**REBUTTAL LETTER – Manuscript 10762 (Hanscheid et al.)**

***The crisis in scientific publishing:  a holistic perspective about background issues associated with predatory publishing.***

**REBUTTAL:**

We would like to thank the reviewers for their comments. Surprisingly to us, the reactions to our article are certainly disparate; and we explain the changes we have made in response to comments below. We have included the changes in our revised version wherever possible, certainly all constructive and specific comments have been addressed and incorporated. Please also note that given this is a commentary where we are very close to the word limit, never mind the bibliography, we have tried to respond to the suggestions taking these factors into account.

***Notas do editor:****Com o objectivo de optimizar a legibilidade do seu artigo e assim
incrementar potencialmente as citações do mesmo, recomendamos que os
conteúdos redigidos em inglês sejam revistos por  um "native speaker",
tradutor qualificado ou empresa especializada em serviços de "language
polishing".*

**REBUTTAL:**

The second author is English and a native speaker (David Hardisty) and lectures English linguistics.

***Revisor A:***

*The authors describe predatory practices in publishing, whether open accessor not. The article is very difficult to read and interpret as it stands. It needs restructuring and simplification. The article needs restructuring to clearly define an objective or objectives i.e. what points the authors intend to discuss. Then the authors should describe these two or three points in the subsequent paragraphs.*

REBUTTAL:

This reviewer criticizes the structure of the “article” (sic). The other two reviewers do not criticize the structure (on the contrary). So, with respect we feel that although this comment would be indeed valid for an article, we feel that there definitely seems to have been a misunderstanding of the text type here. This is a Perspective, not an original article. We also do not feel that this Perspective is overly difficult to read or interpret, an assessment apparently shared by the remaining two reviewers. In fact, we cannot see in which way any previous articles in this category, especially those which also address the issue of predatory publishing, follow the recommended structure given by the reviewer.

However, we acknowledge that the reviewer missed a more structured approach, and we have tried to address this as highlighted in the revised version.

***Revisor A:***

*Preferably, avoid verbatim quotes and instead, express what the person hitherto quoted meant to say, in your own words.*

REBUTTAL:

Again, this is not an article with an introductory background reading section where fewer verbatim quotes would occur. It is a commentary on a controversial topic and we have to be careful to:

a) Use quotes, because they are extremely to the point and their message might suffer through rephrasing.

b) It is also very important to separate our own opinions from others in a commentary.

c) Rephrasing these would open the door to us being accused of plagiarism, even if referenced. It seems more appropriate to completely attribute this to the author(s), and thus quote – it would be extremely unfortunate to be accused of plagiarising extremely well written quotes in an article on publishing!

***Revisor C:***

*The article “The crisis in scientific publishing: a holistic perspective about background issues associated with predatory publishing.” is a globally relevant manuscript particularly to the scientific community, highlighting some of the issues scientific publishing has been facing. Although the article intends to focus on the background issues of predatory publishing, it goes beyond this topic, highlighting some other major problems related to scientific publishing whose cause-effect relationship to predatory publishing advent is not completely established. However it poses some relevant questions to the scientific community, regarding the entire publication process and industry, questioning the* validity of it.

REBUTTAL:

Thank you for the positive feedback!

**Revisor C:**

Concerning specific aspects of the article:• Line 43 – A quotation mark is missing after the word “scale”

REBUTTAL:

Included.

***Revisor C:***• Line 69: “Is it not over-simplistic to indulge in a black-and-white, good-and bad dichotomy in scholarly publishing between tradition and OA publishing, given the larger crisis which has rattled biomedical science itself?” Although Beall developed his campaign against predatory journals adopting a hostile position against open access journals, recent published data on the topic doesn’t seem to reinforce this view of open access journals neither tries to diminish open access journals in opposition to traditional publishing. Moreover, most of the articles on predatory publishing reinforce this phenomenon as an important drawback to the development of small open access journals. Could you please clarify what is the relevance of highlight this dichotomy in relation to predatory publishing?

