

The editor's bookshelf

Bookshelf is compiled by Anna Maria Rossi (annamaria.rossi@iss.it). Please contact Anna Maria if you wish to send items or become a member of the EASE journal blog (<http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.co.uk>) and see your posts published in the journal.

ECONOMICS AND FUNDING

Bariç H, Baždarić K, Glasnović A, *et al.* **Why scholarly publishing might be a bubble.** *Croatian Medical Journal* 2017;58(1):1-3

The economy of publishing has many peculiarities: the number of publications, journals, and publishers is constantly on the rise as well as the number of authorships per article and per unique author, the number of references per paper, self-cited and self-citing rates, and so on.

Journal subscription prices have been growing faster than the consumer price index and the inflation rate. The major publishers act as an oligopoly and, occasionally, even monopoly. A plausible hypothesis is that the expansion is driven by a market bubble.

doi: 10.3325/cmj.2017.58.1

Pyne D. **The rewards of predatory publications at a small business school.** *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 2017;48(3):137-160

This study is the first to compare the rewards of publishing in predatory journals with the rewards of publishing in traditional journals. It finds that the majority of faculties with research responsibilities at a small Canadian business school have publications in predatory journals. In terms of financial compensation, these publications produce greater rewards than many non-predatory journal publications. Publications in predatory journals are also positively correlated with receiving internal research awards.

doi: 10.3138/jsp.48.3.137

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Hartley J, Cabanac G. **The delights, discomforts, and downright furies of the manuscript submission process.** *Learned Publishing* 2017;30(2):167-172

The authors describe the frustration that many authors feel when using manuscript submission systems.

Undoubtedly these new systems have many benefits, such as the ability to detect plagiarism and fake articles and to speed up the production process. Nevertheless, instructions to authors vary hugely, from none at all to whole handbooks, and online submission systems have not reduced the complexity of submission and may have increased the work of authors. Some publishers are introducing more flexible submission rules that may help authors.

doi: 10.1002/leap.1092

Lee CJ, Moher D. **Promote scientific integrity via journal peer review data.** *Science* 2017;357(6348):256-257

The peer review process, both in journals and funding agencies, could use more transparency, reporting, and accountability. The authors identify incentives that could encourage journals to make their peer review data available to evaluate effectiveness toward achieving concrete measures of quality. This is a collective action problem requiring leadership and investment by publishers. It is time to apply the 'trust, but verify' model to journal peer review. The authors suggest revising the Transparency and Openness (TOP) Guidelines, a set of reporting standards.

doi: 10.1126/science.aan4141

ETHICAL ISSUES

Moher D, Shamseer L, Cobey K, *et al.* **Stop this waste of people, animals and money.** *Nature* 2017;549:23-25

Predatory journals have shoddy reporting and include papers from wealthy nations. The authors selected and examined 200 supposed biomedical predatory journals. Most

of the articles came from India, and more than half of the corresponding authors hailed from high- and upper-middle-income countries. Of the 17% of sampled articles that reported a funding source, the most frequently named funder was the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Teixeira da Silva JA, Al-Khatib A. **Should authors be requested to suggest peer reviewers?** *Science and Engineering Ethics* 2017 Feb. 2

This paper queries the ethics, fairness, and validity of the request, by editors, of authors to suggest peer reviewers during the submission process. An author-suggested peer reviewer choice might tempt authors to seek reviewers who might be more receptive or sympathetic to their message or results, and thus favour the outcome of that paper. Authors should thus not be placed in such a potentially ethically compromising situation, especially as a mandatory condition for submission.

doi: 10.1007/s11948-016-9842-6

Zliobaitė I, Fortelius M. **Peer review: revise rules on conflicts of interest.** *Nature* 2016;539(7628):168

According to the authors, definitions of conflicts of interest (COI) in peer review need to be reassessed to reflect modern research practices. This could markedly increase the speed and quality of peer review. For example, many potential reviewers are disqualified under current rules on co-authorship. Co-authors typically have a sound understanding of each other's work and provide frank and constructive feedback. Using them as reviewers avoids settling for candidates who may be too far removed from the topic or not sufficiently senior in the field.

doi: 10.1038/539168a

Jin P, Hakkarinen M. **Highlights in bioethics through 40 years: a quantitative analysis of top-cited journal articles.** *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 2017;43(5):339-345.

