



# Predatory journals

## Shedding light on the deceptive publishing industry

Anna Severin

Coffee & Bit(e)s, Science Library University of Bern



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

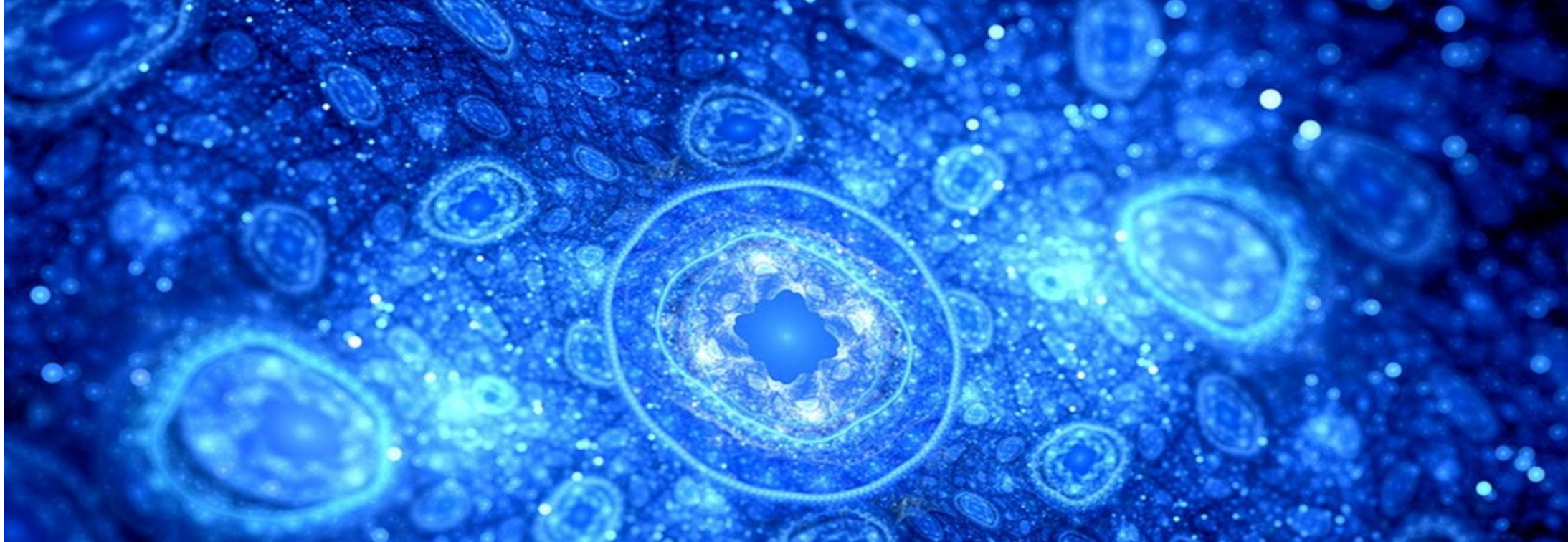


b  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN



# Structure

- 1. What is predatory publishing?**
- 2. Why should we avoid predatory journals?**
- 3. How can we avoid predatory journals?**



## **What is predatory publishing?**

# What is predatory publishing?

*"Predatory journals and publishers are entities that **prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship** and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices."*

(Grudniewicz et al. 2019)

- Misleading information: fake impact factors, incorrect addresses, misrepresentations of the editorial board
- Deviation from best editorial and publication practices: No retraction policy, requesting a transfer of copyright when publishing OA, no Creative Commons license in an OA journal
- Lack of transparency: No contact information, no information about APCs
- Aggressive, indiscriminate solicitation: repeated invitations to submit research articles, often for unsuitable journals




# **Some examples..**

This is not my area of expertise


Standard greeting

Poor English

Fake editor

Journal of Gynecology and Women's Health <gynecology@juniperpublishers.co>Severin Anna Mi. 1

**Affirmative Response**

 Zur Nachverfolgung. Beginn am Mittwoch, 23. Januar 2019. Fällig am Mittwoch, 23. Januar 2019.

