

## Letter to the Editor

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### Nature comment piece “Predatory journals recruit fake editor”

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Dear Editor,

After reading Nature comment piece “Predatory journals recruit fake editor”,<sup>1</sup> some questions crossed my mind. I wish to share them. First, can the scientific community be guilty of crying wolf too much concerning open access, that in the future it may be difficult to know if there is a problem or not? I have a feeling that researchers that have well conducted studies, that are ethical, well reported and scientifically credible are happy to see their research published in open access journals that do not base the acceptance decisions on novelty, importance, potential impact or breadth of appeal. One example is the supposed “unattractive” although important publication of negative results, all in open access journals.<sup>2</sup> Second, assuming the principle that scientific research and its publication are built on trust between all players involved (authors, reviewers and editors), could a sting operation using a fake researcher for a journal’s editorial position be considered as breaking said implied trust? In the process of a sting operation, can the creation of a fake scientist or even of a fake paper be considered as faking science? To achieve the same goal, maybe the authors could have used two real researchers with dissimilar CVs (not fictitious). Third, there is an ethical concern, one can wonder if the sting operation induced journals to accept the application of the fake scientist that they would not have otherwise invite on their own. Finally, I believe that the scientific community has the ethical obligation to strive for better research, better reviewers, better editors, better journals... but at which price? Who would be David and who would be Goliath?

Sincerely,

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#### References

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2. O'Hara B. Negative results are published. *Nature*. 2011;471(7339):448-9.