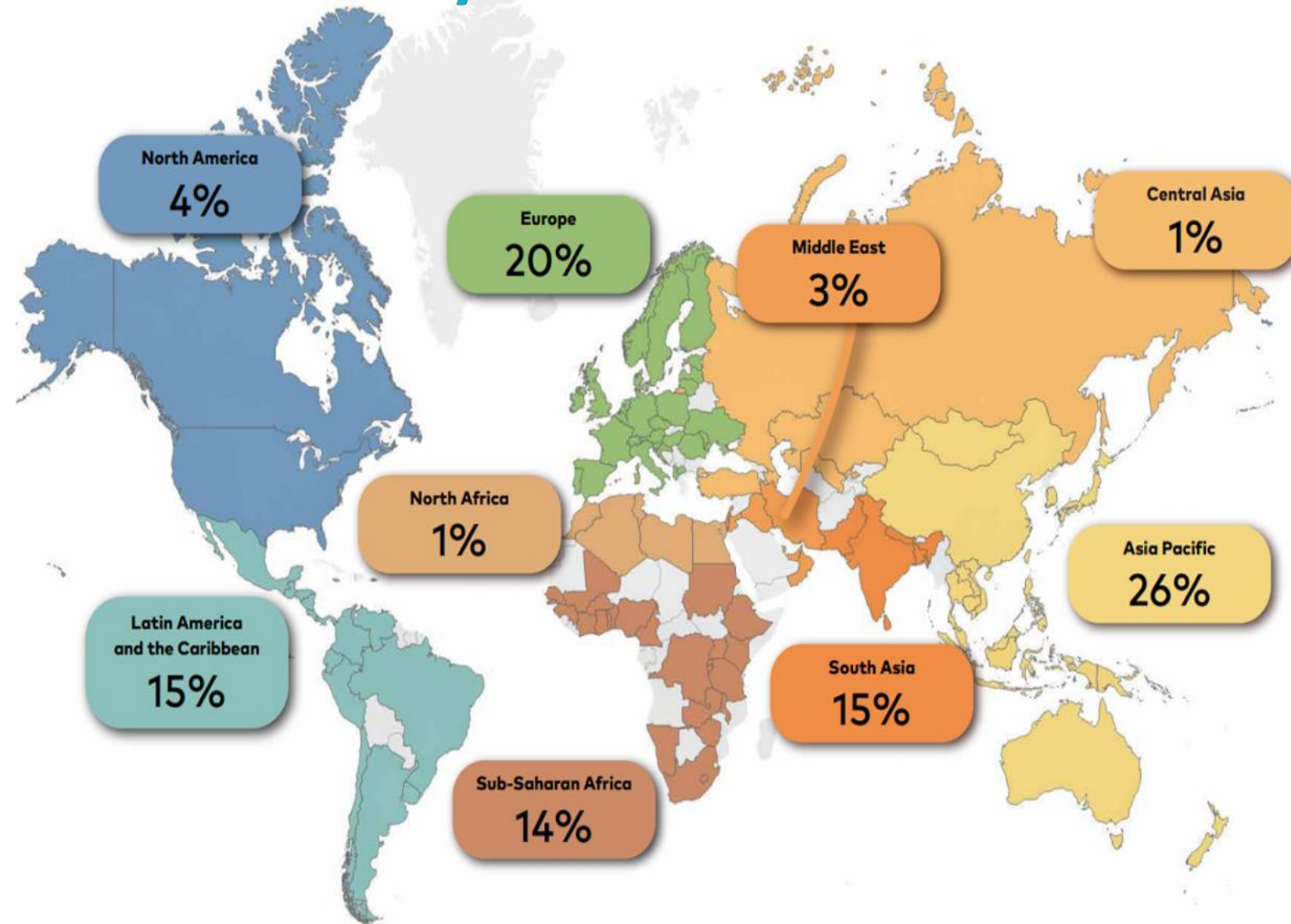
Total
participants
1872
Total
countries
112

Opportunity
Fri, 30 October 2020

**Calling all researchers to participate in
a landmark survey on academic
predatory journals and conferences**

Deadline
Nov
30

Policy for Science



Over 80%
perceive that **predatory practices**
are a **serious problem** or on the rise in
their country of work.

At least 24% of respondents have either published in a predatory journal, participated in a predatory conference, or don't know if they have.

They were not aware at the time

“The conference looked very legitimate and non predatory. There was support from the university and several well known professors were in the invitations.”

They needed to advance their career

“You need to publish in a predatory journal to stay in the race.”

It was a faster, easier, or cheaper option

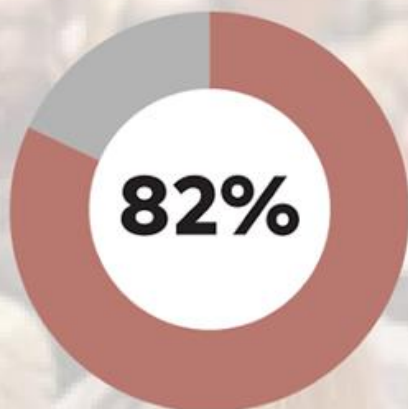
“I feel guilty but it is necessary to publish (in predatory journals) for my students to complete their study faster due to the limitation of time and scholarship.”

They were encouraged by their peers

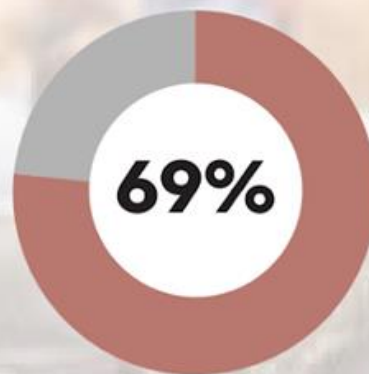
“The lead author suggested we publish in a predatory journal after a few rejections and one co-author was an editor at the journal, which made it difficult to criticize.”

