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The Internet has had a significant influence on scholarly publishing. No longer are articles avail-

- Make claims on their journal websites that are not true.

In a study by Shamseer et al. (2017), the authors identified potential predatory journals from Beall's lists, OA journals that were presumed to be legitimate from PubMed Central, and legitimate subscription journals from Index Medicus. They randomly selected 100 journals from each of these groups for analysis. More than half (66%) of the predatory journal websites had spelling errors, compared with legitimate OA (6%) and subscription (3%) journals. A third of the predatory journals reported a bogus impact factor (Index Copernicus Value) versus three OA and no subscription-based journals. One other striking difference was that 73% of the predatory journals listed editors and editorial board members whose affiliation with the journal could not be verified (Shamseer et al., 2017).

Predatory journals are a global problem. Moher et al. (2017) found corresponding authors of articles published in predatory journals were from 103 countries.

The most common countries were India (27%) and the United States (15%). These findings are consistent with a study of predatory nursing journals, in which the predominant countries of authors were India, followed by the United States (Oermann et al., 2016). India also has a large number of predatory publishers (Shen & Bjork, 2015).

Predatory publishers often solicit manuscripts through e-mail invitations to potential authors. The goal of these e-mails is to entice authors to submit a manuscript to the journal. These spam e-mails may advertise the journal's quick peer review and publication process. They often praise authors as the leading expert in an area and include other flattering phrases (Moher & Srivastava, 2015; Shamseer et al., 2017). Novice authors may not know about predatory journals nor how to differentiate a quality journal from a predatory journal. In other cases, authors may have had a manuscript rejected and view the predatory journal as an option to finally get the manuscript published (Nicoll & Chinn, 2015). The other issue is that some predatory journals have names similar to the reputable journal.

Moher and Srivastava (2015) analyzed the content of 311 e-mail invitations to submit a manuscript to a predatory journal. The majority of e-mails (78.5%) were from predatory journals on Beall's list. One third ($n = 106$) of the invitations began with a greeting that used words such as "dear" and "hello." Although most of the invitations in their study indicated that the journal provided a peer review of the manuscript, other studies document the poor quality of peer review in predatory journals (Frandsen, 2017; Oermann et al., 2016; Shamseer et al., 2017).

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Limited studies have been done on predatory nursing journals. Oermann et al. (2016) identified 140 predatory nursing journals available from 75 publishers. Most of these journals were new and often published only one or two volumes. Although the journal websites claimed the journals were indexed, such as in PubMed or CINAHL, none were. In a follow up study, Oermann et al. (2018) documented the poor quality of the research being published in these journals. However, those studies did not examine the e-mails used to solicit manuscripts.

The number of e-mail invitations to submit manuscripts to predatory journals or an abstract to a predatory conference continues to increase, and many nurses are inundated with these e-mails. The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of these e-mail invitations sent to potential nurse authors.

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This was a descriptive study using data collected from a convenience sample of e-mails from predatory journals and publishers sent to faculty and doctoral students at a school of nursing in the United States. The university's institutional review board approved this study.

The data were collected from faculty and students in the PhD program in the school. The school has four degree programs: Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing (clinical and nonclinical specialties, and advanced practice nursing programs), Doctor of Nursing Practice, and PhD.

We e-mailed faculty and students once, and then 3 weeks later, requesting them to forward to us any e-mails received from a potential predatory journal or publisher. In the recruitment e-mail, participants were informed that all identifying information would be removed during data

of 102 predatory nursing journals (Beall, 2015; Oermann et al., 2016). Examples of these criteria include a lack of indexing of the journal in bibliographic databases such as MEDLINE, CINAHL, Scopus, and others; questionable peer review processes; inaccurate information on the journal website; and a lack of publishing services, such as digital preservation, among others. The authors developed descriptive categories on which to examine the e-mails from these journals or publishers soliciting manuscripts or abstracts for presentation at conferences. The authors met and reviewed the collected e-mails, created categories, defined values for each category, and discussed the coded values until agreement was reached. All data were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and frequency counts were completed using SPSS software, version 24.