[Bing Maps](#) [Action Items](#) [+ Weitere Apps abruf](#)

**Dear Dr. Anna Severin,**

Good Morning.....!

Can we have your article for successful release of **Volume 13 Issue 3** in our Journal?

In fact, we are in need of one article to accomplish the Issue prior 31<sup>st</sup> January; we hope that the single manuscript should be yours. If this is a short notice please do send **2 page opinion/mini review/case report**, we hope 2 page article isn't time taken for eminent people like you.

Your trust in my efforts is the highest form of our motivation, I believe in you that you are eminent manuscript brings out the best citation to our Journal.

Anticipate for your promising response.

Sincerely,  
**Brianna Gilbert**  
Journal of Gynecology and Women's Health (ISSN: 2474-7602)

Very flattering language

Fake ISSN



Article Received from Top Institutions

www.advancesj.com

# Advances in Cancer Research & Therapy

ISSN 2394-9511

Home Aim & Scope Editor Board Author Guidelines **Article Charges** Journals Contact Us

## Article Charges

ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGES

If the manuscript is accepted for publication, the authors have to pay the Article Processing Charges of the manuscript. As costs are involved in several phases of the publication process, like manuscript handling from submission to publication, peer-review, editing & typesetting, indexing of articles, electronic archiving, server and website update and maintenance etc. Therefore, we meet the costs by collecting Manuscript Processing Charges from author, author's institutes or research funding bodies.

Article Processing Charges	\$ 50
----------------------------	-------

**Very low APC**

**Article Processing Charges AND Manuscript Processing Charges**

**How much are the Manuscript Processing Charges?**

Submit Manuscript

Log In

Register

Author Activity Tracker

Manuscript in Press

Join Us

Manuscript Status Checker

Current Issue

Abstract & Indexing

Archives

- Volume 1 – Issue 1
- Volume 2 – Issue 1
- Volume 3 – Issue 1

Like 200 Share Tweet

Article Received from Top Institutions

www.advancesj.com

# Advances in Cancer Research & Therapy

ISSN 2394-9511

Home Aim & Scope Editor Board Author Guidelines Article Charges **Journals** Contact Us

**Broad subjects**

## Histopathological Study of Tumours of Cervix

Carcinoma of cervix is the most common cancer in Indian women and accounts for 20% of all malignant tumours in the females. Squamous cell carcinomas (SCC) account for 75-80%, adenocarcinoma 15-25%, and adenosquamous carcinomas 3-5% of cervical cancers.

**Objectives:** To study histopathology of carcinoma of cervix and to find out the incidence rate, most common type of the carcinoma of cervix.

**Aim & Scope**  
Advances in Cancer Research & Therapy is a peer-reviewed, open access journal that publishes original research articles as well as review articles in all areas of Cancer Research.

**Fast & Easy Publication**  
Manuscript will be made on-line immediately on acceptance after fast track review process.

**Index Copernicus Value (ICV) 2015: 69**  
[JACRT] ICV 2015: 69

**Promise of immediate publication**

**Fake impact factor**

## Recent Articles

### Synergistic Effect of Supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> Extract of Mango Ginger (Curcuma amada- Roxb.) With Glycolytic Inhibitors in Human Glioblastoma Cells In Vitro

January 7, 2019 · Volume 3 - Issue 1

**Background:** Cancer cells, unlike normal cells, principally use aerobic glycolysis with reduced mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation for glucose metabolism, a phenomenon referred to as the Warburg effect. Glioblastoma, one of the most aggressive, lethal and incurable human tumors with a survival rate of 12-15 months in patients undergoing standard of care treatment involving surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy, has been shown to have a preferential metabolism of glucose through aerobic glycolysis. The cytotoxic effects of a previously described supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> extract of mango ginger (Curcuma amada-CA) with two glycolytic inhibitors [2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) and sodium oxamate (SO)] was investigated in the U-87MG human glioblastoma cell line.

