



Pitfalls in Medcomms: “Fakery” & Some advice on how to spot it!

John P. Gonzalez PhD, CMPP



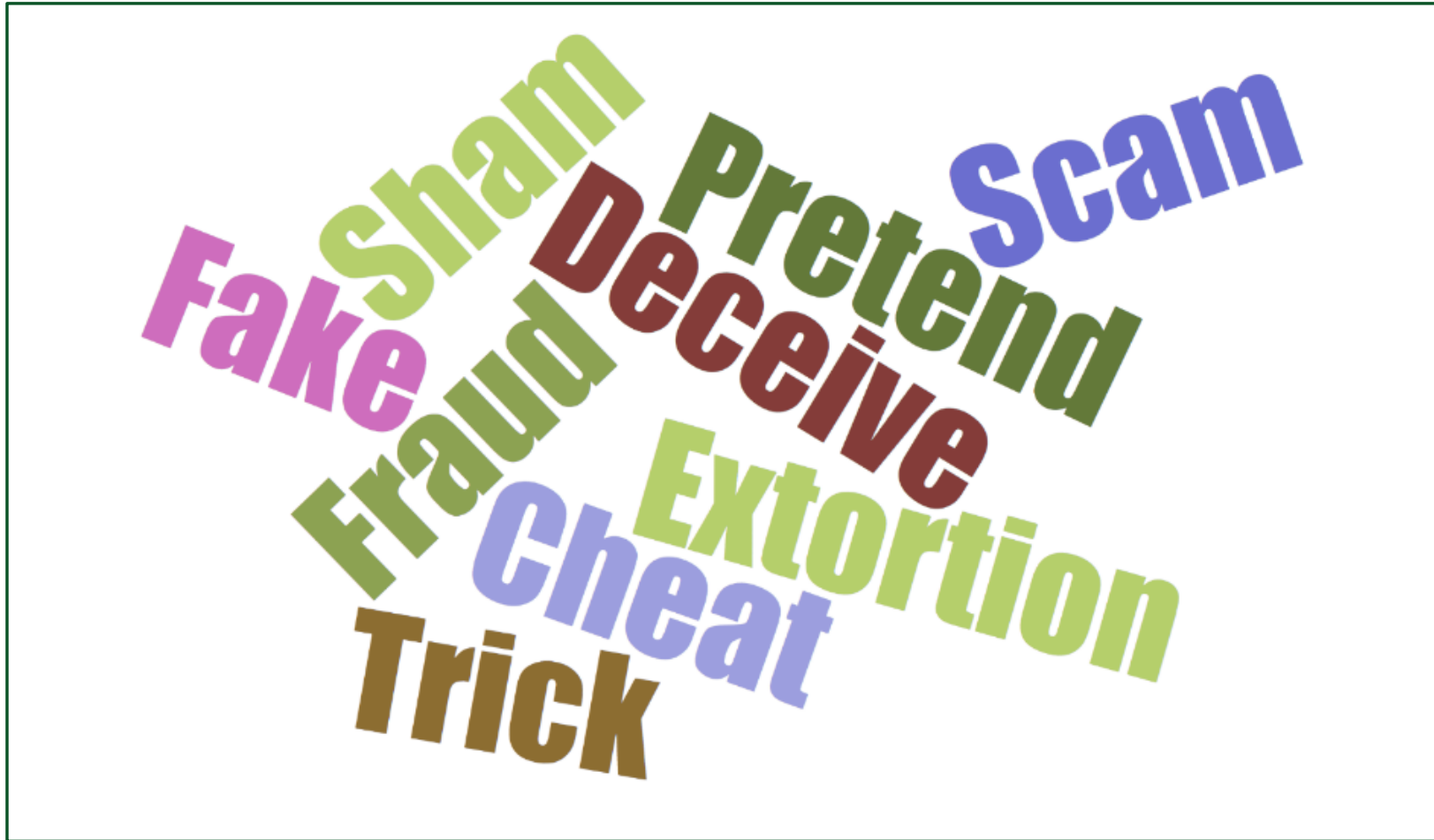
Today's topics

Journals, Publishers & Congresses
“Predatory, Pseudo & Parasitic”

Degrees &
Qualifications

Falsified Data,
Plagiarism &
Journal Retractions







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And the FAKE NEWS winners are...



The Highly Anticipated 2017 Fake News Awards

2017 has been a year of unrelenting bias, unfair news coverage, and even downright fake news.

