2023;8(2):110–123 Научный редактор и издатель / Science Editor and Publisher

PUBLISHING ETHICS

Original paper
https://doi.org/10.24069/SEP-23-17

A reflection on Springer Nature's current editorial policies related to "predatory" journals and references

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Abstract. Despite its prominent position as one of the leading for-profit scholarly publishers of subscription and open access (OA) journals, and its membership of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), Springer Nature can be criticized for taking a vague approach in its editorial policies pertaining to "predatory" publishing. While cautioning authors and/or editors about the citation of papers that are published in "predatory" journals, the advice presented in the policies itself is flawed due its limitation to OA journals – thus apparently excluding the possibility that subscription journals might also be "predatory" and failing to specify precisely which journals authors and editors should be careful of, i.e., no source for the "predatory" definition of OA journals is indicated. Moreover, this vague set of policies does not have a publication date, nor is any authorship specified. The opacity of these aspects of these editorial policies limits their usefulness and weakens their objectives, namely in ostensibly offering scholarly advice to protect editors and authors. I argue that the Springer Nature policies pertaining to "predatory" publishing as they currently stand are not useful, and if left unchanged, can be a source of confusion or error for authors and editors of Springer Nature journals. In this connection, the identified risk is that if the poor advice indicated in those policies is heeded, it may encourage abuse, insults and/or indiscriminate profiling of academics, including those associated with Springer Nature journals. While assuming Springer Nature's genuine intention to alert editors and authors against citing papers published in suspect scholarly venues, I argue that this editorial set of policies should either be rewritten to rely on clearer parameters, including a definitive list of journals for which "predatory" criteria have been defined, or abandoned as they are overly broad. The criticism is aimed at stimulating a discussion among other editors and publishers, especially COPE members.

Keywords: accountability, blacklists and whitelists, editorial oversight, failed peer review, status quo testing

Acknowledgements. The author wishes to thank Thomas Beavitt (Institute of Philosophy and Law, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences) for meticulously editing the English language of the paper. The author also extends a sincere note of thanks to Yan Moiseenko and Natalia Popova (Institute of Philosophy and Law, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences) for carrying out the English-to-Russian translation of this paper.

For citation: Teixeira da Silva J.A. A reflection on Springer Nature's current editorial policies related to "predatory" journals and references. *Science Editor and Publisher*. 2023;8(2):110–123. https://doi.org/10.24069/SEP-23-17

Размышления о текущей редакционной политике компании Springer Nature в отношении «хищнических» журналов и ссылок на публикации в таких журналах

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Резюме. Несмотря на свое видное положение как одного из ведущих коммерческих издателей научных журналов, и распространяющихся по подписке, и открытого доступа (OA), а также членство в Комитете по публикационной этике (COPE), Директории журналов открытого доступа (DOAJ)

и Ассоциации научных издателей открытого доступа (OASPA), Springer Nature можно критиковать за нечеткий подход в своей редакционной политике в отношении «хищнических» публикаций. Предостерегая авторов и/или редакторов от цитирования статей, опубликованных в «хищнических» журналах, Springer Nature предлагает в своей политике не совсем корректные рекомендации, поскольку ограничивает круг таких журналов открытым доступом. Очевидно, эта позиция не учитывает возможность, что журналы по подписке также могут оказаться «хищническими». Кроме того, редакционная политика Springer Nature не объясняет, с какими именно журналами авторам и редакторам следует быть осторожными, поскольку не ясна сама природа определения «хищничества» журналов открытого доступа. Нельзя также не заметить, что политика Springer Nature сформулирована расплывчато: у нее нет адекватного документального выражения, за ней не закреплено авторство. Эти аспекты снижают полезность такой редакционной политики и делают ее цели непрозрачными, а именно – превращают ее в сборник советов, которые якобы защищают редакторов и авторов. Автор утверждает, что редакционная политика Springer Nature в отношении «хищнических» публикаций в их нынешнем виде двусмысленна, и, если оставить ее без изменений, она может породить путаницу среди ученых и редакторов научных журналов Springer Nature, а также привести к ошибкам. В этой связи научное сообщество рискует прислушаться к советам, которые можно легко обратить во вред. Все это может повлечь оговаривание и/или порицание ученых, носящее неизбирательный характер, в том числе тех, которые связаны с журналами под эгидой Springer Nature. Принимая во внимание искреннее намерение Springer Nature предостеречь редакторов и авторов от цитирования статей, опубликованных в подозрительных научных изданиях, автор утверждает, что настоящую редакционную политику следует либо скорректировать, чтобы она опиралось на более четкие критерии, нежели сейчас, либо отвергнуть как не соответствующую поставленным перед ней задачам. В новую версию редакционной политики следует включить окончательный перечень журналов, определенных как «хищнические», а также установить и прописать параметры определения «хищничества» как такового. Критика, представленная в этой статье, направлена на стимулирование дискуссии среди других редакторов и издателей, в особенности среди членов COPE.

