

Predatory journals and developing country research

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221 scientific staff

64% male

36% female



145
national collaborations

88
international collaborations



259
original papers published*

5,841
citations (2012-14)



Take home messages

- Predatory journals a global problem that disproportionately affects developing country researchers and global health research
- Awareness building and ‘detection tools’ useful for *individuals* to choose journals wisely
- But predatory journals a *systems* problem
- More responsibility and action must be taken by institutions, funders, regulators, others

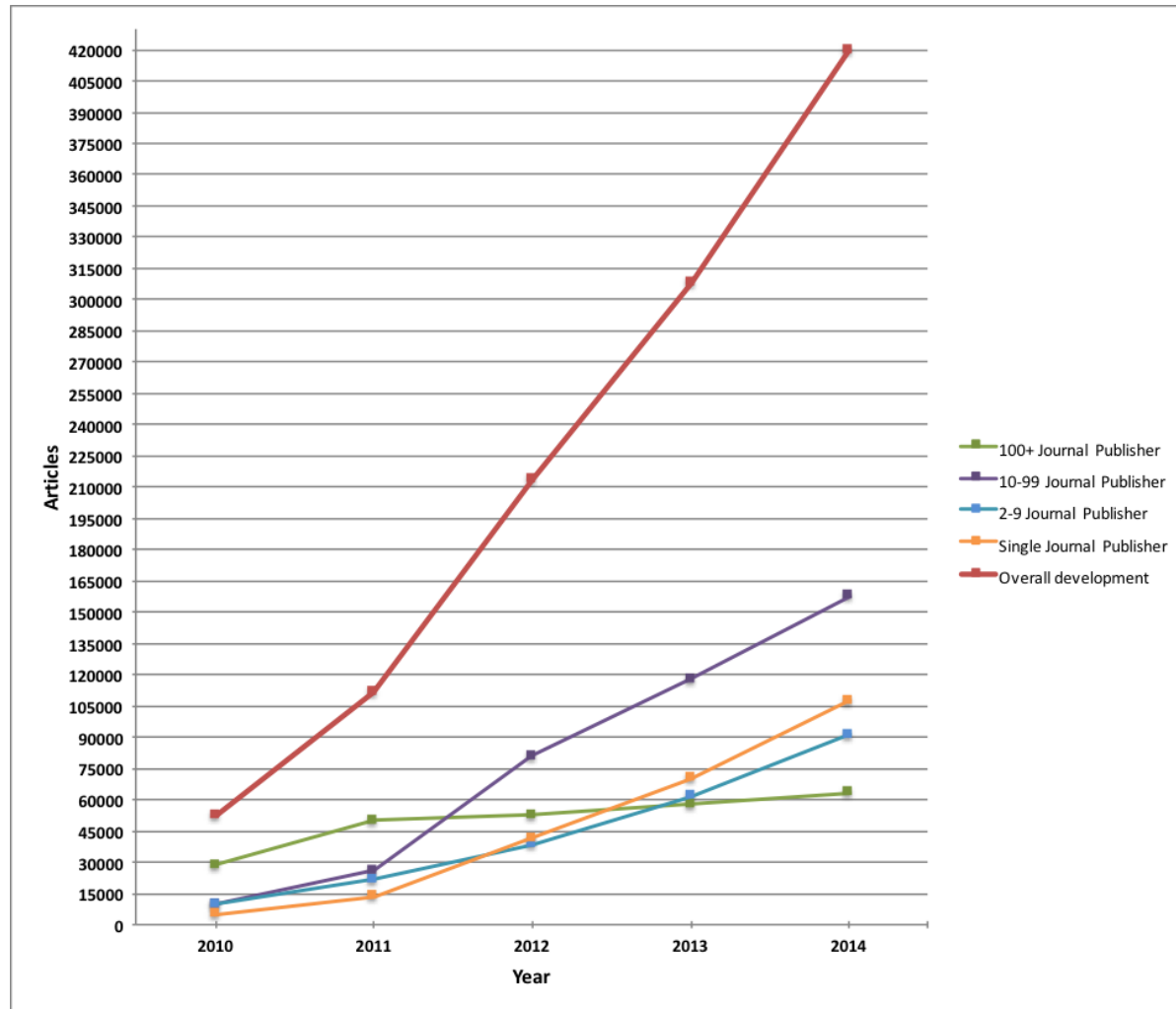
Growing problem, with no end in sight

- Beall's List:
 - **18** predatory publishers in 2011, **923** in 2016
- Shen & Bjork *BMC Med* 2015:
 - 53,000 articles in predatory journals in 2010
 - 2014: 420,000 articles across 8000 active predatory journals from 966 publishers

