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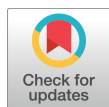
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LETTERS

WE READ SPAM A LOT

Young researchers and students receive spam a lot too

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Grey and colleagues identify the frequency and breadth of academic spam received by mid-career academics.¹ These emails aim to deliberately mislead academics and to earn money through unethical practice.

The concern goes beyond mid-career academics: many researchers early in their career and even postgraduate students receive such spam. In recent years, colleagues and students have told me that they have received academic spam and were unaware that it was from a fake journal. One young researcher told me that, after invitation, they were going to submit an article to a journal. I searched for the journal and told them that the outlet was a scheme for making money. They were shocked: “Wow—thanks for reading the small print! What a cheek to ask for money.” This is only one of many unfortunate examples of academics being duped into submitting to fake, predatory journals that hide publishing costs until an article is submitted or even accepted.

The rise in journals targeting academics is concerning, particularly given the pressures of publishing among early career academics and sometimes students. These predatory journals that offer quick turnaround of articles are often not indexed, have questionable review processes, have fake websites and publishers, and hide the cost of publishing. Receiving invitations from these outlets has become a daily occurrence. Universities should highlight the dangers of predatory journals to ensure that researchers use outlets that are reputable and ethical.

Competing interests: None declared.

1 Grey A, Bolland MJ, Dalbeth N, Gamble G, Sadler L. We read spam a lot: prospective cohort study of unsolicited and unwanted academic invitations. *BMJ* 2016;356:i5383. doi: 10.1136/bmj.i5383 pmid:27974354.

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