Ключевые слова: научное издательство, Springer Nature, редакционная политика, ответственность, хищнические издания, цитирование, черные списки, белые списки, редакционный надзор, неудавшееся рецензирование, проверка статус-кво

Благодарности. Автор выражает благодарность Томасу Бивитту (Институт философии и права УрО РАН) за кропотливую работу по редактированию оригинала данной статьи на английском языке. Автор также выражает искреннюю благодарность Яну Моисеенко (Институт философии и права УрО РАН) и Наталье Поповой (Институт философии и права УрО РАН) за перевод текста с английского на русский язык.

Для цитирования: Тейшейра да Силва Х.А. Размышления о текущей редакционной политике компании Springer Nature в отношении «хищнических» журналов и ссылок на публикации в таких журналах. *Научный редактор и издатель*. 2023;8(2):110–123. https://doi.org/10.24069/SEP-23-17

The issue of criteria related to "predatory" publishing

Predatory journals and publishers are widely considered to threaten the academic and intellectual integrity of the entire publishing landscape, as well as harming the interests of established actors that occupy that intellectual space [1]. For this reason, blacklists and whitelists have long been an accepted means for academics to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate participants in scientific communication [2]. The concept of "predatory" open access (OA) publishing is traditionally credited to the efforts of a US librarian, Jeffrey Beall, who formerly maintained a blog and associated set of blacklists of what he defined as OA journals and publishers that violate established publishing standards. In 2017, citing a number of threats, Beall abruptly shut down his blog [3], stranding academics that had relied on that blog and its blacklists for advice on where or not it was safe to publish. While many concerns had been raised about Beall's

blacklists and their potential abuse in the unfair profiling of rival academics [4], they continue to function as a means for academics to obtain guidance concerning which journals are unsafe to publish in, although that reliance is discouraged given the erroneous and outdated nature of Beall's blacklists [5]. Conversely, whitelists or safelists, are used to indicate scholarly journals or publishers that supposedly follow established codes of ethical publishing [6].

One of the strongest criticisms of Beall's blacklists was his failure to cite the exact criteria according to which each stand-alone journal or publisher had been defined as "predatory". While a list of inclusion criteria was published on the blog, a post-publication dissection of those criteria suggested that only nine of the original 55 criteria could function as useful, clear and informative criteria for classifying "predatory" publishing behavior [7]. Historically speaking, just a few months after Beall abandoned his blog and withdrew his blacklists, Dr. David W.E. Cabell created a commercial product referred to as 'Predatory Reports', essentially functioning as a pay-to-view blacklist [8] that relies on a much more refined set of criteria. Even so, that blacklist was criticized for its unreliability [9], leading to a post-publication inquiry and analysis that suggested that 'Predatory Reports' could benefit from considerable improvements and adjustments, specifically its inclusion criteria, to make it more useful and pertinent to the ever-changing field of "predatory" publishing [10]. Another blacklist, Dolos list, which also relied on unspecific criteria pertaining to blacklist journals and publishers, as well as failing to disclose the identity of its management, has since disappeared [11].

