Dear Authors,

Journals are defined as “predatory” if they “actively solicit manuscripts and charge publications fees without providing robust peer review and editorial services” (Shamseer 2017). While you are reviewing the list of studies that potentially meet inclusion criteria, please keep in mind the prevalence of these journals, and the need for robust assessment of studies that are chosen for inclusion Cochrane Neonatal reviews.

Below is a list, created in an effort to identify characteristics of potentially predatory journals. This list is not all-inclusive, but the authors note that it is a good place to start (Shamseer 2017). Publication of a study in a predatory journal does not necessarily reflect on the quality of the research; however the peer review may not have been sufficient. Please evaluate the research carefully, and consider downgrading the evidence or excluding the study if you suspect the journal of predatory practices.

Salient characteristics of potential predatory journals

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| 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 which 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. | The contact email address is non-professional and non-journal affiliated (e.g., @gmail.com or @yahoo.com) |

Helpful Resources:

DOAJ is a community-curated online directory that indexes and provides access to high quality, open access, peer-reviewed journals. Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) (<https://doaj.org/>)

Think, Check, Submit is a website that describes a process authors can follow to ensure that they are submitting to a reputable journal. Their checklist is here: <http://thinkchecksubmit.org/check/>

Cabell’s New Predatory Journal Blacklist: A Review by Rick Anderson. July 25th 2017.

<https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2017/07/25/cabells-new-predatory-journal-blacklist-review/>

Shamseer 2017

Shamseer L, Moher D, Maduekwe O, Turner L, Barbour V, Burch R, Clark J, Galipeau J, Roberts J, Shea BJ. Potential predatory and legitimate biomedical journals: can you tell the difference? A cross-sectional comparison. BMC Medicine 2017; 15 (1): 28. DOI: 10.1186/s12916-017-0785-9. <https://bmcmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12916-017-0785-9>