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The authors received 298 e-mails over 10 weeks. Duplicate e-mails (i.e., the same e-mail forwarded twice, based on the timestamp) were removed from the database ($n = 78$). Each e-mail was screened to confirm it was from a predatory journal or publisher. The authors removed e-mails from legitimate OA journals ($n = 10$). Legitimate journals were defined as those indexed in MEDLINE, CINAHL, or Scopus. We also removed short e-mails (i.e., those that included only an impact factor, a colorful headline requesting manuscripts, and an international address; $n = 4$). After review, we completed analysis on 206 e-mails. **Table 1** describes the characteristics of the e-mails that were sent to faculty and students from predatory journals or publishers.

The majority of e-mails had some form of salutation; the most common salutations included

requested manuscripts on topics that closely resembled the journal's name, such as a journal on family studies requesting manuscripts on marital or family studies.

Most of the e-mails did not include information about the peer review process or a time line for peer review. Four journals requested submissions within 1 week, and an additional 15 asked recipients to submit their manuscripts within 1 to 3 weeks. More than half of the requests (= 116, 56.3%) included a due date for the manuscript or abstract. Frequently, the due dates were close to the date of the e-mail. Examples include:

- E-mail sent on the 5th of a month, with the manuscript due the 10th of that same month.
- E-mail sent on the 15th of the month, with the manuscript due on the 20th of the next month.
- E-mail sent on the 16th of the month, with the manuscript due on the 30th of the same month. In addition, most e-mails did not list the length of time to publication.

Few e-mails (= 11, 5.3%) stated that there was a fee (APC) for publishing in the journal. Ten of the e-mails included the "impact factor" of the journal; however, none of these were actual impact factors from Journal Citation Reports . Most e-mails did not indicate the journal was indexed, but the 17 that did listed websites that were not bibliographic databases, such as Academic Keys (a higher education job website). Almost all e-mails included a formal signature at the end of the e-mail that had some combination of "Regards," "Sincerely," or "anks."

mine whether the journal was indexed in one of them, and the peer review guidelines at the journal website were also reviewed; these steps are similar to those suggested in the literature (Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017; Hansoti et al., 2016; Moher & Srivastava, 2015).

With Beall's (2015) list of predatory publishers and standalone journals no longer available on the Internet, we found the process to identify journals confusing and time consuming, despite the one author's extensive experience in publishing and our collective experience reading these study data. Consistent with an earlier study on predatory nursing journals, which revealed difficulty in locating the APC for a publication (Oermann et al., 2016), few e-mails in this study contained information about the APC. Beall (2015) suggested that one of the characteristics of predatory publishers is they provided limited information about the APC or hide this information on the journal website. Our struggle to correctly identify whether a journal was legitimate highlights the challenges nurses—many of whom may not have much experience in writing for publication—may have when they receive an e-mail requesting a manuscript or inviting them to present at a conference.

Therefore, the frequency with which nurses receive e-mails from predatory journals and publishers, in combination with confusion about the various types of journal and publishing options, is a concern.

Overall, the e-mails sent from predatory journals and publishers requested manuscripts in a general range of subjects. Nurses whose area of research or clinical practice is different from the topics in an e-mail asking them to submit a manuscript would likely not consider that journal. Similarly, experts in a field might be skeptical about a request for manuscripts about an entire subject area (e.g., pediatrics) that did not specify a subfield (e.g., pediatric cardiology, pediatric nursing, pediatric rehabilitation). Of more concern are e-mails soliciting manuscripts in an area of research or clinical practice consistent with the recipient's own expertise. Some of the e-mail invitations sent from predatory journals included the title of a prior publication by the nurse and were in the same subject area.

By collecting these e-mails, the authors learned that the same e-mail invitation was sent to many individuals at the same time. On the basis of this pattern, the current study authors determined that most likely, predatory journal e-mails are sent in bulk to potential authors regard

manuscript. However, the challenge is when e-mail invitations do not have incorrect statements or errors, which was the case for a majority of e-mails in this study.

is carefully vetted to ensure it meets publishing standards, which are indicated on the INANE website. Nurses can be educated to review the journals in the directory for a potential journal for their manuscript. Another strategy is to search for potential journals from among those indexed in a bibliographic database. There also are Internet resources for making a decision about a journal. One such resource is “Think. Check. Submit,” which is a checklist to use for reviewing potential journals (<http://thinkchecksubmit.org/>). **Table 2**

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