Even though Beall's efforts have been recognized for creating global awareness of the phenomenon of "predatory" publishing [12–15], the constantly evolving nature of fraud and misconduct in academic publishing, which includes fraudulent publisher social media accounts [16], paper mills and fake peer review [17; 18], editorial misconduct [19], spamming [20], phishing [21], and journal hijacking [22; 23], necessitates the constant re-evaluation and adjustment of criteria and associated blacklists, either in terms of criticizing those journals or publishers that fail to follow established industry-implemented good publishing practices [24; 25], or to acknowledging those that do.

To this end, several individuals and organizations around the world [26–33] have made efforts in the post-Beall era to create new criteria, either in terms of refining Beall's original criteria, or explaining specific characteristics in greater detail. Here, the main objective has been to clarify the general understanding of what a "predatory" journal or publisher might be as a means of making scientific publishing environments safer to publish in[1]. These collective efforts suggest that journals or publishers without such characteristics might be "safe" to publish in, or at least be "non-predatory", provided that they also follow established "best practices" [34]. Ultimately, academics want to know more precisely which journals are junk or degenerative, and differentiate them from those that are ethical, scholarly and progressive [35–37], so as not to waste their precious time, intellect and funding, and to ensure that their work is represented in as "safe" a publishing venue as possible. Even so, not all journals or publishers blacklisted by Beall are bibliometrically poor performers compared to their whitelisted (e.g., in Scopus) counterparts [38]. It is also important to consider the various motivations and reasons of academics for publishing in potentially less-than-safe publishing venues [39; 40], allowing for a more holistic appreciation of the phenomenon of "predatory" publishing [41].

Absent clear and concise "predatory" criteria, academic legitimacy cannot be effectively determined [42]. More importantly, if such criteria lack validation, they may appear subjective and thus lack any practical value [43]. If it turns out to be impossible to provide reliable and replicable criteria to test the "predatory" nature of such publishers, academic publishers should refrain from the emotive designation of "predatory" publishing as representing a "threat" [44].

With the exception of patently obvious cases such as OMICS International [45], or its rebranded

[1] Combatting Predatory Academic Journals and Conferences (Full Report in English), March 2022. Available at: https://www.interacademies.org/publication/predatory-practices-report-English (accessed: 16.11.2023).

"family" of publishers [46], and notwithstanding the debate leading to the establishment of a broad definition for this phenomenon [47], accurate knowledge about precisely which journals and publishers are to be considered "predatory" remains hard to obtain.

For this reason, the term "predatory" is indicated throughout the present work in inverted commas. Such an ambiguity of the "predatory-non-predatory" divide exists due to the continuing difficulty in clearly distinguishing between "predatory" or merely "exploitative" publishing behavior, allowing the two terms to be used interchangeably, or even with overlapping aspects [48]

Given that its established standards have the possibility of influencing industry-wide standards and thus other publishers due to its dominant position, the present work sets out to assess *Springer Nature's* editorial ethical guideline related to "predatory" publishing as a way to appreciate how editorial guidelines are created, worded and framed by a publisher that is traditionally regarded as safe.

Ambiguous Springer Nature editorial ethical guideline related to "predatory" publishing

Along with the editors of its journals, all authors that submit work for publication in Springer Nature journals are expected to abide by its stated ethical rules and guidelines. In the predatory journals and references editorial policies (hereinafter PJREP) forming the subject of the present article (Fig. 1)[2], Springer Nature employs inverted commas when referring to this phenomenon in the main text, but not in the title, implying a basic confusion as to whether the precise identity of such journals is known.

As contrasted with the subjects of blacklists, such as those published by Jeffrey Beall, various anonymously-curated post-2017 derivatives, or Cabells' Predatory Reports, which have been criticized for basic mischaracterizations, criterional flaws, and sensitivity errors [9; 49], journals appearing in a number of "whitelists" are more generally considered to be "safe" for the purposes of publishing. These include publisher-members of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), those indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, Cabells' Journalytics or the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) [50].

While the Springer Nature PJREP suggests that journals indexed by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) and DOAJ, as well as those claiming to be COPE members, can be considered as whitelisted, concerns have been raised about the quality of some journals included in such whitelists, even COPE members (OA and non-OA) or DOAJ-indexed journals [51–53].