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Reporters with various forms of "fake news" from an 1894 illustration by Frederick Burr Opper (Wikipedia)

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Mark Twain was right: fake news spreads far more rapidly than the genuine article



6



False news is 70 per cent more likely to be retweeted over bona fide articles CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES

By Sarah Knapton, SCIENCE EDITOR

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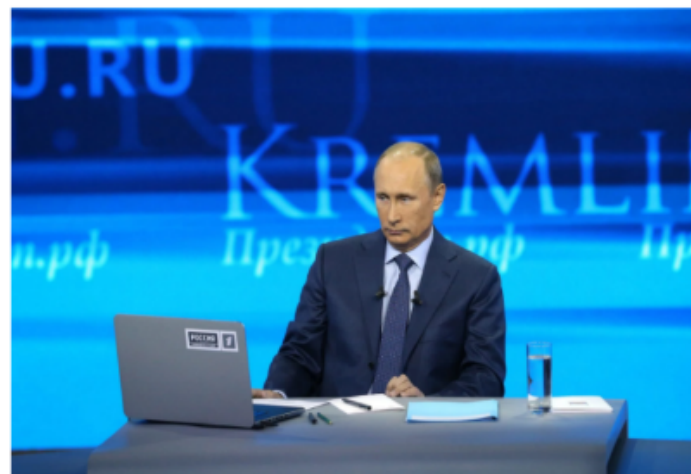
Fake news makes cynics of us all, and in doing so undermines our faith in democracy

LAURENCE DODDS

14 NOVEMBER 2017 • 7:34PM



37



Vladimir Putin's Russia has been linked to meddling in multiple Western elections CREDIT: MIKHAIL KLIMENTYEV / RIA NOVOSTI / KREMLIN POOL/EPRA

■ 29 August 2017, 10:00 BST

Medical Journals Have a Fake News Problem

With help from drug companies, Omics International is making millions as it roils the scientific community with sketchy publications.

“People can get harmed because we depend on what we read in medical journals to drive patient care.”

Rita Redberg, Cardiologist at the University of California at San Francisco Medical Center & editor [JAMA Internal Medicine](#).



Beall's List of Open Access Predatory Publishers

Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access publishers: This year, 2016, marks the sixth annual release of this list, which is also continuously updated. The list this year includes 923 publishers, an increase of 230 over 2015.

Publishers	
Year	Number of publishers
2011	18
2012	23
2013	225
2014	477
2015	693
2016	923

Number of predatory publishers, 2011-2016.



Beall's List of Open Access Predatory Publishers

Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open-access journals: This year, 2016, marks the fourth annual release of this list, which is also continuously updated. The list this year includes 882 journals, an increase of 375 over 2015.

Standalone journals	
Year	Number of journals
2013	126
2014	303
2015	507
2016	882

Number of predatory, standalone journals, 2013-2016.

Hijacked journals: 101 (The list started in May, 2014.)

Hijacked journals	
Year	Number of hijacked journals
2015	30
2016	101

Hijacked journals, 2015-2016.



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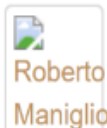
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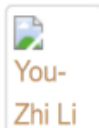
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You-Zhi Li
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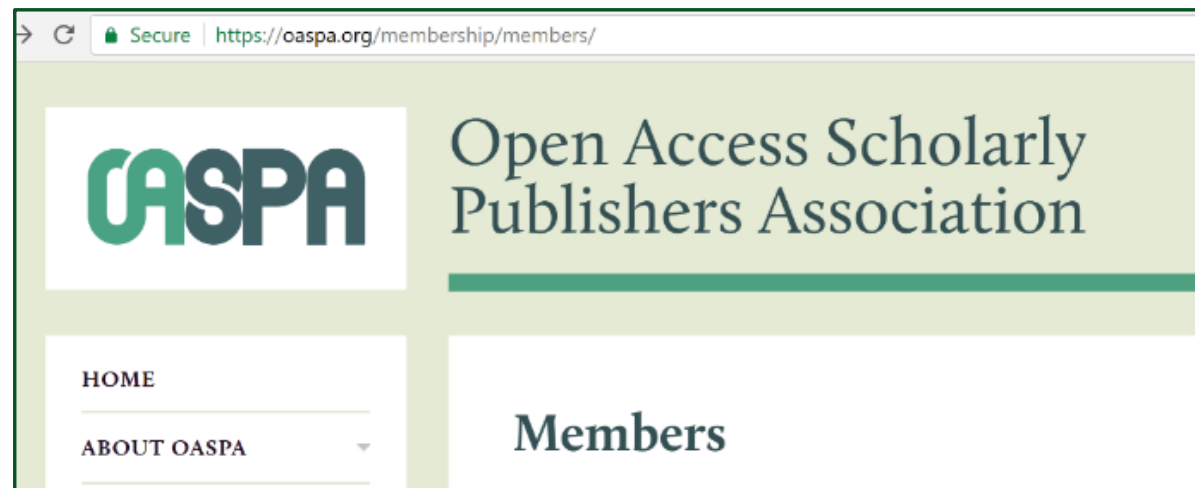
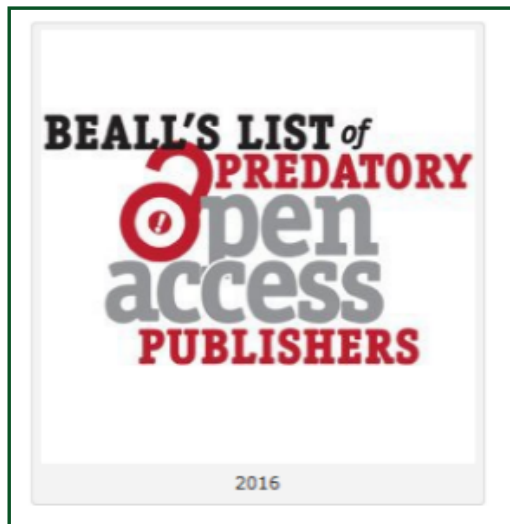
Journal of Nutrition & Food Sciences



