

A RESPONSE TO THE EDITORIAL ON PREDATORY PUBLISHING

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I have read your JOTT editorial (Raghavan et al. 2015) with interest. It depicts some realities of the open access (OA) world of publishing, and this is good because it contributes to raising awareness, especially among Indian scholars where a high level of fraudulent and unprofessional journals are emerging which taint the good reputation of Indian academics. However, I believe that the central assumption of your paper is dangerously flawed, in my view, and I wish to explain why.

Your paper and proposal to curb the citation of publications from “predatory journals” relies exclusively on the Beall lists, which include “potential, possible, or probable predatory” journals or publishers. In other words, there is no quantifiable evidence that any of the journals or publishers on those lists are any more “predatory” than let’s say a mainstream science, technology and medicine (STM) journal/publisher. I do admit, very sadly, that there is still no better (i.e., quantitative) list than the Beall lists. Although there are some criteria for inclusion by Beall, many entries are highly questionable, and Beall frequently includes journals on his lists automatically without proper vetting. I have critiqued this before at Retraction Watch in 2013. You cannot reward Beall indirectly by using his flawed lists.

This implies that JOTT will apply what I believe may be a highly discriminatory policy against scientists who have conducted or who may have cited honest, good or valid science, simply because that work appears in a

journal/publisher on the Beall lists. If so, then the precedent set is very, very dangerous for other journals and publishers. I have put forward a quantitative system, a blueprint for quantifying predation, the Predatory Score (Teixeira da Silva 2013), which has unfortunately not been widely adapted. However, I am considering refining the parameters and publishing version 2 in 2016 so that predation of suspect academic journals and publishers can be quantified. I warmly invite you to join me in this effort.

I have also documented what JOTT seems to be experiencing, namely a flood of work/references stemming from journals which are on Beall’s lists, and what impact these can have on citations and reference lists (Teixeira da Silva 2014). The ultimate result can be disastrous. This has been alluded as the “deluge of scientific literature” (Siebert et al. 2015).

The solution is to have a quantitative system that quantifies “predatory” publishing practices, both in OA and print journals, including of mainstream STM publishers. There needs to be a penalty when a high “predatory” score is found, and I propose that the penalty be a suspension from the impact factor, or a boycott, given the fact that most journals aim to ultimately obtain one to somehow validate their academic worth.

References

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and its implications for trust. *eLife* 2015;4: e10825; <http://dx.doi.org/10.7554/eLife.10825>

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Erratum

Bijukumar, A. & R. Raghavan (2015). A checklist of fishes of Kerala, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 7(13): 8036–8080; <http://dx.doi.org/10.11609/JoTT.2004.7.13.8036-8080>

In Table 1, Fish number 183 should read '*Hypselobarbus kurali*' instead of '*Hypselobarbus mussullah*'

English name	Species Name	Authority	Malayalam Name	Vernacular Name	IUCN	END	WPA	CITES
Kurali Barb	<i>Hypselobarbus kurali</i>	Menon & Remadevi 1995	കരിവാലൻ കുരൽ	Karivālan Kūral	LC	WG		