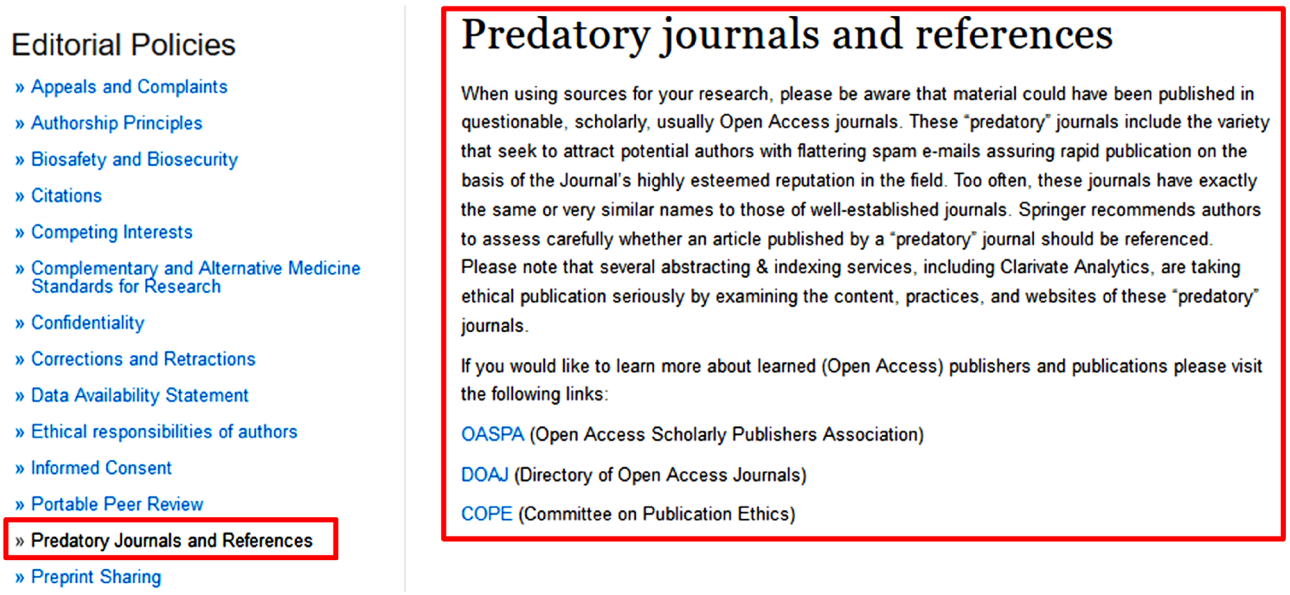
This suggests that the meaning of the term "predatory" might change over time, or that criteria to detect and classify journals and publishers as "predatory" might require constant reappraisal, reform and reassessment. Since nowhere in the PJREP is a definition provided as to what a "predatory reference" actually is, how an author or an editor can identify, or classify, a reference as "predatory", or what the precise demarcation between a "predatory" and a "non-predatory" reference is, it can only be assumed that Springer Nature is referring to the reference of papers that were published in blacklisted (i.e., supposedly "predatory") journals or publishers, a topic that was explored and debated by Munn et al. [54].

Problematizing why the current Springer Nature PJRG is unhelpful

As currently stated, the PJREP pertaining to "predatory" publishing seems to have extremely limited practical value. Even if a specific blacklist were cited, there can no certainty that a journal (or its publisher) appearing on such a list is absolutely predatory due to the flawed nature of such blacklists that exist [49]. In order to provide confidence to the scientific community, it is necessary to explain not only why a particular source has been classified as "predatory" and based on what criteria, but equally important, by whom such a determination has been made. The same problem and associated limitations are plaguing an artificial intelligence-driven tool based on Beall's blacklists, which claims to be able to

[2] OASPA, DOAJ, COPE. Predatory journals and references. Available at: https://www.springer.com/gp/editorial-policies/predatory-journals-and-references (accessed: 16.11.2023).