Editor-in-Chief
Allan Ayella
Associate Professor
Division Chair for Science and



Quote: “.....published in an Omics journal within two weeks of submission. Companies “are often in more of a hurry and are willing to accept lower-tier journals,” The spokesperson says. “They want a citation. They want someone to be able to reference it and have it be official.”



How to avoid being tricked by a predatory publisher

- Do you or your colleagues know the journal?
- Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
- Is the journal clear about the type of peer review it uses?
- Are articles indexed in services that you use?
- Is it clear what fees will be charged?
- Do you recognise the editorial board?
- Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative? (e.g. COPE, DOAJ, OASPA)



Characteristics of predatory journals

1. The scope of interest includes non-biomedical subjects alongside biomedical topics
2. The website contains spelling and grammar errors
3. Images are distorted/fuzzy, intended to look like something they are not, or are unauthorized
4. The homepage language targets authors
5. The Index Copernicus Value is promoted on the website
6. Description of the manuscript handling process is lacking
7. Manuscripts are requested to be submitted via email
8. Rapid publication is promised
9. There is no retraction policy
10. Information on whether and how journal content will be digitally preserved is absent
11. The Article processing/publication charge is very low (e.g., < \$150 USD)
12. Journals claiming to be open access either retain copyright of published research or fail to mention copyright
13. Email address is non-professional & non-journal affiliated (@gmail.com, @yahoo.com, etc)

<https://bmcmmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-017-0785-9>



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By Dr. Madhukar Pai, Eduardo Franco

THE BLOG

Predatory Conferences Undermine Science And Scam Academics

10/13/2016 05:01 EDT | **Updated** 02/10/2017 10:30 EST



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Nobel Across China Plan

BIT has invited 45 Nobel Prize Laureates over the past ten years. The activities and events we arranged, including the Nobel Laureates Forum, have gained rave reviews. With the purpose of spreading the spirits of Nobel Laureates to China, BIT would make more efforts than ever to the forum and invite more Nobel Laureates since then.