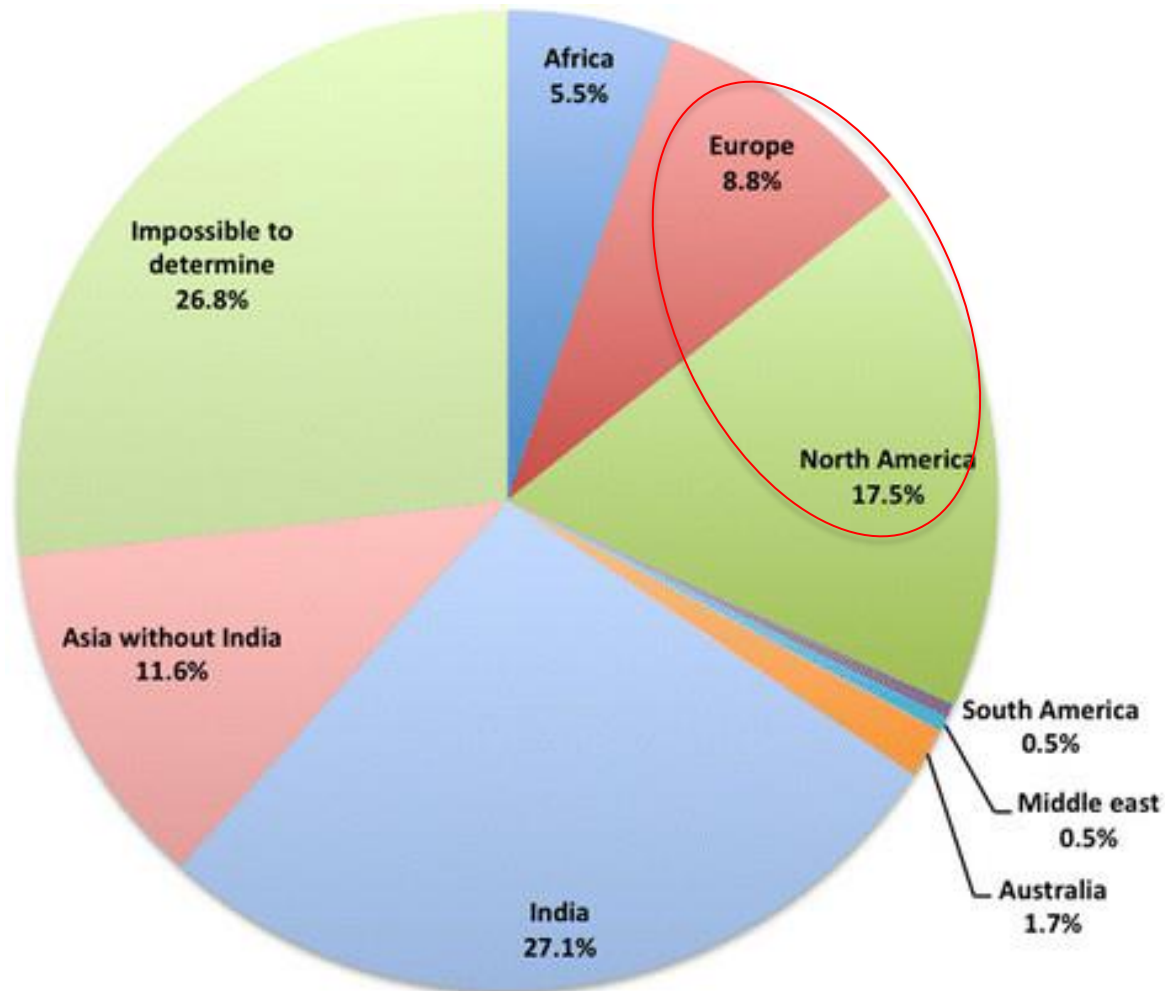
Predatory journal market worth \$75 million in 2014

Global annual OA journal market = \$244 million; Annual subscription journal market = \$10.5 billion.