A



B

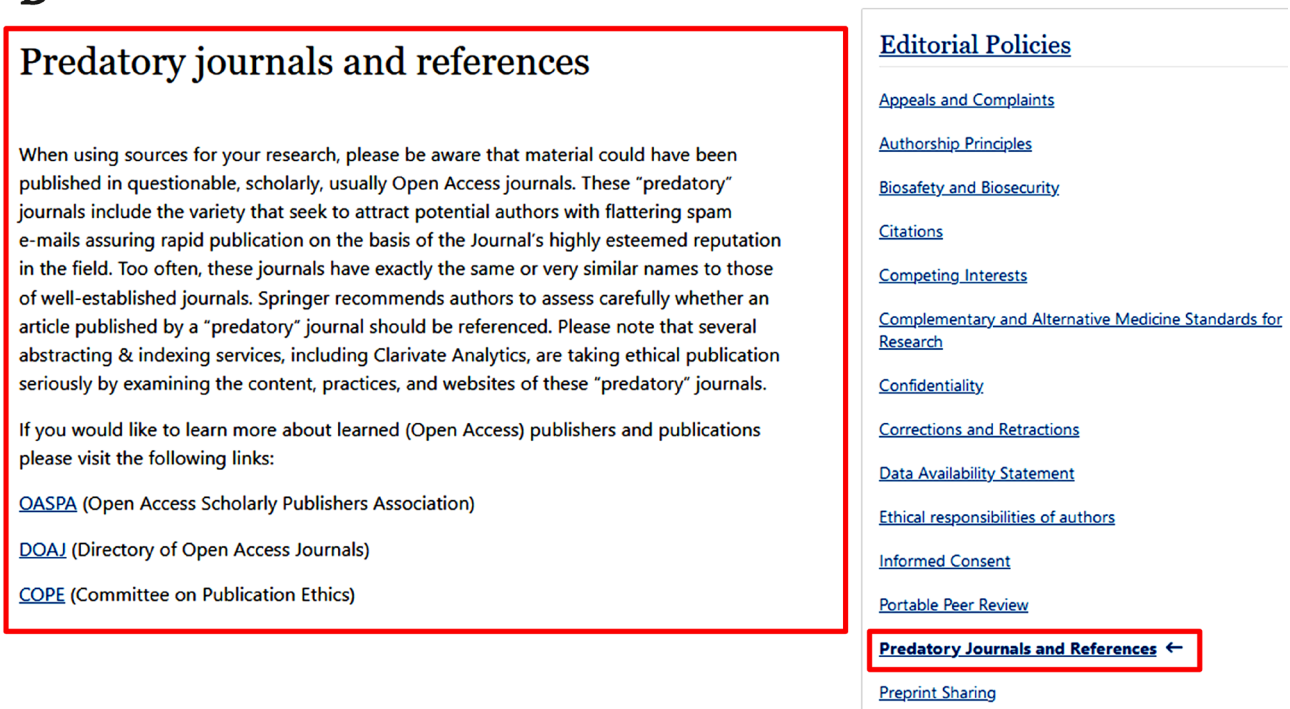


Fig. 1. *The current Springer Nature PJREP pertaining to predatory publishing, specifically the citation of papers published in so-called "predatory journals". This guideline applies to all journals published by Springer Nature and thus, by association, to all authors that publish in a Springer Nature journal, and to all editors that serve on the editor boards of Springer Nature journals. Screenshot of Springer Nature website used under fair-use principles, for academic and educational purposes. Screenshot dates: 8 July 2022* (**A**); *16 November 2023* (**B**)

differentiate "predatory" from "normal" journals but is unable to do so effectively or reliably [55]. As it currently stands, the PJREP provides no theoretical or philosophical background, nor any academic insight into such aspects that might support its foundation.

The latter issue is important due to the possibility of anti-status quo or anti-scientific elements in academia and among members of the general public, for whom it might be tempting to describe journals and/or publishers as "predatory" based on unscholarly criteria in an attempt to muddy the waters [56] in an attempt to harm the scientific endeavor. It is here that librarians can play a crucial role in accurately informing academics about "predatory" publishing practices in order to reduce misinformation [57].

The greater risk of the excessively broad nature of the PJREP is that any paper published in such a journal (or publisher) defined as "predatory" (by any blog, individual or organization) then harms the reputations of the authors of such papers.