**Methods:** Cytotoxicity assay was performed with increasing concentrations of CA, 2-DG and SO as single agents and in combinations in U-87MG glioblastoma cells by the MTT assay. The cytotoxicity data was analyzed using CompuSyn software to determine the synergism/additive effect/antagonism between drugs. The effect of CA and glycolytic inhibitors on ATP and lactate synthesis was analyzed to establish the inhibitory effects

Submit Manuscript

Log In

Register

Author Activity Tracker

Manuscript in Press

Join Us

Manuscript Status Checker

Current Issue

Abstract & Indexing

Archives

- Volume 1 – Issue 1
- Volume 2 – Issue 1
- Volume 3 – Issue 1

**Who are the authors?**



# Empirical Evidence

## Market Characteristics and Global Distribution

- Rise in the extent of predatory publishing since the early 2010s. Today, there are about 8000 predatory journals that publish approx. 400 000 articles p.a.
- The regional distribution of publishers is heavily skewed towards India, Asia and Africa with these locations contributing more than 50% of publishers.
- APCs per article are much lower and waiting time for publication is much shorter than for subscription and reputable OA journals (Shen & Björk, 2014).

## Scholarly Impact

- Citations to the articles in predatory journals are relatively low.
- Characteristics of citing authors: Inexperienced, little renowned, affiliated with institutions located in Africa, Southeast Asia or South Asia (Frandsen, 2017).



# Empirical Evidence

## Author Characteristics

- **Early studies:** Affiliated with institutions concentrated in developing countries (especially India and Nigeria, and more generally in Asia, Africa and the Middle East), little to no experience with few prior publications and citations (Watkinson et al., 2016)
- **More recent studies:** Authors are affiliated with institutions that are located in developed countries (e.g. US, Canada, Europe), predominantly affiliated with less prestigious and well-ranked institutions. Authors of publications in predatory journals are less experienced but might be aware of the journal being predatory (Moher et al., 2017; Seethapathy et al., 2016)

## Country Studies

- A limited number of country case studies has investigated the relevance of predatory publishing in a national setting.
- Italy (Bague et al., 2017) & South Africa (Mouton and Valentine 2017).



# Empirical Evidence

## Reviewer Characteristics

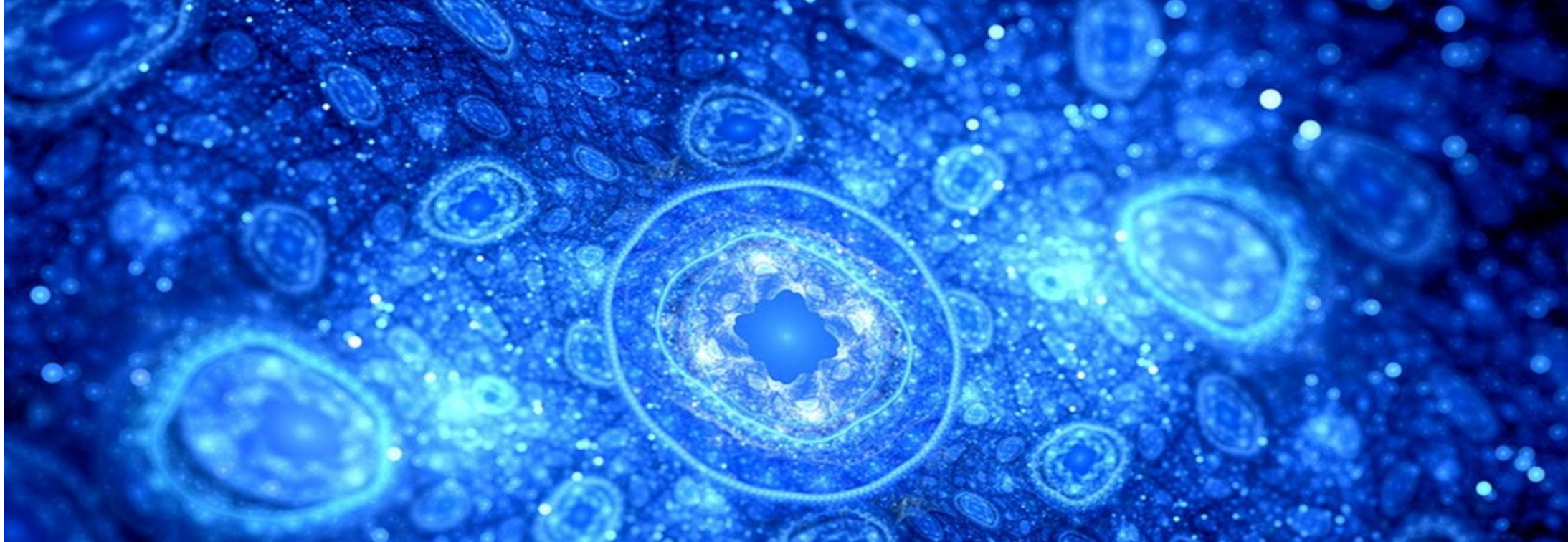
The characteristics of scholars who review for predatory journals resemble those of authors: inexperienced, little productive, located in developing regions (Severin et al. 2020).

