

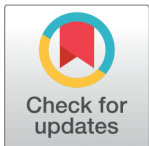
# Predatory conferences: A threat to scientific integrity

Hussein A. Abid<sup>1</sup>, Hayder Al-Aubaidy<sup>2</sup> and Hunny Sharma<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Scientific Affairs and Cultural Relations Section, Al-Nahrain University, Baghdad, Iraq

<sup>2</sup>Department of Microbiology, Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology & Centre for Cardiovascular Biology and Disease Research, School of Agriculture, Biomedicine & Environment, La Trobe University, Bundoora, VIC, Australia

<sup>3</sup>Department of Community and Family Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India



**Received** 28-03-2023

**Accepted** 28-03-2023

**Published** 30-03-2023

## Corresponding Author

Hussein A. Abid

[hussainaltameemy@yahoo.com](mailto:hussainaltameemy@yahoo.com)

Scientific Affairs and Cultural  
Relations Section, Al-Nahrain  
University, Baghdad, Iraq

**DOI** [https://doi.org/10.47419/  
bjbabs.v4i01.212](https://doi.org/10.47419/bjbabs.v4i01.212)

**Pages:** 3-7

Distributed under  
the Creative Commons  
Attribution (CC BY) 4.0  
International License, which  
permits unrestricted use,  
distribution, and reproduction in  
any medium or format, as well as  
alteration, transformation, or  
building upon the material,  
including for commercial use, as  
long as the original author and  
source are properly credited.

**Copyright:** © 2023 the Author(s)

Predatory conferences have become a significant issue in the academic community in recent years. These conferences are organized solely for profit and lack the proper academic rigor and standards that legitimate academic conferences follow. As a result, many researchers have raised concerns about the quality of research presented at these conferences and the potential harm this could cause to the reputation of the academic community. They often use deceptive marketing tactics to attract participants. For example, they may claim to have a high acceptance rate for submitted abstracts or offer publication in a fake or low-quality journal. They may also list well-known scholars as keynote speakers, even though those scholars may not have agreed to speak at the conference.<sup>1,2</sup>

Predatory conferences can have serious consequences for the scientific community.<sup>3</sup> These conferences often charge high registration fees and may require attendees to pay for their own travel and accommodation expenses. However, the conference may not provide any significant benefit to attendees in terms of networking opportunities, learning new research findings, or gaining feedback on their own research. Additionally, predatory conferences can damage the reputation of legitimate academic conferences by creating confusion among attendees and casting doubt on the quality of scientific research as a whole.

The rise of predatory conferences is a symptom of a broader problem within the academic community, namely the pressure to publish and present research in order to secure funding, tenure, and other professional rewards. This pressure has led some researchers to prioritize quantity over quality, and has created a market for predatory conferences that offer easy opportunities to present research without the rigorous review and feedback that is essential for scientific progress.

## DETECTION OF PREDATORY CONFERENCES

Detecting predatory conferences can be a challenging task, as they often disguise themselves as legitimate academic conferences. However, there are several warning signs and red flags that can help researchers identify predatory conferences. Some of these include:

## OPEN ACCESS

- **Poorly designed conference website:** Predatory conferences often have poorly designed and unprofessional-looking websites with grammatical errors, broken links, and lack of information about the conference organizers.<sup>4</sup>
- **Vague or generic conference themes:** Predatory conferences often have vague or generic themes, such as “Advances in Science and Technology”. Legitimate academic conferences typically have more specific themes that are relevant to a particular field of study.
- **Lack of peer review or editorial oversight:** Predatory conferences may claim to have a peer review process, but the reviews may not be conducted by experts in the field or may be very superficial, suggesting that they are not rigorous or reliable.<sup>1</sup>
- **Overemphasis on the fees:** Predatory conferences often place too much emphasis on the registration fees<sup>1,4</sup> and require payment before any papers or abstracts are submitted. They may also have hidden costs or charge high fees for publication or other services.
- **Lack of transparency:** Predatory conferences may not provide clear information on the location, date, and schedule of the conference. They may also not disclose the names or affiliations of the organizing committee or reviewers.<sup>5,6</sup>
- **Unsolicited invitations:** Researchers may receive unsolicited invitations to submit papers or attend conferences, often sent via email or social media. Predatory conferences may use generic and impersonal language, without mentioning the researcher’s specific research area or achievements.<sup>2,5</sup>
- **Lack of reputable sponsors or supporters:** Predatory conferences may claim to be supported by reputable organizations, universities, or academic journals, but such claims may not be verifiable or are often fake.<sup>7</sup>
- **Fake or low-quality journals:** Predatory conferences may claim to publish papers in fake or low-quality journals that are not recognized in the academic community. These journals may not have a proper editorial process or may charge exorbitant fees for publication.<sup>8</sup>

In order to ensure the credibility of conferences and avoid predatory practices, researchers are encouraged to consult online resources and databases that maintain lists of potentially fraudulent events. One such resource is the Caltech list (<https://library.caltech.edu/c.php?g=512665&p=3503029>),<sup>2</sup> which offers a comprehensive list of conferences that are considered questionable and should be avoided. Additionally, the Think-Check-Attend (<https://thinkcheckattend.org/>) tool serves as a valuable aid in the assessment and identification of a conference’s legitimacy.