This raises an additional issue, namely that the merits or demerits of any paper should be assessed independently of the journal in which it has been published, precisely to avoid risks of "associative slander", i.e., attempts to tarnish the reputation of an author based merely on their choice of publishing venue, or that of an editor who chooses to provide a service to a specific journal. Consequently, it might be irrelevant if a paper having academic or scholarly merit has been published in a "predatory" journal, as alluded to above by the academic interest and relevance in a solid body of papers published precisely in Beall-blacklisted journals [38]. For this reason, the current PJREP may be rightly perceived by some scholars as unfair, discriminatory, and/or prone to misuse or abuse by third parties. The possible indiscriminate labeling of academics (authors or editors) based exclusively on their association with specific journals thus becomes a novel source of potential discrimination in academic publishing [58].

It is also rather odd that the PJREP fails to warn authors and editors of "predatory" peer reviewers, who may just as easily damage the integrity of the peer review process [59; 60].

Dissecting the wording of the "predatory" publishing PJREP

In order to better appreciate why the PJREP is flawed, it is necessary to dissect and examine the wording of the PJREP in detail.

The first sentence states: "please be aware that material could have been published in questionable, scholarly, usually Open Access journals." This may of course be a simple error: perhaps Springer Nature wanted to write "unscholarly" rather than "scholarly". Clearly, stating that a journal is both "questionable" and "scholarly" is contradictory. In any case, the authorship of this statement should be publicly disclosed by Springer Nature in order to be able to understand who drafted it and under what authority.

An additional problem that arises in this connection is that "predatory" publishing behavior is not generally thought to be limited to OA journals, but may also occur in subscription or hybrid journals [61], while a body of academics might conflate OA with "predatory" [15]. Consequently, the PJREP is both ambiguous and non-inclusive, i.e., it deliberately excludes non-OA journals without disclosing any logical explanation and/or rationale for so doing.

The second sentence states: "These 'predatory' journals include the variety that seek to attract potential authors with flattering spam e-mails assuring rapid publication on the basis of the Journal's highly esteemed reputation in the field". Springer Nature needs to indicate where authors and editors can find this elusive list of journal "varieties" (this odd term used within the context of scientific publishing once again highlights the need to specify the authorship of the PJREP). While the issue of spam as an unfair mechanism to attract authors to a journal is indeed a valid objection [20; 62], the lack of a specific list of journals that are known to engage in spamming is not helpful. One also has to wonder if select Springer Nature journals (all COPE members) caught up in the paper mill scandal, abuses by guest editors, as well as other ethical infractions, many leading to their retraction[3] would still be classified as being

[3] Retraction Watch. Tracking retractions as a window into the scientific process. Available at: https://retractionwatch.com/?s=Springer+Nature (accessed: 16.11.2023).

of "highly esteemed reputation", or if authors and editors who are meant to follow this PJRG should perchance also not cite papers from these scientifically compromised journals.

Like many statements in this PJREP, the third sentence appears like a classic strawman argument: "Too often, these journals have exactly the same or very similar names to those of well-established journals." Surely, this fact is meaningless if such journals publish scholarly work. An ISSN does not prohibit journals from having the same title, or similar titles, so long as they are assigned a unique ISSN (or eISSN in the case of electronic journals)[4]. Finally, there is no clear definition or indication of which journals comprise "well-established journals". Therefore, authors and editors are left to assume that these refer to supposedly "safe" or whitelisted sources already mentioned, i.e., those validated by COPE, DOAJ, and OASPA.

The final sentence of the PJREP states: "Please note that several abstracting & indexing services, including Clarivate Analytics, are taking ethical publication seriously by examining the content, practices, and websites of these "predatory" journals." Since different Springer Nature journals are indexed by different indexing services, it should be specified which abstracting and indexing services it is referring to. The lack of indexing is not necessarily a sign of a "predatory" entity [20; 63]. This reinforces why the authorship of this statement needs to be revealed, for accountability. Incidentally, Clarivate Analytics is the former name for Clarivate[5], again indicating a need to revise the PJREP because it is outdated by at least 3 years.