## Indexing and Archiving

- Predatory journals are increasingly indexed in citation databases, e.g. DOAJ, WoS, PubMed, Scopus (Severin and Low, 2019).
- Interpretation: Are citation databases neglecting due diligence? Are indexed journals operating in a grey zone? Are indexed journals wrongly classified as predatory?

## Quality of peer review

Study to investigate quality of peer review in predatory journals and legitimate journals included in Publons, using quantitative text analysis with machine learning



## **Why should we avoid predatory journals?**

# No rigorous peer review

- Predatory journals usually do not uphold quality or integrity of peer review: potentially substandard quality control; editors potentially pressured to accept papers
- Publications enter the public domain without rigorous quality control
  - Publications can be of any quality
  - Threat to the credibility of (publicly-funded) research
  - Particularly dangerous in fields where practitioners rely on findings published in scientific journals





# DESMOG

CLEARING THE PR POLLUTION THAT CLOUDS CLIMATE SCIENCE

HOME RESEARCH DATABASE SERIES ABOUT DESMOG MEDIA RESOURCES CONTACT US

## Climate Denial Group With Trump Admin Ties Is Funding Sea Level Research in Questionable Journals

By Graham Readfearn • Thursday, January 18, 2018 - 12:51

Read time: 10 mins



(Readfearn, 2018)

Guardian

Search jobs

Sign in

Search

International e

# The Guardian

inion

Sport

Culture

Lifestyle

More

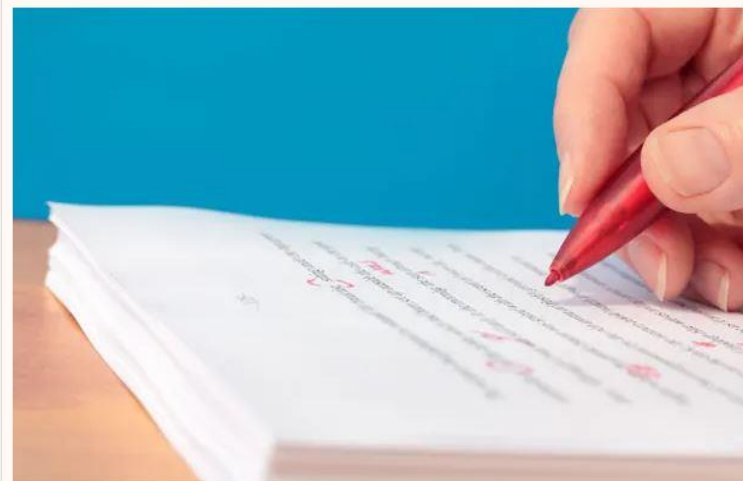
ange Wildlife Energy Pollution

## Murky world of 'science' journals a new frontier for climate deniers

Graham Readfearn

Deniers have found a platform in emerging publications that publish without rigorous review

358



▲ 'These journals, and hundreds more like them ... are part of a ballooning online industry offering to give academics a place to publish their work in return for a fee and minimal, if any, quality control.' Photograph: Alamy

(Readfearn, 2018)

Kultur &gt;

Wissen &gt;

Vernebelte Wissenschaft

## Wie seriös sind Studien der Tabak-Industrie?

Harmloser Dampf statt giftiger Rauch: Hersteller wollen ihre «gesunde» Zigaretten-Alternative anpreisen – dabei hilft ihnen ein dubioser Wissenschaftsverlag.

