



Fraud alert



How much do you know about predatory conferences?

THE PREDATORY JOURNAL explosion over the past few years has now infiltrated the conference arena. You should know how to recognize a legitimate conference versus a bogus one. Your time, professional growth goals, and monetary resources are all precious commodities that can be easily exploited by unscrupulous organizers of programs that, on the surface, appear legitimate but are actually a sham.

What's the difference?

Predatory conferences are meetings designed to appear like legitimate scientific conferences but are actually fraudulent activities that exploit attendees' time and money, lack academic and editorial rigor, mimic well-established conferences to gain topic submissions, and advertise prominent professors and researchers as faculty or reviewers who are, in fact, not involved at all. This is a scary scenario. The number of predatory conferences has increased rapidly, reportedly numbering over 3,000 per year.

These events are an expansion of the predatory open access publishing business model, which charges publication fees to authors without providing the editorial and publishing services associated with legitimate journals. One resource on this topic is Jeffrey Beall, a well-known librarian and associate professor at the University of Colorado Denver. He coined the term "predatory meetings" as analogous to "predatory publications," where the "owners" are expert spammers and mimic legitimate publishers in many ways.

I heard Beall speak at the 2017 International Academy of Nurse Editors (INANE) meeting where he explained that the business model involves "conferences organized by revenue-seeking companies that want to exploit researchers' and others' need to build their curriculum vitae or resumes with conference presentations and papers in published proceedings or journals."

Other characteristics of predatory conferences (which are similar to the criticisms leveled against predatory publishing) include:

- rapid acceptance of submissions with poor quality control and little or no true peer review
- acceptance of submissions consisting of content that is nonsense or gibberish
- high attendance fees and charges disclosed only after a submission is accepted
- names, website content, or styles (such as colors) similar to more established conferences
- conference names similar to credible conferences being held in the same city.

What can you do?

National and international efforts are under way by the editors of credible journals to inform nurses and interdisciplinary authors and colleagues of these unethical and fraudulent practices. The INANE 2017 attendees agreed to add the predatory conferences to our collective action list to keep readers informed. By staying informed and spreading the word, you can help protect patients, colleagues, and the public. All of our colleagues should be aware of these unethical practices. Aspiring and novice nurse authors and speakers are at a particular disadvantage because they may not be aware of appropriate publishing and presentation practices.

The electronic age makes fraud easier. Protect the profession and your own professional growth. Treat the publications you read and the presentations you create as assets that need the same rigor and oversight used to protect your bank account.

You can access a directory of nursing journals at nursingeditors.com/journals-directory/. This comprehensive international listing of reputable nursing journals is a collaboration between INANE and Nurse Author & Editor. If you're unsure about a journal you're submitting to, check it against the INANE guidelines for evaluating the integrity of a journal (naepub.com/predatory-publishing/2014-24-3-2/) or the checklist at Think. Check. Submit. (thinkchecksubmit.org/).

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