If left unchallenged, the majority of respondents believe predatory practices will have detrimental effects.

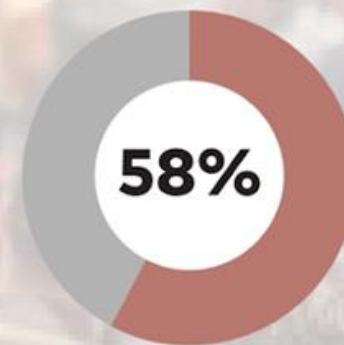
**Fuel misinformation
in public policy**



**Infiltrate and
undermine the
research enterprise**

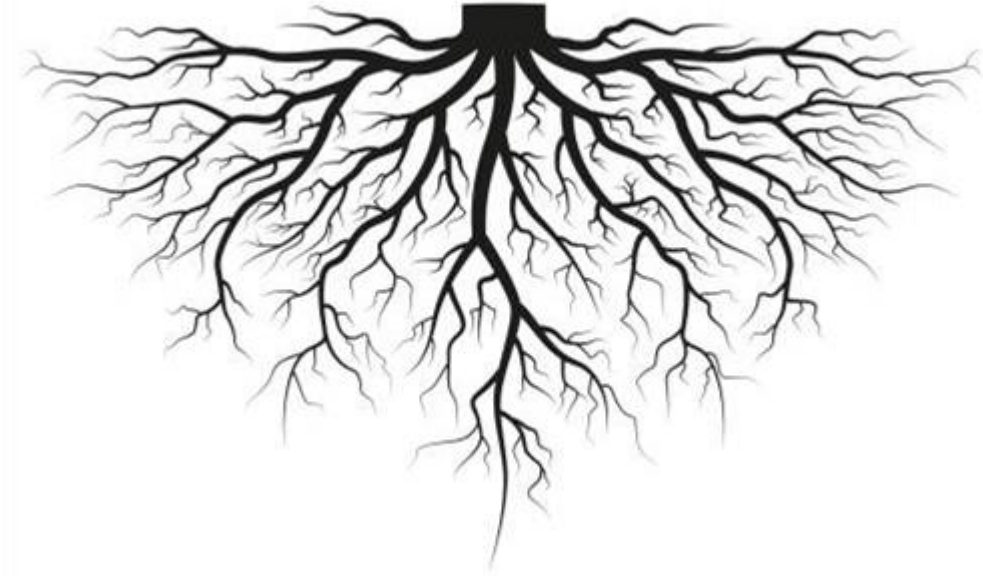


**Widen the research
gap between high
income and low
income countries**



Drivers or root causes

- **The monetisation and commercialisation of research output**, with the **author-pays model** being especially prone to abuse.
- **Research evaluation systems where quantity overrides quality**, together with the institutional drivers and incentives that shape the behaviour of individual academics.
- **The lack of transparency (whether fully open, anonymised or hybrid) in the peer-review process**, exacerbated by poor training, capacity and recognition of peer reviewers.



A call to action for multiple stakeholders

Working collaboratively to:

- **raise awareness** of predatory practices, the repercussions of not addressing them, and their threat to both science and society;
- **avoid engaging with, and legitimising**, predatory journals and conferences; **spread good practice** in publishing and conferencing choices; and create disincentives for researchers who use them, whether knowingly or unknowingly;
- **promote open science** and **reduce the commercialisation and monetisation of academia**, including a move towards **alternatives to the author-pays model**;
- **reject the overuse and reliance on quantitative metrics** in research evaluation (instead, using them more rationally and intelligently), and promote ways of **recognising research quality**;
- **strengthen the institution of transparent peer review** in academia, through merit systems, policies and support structures at all levels.

How the Council can help

Leaders of universities

- Implement training and awareness-raising programs for faculty and students
- Mainstream publishing, conferencing and peer-review good practice in research integrity courses
- Revise recruitment and promotion criteria so they do not overemphasize bibliometrics; disqualify all papers published in predatory outlets; and recognize peer-review/editorial responsibilities
- Harness their collective power in negotiating institutional publishing and conferencing deals

Leaders of research funding agencies

- Reform metrics for evaluating grant applications and recipients
- Require training on responsible scholarly communication as a prerequisite for funding
- (Co-)fund more research into predatory practices, including the impact of COVID-19
- Research and pilot innovative peer-review models, fit for the 21st century

How the Council can help

Leaders of national academies

- Mainstream good publishing, conferencing and peer-review practice in academy business
- Withdraw or suspend membership for repeat offenders who use predatory outlets
- Reform criteria for academy membership in line with a more progressive research culture
- Be active advocates nationally, regionally and globally for the reform of research evaluation

Leaders of publishing houses

- Commit to increase global equity and inclusion by, for example, automatically waiving APCs for researchers in lower income countries
- Implement alternatives to the pay-to-publish model of OA funding
- Have an open and transparent policy on predatory publishing and retraction of papers
- Implement more transparent peer-review policies and processes

Reforming research evaluation: a pressing priority, a growing momentum?

San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](#)) and other seminal reports (e.g. [The Leiden Manifesto](#), [The Metric Tide](#), [Hong Kong Principles](#)). More recently....

- [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#) adopted in November 2021
- [Global Research Council's Responsible Research Assessment Working Group](#) established (September 2021)
- EU Commission's [Reforming research assessment: the way forward](#) (November 2021)
- League of European Universities (LERU) [paper on the Assessment of Researchers](#)
- Latin American Forum for Research Assessment (FOLEC)'s [Towards a transformation of scientific research in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
- [GYA-IAP-ISC joint scoping initiative on research evaluation](#) – to give the research community a voice