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New York 2018 Conference

Apr 19-20, 2018
New York, USA

Submissions due:
Mar 19, 2018



Paris 2018 Conference

Apr 19-20, 2018
Paris, France

Submissions due:
Mar 19, 2018



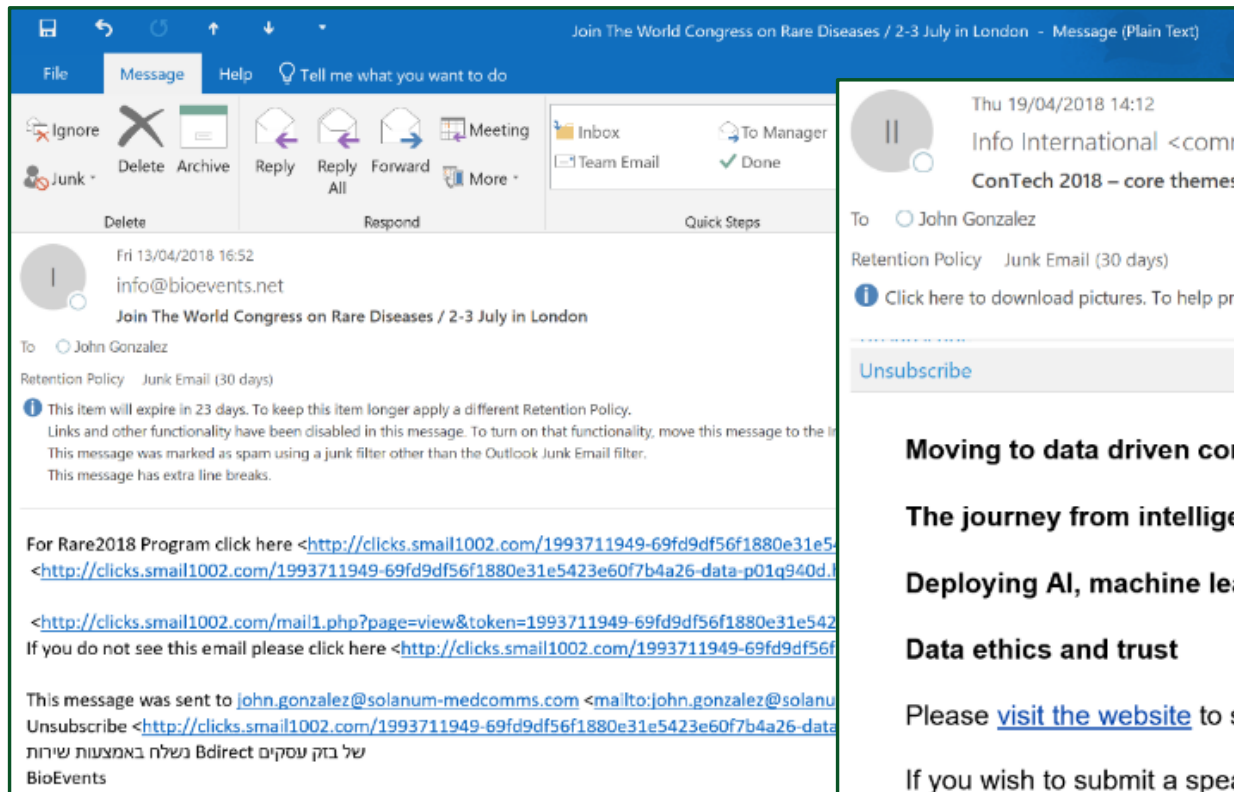
Boston 2018 Conference

Apr 23-24, 2018
Boston, USA

Submissions due:
Mar 23, 2018



Typical emails from predatory conferences



Thu 19/04/2018 14:12
Info International <comms@info-international.co.uk>
ConTech 2018 – core themes and call for speakers announcement

To: John Gonzalez

Retention Policy: Junk Email (30 days)

Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

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If you wish to submit a speaker proposal, please do so by Friday 4th May 2018.

Interested in attending? We have an attractive pre-agenda rate available – this offer will not last long so [please register now!](#)

Characteristics of predatory conferences

- Falsely claiming to be a non-profit.
- Falsely claiming involvement of people on advisory boards or organizing committees and/or universities or other organizations as partners or sponsors.
- Lack of transparency by using fake names to hide the identity of organizers or their country of origin.
- Inadequate peer review with rapid acceptance of submissions.
- Higher fees than typical in the field, with presenters paying more than attendees.
- Organizer simultaneously holds multiple conferences at the same time and place, with the same conference held multiple times a year in different locations.
- Conference papers appear in known or suspected predatory journals.

<http://ismpp-newsletter.com/2017/09/28/beware-the-imposter-predatory-conferences-lure-the-unsuspecting/>



Hints to avoid being tricked into submitting to, or attending a predatory conference

Conference subject and scope:

- Have your peers and senior colleagues heard of, or attended this conference? Would they recommend it?
- Is the content of the conference relevant to your field?
- Is the topic of the conference focused enough for you to a) hear about relevant research and b) meet relevant researchers?
- Does the conference prioritize the academic value of the conference more than the tourist destination?
- Does the conference title includes the word 'international'

Conference website:

- Does website seem knowledgeable about the field? Are technical terms spelt correctly, and is it up-to-date technically?
- Does the conference programme list speakers who you or your colleagues have heard of? Checking credentials on Google if unsure.
- Does the conference website have full contact details (email, phone & postal address) so that you can contact them to ask questions?
- Is there a report on the previous year's conference? (Unless this is a new conference.)
- Does the website look reputable, with good spelling and grammar?
- Is the conference listed on a source (journal, blog, website) you trust? Important if you were contacted via an unsolicited email.

Conference organisers:

- Who is organizing the conference, and why? Is the theme of clear and specific?
- Do the organizers seem fully focused on making this high-quality or are they involved in multiple events in the same day/week/month?
- If the conference is being hosted by a university/research institution and are they advertising the conference on their website?
- Is the conference organized by a scholarly/non-profit organisation you know and is the conference on their website?