The authors conducted a quantitative analysis of 800 top-cited articles in bioethical journals over the past 40 years. Findings show that the forefront of bioethics varies over time and is becoming more collaborative, internationalized, diversified, and decentralized. Each period could be defined by topics or areas of interest that attract a great deal of discussion and thus citations, and some themes are more enduring than others.
doi: 10.1136/medethics-2016-103658

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Every B. **Writing economically in medicine and science: tips for tackling wordiness.** *Medical Writing* 2017;26(1):17–20

The author describes three ways for medical writers and editors to tackle wordiness: avoiding repetition, eliminating redundancy, and minimizing purposeless words such as unnecessary qualifiers, weak verbs, and roundabout expressions. An added benefit of limiting word clutter is that it helps reduce the word count to suit publication guidelines.

Pitrelli N. **Science journalism: in search of a new identity.** *Medical Writing* 2017;26(2):41–44

Science journalism is undergoing a major transition due to changes in the relationship between science and society and dissemination via digital and connective technologies. This article presents a number of scenarios and a series of significant results of research that fuel the debate on the future of the information systems dealing with science, technology, and healthcare.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Anderson K. **A confusion of journals - what is PubMed now?** *The Scholarly Kitchen* September 7, 2017

PubMed Central used to be an accrediting system, an online portal of the MEDLINE index. This shift of medium quickly made it a search engine, but one built on a manual and highly curated index. Then it was discovered that it is including articles published in journals whose

publishers are considered predatory. Although these articles appear in PubMed (often after a delay), the titles are not indexed by Medline and are difficult to find. PubMed's brand has long been muddled in ways that pass lower-quality works through the system under cover of prestige.

PUBLISHING

Banks M. **European Commission moves into publishing.** *Physics World* 2017;30(5):6.

Reports that the European Commission is proposing to launch its own open access publishing platform for papers that emerge from its Horizon 2020 programme. It would be similar to that launched last year by the Wellcome Trust. This aims to publish papers quickly with peer review occurring post publication. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has also announced that Gates Open Research will launch later this year. These developments present further options for open-access publishing to those provided by regular journals.

Cobey K. **Illegitimate journals scam even senior scientists.** *Nature* September 7, 2017;549:7

The author has seen a growing number of researchers preyed on by predatory journals, even those who recognize a potential problem can fall victim. She has ideas on how to stop it: do a better job of educating trainees and faculty members about how to assess a journal's integrity; and use incentives and resources that will prevent scientists from sending real work to places that will not identify flaws or truly contribute to scholarly literature.

Moher D, Galipeau J, Alam S, *et al.* **Core competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals: consensus statement.** *BMC Medicine* 2017;15:167

The authors describe the development of a set of core competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals. The 14 key core competencies are divided into three major areas, and each competency has a list of associated elements or descriptions of more specific

knowledge, skills, and characteristics that contribute to its fulfilment. They aim to provide guidance to scientific publishers and editors of biomedical journals worldwide on the minimum knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed to be effective in their role.
doi: 10.1186/s12916-017-0927-0

Sorokowski P, Kulczycki E, Sorokowska A, *et al.* **Predatory journals recruit fake editor.** *Nature* 2017;543:481–483

Predatory journals exhibit questionable marketing schemes, follow lax or non-existent peer review procedures, and fail to provide scientific rigour or transparency. Crucial to a journal's quality are its editors. Such roles have usually been assigned to established experts in the journal's field, and are considered prestigious positions. The authors conceived a sting operation and submitted a fake inadequate application for an editor's position to 360 journals, a mix of legitimate titles and suspected predators. Forty-eight titles accepted. Four titles immediately appointed the fake editor as editor-in-chief, while others required some form of payment or profit.
doi:10.1038/543481a

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Silberberg SD, Crawford DC, Finkelstein R, *et al.* **Shake up conferences.** *Nature* 2017;548:153–154

The role of scientific conferences, where much work gets its first airing, is crucial for communication. Hence greater transparency should be encouraged and embraced by all attendees. Earlier this year, the group of authors of this article met to hash out what could be done to improve transparency at meetings: for example, emojis, smartphone technologies, and revamped guidelines would boost transparency.

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