## STOPPING PREDATORY CONFERENCES

It is incumbent upon the scientific community to take action against predatory conferences. Below are some strategies that can be used to prevent and stop predatory conferences:

- Raising awareness of predatory conferences among researchers, students, and other stakeholders through education and outreach efforts;
- Encouraging researchers to carefully evaluate conference invitations and to only attend events that are reputable and have a clear track record of high-quality presentations and peer review;
- Strengthening academic publishing in reputable journals can be encouraged by funding agencies and universities. Researchers should be made aware of the importance of publishing in reputable journals and should be encouraged to avoid predatory journals;
- Developing a set of criteria for legitimate conferences with clear guidelines for what constitutes a reputable conference and developing a system for accrediting conferences that meet these standards.

In conclusion, predatory conferences are a serious threat to the academic community and to the integrity of scientific research as they lack the rigorous peer review and editorial oversight that are the hallmarks of reputable academic conferences. Identifying and preventing predatory conferences requires the cooperation of multiple stakeholders in the academic community, including researchers, universities, funding agencies, and publishers. By working together, we can protect the integrity of academic research and prevent the spread of misinformation in the scientific community.

## DECLARATIONS

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### Funding resources

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## REFERENCES

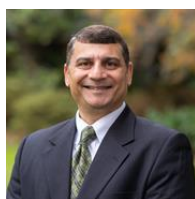
1. Godskesen T, Eriksson S, Oermann MH, Gabrielsson S. Predatory conferences: a systematic scoping review. *BMJ Open*. 2022;12(11):e62425–e62425. [10.1136/bmjopen-2022-062425](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-062425).
2. Koçak Z. Precise and immediate action against predatory conferences. *Balkan Med J*. 2019;37(1):1–2. [10.4274/balkanmedj.galenos.2020.2020.1.001](https://doi.org/10.4274/balkanmedj.galenos.2020.2020.1.001).
3. Ibrahim S, Saw A. The perils of predatory journals and conferences. *Malaysian Orthop J*. 2020;14(2):1–6. [10.5704/MOJ.2007.003](https://doi.org/10.5704/MOJ.2007.003).

4. Eaton S. Avoiding predatory journals and questionable conferences: A resource guide. University of Calgary. Calgary, Canada; 2018.
5. Krasowski MD, Lawrence JC, Briggs AS, Ford BA. Burden and characteristics of unsolicited emails from medical/scientific journals, conferences, and webinars to faculty and trainees at an academic pathology department. *J Pathol Inform.* 2019;10:16–16. [10.4103/jpi.jpi1219](https://doi.org/10.4103/jpi.jpi1219).
6. Ball P. Computer conference welcomes gobbledegook paper. *Nature.* 2005;10.1038/nature03653.
7. Beshyah S. Fake academia and bogus conferences are on the rise in the middle east: Time to act. *Ibnosina J Med Biomed Sci.* 2017;09(06):147–149. [10.4103/ijmbs.ijmbs6117](https://doi.org/10.4103/ijmbs.ijmbs6117).
8. Jakhar D, Kaur I. Predatory conferences: a flimflam academic deception. *Clin Exp Dermatol.* 2019;44(8):948–949. [10.1111/ced.14020](https://doi.org/10.1111/ced.14020).

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**Hussein A. Abid** is a researcher at Al-Nahrain University (Baghdad, Iraq) since late 2021. With a strong research focus on diagnostics and laboratory medicine, he specializes in biomarkers and diagnostic accuracy, aiming to discover novel biomarkers for cardiovascular and metabolic disorders as well as malignancies. Abid is also engaged in investigating the anti-inflammatory, toxicity, and medicinal properties of various nutraceuticals and synthetic compounds, which hold the potential for managing inflammatory diseases and malignancies. As a dedicated professional, Abid is committed to promoting scientific integrity and ethics in academic publishing. He is a top reviewer and editor for numerous international peer-reviewed journals published by well-known publishers. His collaborative efforts extend to both national and international research teams, working together to co-author and publish research works.



**Hayder Al-Aubaidy** is an Associate Professor and Anatomy Discipline Head at the Department of Microbiology, Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology at La Trobe University (Melbourne, Australia). His research interest is in the field of early detection and prevention of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. He is investigating the anti-inflammatory, lipid-lowering, and glucose-lowering effects of several nutraceutical compounds which can be used in prediabetes and /or early-stage type 2 diabetes to control (and revert) diabetes complications. He is also looking into the interplay of several biochemical markers associated with poor diabetes outcomes which may precipitate the development of diabetes complications including cardiovascular disease. Dr. Al-Aubaidy has published more than 70 research papers in peer-reviewed journals and collaborates with national and international

research teams. Furthermore, he has supervised numerous research high-degree students, tackling diverse topics related to his field of expertise.



**Hunny Sharma** is an accomplished Public Health Dentist pursuing a Ph.D. in Environmental Sanitation at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur, Chhattisgarh. His research focuses on dentistry aspects like Cariology, Oncology, Tobacco Cessation, and Oral Health, and he has a keen interest in research methodology. As a life member of prestigious associations such as the Indian Dental Association, the Indian Association of Public Health Dentistry, the Epidemiology Foundation of India, and the Indian Public Health Association, Dr. Sharma actively contributes to dentistry and public health in India. He has authored and reviewed numerous peer-reviewed articles, demonstrating his dedication to evidence-based medicine and dentistry. Dr. Sharma was the university topper in Public Health Dentistry and has received multiple research awards. His achievements and commitment make him a valuable asset to the profession and an inspiration to peers and students.