The reliance on Clarivate's position also appears as problematic for several reasons: (1) Clarivate owns the journal impact factor metric, which has been criticized for being gamed and abused [64; 65]; (2) Clarivate has partnered with Aries Systems Corporation, which owns the Editorial Manager that many Springer Nature journals use for submission. The 2021 partnership between Aries Systems Corporation and Clarivate to mine Clarivate's Web of Science database to find potential reviewers for papers[6] then begs the question: What if authors who publish in such "predatory" journals, or who cite papers published in such "predatory" journals that this PJREP alludes to, are used as reviewers for papers that are then published in a Springer Nature journal? (3) Linked to 2), Springer Nature journals had an agreement with the peer reviewer rewards platform Publons, which was owned by Clarivate. This brand was abruptly and opaquely terminated in the third quarter of 2022 and merged with Web of Science without any detailed public explanation by Clarivate [66]. It is currently unclear if peer review rewards earned for reviewing Springer Nature journals will continue to be allocated via Web of Science. Some prior evidence suggested that unscholarly – possibly even "predatory" journals – are indexed at Publons; of more potential concern is the possibility that there may be peer reviewers who have approved – and thus offered indirect support to, unscholarly or even fraudulent work for publication in valid or unscholarly or "predatory" journals, but been rewarded for it at Publons [67; 68]. A new concern is the continued claim of indexing at Publons, a year after this service terminated, and whether such journals themselves are "predatory" as they engage in false or misleading claims of indexing [69], something that Springer Nature could instead consider for its PJREP rather than its current content.

Other issues with the "predatory" publishing PJREP: Suggestions for improvement

Other issues with this short and vague PJREP include the lack of publication date or dates indicating when policies might have changed. It remains unclear who exactly authored this PJREP and thus if it was influence by policy groups or individuals unrelated to Springer Nature.

[4] ISSN, the major principles. Available at: https://www.issn.org/understanding-the-issn/assignment-rules/issn-the-major-principles/ (accessed: 16.11.2023).

[5] Mair J. The Clarivate story continues. May 29, 2020. Available at: https://clarivate.com/blog/the-clarivate-story-continues/ (accessed: 16.11.2023).

[6] Aries systems and Clarivate partner to connect web of science reviewer locator with editorial manager. April 22, 2021. Available at: https://www.ariessys.com/views-press/press-releases/aries-systems-and-clarivate-partner-to-connect-web-of-science-reviewer-locator-with-editorial-manager/ (accessed: 16.11.2023).

At best, these identified issues represent a poor example of librarianship and indexing practices, implying a lack of transparency regarding the entire PJREP.

A few possible suggestions about what would help the PJREP to represent a valid, transparent, useful, and fair statement are as follows:

1. The precise date when the PJREP was published. The Internet Archive (Wayback Machine) indicates that this URL was first archived on June 24, 2020[7], although it is unclear if this date corresponds to the original date of publication of the PJREP.

2. Precise dates of when this PJREP was modified, if indeed it was ever modified, with an indication of what was modified.

3. The assignment of a digital object identifier (DOI) to this and all other guidelines. Any changes to the PJREP over time should be identified, possibly, as one solution, using a dual-DOI "publication history" [70].

4. An indication of the precise authorship of this and all other guidelines.

5. An indication of the dates for which this policy is valid, for example, January 2020 until the current date. For example, if this PJREP is retroactively applied to older literature and references, should papers prior to 2020 that cited papers from so-called "predatory" journals be corrected or retracted?

6. Guidance regarding the validity of journals and references that were cited prior to the existence of the PJREP and how to evaluate them.

7. A clear definition of what a "predatory reference" constitutes.

8. A list of exact OA and non-OA journals (and publishers), as well as references, that Springer Nature considers "predatory" so that authors can objectively evaluate their choice of references.

9. The temporary removal of this recommended guideline, after assigning a DOI, to allow it to be carefully reevaluated, reformed, reworded, and republished.

