

When calls for papers go wrong

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Last week I received email invitations from three different journals to submit a research article. I should have felt flattered, but it is unclear why it is me that received invitations to the journals *Biomarker Insights*, *Genomics Insights* and *International Journal of Medical Sciences*. All three journals already exist for a few years, and I wouldn't say that the focus of my research is biomarkers or genomics.

Then I thought about a recent blog post by Gunther Eysenbach: Black sheep among Open Access Journals and Publishers. In this post he calls the sending of unsolicited emails simply spamming and argues that there are also throw-away journals out there from shady publishers trying to cash in on the current surge of interest in open access publishing.

And this is what all three journals mentioned above have in common: they are open access journals and the author pays for the (accepted) article. It is obvious that any journal that gets paid by the author is interested in soliciting articles whereas a subscriber-pays journal would be interested in attracting new readers. There is nothing wrong with this, but there are two potential problems. (1) Like most people I don't like spam. (2) Journals with an author-pays business model have to be extremely careful about the quality of their papers.

Potential authors should first check whether the journal (if it is a biomedical journal) is indexed in Medline (*Genomics Insights* is not) and either has a reasonable impact factor or (for new journals) receives enough citations.