Cathrin Caprez

Mittwoch, 12.09.2018, 18:04 Uhr



Dieser Artikel wurde 5-mal geteilt.



Wie seriös sind Studien der Tabak-Industrie?

04:33 min, aus Rendez-vous vom 12.09.2018.



# No indexing and/or archiving

- Predatory journals not guarantee archiving and long-term access to published articles
  - Publications are rarely cited or not at all, have little impact in practice and could eventually be lost
  - Waste of resources used to generate publications

#### Article types

[Clinical Trial](#)  
[Review](#)  
[Customize ...](#)

#### Text availability

[Abstract](#)  
[Free full text](#)  
[Full text](#)

#### Publication dates

[5 years](#)  
[10 years](#)  
[Custom range...](#)

#### Species


[Humans](#)  
[Other Animals](#)

[Clear all](#)

[Show additional filters](#)

### Search results

Items: 0

 No documents match your search terms

#### Search details

(Synergistic[All Fields] AND  
 Effect[All Fields] AND  
 Supercritical[All Fields] AND  
 CO2[All Fields] AND Extract[All  
 Fields] AND ("mangifera"[MeSH Terms])

Search

[See more...](#)


#### Recent Activity

[Turn Off](#)
[Clear](#)

 Synergistic Effect of Supercritical CO2  
 Extract of Mango Ginger A... (0) [PubMed](#)

 kjioiubciunxiunkjd (0) [PubMed](#)

 "Biomed Research" (151) [PubMed](#)

 Research Integrity and Peer Review—past  
 highlights and future directions

[See more...](#)

You are here: [NCBI](#) > [Literature](#) > [PubMed](#)

[Support Center](#)

#### GETTING STARTED

[NCBI Education](#)  
[NCBI Help Manual](#)  
[NCBI Handbook](#)  
[Training & Tutorials](#)  
[Submit Data](#)

#### RESOURCES

[Chemicals & Bioassays](#)  
[Data & Software](#)  
[DNA & RNA](#)  
[Domains & Structures](#)  
[Genes & Expression](#)  
[Genetics & Medicine](#)  
[Genomes & Maps](#)  
[Homology](#)  
[Literature](#)  
[Proteins](#)  
[Sequence Analysis](#)  
[Taxonomy](#)  
[Variation](#)

#### POPULAR

[PubMed](#)  
[Bookshelf](#)  
[PubMed Central](#)  
[BLAST](#)  
[Nucleotide](#)  
[Genome](#)  
[SNP](#)  
[Gene](#)  
[Protein](#)  
[PubChem](#)

#### FEATURED

[Genetic Testing Registry](#)  
[GenBank](#)  
[Reference Sequences](#)  
[Gene Expression Omnibus](#)  
[Genome Data Viewer](#)  
[Human Genome](#)  
[Mouse Genome](#)  
[Influenza Virus](#)  
[Primer-BLAST](#)  
[Sequence Read Archive](#)

#### NCBI INFORMATION

[About NCBI](#)  
[Research at NCBI](#)  
[NCBI News & Blog](#)  
[NCBI FTP Site](#)  
[NCBI on Facebook](#)  
[NCBI on Twitter](#)  
[NCBI on YouTube](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)



# Reputational damage

## Czech university urged to bar new dean over 'junk journal' papers

Scholars claim dean-elect is unfit for office after publishing articles in journals found on Jeffrey Beall's blacklist

December 23, 2017

By Jack Grove  
Twitter: @jgro\_the



The Czech Republic's most famous university is facing calls to block the appointment of its new dean of social sciences after it emerged that she has published in alleged junk journals.