<http://www.authoraid.info/en/news/details/1156/>





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Local News

'Staggering' trade in fake degrees revealed

By Helen Clifton, Matthew Chapman and Simon Cox
File on 4

🕒 16 January 2018



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42579634>

BBC File on 4 Investigation

- 3,000 fake Axact qualifications were sold to UK-based buyers in 2013/2014, including master's degrees, doctorates and PhDs.
- Various NHS clinical staff, including an ophthalmologist, nurses, a psychologist, and numerous consultants also bought fake degrees including:
 - A consultant at a London teaching hospital bought a degree in internal medicine from the fake Belford University in 2007.
 - An anaesthetist who bought a degree in "hospital management" said he had not used the qualification in the UK.
 - A consultant in paediatric emergency medicine bought a "master of science in health care technology".
- While purchasing a fake diploma is not illegal in the UK, using one to apply for employment constituted fraud by misrepresentation and could result in a 10-year prison sentence.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42579634>



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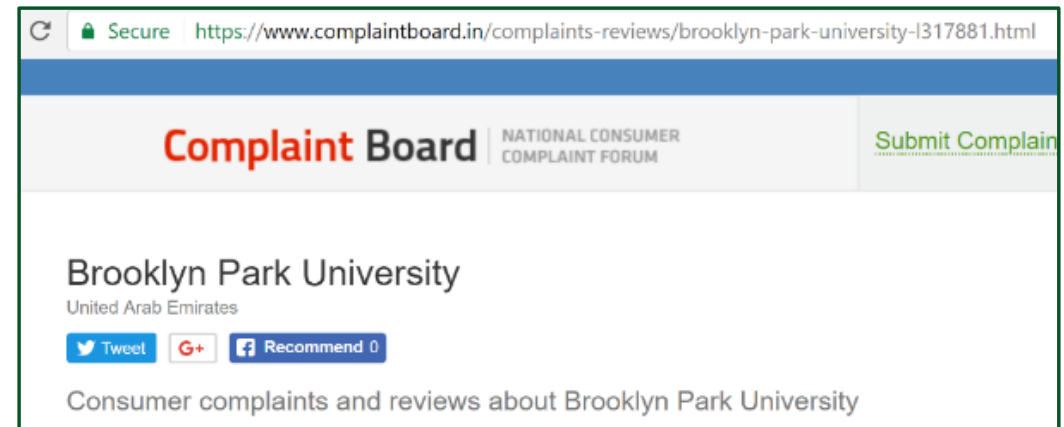
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Even more sinister: extortion & blackmail!

- “Past students” get a call that looks like it's coming from your embassy or local law enforcement, threatening to arrest or deport you unless you get some additional documents to help support the phony diploma you already have.
- British engineer based in Saudi Arabia, was still getting threatening calls from them after paying nearly £500,000 for fake documents.



FAKE UNIVERSITY & TRAINED EXTORTIONIST

THE BROOKLYN PARK UNIVERSITY, USA., HAVE WELL TRAINED EXTORTIONIST AND THEY ARE IMPOSTORS, DECEIVERS AND CHEATERS.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42579634>

Implications for medcomms

Employment:

- Don't get duped into signing up for one of these “degrees”.
- Do employers routinely check for the authenticity of candidate qualifications?



HCP Engagement:

- Legitimate qualifications to perform the service requested?
- Compensation at “fair market value” varies and is based on qualifications & experience.
- Not much you can do here but this is more about awareness of the issues.

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Fraudulent Medical Research Could Affect Your Diagnosis



By Dr. Sherri Tenpenny

The press has led us to believe that the recall of a medical research paper represents a rare, media-worthy event. Case in point: the week-long blitz announcing the retraction of a single, [disputed paper](#), published in *The Lancet* in 1998. By comparison, the retraction of more than 100 papers by two medical researchers didn't even make the evening news. The enormity of that recall rattled the entire subspecialty of anesthesiology and pain

TRENDING

Steve Mnuchin's Wife Has A
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News

Diabetologist and former journal editor faces charges of data fabrication

BMJ 2017 ; 356 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j1348> (Published 16 March 2017)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2017;356:j1348

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At a four week hearing of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service that opened on 13 March, the GMC accuses Grant of a catalogue of research misconduct, including forging the signatures of coauthors, listing doctors who had not significantly contributed to papers as coauthors, and fabricating data.

Clare Dyer

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The Ohio State University's campus in Columbus ISTOCK.COM/ACESHOT

Cancer researcher at The Ohio State University resigns following multiple misconduct findings

By Alison McCook, Retraction Watch | Mar. 30, 2018, 3:00 PM

Ching-Shih Chen was guilty of “deviating from the accepted practices of image handling and figure generation and intentionally falsifying data in 14 instances in 8 papers.

OSU to temporarily shut down research involving a compound developed by Chen; a phase Ib trial was suspended in June 2017.