REBUTTAL:

The highlighting of the dichotomy is an extension of the comments made regarding Beale’s own highlighting of the dichotomy but we will clarify this in changing the sentence to:

Line 69: “Beale’s black-and-white, good-and bad dichotomy in scholarly publishing between tradition and OA publishing certainly seems over simplistic, given the larger crisis which has rattled biomedical science itself.”

***Revisor C:***

*• Line 84 – “Even rigorous peer review, held as the pinnacle of quality control in top journals, has issues.” In this paragraph, the authors formulate an important critic to peer-review.*

REBUTTAL: Thank you.

***Revisor C:***

However, the arguments used to support this sentence are only based on citations and personal perspectives of renowned editors. What is the authors’ personal view ofthe validity of peer-review and do you have any suggestion to improve its quality control capacity?

REBUTTAL:

We have quoted the Editor in chief of two of the three most important general medical journals being (i) critical and (ii) highly critical of peer review. We felt the experience of such important editors counted more than our own opinions in this regard and we wished only to show the concern of such individuals. If a statement from ourselves is needed, ideally we would like to put evidence that it is able to find more than factual scientific errors and that “most of what is published in journals is just plain wrong or nonsense”. (16). Given the private, confidential nature of peer reviewing, while it may facilitate decisions on acceptability, it is hard to carry out scientific enquiry into its validity. Perhaps it is instructive to look at the peer review of our submitted manuscript, given the disparate assessment of reviewer A and D, although neither makes any specific comments.

***Revisor C:***

*Line 95 – “Bizarrely, this suggests that the highly educated, intelligent, professional scientist, able to secure funding, to perform and analyse complex studies, to write them up clearly, often in a foreign language (English), is then too naïve and unexperienced for the simple task to spot a “predatory” publisher? “ The motives driving publication in predatory journals are not completely understood and this is a very important question posed by the authors.*

REBUTTAL:

Thank you!

**Revisor C:**

Although most of the articles highlight predatory publishing as a practice that preys authors, this question highlights the other face of the problem. However, the question is posed in an ironic tone that leaves few space to consider that authors can be truly be deceived. Although I agree with the point-of-view expressed by the authors, I suggest to review the sentence, having in consideration the following article, which exemplifies a situation where a senior scientist has been scammed (<https://www.nature.com/news/illegitimate-journals-scam-even-senior-scientists-1.22556>) or even the relevant question of the lack of training, mentorship and support of scientists from LMIC, who still remain the majority of authors publishing in predatory journals (<https://www.actamedicaportuguesa.com/revista/index.php/amp/article/view/10489/5388>).

REBUTTAL:

As it happens, a huge investigation has just been published, throwing doubts on the view that researchers are only being tricked into publishing in predatory journals. We quote: “However, in some cases, scientists appear to have taken advantage of the lack of editorial oversight—most predatory publishers omit peer review altogether—to report their results quickly and without the risk of rejection.” (<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/german-scientists-frequently-publish-in-predatory-journals-64518>). We have added this reference, although it exceeds the total allowed number, but we are doing this taking the comment of reviewer D into account.

However, we accept this suggestion for reviewing the sentence and therefore have added the following change:

Line 95 – “Although there is some evidence that some senior scientists or less well trained scientists from LMIC have been fooled this still suggests that the highly educated, intelligent, professional scientist, able to secure funding, to perform and analyse complex studies, to write them up clearly, often in a foreign language (English), is then too naïve and unexperienced for the simple task to spot a “predatory” publisher.

*Revisor D:*

*Excellent perspective! Although I found the bibliography very interesting I am afraid that the author's guide at AMP only allow up to 10 references in Perspective article. Nevertheless, maybe the Editor-in-Chief will open here an exception? We would like the Editor-in-Chief to indeed open an exception.*

REBUTTAL:

Thank you. We have added one more current publication, which we deem of significant importance and hope the Editor will make the suggested exception and accept this.