

The Deontology of Using Pets in Academic Publishing-Related Sting Operations

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Abstract

Academic publishing has become considerably stringent in the past few years because of increased scrutiny focused on an overwhelming number of challenges. One of the greatest challenges that academia faces is the notion that certain elements within science publishing have entered an era of 'fake'. There are few moral arguments in favor of anything fake in academic publishing, including fake identities (authors, reviewers, or editors), fake peer reviews, or fake publications. We argue – humor aside – that a zero-tolerance approach is likely essential to prevent the proliferation of fake aspects in academic publishing, independent of the publishing venue, i.e., journal or publisher. Sting operations against 'predatory' publishing outlets, which involve the use of fake authors, papers, or editors, continue to be selectively praised, including by some media. In this opinion article, we focus on the personification of animals assuming roles within academic publishing, such as authors or editors, to emphasize that while perhaps there is an element of humor, such actions may further endanger scientific integrity, precisely at a time when academic publishing is in the phase of a crisis of trust. We believe that while the authors of such hoaxes and sting operations involving animals, as well as some readers, may find humor in these actions, academic publishing cannot and should not be equated with reality shows. We ultimately argue that such hoaxes and sting operations have no place in academic publishing, nor do they have any scholarly value. Finally, we put forward a set of guidelines that could assist academics, including early career researchers, editors, publishers and ethics-related organizations, in dealing with these threats.

Keywords: deontology; editorial screening & standards; ethics; fake; morals; transparency

Fake Elements in Academic Publishing

The term 'fake' has assumed a central position in both journalism and science. In science, the issue of fake (i.e., untrue or false, and thus fraudulent) (Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017) has already expressed itself as fake peer reviews, fake authors or fake editor identities complemented by corresponding fake institutions and email addresses, all of which amount to fake data that poses a threat to science's integrity (Teixeira da Silva, 2017a; Clark & Buckmaster, 2021). Academia has begun, in recent years, to recognize that such elements constitute a risk to integrity, and the retraction of such fake elements is on the rise (Rivera & Teixeira da Silva, 2021). In this paper, we focus our opinion on the issue of hoaxes and sting operations, strictly within the realm of academic publishing.

Although a number of cases in the past few years have captured the attention of the media, the most prominent most likely being John Bohannon's sting operation, which was published in *Science*, against open access (OA) journals and publishers that had been blacklisted by Jeffrey Beall as 'predatory' (Bohannon, 2013). Blacklists such as those by Beall, which are now defunct, carry risks because they lack specificity, are biased, and may be error-prone (Teixeira da Silva & Tsigaris, 2018a). While much fanfare was made about that sting operation, curiously, little attention was placed on the author of that sting operation, John Bohannon, an investigative journalist who created multiple fake authors, fake institutions and fake email addresses in 304 versions of the same paper, clearly in direct violation of the ethical submission requirements of targeted journals, with the ultimate targeted objective of duping the editors and publishers of those OA journals (Al-Khatib & Teixeira da Silva, 2016; Teixeira da Silva & Al-Khatib, 2016). Although that sting resulted in the 'clean-up' of whitelists such as that by the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) (Frantsvåg, 2019), it reached a conclusion that many had already known, i.e., that 'predatory' publishing is widespread among OA journals and is not geographically limited (Teixeira da Silva et al., 2022). Ironically, despite an astonishing amount of fake identities and information having been used as the basal support for that sting, as well as the hundreds of simultaneous submissions, made intentionally to cause reputational damage, the 2013 *Science* paper has never been corrected, retracted, or subjected to any editorial expression of concern. It is even more ironic that ethics-promoting organizations such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and the Council of Science Editors (CSE), which are generally considered to be the global trend-setters in academic publishing-related ethics, have failed to explicitly consider hoaxes and sting operations, such as that by Bohannon, as unethical (Teixeira da Silva, 2021a).

The specific topic of this article is the alleged appointment of animals as editors, reviewers or authors, the ethics of such actions, and whether a consequentialist approach, wherein making sensationalist news headlines is the sought outcome, justifies the use of deception in the ‘war’ against ‘predatory’ journals and publishers by focusing on a sting that employed a dog as editor. The objective of this opinion paper is not to focus on the issue of poor editorial standards in journals, a theme that is widely explored elsewhere, but instead to focus on the ethical elements of sting operations and hoaxes within the context of academic publishing (**Teixeira da Silva, 2021a**). This paper also explores possible appropriate and ethical ways of addressing the issue of fake elements – specifically fake authors and editors – in academic publishing.