The controversy follows the decision by the academic senate of Charles University in Prague, which was founded in 1348, to select Alice Němcová Tejkalová as head of its Faculty of Social Sciences.



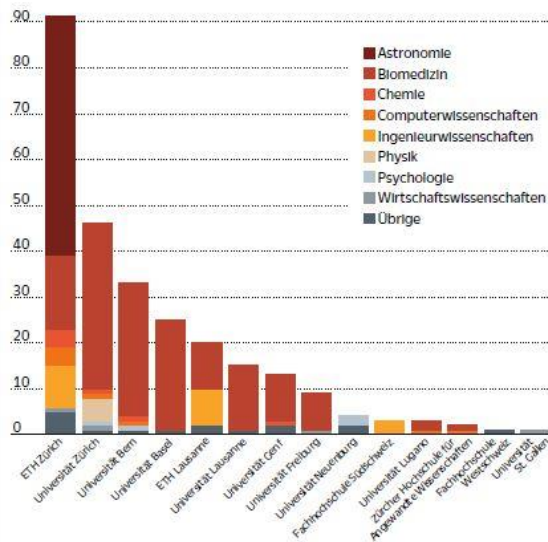
Predatory journals a 'global problem', study warns

More than 330 academics from across the world have added their names to an open letter calling on the university's rector, Tomáš Zima, to veto the committee's decision over several questionable publications.

(Grove, 2017)

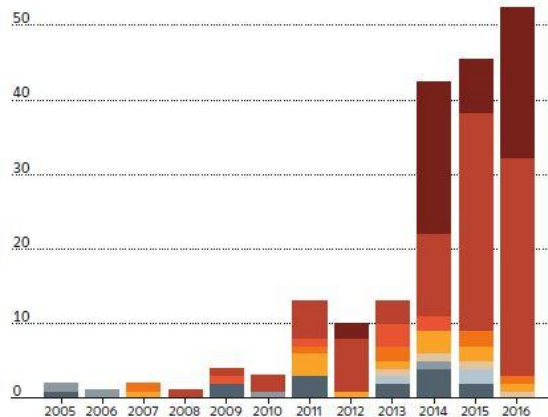
### 1 Universitäten vor Fachhochschulen

Anzahl Artikel in Pseudo-Journals pro Institution (2005–2017)



