**Cover Letter**

We are submitting the letter to editor “TITLED; Selecting journal for publication in the era of “Haste, Predatory journals and COVID -19” to be considered for publication in your esteemed journal.

The manuscript was not published or under consideration, in part or whole, simultaneously in any other journal or proceedings.

There exists no conflict of interest amongst the authors.

**TITLE PAGE**

**TITLE:** **Selecting journal for publication in the era of “Haste, Predatory journals and COVID -19”**

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Dear Editor,

The year of rat 2020 has brought landmark changes on the planet which is reflected in many spheres of life including field of biomedical publication.

Firstly, though the open- access platform and paid scientist publication had opened the gates for low quality as well as intentionally dubious scientific journals (also called as Predatory journals) long back, the problem has been amplified by the COVID -19 pandemic. During this pandemic, the scientific world requires early and rapid dissemination of information and such journals can do it very well as they have minimal or absent peer-review process. The term “predatory journals” was coined by Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at University of Colorado, who also maintained a list of potentially predatory journals called as “Beall’s list”. Identifying predatory journals is often difficult as objective definition is lacking in literature. In December 2019, a consensus definition of predatory journals was given in a meeting attended by 43 experts from 10 countries.1 The consensus described “predatory publishers / journals” as the ones who are driven by financial gains, spread misleading information, lack transparency, don’t follow best editorial/publishing practices and use aggressive demands. A checklist to identify such journals is much needed and awaited.2 The novice needs to remain alert as these journals lure by rapidity of publication and open-access platform.

Secondly, Cabell’s international, a scholarly analytics company which maintains a list of such journals under the name of “Cabell’s blacklist” has withdrawn the potentially racist terminologies from their website, after the death of George Floyd, to show their solidarity in fight against racism. Their whitelisted and blacklisted journals are now called as “Journalytics” and “Predatory Reports” respectively.3

Thirdly even the legitimate journals need to redefine current standards of peer- review and publication as proven by recent retraction of COVID-19 related papers from high quality journals i.e. Lancet and NEJM.4 Enhancing transparency and legitimacy of scientific literature via “open- peer review process” and “open data” might be the future of high-quality scientific research and publication. The COVID -19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to correct our flaws of living and doing things.

Till scientific community evolves further, and better publication guidelines and standards are established, we have tried to help the young researchers in this era of haste by summarising the journal submission process in a flow chart (see figure 1).

**Declaration of interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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* Make a list of Journal from standard sites in the relevant area (e.g. Journal Citation Reports, https://www.scopus.com/sources.uri, <https://www.scimagojr.com/>)
* Select journal as per significance (international journals for topics of global interest/ regional journals for topics of region significance)
* Shortlist journals as per the journal rating and aims/mission of the journal

Figure 1. Flowchart to guide journal selection and submission for publication.

\*Think check submit” initiative is a campaign led by various organisations to guide researchers regarding submission of their work for publication in various journals. \*\*Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) maintains a list of open access journals with appropriate quality control and Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE) is an independent non-profit organisation that provides best practices and ethical guidance for editors and publishers. \*\*\*Cabell’s international provides a list of potentially predatory journals for a payment.

Submit

Consider following for guidance

* “THINK. CHECK.SUBMIT.” initiative\*
* DOAJ list and COPE membership of the journal\*\*
* Cabell’s international \*\*\*

Hints to Identify Predatory journals;

* ABSENT OR MINIMAL PEER REVIEW
* Editorial board lack transparency and expertise in the field
* Insufficient / hides information about the fees
* Quality of published papers is low
* Poorly maintained websites (deadlinks, spelling mistakes)

Check for predatory journals; Discard from your list

Note that it’s easier to identify legitimate journal as compared to predatory journal. Discard the ones you are not sure about

Check your list of journals for

1. Check need for payment (Does it match with your funding resources?)
2. Check Indexing policy (Does it match with your requirements?)
3. Check frequency of publication (weekly vs. monthly vs. quarterly)

* Make a final tentative list of journals where you can submit your work
* Download a sample article and author guidelines for these journals and read carefully
* Narrative reviews are frequently commissioned, so communicate with the editor before writing a review.

Points of emphasis in *author’s guidelines*

* Referencing style
* Word count (permissible for title, abstract and main document)
* Sub-headings needed for abstract and main document

Journal search

Minor differences in referencing style and word count between journals makes submission process tedious and time consuming.