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/03/cancer-researcher-ohio-state-university-resigns-following-multiple-misconduct-findings>

Doctors urge elite academy to expel member over charges of plagiarism



The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine building in Washington.
Carol M. Highsmith/Buynlarge, via Getty Images

Dr. Noji also, until recently, listed impressive honors: the Ordre des Palmes Academiques, presented by President Hollande of France; nomination to the Royal College of Physicians of London; the Antarctica Medal of Honor for Scientific Exploration; and an M.B.A. from Stanford.

But the French never bestowed that award on Dr. Noji. The Royal College didn't nominate him. There is no such prize as the Antarctica Medal of Honor for Scientific Exploration. Stanford Business School says it has no record of his existence. And some of his papers plus a book chapter were copied from former colleagues at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for International Development, according to a complaint filed with the academy by Dr. Arthur Kellerman, dean of the nation's military medical school.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/09/health/academy-medicine-plagiarism.html>



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Perspective

Peer-Review Fraud — Hacking the Scientific Publication Process

Charlotte J. Haug, M.D., Ph.D.

N Engl J Med 2015; 373:2393-2395 | December 17, 2015 | DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp1512330

Comments open through December 23, 2015

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Article References Citing Articles (18) Comments (29) Metrics

In August 2015, the publisher Springer retracted 64 articles from 10 different subscription journals "after editorial checks spotted fake email addresses, and subsequent internal investigations uncovered fabricated peer review reports," according to a statement on their website.¹ The retractions came only months after BioMed Central, an open-access publisher also owned by Springer, retracted 43 articles for the same reason.

"This is officially becoming a trend," Alison McCook wrote on the blog Retraction Watch, referring to the increasing number of retractions due to fabricated peer reviews.² Since it was first reported 3 years ago, when

Audio Interview



Interview with Dr.
Charlotte Haug on the
growing number of

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Retraction of articles from Springer journals

London | Heidelberg, 18 August 2015

Springer confirms that 64 articles are being retracted from 10 Springer subscription journals, after editorial checks spotted fake email addresses, and subsequent internal investigations uncovered fabricated peer review reports. After a thorough investigation we have strong reason to believe that the peer review process on these 64 articles was compromised. We reported this to the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE) immediately. Attempts to manipulate peer review have affected journals across a number of publishers as detailed by COPE in their December 2014 statement. Springer has made COPE aware of the findings of its own internal investigations and has followed COPE's recommendations, as outlined in their statement, for dealing with this issue. Springer will continue to participate and do whatever we can to support COPE's efforts in this matter.

The peer-review process is one of the cornerstones of quality, integrity and reproducibility in research, and we take our responsibilities as its guardians seriously. We are now reviewing our editorial processes across Springer to guard against this kind of manipulation of the peer review process in future.

Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a window into the scientific process

Early data on potential anti-cancer compound now in human trials was falsified, company admits

without comments

A pharmaceutical company has admitted that one of its former researchers falsified early data on a compound that's designed to fight cancer, now in human trials.



The data, published as an abstract in [August 2015 in the journal *Cancer Research*](#), reported a therapeutic benefit of acalabrutinib in a mouse model of pancreatic cancer. The compound, developed by the company Acerta Pharma, has also been the subject of additional trials published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) and [Blood](#) in 2015. The 2015 *NEJM* study, which had several authors in common with the *Cancer Research* abstract, showed the agent had "promising safety and efficacy profiles in patients" with relapsed chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

But an investigation into the data underlying the 2015 abstract shows some were falsified, prompting the journal to retract the abstract.

Ed Tucker, senior vice president of Medical Safety, Quality and Compliance at Acerta Pharma, told us that in August 2016 the company identified an issue with the data in the *Cancer Research* abstract and started an investigation:



Our investigation was initiated following a communication from an external research collaborator to one of our Acerta scientists in August 2016 regarding the pre-clinical data set in question.

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BMJ Open 2016;**6**:e012047 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2016-012047

Ethics

Why articles are retracted: a retrospective cross-sectional study of retraction notices at BioMed Central