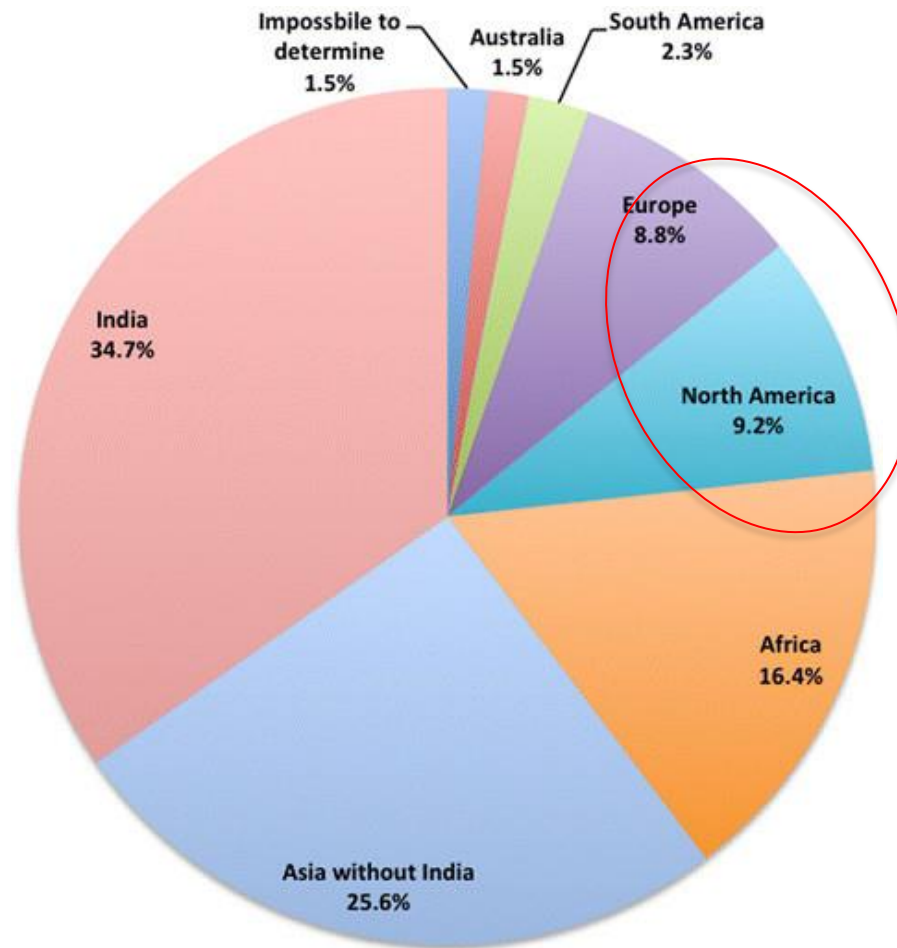
Volume of predatory articles 2010-4



Geographical spread of publishers (n = 656)



Geographical spread of corresponding authors



Why is this a problem?

- Can't be assured of quality
- 'Pollution' of scientific literature (plagiarism, fraud)
- *Corruption* of the legitimate and vital Open Access publishing model
- ***Corruption* of the (public) funds invested in health research around the world**
 - *Global health funding = \$31.3 billion annually*

Nuisance for many in the rich world

"I get these emails every day but I don't know a single academic who would fall for these obviously fake journals. I only publish in journals that I know about. Honestly, nobody would fall for this, it's not a problem for me."

Call for Papers

Scholar: Community medicine

FW: OA Journal "Health" - High Visibility and Fast Publ

Jocelyn Clark [j.clark@utoronto.ca]

To: Dr. Jocelyn Clark

[mailto:submit@medicineinsights.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2014 7:40 PM

To: undisclosed-recipients:

Subject: Publication of Journal Articles

Dear Colleague,

Editors: Journal of Medical Diagnostic Methods <medicaldiagnostic@medicineinsights.com>

Medical Diagnostic Methods!

To: Clark, Jocelyn (ELS-LOW)

Retention Policy Junk Email (30 days)

Expires 24/06/2017

i This item will expire in 28 days. To keep this item longer apply a different Retention Policy.
Links and other functionality have been disabled in this message. To turn on that functionality, move this message to the Inbox.
This message was marked as spam using a junk filter other than the Outlook Junk E-mail filter.
This message was sent with High importance.

Journal of Medical Diagnostic Methods
ISSN: 2168-9784

Dear Dr. Researcher,

Greetings for the day!!