### 2 Massiver Anstieg

Anzahl Artikel von Schweizer Forschern in Pseudo-Journals pro Jahr



### 3 Unrühmlicher Rekord

Schweizer Forscher mit den meisten Artikeln in Pseudo-Journals



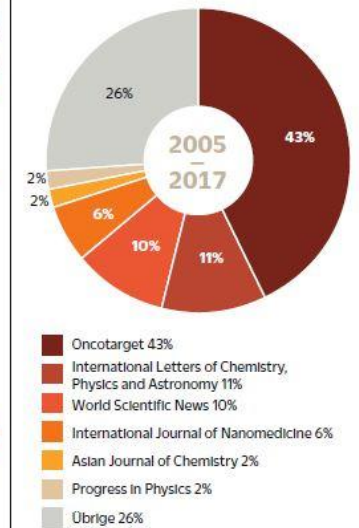
### 4 Viele Professoren betroffen

Universitäre Position der Autoren



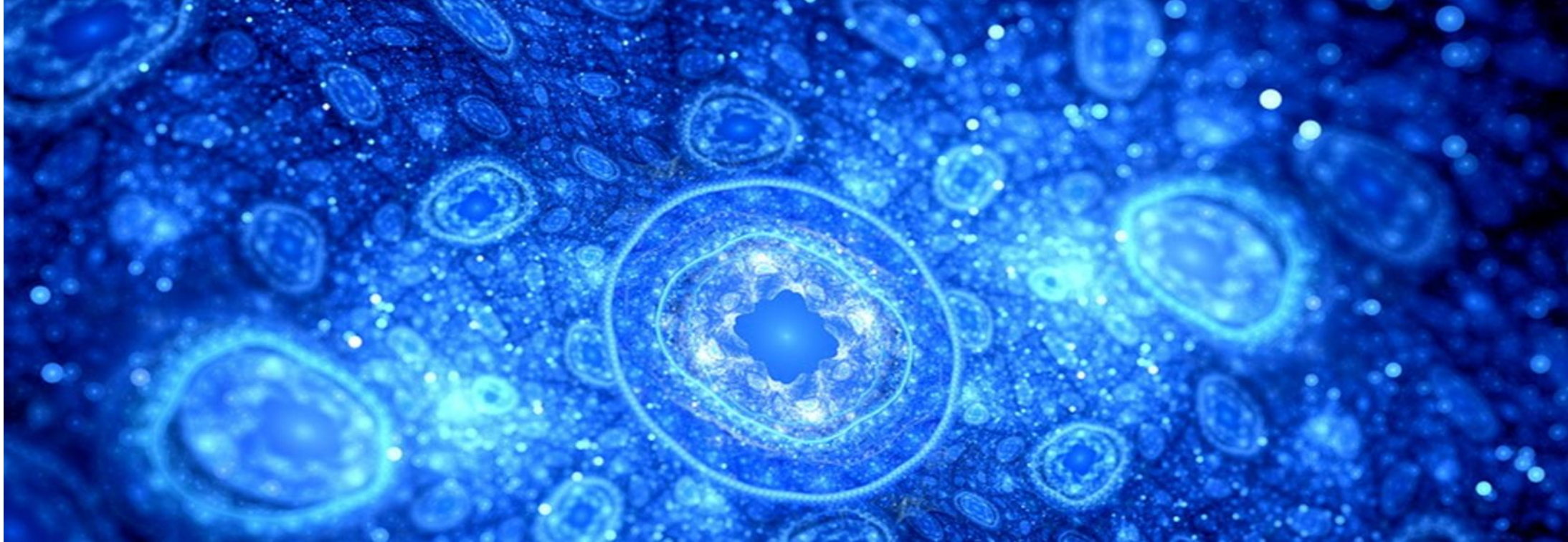
### 5 Krebsmagazin liegt vorne

Meistgenutzte Pseudo-Journals



(Amrein, 2018)





## How can we avoid predatory journals?

# How can we avoid predatory journals?

## Blacklists and Whitelists

- Databases that endorse the validity of a journal, or the lack thereof, based on sets of certain inclusion criteria
- Inclusion criteria relate to peer review, editorial services, business and publishing practices
- Two approaches: Blacklists and whitelists



CABELLS  
SCHOLARLY ANALYTICS

DOAJ  
DIRECTORY OF  
OPEN ACCESS  
JOURNALS



# How can we avoid predatory journals?

## Problems associated with blacklists and whitelists

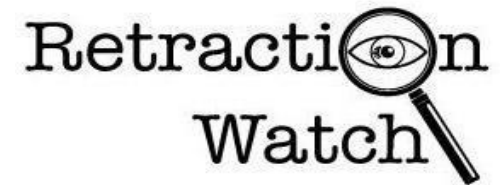
- **Lack of transparency:** Who decides which journals and publishers are indexed? Which inclusion criteria are met?
- **Incomplete:** One list can never capture all operating journals and publishers.
- **Static:** Publishing practices can change over time. Lists cannot capture this adequately.
- **Black and white:** Many journals operate in a grey-zone somewhere between «predatory» and «legitimate».

# How can we avoid predatory journals?

## Other initiatives:

### Retraction Watch

Blog that reports on retractions of scientific papers and on related topics, e.g. scientific misconduct and predatory publishing



### Think, Check, Submit

Provides a simple checklist for assessing the credentials of a journal or publisher

Examples:

- Do you or your colleagues know the journal?
- Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?
- Are articles indexed in services that you use?
- Do you recognise the editorial board?





# Questions?

Anna Severin  
Schweizerischer Nationalfonds  
Wildhainweg 3  
3001-Bern  
[anna.severin@snf.ch](mailto:anna.severin@snf.ch)  
Twitter: annasvrn