Editors’ Curriculum Vitae, Qualifications, and Responsibilities in Academic Publishing

Editors that are appointed to an editorial board of an academic journal must be thoroughly vetted, their credentials must be verified and the academic qualities that have led them to be appointed to this traditionally privileged position need to be checked by the publishing society’s board of directors, and/or the journal manager (**Teixeira da Silva & Al-Khatib, 2016; Dean & Forray, 2019**). Most importantly, the process should be transparent and open to the public, listing editors’ conflicts of interest (COIs) as well as a link to their full, accurate and complete *curriculum vitae* (CV), without differentiating between ‘predatory’ and ‘non-predatory’ papers and conferences, so that editors are always held accountable to other academics and the public (**Teixeira da Silva & Tsigaris, 2018b**). Despite this, it is rare to see editorial boards where editors’ COIs and complete CVs are listed (**Teixeira da Silva, 2021b**). In a predatory open access journal (POAJ), editors might be accepted to this position automatically, or may be listed without their permission, most likely without proper or even any vetting (**Sorokowski et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2019**). In such cases, the honor and privilege of being an editor of an academic journal becomes diluted. Within the context of the trivialization of editorial positions, including among editors’ own responsibilities (**Teixeira da Silva & Dobránszki, 2018**), the use of deception or fraudⁱ needs to be constantly emphasized. Finally, the use of animals or other pseudonymous authors, ‘complements the strategies to counteract, sabotage or disrupt credit distribution politics and, accordingly, evaluation metrics’ (**Penders & Shaw, 2020: 14**). With this moralistic prelude in hand, we now explore the case study of a dog that was appointed as an editor after his owner responded to unsolicited journal invitations to join their editorial boards. The purpose of the sting was to trick journals into appointing his dog on their editorial boards in order to show the ‘predatory’ nature of unsolicited journal spam.

The Morality of the Dog-as-Editor Sting

In May of 2017, an Australian news siteⁱⁱ reported how a dog named Ollie was serving on the editor board of seven supposedly POAJs after the owner of that dog created a fake name ('Dr.' Olivia Doll), fake institute (Subiaco College of Veterinary Science), with fake credentials (*curriculum vitae*) and even a photo of a public figure, an Australian pop-star, Kylie Minogue, to falsely represent his canine editorial creation. In other words, the dog's owner purposefully created a fake identity, fake credentials, fake qualifications, fake institutional affiliations and most likely fake email addresses for the applications, in order to complete his sting operation to assess the editorial rigor of these potential POAJs. The 'success' of this sting operation was that Doll, according to several media organizations that covered this story in 2017 (Annex 1), was appointed as an editor of those journals. This clearly reflects that no screening or vetting of editorial candidates occurred at those journals, thereby undermining their academic legitimacy and possibly that of their publishers. However, although the dog's owner used deception with the intention of exposing 'predatory' practices, the question we raise is whether violating the principles of virtue and deontological ethics (**Athanassoulis, 2014**), in particular, truthfulness, is justified, and whether it was ethical for the author of the sting to create a fake identity to pose as an editor.

To answer this question, we consider the justification that excuses breaching the duty of truthfulness in order to deceive the editors of those journals that were the targets of the dog-as-editor sting. A closer look at the details of that sting reveals that such justifications are included in a statement by the dog's owner: 'While this started as something lighthearted, I think it is important to expose shams of this kind which prey on the gullible, especially young or naive academics and those from developing countries'ⁱⁱⁱ. This statement gives the impression that the dog owner's primary objective was to expose the lack of good scholarly practices in selecting editorial boards by so-called POAJs. We believe that such an objective alone does not justify deceiving journal editors, simply because under virtue ethics and deontological justification (**McCarty, 2012; Bibus III, 2013**), or deontological ethics, academics are, simply speaking, required to follow the rules, uphold honesty and avoid deception, i.e., they should not tell lies. Lying is strongly condemned by moral theories and is rarely justified (**Alexander & Sherwin, 2003**), with some exceptions: for example, lying to prevent a murder, to detect a crime, or to protect innocent victims is morally justifiable (**Slobogin, 1997**). This was not the case for the dog's owner. From a deontological perspective, examining the actions employed in that sting led us to consider whether lying and deception, in order to dupe journals into accepting a fake editor without vetting, is morally right. On the other hand,

from a virtue ethics approach, one should consider what a virtuous person would do in a similar situation (Kim et al., 2021), raising many questions regarding honesty and integrity. Honesty is still an important aspect of integrity in academic life, so encouraging dishonesty is more likely to erode trust in academic institutions.