On behalf of editorial board of the Journal of Medical Diagnostic Methods <<https://www.omicsgroup.org/journals/medical-diagnostic-methods.php>>, we cordially invite you to submit a

This journal aims to publish articles in all aspects of disease diagnosis and advanced techniques.

You can also submit Commentaries, Short communications, Case reports, Letter to editors, Opinion articles which may advance the current knowledge.

If you have an article ready, submit it now or before June 15, 2017.

You can submit it online at: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/medicaljournals/> <<http://www.editorialmanager.com/medicaljournals/>> or mail us at medicaldiagnostic@medicineinsights.com

Awaiting for the response and if possible manuscript.

With regards,

Ravik Dev

Journal coordinator



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[†]2016 Journal Citation Reports® (Thomson Reuters, 2016).



BMC Women's Health

Impact Factor: 1.353

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Dear Jocalyn Clark,

I'm pleased to share with you three new articles from [BMC Women's Health](#), an open access journal that considers articles on all aspects of the health and wellbeing of adolescent girls and women.

In addition, I would like to invite you to submit to our [ongoing thematic series](#) on structural and interpersonal violence in women's lives. Read more about the series below, along with an invitation to join our editorial board.

Featured Articles



VS



Subject: Reliable Proofreading Services

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ElsevEditors is one of the leading online editing and proofreading firm based in Ontario, Canada.

Disproportionate effect on LMICs

- Massively growing research output in LMICs
- Increasing:
 - Pressure to widely disseminate and publish
 - A ‘publish or perish’ culture
 - Access to and marketing of predatory journals
- Limited knowledge/training in publishing
- Distort the knowledge base on which global health policy and practice are developed





Unwitting authors, persistent predators

- Lack sufficient training, education, mentorship, supervision or oversight
- Need to publish for career advancement
- Often expected + have funds for OA publication
- Are actively courted by publishers offering (easy, quick) publication



Strategic scientists, savvy publishers

- Publish or perish demands must be met
- Little regulation, awareness or literacy by institutions + funders
- Publishers seize a massive market opportunity
- Researcher pads CV
- Everyone wins

Whose problem is this and whose responsibility is it to find solutions?

- A.** Authors themselves – they are ultimately accountable for papers they put their name on
- B.** Predatory publishers – they are driving this market and corrupting science
- C.** OA advocates who failed to prevent the unintended consequences
- D.** Institutions that govern publication and create a ‘publish or perish’ culture

Nobody's, evidently

Neither the leadership nor those who rely on the truth of science or medicine are sounding the alarm loudly or moving to fix the problem with appropriate energy. - Caplan

*No one group has prime responsibility and no single action is likely to have a large impact.
- Moher and Altman*

Detection tools

- Moher et al. list of 10 characteristics
- Think, check, submit checklist - BMC
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
- List of key journals (departmental, institutional, research council etc. level)
- COPE/OASPA/WAME guidance on 'legitimate publishing'

But not enough

- Blacklists and whitelists deflect responsibility
- They have their limits

System issue:

