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of so-called **predatory publishers**. An unintended consequence of the open access movement, predatory publishers have appeared in many countries, offering quick and easy publication in exchange for a fee, usually without any apparent peer review or quality control.

Although **concerns have been raised over predatory journals**, these are often accounts based on experience of a limited number of journals, or **research studies limited to a specific subject**.

Our research, recently **published in *Scientometrics***, analyses the extent of this problem throughout the entire Brazilian academic system. Our study uses a quantitative approach based on a large database of published papers (2,349,719 publications from 102,969 individual researchers) and constructed using reliable, replicable, statistical-based methods.

Publications data was taken from **Lattes**, an information system maintained by the Brazilian government to manage information on science, technology and innovation related to individual researchers and institutions working in Brazil. By gathering bibliometric data for all academics from 2000 to 2015, we were able to identify predatory publications, their year and the profiles of authors.

First, we compiled a database of predatory journals using data from the now extinct **Beall's list**, the **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)** and standard impact factor tables – **Journal Citation Reports** (previously Thomson Reuters, now Clarivate Analytics) and **SJR** (Scientific Journal Rankings – SCImago – Elsevier).

While not perfect, and certainly not without its critics, Beall's list highlighted a large number of allegedly predatory publishers and journals that were being referenced extensively in the research literature.

We set three levels of predatory identifications. The least severe, Level I, contains all journals found in Beall's list. The second, Level II, contains those journals found in Beall's list but not also included in the DOAJ. Level III, the most severe, contains those journals included in Level II but which also do not have an impact factor (in either JCR or SJR).

Who publishes in predatory journals?

When looking at the profiles of the researchers publishing in these venues, the results were striking. Contrary to our initial expectations, those found to have published significantly in predatory venues are experienced scholars,

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predatory journals. That is, the predatory journals classified in Qualis are being targeted by authors in a significant and worrying way. The message from our research is clear: predatory journals are not yet undermining the academic system of Brazil, but may do so in the future. The proportion of the research literature made up of predatory journals is increasing at an alarming rate. We provide strong evidence to suggest Qualis is a key factor in why we see such an increase. If not identified and combatted, predatory publishers may consume important research funds at the expense of the scientific endeavour. Global implications Although our results are restricted to Brazil, they constitute a warning to other countries with a similar academic system. The use of a local journal ranking such as Qualis is not novel or restricted to Brazil; countries such as Australia with the ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia) system, Norway with the CRISTin initiative, and Colombia with Publindex, all have their own standards. We suspect that if our study is replicated in these countries, similar results may be found. Raising awareness of predatory journals and publishers is essential to the sustainable future of academia, based on rigour and relevance. This task should be undertaken by research funding agencies. The results of our research indicate that researchers may be exploiting the inertia of these agencies in combatting the more energetically predatory journals and using governmental funds to publish ‘questionable’ scientific research results. The data used in our research is publicly available via an online application providing easy access to the database. We hope these simple tools can contribute to minimising the penetration of predatory publishers in the academic system. <i>Marcelo S Perlin is assistant professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; Takeyoshi Imasato is assistant professor at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul; and Denis Borenstein is a full professor in the Management School, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. This blog post is based on the authors’ article, “Is predatory publishing a real threat? Evidence from a large database study”, published in <i>Scientometrics</i> (DOI: 10.1007/s11192-018-2750-6). It was first published on the LSE Impact Blog and gives the views of the authors, and not the position of the LSE Impact Blog, nor of the London School of Economics and Political Science.</i>	Sustainability Microcredential Get Started Trust every transcript. Get ECE Document Authentication™ - Helps institutions worldwide confirm document legitimacy - One of many solutions for international admissions teams anywhere Learn More ECE Educational Credential Evaluators Expert Evaluations. Endless Possibilities.™ PROUD MEMBER OF NACES
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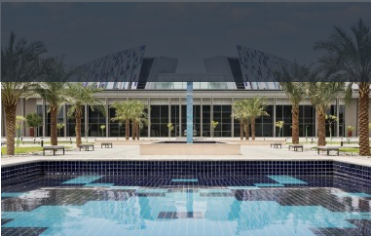
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