In appealing to the consequences that were directly or indirectly sought by the use of deception in the dog-as-editor sting, in particular exposing sham processes in selecting editors and protecting ‘gullible, especially young or naive academics and those from developing countries’, as justification for overriding the duty of truthfulness, we explored the amount of exposure that the case had received in the news (Annex 1). We also examined the reported POAJs that appointed the fake editor, i.e., ‘Dr.’ Olivia Doll the dog, to their editorial boards (Annex 2). Our examination shows that the dog-as-editor case received extensive coverage, even by some prominent media organizations. There were a few discrepancies, and possibly two additional journals were found that did not appear in the ‘original’ list of seven journals (Annex 3)^{iv}.

Consequently, the first outcome the author of the sting had sought was achieved. However, one should examine the other objective of the sting which can be inferred from the actor’s statement: ‘While this started as something lighthearted, I think it is important to expose shams of this kind which prey on the gullible, especially young or naive academics and those from developing countries’. In this regard, and by exploring the journals’ websites, it can be easily noted that the majority of these journals are still operating, at the time of writing, some under their original names, with international editorial boards, i.e., just under five years after that sting. We thus conclude that one outcome of the dog-as-editor sting, i.e., to protect gullible authors, was not achieved, by virtue of the fact that those journals are still accepting submissions. Very importantly, even though the seven stung journals are not listed by the ICMJE, four out of the five publishers of these supposed POAJs, as classified by the dog’s owner, are listed by the ICMJE^v, namely E-Cronicon Open Access^{vi}, Austin Publishing Group^{vii}, Peertechz Publications Pvt Ltd.^{viii}, and Juniper Publishers^{ix}, even though the ICMJE has a clear anti-POAJ stance (Teixeira da Silva, 2020a)^x.

In other words, the sting sought to alert and protect ‘gullible, especially young or naive academics and those from developing countries’ by widely disseminating the finding that the journals were negligent in recruiting and vetting prospective editors. In this regard, it is unreasonable to expect that the targeted ‘gullible authors’ would have received the dog owner’s alert when one takes into account the findings of Gabelkov et al., (2016), who estimated that the majority of those who share online articles do not click the URLs, i.e., do not read the articles. In addition, to our knowledge, there

has not yet been any follow up, including by the dog's owner and mastermind of the sting, that would enable an unbiased assessment of the outcome of the sting. Thus, the argument that considers making headlines a positive outcome would not be acceptable unless there was a follow up and only if there were consequences for those journals. The dog's owner also failed to include a control group in his sting, which should have been a supposedly reputable set of scholarly OA journals.

Unfortunately, the lack of perceived consequences has encouraged predatory practices (**Al-Khatib, 2016**) and sting operations in the context of scholarly publishing (**Teixeira da Silva, 2021a**). Hence we disagree that the argument 'for the greater good' or for 'academic purposes' serves as a valid excuse to employ false or fake tactics, including the use of a dog as an editor, simply because fake is not an academic property. In other words, as we see it, the main outcome that this case achieved was to create increased non-productive sensationalist media attention, to the issue of POAJs. Furthermore, a closer look at these biomedical journals reveal that they employ – or claim to employ – peer review, which raises a very important question of what criteria can be considered to be reliable for classifying journals as 'predatory', parasitic or unscholarly (**Al-Khatib, 2016; Eriksson & Helgesson, 2017**), a debate that rages on (**Teixeira da Silva et al., 2022**). The retirement of the term 'predatory' has been suggested in the post-Beall era (**Eriksson & Helgesson, 2018**).

In the light of the aforementioned discussion, we reject the argument that violating the duty of truthfulness, by an academic (in this case the dog's owner) was necessary to expose 'predatory' publishing practices. To clarify our point, we urge the reader to consider the following analogies: 1) A stranger pretending to be a student in order to deceive and embarrass an unethical university professor; 2) a student creating a fake email account posing as a celebrity to request an interview with a professor; 3) an editor, using a fake name and email, posing as an authority to dupe an editor of a competing journal in order to expose misconduct and gain a competitive advantage; or 4) a famous expert creating an ORCID account for their cat, using the image of a foreign actress and submitting a plagiarized article in order to trick the journal into publishing the article and then revealing the hoax in a social media post asking their followers to retweet #CatAuthoredArticle in order to spark a debate on the status of peer review. Would academics consider such deceptive practices justifiable? We believe that the answer to some of these questions is not that simple, because one should consider the facts and the possible outcomes on a case-by-case basis.

