

# The Rise of Fake and Clone Journals in Medical Sciences: A Threat to Research Integrity

Waqar M. Naqvi<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Physiotherapy, College of Health Sciences, Gulf Medical University, Ajman, UAE

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## Correspondence

Dr. Waqar M. Naqvi  
Department of Physiotherapy,  
College of Health Sciences, Gulf  
Medical University, Ajman, UAE  
E-mail: [dr.waqar@gmu.ac.ae](mailto:dr.waqar@gmu.ac.ae)



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## ABSTRACT

Open-access publishing has made research sharing and access easier, but it has also led to the proliferation of deceitful journals that exploit the author-pay model, endangering research integrity. These journals appear trustworthy, claim high impact factors, but lack review information and editorial board details. Identifying fake journals is challenging, but researchers can use indicators like thorough website examination, searching for additional contact information, and verifying indexing in reputable databases. Clone journals are fraudulent replicas of authentic ones that deceive authors and readers with identical names, logos, and designs. They lack peer reviews and publish flawed or deceitful research. Medical research is particularly vulnerable, with even prominent journals falling victim. Fake and cloned journals misguide researchers, clinicians, and policymakers, harming public health and undermining genuine research credibility. To protect valuable findings, researchers must stay vigilant, evaluate journals carefully, and choose reputable ones with rigorous peer-review processes and high impact factors. By doing so, researchers ensure comprehensive evaluation and contribute to medical science advancement. Addressing the issue requires collective attention from researchers, publishers, and policymakers, preserving research integrity and public well-being.

**Keywords:** Clone Journals, Fake Journals, Research, Publications, Indexing

The emergence of open-access publishing has simplified the process of researchers sharing their work and readers accessing it. Nevertheless, this development has also given rise to the proliferation of deceitful and replicated journals that exploit the author-pay business model, jeopardizing the integrity of published research. These journals often boast seemingly trustworthy websites and claim high impact factors, but lack proper review information and editorial board details, while promising swift publication [1,2].

In many cases, identifying fake journals proves challenging. However, researchers can utilize several common indicators to

steer clear of them. For instance, researchers should thoroughly examine the website and search for additional contact information beyond the provided email address. It is also advisable to verify if the journal is indexed in Web of Science, PubMed, or SCOPUS, and cross-check the mentioned links. Additionally, researchers should conduct basic research on journal blacklists to ascertain if a journal is listed [3].

On the other hand, clone journals are fraudulent replicas of authentic journals that employ the same name, logo, and website design to deceive authors and readers. These clone journals often exhibit lower quality standards and lack proper peer reviews,

resulting in the publication of flawed or deceitful research. Medical research is particularly vulnerable to the threat of clone journals, and even prominent journals in the field have fallen victim to them [2,4].

The detrimental impacts of fake and cloned journals on medical research are substantial. They can misguide researchers, clinicians, and policymakers, leading to significant harm to public health. Additionally, they undermine the credibility of genuine research and tarnish the reputation of reputable journals and publishers [1, 5].

In order to protect valuable research findings from falling into the hands of fake or clone journals, researchers must remain vigilant of the common signs that indicate their presence and diligently evaluate them before submitting their work. Additionally, researchers should give careful consideration to reputable journals that adhere to rigorous peer-review procedures and hold a high impact factor. By following these steps, researchers can guarantee that their work receives a comprehensive evaluation and makes meaningful contributions to the advancement of medical science [1,2].

In summary, the problem of fake and cloned journals in the medical sciences demands the collective attention of researchers, publishers, and policymakers. By familiarising themselves with the common indicators of these journals and making informed choices to publish in reputable journals, researchers can actively preserve the integrity of medical research and ensure the well-being of the public.

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