10. Given that several Springer Nature OA journals are indexed, for example, in the DOAJ, and that Springer Nature is a COPE and OASPA member publisher, this guideline (and other guidelines) should be validated and/or supported by COPE, the DOAJ and OASPA. This would represent an important step in tackling any possible perceptions of hidden conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise.

Unless this nondescript PJREP is urgently reformed, it might appear to justify the profiling of authors in Springer Nature journals on public platforms such as blogs or websites. Such profiling could be perceived by academics as malicious and unscholarly, or even slander, depending on how characterizations are formulated. There are very serious implications caused by this currently stated PJREP that could potentially impact thousands, if not tens of thousands of papers published in Springer Nature journals (and books), even more so if retroactively applied to older literature sources: it is currently clear how many papers in Springer Nature journals carry "predatory references" based on its own classification. Moreover, if one considers that papers may have multiple authors, the potentially negative impact of the PJREP could affect a large number of authors and academics – and, by association, their research institutes, affiliations, and funders – who are interlinked in a complex global academic web. Since it is remains unclear as to what extent Springer Nature authors and editors are even aware of this PJREP and how it impacts them, the present opinion paper has a very important mission: to inform and thus stimulate debate leading to the creation of a more appropriate PJREP that addresses the ambiguities here identified.

Conclusion and limitation

There are other issues that are worthy of deeper reflection, as indicated by the following questions. What will editors of Springer Nature journals do if they detect a citation to a paper in a "predatory" journal, and will they force authors to remove that citation, even if its use can be argued to be valid? What is Springer Nature's policy towards authors that publish in such "predatory" journals, or that cite papers published in such venues? Will Springer Nature penalize editors that publish in such "predatory" journals, that cite papers published in such venues, or that serve as editors for such journals?

[7] Internet Archive "The Wayback Machine". https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://www.springer.com/gp/editorial-policies/predatory-journals-and-references (accessed: 16.11.2023).

In order to eliminate professional and potentially inter-publisher financial and intellectual conflicts of interest, I previously argued that competing editorial positions should be declared by editors alongside their editorial profiles [71]. It has also been recently pointed out that journals that continue to rely on academics with a record of misconduct or multiple retractions as editors on journals' editorial boards risk damaging their reputational brand [72]. Is the accommodation of editors with multiple retractions for ethical offences a sign of a "predatory" journal [73]? Will authors' and editors' rights of choice be respected and protected [74], or will this PJREP be forcefully imposed , ignoring the inherent freedom of choice that an academic author has when selecting the publishing venue or literature that they wish to cite? In order to lay such unsavory questions to rest, it is therefore proposed that Springer Nature openly debate these issues with the academic community.

The "predatory" publishing market, including a nondescript set of journals and publishers, OA and non-OA, represents a de facto "competitive" market for the potential publication of papers rejected by Springer Nature or other COPE member journals. For this reason, Springer Nature journals should ensure that the guidelines issued to authors and editors are sound, logical, transparent and thus useful to its journals' editors and authors. Although this scrutiny relates to only a single publisher, it is justified by the size and prominence of the publisher in question [75], thus potentially affecting a large swathe of academics globally, whether participating as authors or editors. Thus, it is hoped that this paper will not be interpreted as a critique of Springer Nature, but rather as a springboard for a larger debate on how this publisher (and other COPE-, DOAJ- and OASPA-affiliated publishers) could further improve its services to academia. Other stand-alone journals and publishers can also obtain a valuable perspective from the presented consideration of the function of the PJRG serving as an ethical guideline related to "predatory" publishing. If Springer Nature is hopeful of achieving a successful initial public offering [76], then greater due diligence to specific scholarly aspects such as clear and unambiguous guidelines will be required. Finally, does Springer Nature preclude any of its own journals from coming under the classification outlined in its PJREP merely because they are published by Springer Nature? As one example, Tumor Biology, which was published by Springer Nature, lost its Clarivate journal impact factor at the time due to apparent unscholarly behavior [77].

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflicts of interest relevant to this topic.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The author contributed to the intellectual discussion underlying this paper, literature exploration, writing, reviews and editing, and accepts responsibility for the content and interpretation.

FUNDING

None.

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Received 24.02.2023
Revised 29.08.2023
Accepted 25.11.2023