However, more questions can be raised: What would the appropriate course of action be if lying and deception were not morally justifiable,

simply because there were other means to deal with a certain situation? In addition, assuming that stinging journals to expose predatory practices constitutes an academic investigation, what measures should be taken to safeguard the rights of the editors of these journals? Should they not be informed and asked if they would give consent? Should institutional ethics approval be obtained? Are these actions 'right' under deontological ethics or virtue ethics, or from a consequentialist approach? With possible consequences, good or bad, in mind, academics are encouraged to ponder these rhetorical questions and issues, and the potential harm of using similar stings in academia. Clearly, sting operations, at least in our view, are not ethically permissible in any academic context because they fail to morally justify, under major ethical theories (**Biagetti et al., 2020**), the use of lies and deception to curb predatory journals and publishers, as we have shown in our analysis. Even more, the use of deception to exploit the naiveté and inexperience of some stakeholders, or gaps in scholarly publishing, is morally impermissible because such deception betrays the trust inherent in academic publishing (**Al-Khatib & Teixeira da Silva, 2016**).

A Note on Ethical Exceptionalism

An argument can be made that the individuals who are behind such sting operations and hoaxes that employ fake or fraudulent elements are applying a dual set of ethical values, one for themselves – by considering that they are themselves higher than established ethical codes – and one for the subjects that they are trying to sting, for whatever purpose, with the purpose of exposing their targets' ethical stance. This would be a classic example of ethical exceptionalism where the values, preached or created by an individual or a group of perceived higher moral or ethical standing, apply to all others, except themselves (**Teixeira da Silva, 2017b**). There is a gap between what some individuals expect as ethical behavior from others, and what justification they apply for their unethical actions (**Gino, 2015**). The lack of consequences or deterrents for those that engage in publishing malpractice (**Cox et al., 2018**), including those that apply double-standards, such as the authors of unethical sting operations, may spur them to conduct additional sting operations, publish hoaxes or fake papers, all with the ultimate intent of humor, public attention and self-satisfaction. Such is the case of a fairly recent sting of an economics journal (**Teixeira da Silva, 2020b**), where the author of the sting continues to enjoy institutional support and protection, maintaining their employment without any repercussions for the employment of unethical methodologies to intentionally shame colleagues and inflict reputational damage on the targets of those 'attacks'. There should be legal – including criminal, if necessary – consequences for those who create such fake elements (**Teixeira da Silva, 2020c**).

The Role of Media and Lack of Critical Analysis

Despite extensive media coverage of the dog-as-editor sting (Annex 1), the focus of the news headlines was the appointment of a dog to the editorial boards of POAJs. Such coverage was frequently republished without any factual rebuttal or critical analysis. Coverage was thus partially objective, not neutral, and thus biased. According to Fox (2013), objectivity is 'to report only the facts of the matter'. We argue, in agreement with Fox, that media coverage of this sting lacked interpretation and critical analysis, and many media outlets simply cloned what was stated in earlier media outlets, without adding new perspectives, or even investigating moral or ethical issues behind this sting and without any fact checking. This demonstrates, as previously reported by Diekerhof (2021), that journalists do not pay much attention to verification and that the routine of churning and re-using stories without checking was a common strategy for gathering information about the sting. One media source even wrote: 'A dog with Kylie Minogue's face has worked her way onto the boards of 7 international medical journals'^{xi}.

For example, the fact that a dog could not have sent the application to become an editor was neither mentioned nor questioned, perhaps for obvious reasons. Furthermore, no light was shed on the unintended consequences of using a celebrity's photo in operating this sting. Moreover, the fact that the sting was not exposed immediately to the extent that could have led to illegal actions by any of the targeted journals, even in situations where the use of a sting operation is permissible when it is the only means to detect or prevent a crime, effort should be made to prevent any unlawful conduct. The sting could have been revealed before the stung party committed an offense. For example, these journals, unknowingly, could have sent emails using the photo of Kylie Minogue and profited from infringing the copyright of her photo. Fortunately, as far as we can tell, they did not. In addition, a consequence of not contacting the journals immediately to expose the sting was that one journal contacted the fake editor with an invitation to peer review an article by an unwitting author, which could have led to a breach in confidentiality of that author's submission. Finally, another unintended consequence of the dog-as-editor sting was to expose academics to mockery and ridicule as exemplified in some comments on an article by Bernard Lagan^{xii}. Comments such as, (referring to the dog's photo): 'Better looking than a lot of academics I know'... and '[s]he [the dog] actually looks quite intelligent, for an academic,' are derogatory to all academics. We can appreciate that some may find humor in these characterizations. However, there are serious repercussions of not controlling fake element-ridden hoaxes and stings in academic publishing, and of not holding their creators legally and ethically accountable. In general, there are remedies to redress the violations that

