

## If It Looks Like a Duck and Quacks Like a Duck . . .

**H**ave you ever received an email inviting you to submit an article or edit an issue of a journal that sounds vaguely familiar? Do they recognize you as an expert in the field and shower you with compliments? Does your heart skip a beat, and do you feel flattered and think, yes, you will write that article? The invitation sounds great—a guaranteed two-week turnaround to publication and it seems to come from a senior academic, perhaps one you recognize as a big name in the field. So you write the article, your colleagues write their articles for the issue you are editing, and you work with them to make their manuscripts the best they can be. And then it all goes wrong. You receive an invoice for a large sum of money for the honor of publishing in the journal that you realize, too late, is not a legitimate journal after all. Your colleagues are annoyed with you because they too received an invoice requesting payment. You attempt to contact the editor of the journal or someone at the publisher, but now the contact information is not valid or the journal no longer exists. Your work is now in limbo, and you cannot use it because you have signed copyright over to a sham publisher and you are not able to get anything back. The published article will not count toward tenure and promotion, and you may have lost credibility with your colleagues.

This scenario is the reality of predatory publishing, an unfortunate and unintended side effect of the open-access publishing movement. The goal of open-access publishing is to remove restrictions to the use of peer-reviewed research. Some scholarly journals publish exclusively in this format, allowing the public, clinicians, and researchers to have access to research findings that previously were unavailable to some, particularly those in developing countries, because of the costs of subscription. Many journals, including the *Oncology Nursing Forum* (ONF), selectively allow open access to one or more articles. ONF publishes one article

per issue as an advanced print exclusive, which is available as open access. Most open-access journals require authors to pay a fee to publish; the usual revenue from private and library subscriptions is lost when a journal is open access. These fees are paid by some funding agencies so research findings can be rapidly disseminated.

However, predatory publishing is a different beast. These fly-by-night enterprises promise rapid turnaround of the peer-review process, which typically means there is no peer review. The editor of the journal is usually not a scholar or researcher and may edit a number of these sham publications. They are often not able to be contacted or do not respond to emails or phone calls. The journal titles are often similar to legitimate journals, but if you look closely, spelling and grammatical errors often appear in the description of the journal and its title, and the articles published contain similar errors because no editing process exists. If you look closely at articles in these journals, you will notice that the submission and publication dates are very close together. As many authors will tell you, this never happens with legitimate journals.

How can you avoid these predatory journals? First, be suspicious of any emails soliciting papers from you if you do not personally know the editor who is requesting the article. If the message is effusively complimentary and offers rapid turnaround times for publication, be even more suspicious. If the name of the journal is not familiar to you, check the list created by Jeffrey Beall, BA, MA, MSLS, who maintains an updated list of predatory publishers on his very informative blog, Scholarly Open Access ([www.scholarlyoa.com/2014/01/02/list](http://www.scholarlyoa.com/2014/01/02/list)

-of-predatory-publishers-2014). Another resource is the NursingWriting website ([www.nursingwriting.wordpress.com](http://www.nursingwriting.wordpress.com)). A directory of legitimate nursing journals can be found on the website of *Nurse Author and Editor* ([www.nursingeditors.com/journals-directory](http://www.nursingeditors.com/journals-directory)), a highly recommended online publication supported by the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE); I am proud to be a



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member of this association, as are most editors of nursing journals.

This is an important issue for nursing scholarship and nursing research. It is so important that editors of nursing journals who are members of INANE are committed to raising this issue through editorials in our journals. This is not about profits for publishing companies or protection of our territory; it is an issue of truth, integrity, and legitimacy. Don't be fooled—if it looks like a duck, a predatory duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's surely a duck, and a predatory one at that!

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