

PREDATORY CONFERENCES

Meetings to avoid



BACKGROUND

The past decade has seen an exponential increase in the number of journals that apparently lack any robust peer reviews of submitted papers and charge between \$500 and \$1500 for publication. These “predatory journals” have corrupted the concept of open-access publication and are found in various fields, including medicine, dentistry, science, and technology. This model has now spawned conferences that appear to be following the same patterns and can also be considered predatory. The characteristics of these conferences were documented with the hope that practitioners at the vulnerable stage of early career and somewhat inexperienced with conference organization and conduct would especially take note and avoid these gatherings.

CHARACTERISTICS

Predatory conferences are targeted not just to researchers and academics, but to the entire dental team. These meetings consistently exhibit a number of features. When these are recognized, the dental practitioner can almost be assured that the conference is not one that should be considered for attendance.

The initial approach to the practitioner will be by e-mail, and the event will be described as a Dental Congress, Global Summit, World Congress, or International Conference. The invitation itself and other documents will contain multiple grammatical errors. The text describing the conference tends to make no sense. Notably, the fee for a 2-day meeting is significant.

The meeting’s theme is vague, and the organizer is not a society or association familiar to dental practitioners. Among the names often seen are Science Assess, EuroSciCon, Biocoreconferences, Allied Academies, Scientific Future, and Scientific Federation.

The website for the conference often tells the visitor as much about the city where the meeting will be held as about the meeting itself. The goal appears to be to attract delegates. The meetings are held in relatively small hotels, which is at odds with the concept of a world conference. They never take place in conference centers, colleges, or universities.

The contact person is often someone with 2 given names. Some examples are Caroline Jennifer, Laura Jen, or Elena Rose. In addition, the contact address is just a virtual mailing address, such as a sandwich shop.

The topics covered in the conference include nearly everything that is done in dentistry. The organizing committee consists of a wealth of individuals whose photographs and biographies have been copied from other sites. The list of speakers is full of names dental practitioners don’t know. If one were to e-mail them to inquire about their attendance at the meeting, they often have never heard of the conference.

The combination of all these aspects tends to indicate that this is a predatory conference. In the author’s experience, if you reply to the e-mail or website, you will quickly receive a reply and will be welcomed to attend as long as the fee is submitted. Such a reply may also set loose an avalanche of invitations to similar conferences.

Clinical Significance

Researchers and clinicians should avoid predatory conferences, especially if they are just beginning their careers. Any advice for these new clinicians should be gleaned from supervisors and more senior colleagues rather than through a presentation at a conference. An invitation to be on the event’s organizing or planning committee or to give a presentation at a predatory conference should be refused.

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Reprints available from P Heasman; e-mail: peter.heasman@newcastle.ac.uk