Elizabeth C Moylan, Maria K Kowalczuk

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Publication retractions

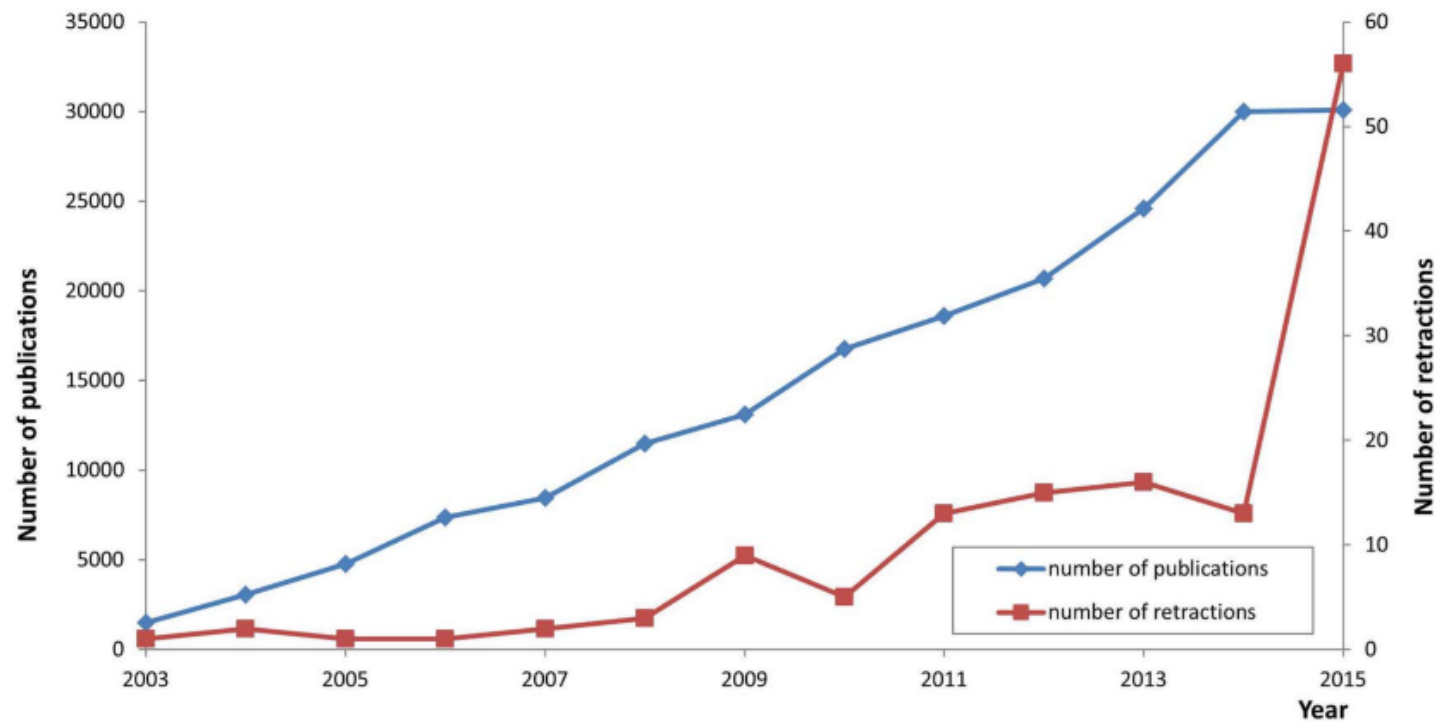


Figure 1 Growth in retractions compared with growth in total articles published (excluding supplements, corrections, retractions and commissioned content).

Publication retractions

Table 2 Individual reasons for retraction and classification into the main categories of honest error, misconduct or unclear

Reason for retraction	Honest error	Misconduct	Unclear
Breach of editorial policy		1	
Co-authors unaware of manuscript submission		5	
Compromised peer review		44	
Data falsification/fabrication		10	
Data unreliable	6		8
Duplicate publication		7	1
Image duplication	1	5	
No consent			1
No ethical approval		5	
No permission for data		3	2
Plagiarism		22	
Published in error	10		
Undeclared conflict of interest			3
Sub-totals per broad category	17	102	15

