

## Review Article

# Kscien's List; A New Strategy to Discourage Predatory Journals and Publishers (Second Version)

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## Abstract

Kscien's list is currently the most up-to-date blacklist. The current study aims to add some additional properties to the first version of Kscien's list in order to recognize predatory publications more appropriately. Kscien has developed two other independent lists besides the four previous ones under the titles "Conference list" and "Cumulative list". The conference list includes the titles of predatory conferences that are independent or sponsored by a particular organization. After vanishing Beall's list, Kscien's list remained the only up-to-date list of predatory publications. Nonetheless, the predators' rapid evolution with several mutated strategies compelled Kscien Predatory List Committee to take some necessary actions to keep predatory publications under observation and better recognize them; the conference and cumulative lists would be a necessary option to shed light on modern predators.

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## 1. Introduction

As it is well recognized, evaluating the scientific output of academics is commonly based on their publications in related fields [1]. The scientific publishing industry has recently shifted toward open-access publishing (OAP). This system of publication allows scientific content to be free to read, download, save, and distribute without limitations. The authors pay the article processing charge (APC) in OAP journals; however, the chances of citing and reusing the studies increase with their impact. Therefore, this model of publishing may have much more interest for both authors and journals [2]. Despite the fact that the OAP system has many advantages and is anticipated to become the default strategy for scholarly publications, it also provides a suitable environment for the development and emergence of predatory journals or publishers. According to Kakamad et al., a predatory journal or publisher is one that has a fraudulent or non-existent peer review process [3]. In the OAP system, each published work provides an income for the publisher. Conducting peer review, which may reject manuscripts repeatedly, would contradict the interests of predatory publishers due to reducing their income, so this factor makes them decline the peer-review process and degrade the quality of scientific literature [4]. This problem in the OAP system has led to the development of numerous predatory publishers in different fields that illegally collect income from researchers. So, the differentiation between pure science and pseudoscience is somewhat difficult in certain situations [4,5]. Several lists containing the names of predatory journals and publishers have previously been published under anonymous or formal names. The most known ones are Beall's list and Kscien's list. Beall's list has been removed and is no longer being updated, whereas Kscien's list is currently the most up-to-date one [4,6]. The current study aims to add some additional properties to the first version of Kscien's list in order to recognize predatory publications more appropriately.

## 2. Kscien's list

The commitment to practice within a system that praises researchers based on the total number of scientific publications, combined with a lack of proper guidance from institutions in developing countries, has led many academics to be seduced by predatory journals. The journals repeatedly send spam emails to the authors with the aim of convincing them to submit works for these masquerading journals [4]. Jeffrey Beall stated that predatory journals and publishers degraded the integrity of

science by faking and spoiling the peer-review process, which is a cornerstone of scientific communication [5]. As a result, the emergence of a list like Kscien's list became necessary to recognize predatory journals with various mutation strategies [4]. The Kscien Organization is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded by a group of young researchers. It mainly focuses on embedding and improving the research culture in developing countries, preserving the quality of scientific communication, and burying predatory journals. Researchers from developing countries have been known to be subjected to falling into the traps of predatory journals more than other regions of the world. Kscien's values are scientific approaches, eminence, respect, quality, cooperation, and competition. Its vision is to develop a culture of conducting high-quality research. Kscien has a well-trained and expert committee under the name "Predatory List Committee (PLC)" consisting of 25 young researchers. The Committee is dedicated to keeping the Kscien's list up-to-date and revealing the tactics and mutated strategies of predators. The criteria used to recognize predators are journal misconduct, fabrications, and inadequate peer review. From the commencement, like Beall's list, Kscien's list was composed of four lists, sequentially including predatory publishers, predatory standalone journals, hijacked journals, and misleading metrics. Kscien's list has remained the most updated predatory list under the efforts of a specialized committee, but even so, we think that some additional properties can make the list much more appropriate. The updated version of Kscien's list can be found on [www.kscien.org](http://www.kscien.org).

## 3. What has been added to Kscien's list?

Recognizing predatory journals and publishers was somewhat straightforward on the basis of previous criteria proposed by Beall's and Kscien's lists. Almost all predators used at least one of the following techniques: false indexation, comprehensive names, poorly developed websites, dubious publication fees, or a suspicious or lack of a peer review process. Nowadays, predatory publications have evolved and stepped up to another level that is often strenuous to distinguish from other legitimate journals and publishers [3]. Modern predators have come to the conclusion that by practicing the same techniques, their escape under the radar of predatory lists would be challenging, and their business would ultimately come to an end. As a result, these journals have repurposed techniques and concealed themselves from the radar of detecting predators by creating well-designed websites, indexing in real resources, being sponsored by legitimate organizations, offering free publication for other interests, creating bogus archives, checking for plagiarism [3,4]. The evolution of modern predators increases the demand for having much more properties in Kscien's list to parallelly

progress with the advancement of predators and keep them under the radar. Currently, Kscien has developed two other independent lists besides the four previous ones under the titles “Conference list” and “Cumulative list”. The conference list includes the titles of predatory conferences that are independent or sponsored by a particular organization. One of the unfavourable features of Kscien’s list was searching for journals published by a predatory publisher since the list included only the publisher’s name. This makes identifying those journals difficult, and researchers frequently mistake them for legitimate. The cumulative list has resolved this issue by extracting and listing the journals of the publishers separately. This list provides authors with a considerable resource for more easily identifying predatory publications.

#### 4. Conclusion

After vanishing Beall’s list, Kscien’s list remained the only up-to-date list of predatory publications. Nonetheless, the predators' rapid evolution with several mutated strategies compelled PLC to take some necessary actions to keep predatory publications under observation and better recognize them. The conference and cumulative lists would be necessary options to shed light on modern predators.

#### Declarations

**Conflict of interest statement:** The authors are all members of Kscien's list committee, Kscien Organization for Scientific Research.

**Ethical approval:** Not applicable.

**Guarantor:** The corresponding author is the guarantor of submission.

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