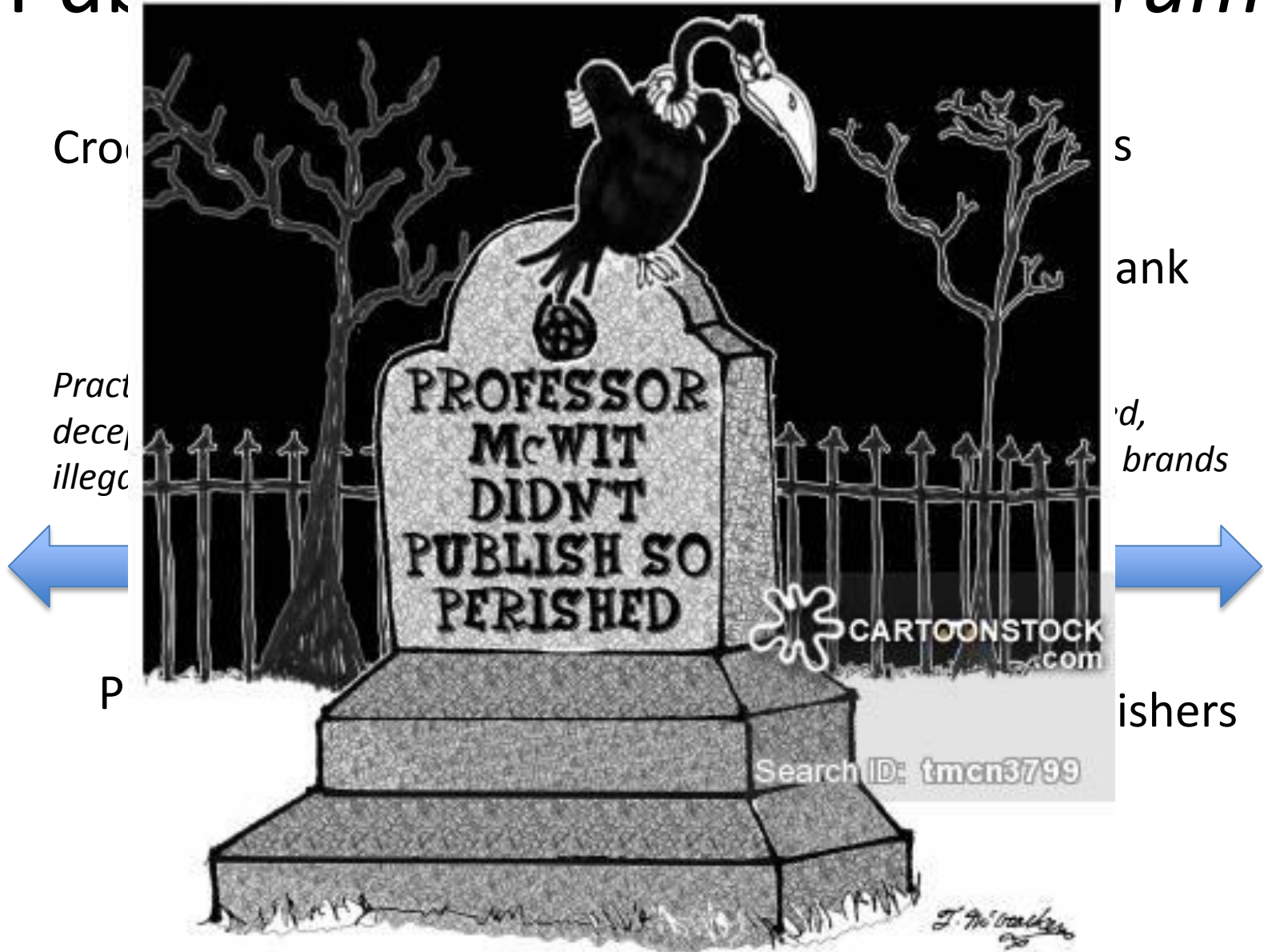
Predatory publishing market inevitable

- Publishing market capitalises on 'publish or perish' mandate and its perverse incentives
- Scientific publishing extremely profitable
- More and more journals, and acquisitions
- Difficult to assure quality and oversight
- Fake journals and publishers offering to publish for a fee

System issue: broken research environments

- Research environments inadequately support and train researchers
- ‘Knowledge’ and ‘norms’ about publishing are not evidence-based
 - Passed down from senior to junior, bad habits and all (north -> south)
 - Best practice guidelines ignored or not properly implemented
- Little oversight or regulation of publishing behaviour

Publishers like banks: a spectrum



System level solutions: *institutions*

- Reorganisation of incentives within medicine
 - Quality over quantity of publications
 - Less research and better research
 - Other forms of currency for career advancement
 - For developing countries, an opportunity to shape a different publishing ethos
 - But.... hierarchy, loyalty, feudal work culture
 - Requires a cultural shift – how does this happen?

System level solutions: *funders*

- Reorganise incentives for institutions
- Much more oversight
 - Funders and donors of LMIC research must recognise predatory journal problem
 - ‘Lost’ research is ‘discoverable’
 - Funds are forfeited
- Better accountability for research they fund
 - Demands for OA dissemination must be accompanied by support for strategic publication

System level solution: *business regulation*

- Regulation e.g.,
 - US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) investigating OMICs Group (global conglomerate based in India, incorporated in the US, 700+ journals)
 - FTC suing OMICs for misrepresenting the legitimacy of its publications, deceiving researchers, and obfuscating publication fees
 - Sets precedent for how academic publishing industry is regulated and how ‘knowledge’ is created

Some unanswered questions

- The journals (and maybe the papers) are fake, but are the data fake? Are the patients fake?
- What clues are there in ‘unaffected’ regions of South America, Australia etc.
 - Different academic cultures?
 - Different pressures or regulations around publication?

Thank you!

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