Publication retractions

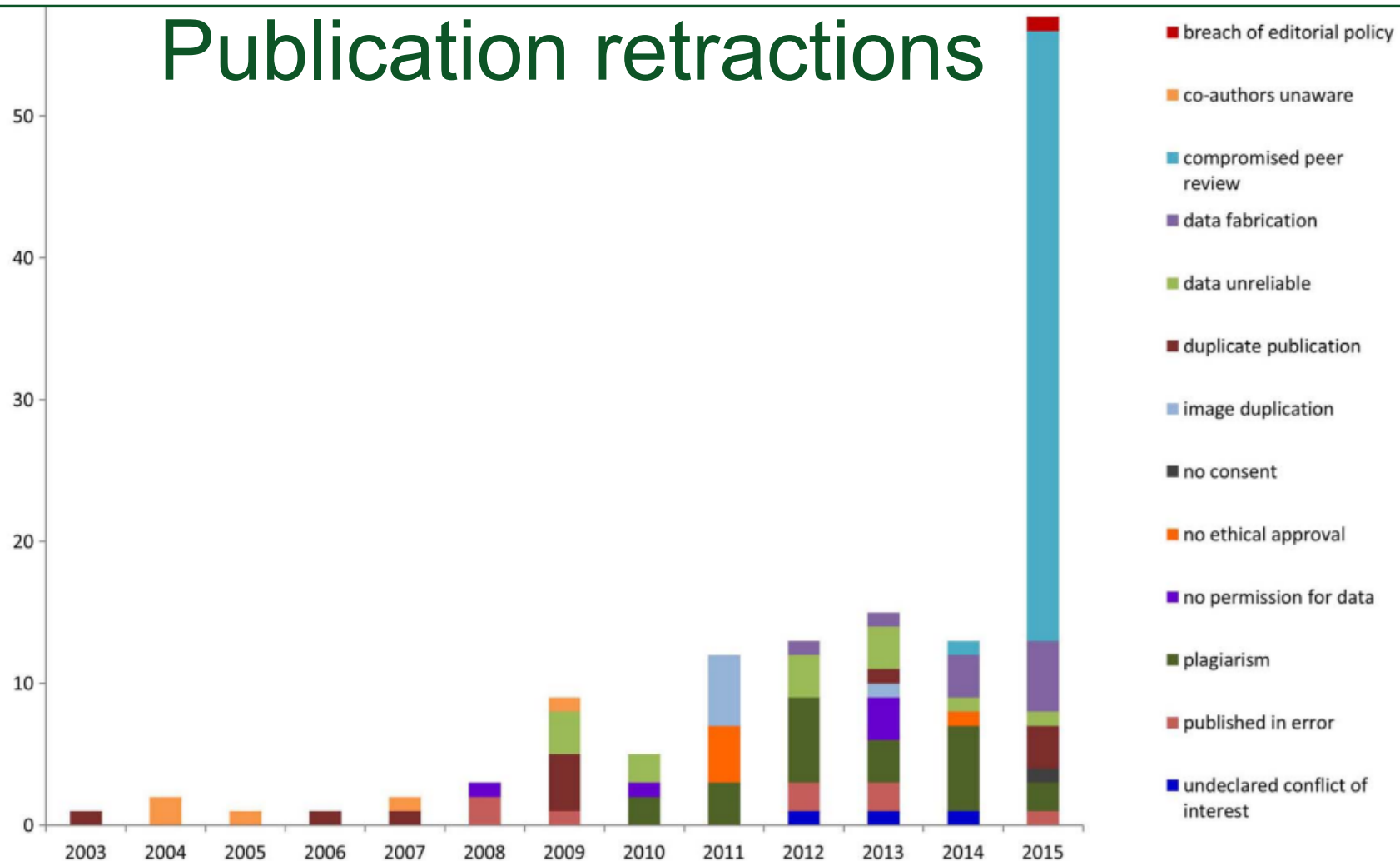


Figure 2 Growth in retractions showing variation in reasons for retracting articles from 2000 to 2015.

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/6/11/e012047.full.pdf>



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India creates unique tiered system to punish plagiarism

By [Pallava Bagla](#) | Apr. 9, 2018, 4:45 PM

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BMJ Open Authorship, plagiarism and conflict of interest: views and practices from low/middle-income country health researchers

Anke Rohwer,¹ Taryn Young,^{1,2} Elizabeth Wager,^{3,4} Paul Garner⁵

“LMIC researchers report that guest authorship is widely accepted and common. While respondents report that plagiarism and undeclared conflicts of interest are unacceptable in practice, they appear common. Determinants of poor practice relate to academic status and power, fuelled by institutional norms and culture”.





Legal Remedies for Medical Ghostwriting: Imposing Fraud Liability on Guest Authors of Ghostwritten Articles

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Simon Stern^{1*}, Trudo Lemmens²

1 Faculty of Law, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, **2** Faculties of Law and Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

To **add a note**, highlight some text. [Hide notes](#)

Legal Liability for Research Fraud

Statistical Journal of the IAOS, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2017), pp. 755-761

10 Pages • Posted: 7 Oct 2015 • Last revised: 15 Sep 2017

[F. E. Guerra-Pujol](#)

University of Central Florida; Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico

Date Written: December 3, 2016

Abstract

Should scientists, statisticians, and other researchers be held to the same legal standards as certified public accountants or other actors involved in business or commercial activity? What about research organizations that rely on fraudulent research methods or predatory publishers who publish fraudulent research? This paper explores several possible theories of civil liability arising out of quantitative and qualitative research fraud in academic publishing.



Conclusions

- The scammers want your money.
- They operate without ethics or morals regardless of any harm they may cause.
- Be vigilant, don't take anything at face value, check and check again, don't put your reputation at risk.
- Use the checklists to verify legitimacy of publishers, journals & congresses.
- Remember everything we do in Medcomms is for the benefit of patient health: nothing should ever compromise that.





Thank you for your attention.

Any questions?

