**India tops submissions in predatory journals**

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A large survey of predatory journals from across the world has revealed that the most number of papers in such fake publications come from India1. The results mirror an earlier sting operation2 and two smaller surveys3, 4, which found that most authors in such suspect journals were in India or elsewhere in Asia.

Researchers, primarily from Ottawa Hospital Research Institute (OHRI), Canada and the University of Ottawa scanned more than 200 journals likely to be predatory to find that more than half of the corresponding authors were from high- and upper-middle-income coun­tries. Studying 1,907 papers from close to 200 such journals, they found that 27% of the corresponding authors came from India followed by the United States (15%), Nigeria (5%), Iran (4%) and Japan (4%).

For over an year, the researchers examined journals and publishers thought to be predatory from a list maintained by librarian Jeffrey Beall of the University of Colorado, Denver. Though the list was taken offline early in 2017, it remains in web archives and is routinely used by researchers studying illegitimate journals.

Kelly Cobey, publications officer at OHRI, says they found even senior scientists from prestigious institutions falling prey to such predatory journals. "However, few research institutions have hired a staff member with a role such as mine, dedicated to educating researchers and guiding them in their journal submission,"she writes in an article accompanying the study.

The researchers contacted 16 vice-presidents of research at some of the top institutions from the survey. "Our e-mail to Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute bounced back. Three institutions provided feedback; one (Manipal University, India, 15 papers) detailed an intervention launched earlier this year, and provided data that the effort reduced the number of articles published in presumed predatory journals."

D. Y. Patil University in Navi Mumbai, India, which calls itself a "deemed to be" university on its [website](http://www.dypatil.edu/), had the most number of papers (20) in their sample. However, the university authorities did not reply to the researchers' emails. "Nor did the University of Teh­ran, which, with 14 papers from 14 authors, tied with D. Y. Patil University for the most unique authors."

When the researchers set out to contact correspond­ing authors at some of the leading institutions, they found that 15 articles — including all 9 at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute — did not include author e-mails.

Interestingly, just one of the 10 most common funders reported in the study — the University Grants Commission (UGC), India — provided [guid­ance](http://www.ugc.ac.in/journallist/) about journal selection on its website. However, UGC is now being criticised5 for creating fertile ground for the growth of fake publications in India by introducing an Academic Performance Indicator (API) system. Under this system, a certain number of papers have to be published by a research scholar prior to submission of the doctoral thesis, and by the teachers in colleges and universities at the time of their recruitment and assessment for promotion.

The OHRI research group has identified 13 tell-tale signs of predatory journals including "low article-processing fees (less than US$150); spelling and grammar errors on the website; an overly broad scope; language that targets authors rather than readers; promises of rapid publication; and a lack of information about retraction policies, manuscript handling or digital preservation." They say manuscript submissions by e-mail and the inclusion of distorted images are also common.

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