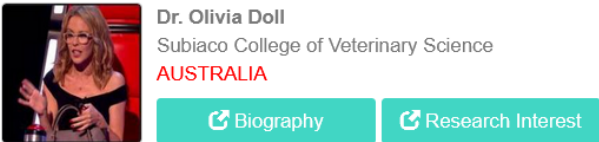
cause reputational harm and emotional distress, but this would depend on the facts, institutional policies and jurisdictions. Nevertheless, we believe that such forms of humor need to be clearly expunged from academic publishing for reasons we elaborate on in our conclusions.

Conclusions

So-called POAJs, as well as non-POAJs, spam academics, including senior scientists, with emails, which may include calls to join editor boards (Cobey, 2017). Despite several stings and exposés (Bohannon, 2013; Sorokowski et al., 2017), most of these journals do not appear to have been negatively affected. A closer look at the websites of the biomedical journals that appointed a ‘dog’^{xiii} to their editorial boards (Annex 2) reveals that they may have improved their practices, although it is impossible to compare – for these and almost any journal – editorial practices before and after the sting^{xiv}. However, at least in one case, the dog, including the photo of Minogue, continues to exist on an editor board (Figure. 1), even though the journal ceased publication after a single volume. In this respect, we argue that stings have not yet achieved any success, at least in dealing with ‘predatory’ publishing practices, because other than the reformation by the DOAJ, which removed some journals from its whitelist after John Bohannon’s sting (Bohannon, 2013), suspected editorial misconduct still continues.

Figure 1: A fake editor (‘Dr.’ Olivia Doll), in that it is a dog in reality, affiliated with a fake institute (Subiaco College of Veterinary Science), and using a photo of the Australian pop-star, Kylie Minogue. See Endnote^{xv} for details. (GSL Publishers, 2021; Web Archive, 2022)

A



Dr. Olivia Doll
Subiaco College of Veterinary Science
AUSTRALIA

Biography Research Interest

B

Olivia Doll, Subiaco College of Veterinary Science
Australia

Research Interest: Avian propinquity to canines in metropolitan suburbs; Relationships between Doberman Pinschers and Staffordshire Terriers in domestic environments; The role of domestic canines in promoting optimal mental health in ageing males; The impact of skateboards on canine ambulation; The benefits of abdominal massage for medium-sized canines; Implications for canine and equine animals of participation in gambling sports; Accidental drug use by Staffordshire Terriers in a roadside setting; Passive exposure of canines to alcohol fumes in the domestic environment

For example, on June 1, 2018 the DOAJ removed four journals from its list on the grounds of ‘suspected editorial misconduct by publishers’^{xvi}. Peter Boghossian, the author of multiple fake ‘hoax’ papers, suffered multiple retractions following an ethical investigation by Portland State University^{xvii}. This fact alone illustrates that there are other means to deal with the problem of ‘predatory’ journals and to assess editorial practices without using sting operations, although the DOAJ does not provide transparent details regarding the suspected editorial misconduct that led it to delist four OA journals on one day. Furthermore, it is enough to show that violating the duty of truthfulness, a duty that every academic should strictly adhere to, without deviation and despite the temptation of humor, cannot be justified. Therefore, we propose the following guidelines in order to deal with fake sting and hoax operations:

Young academics such as early career researchers need to reflect carefully on the consequences of their actions, on the reputational harm to their academic institutes, and on the damage to their careers if they engage in the creation of fake sting and hoax operations. It is here that their supervisors and research institutes play an important guiding educational role (Teixeira da Silva, 2021c).

We recommend that research institutions promote honesty and integrity (Horbach & Halffman, 2017), implement codes of ethics (Marušić & Marušić, 2022), and even add a module on publishing ethics and academic integrity to responsible conduct of research training. For example, The Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions at Illinois Institute of Technology maintains the largest online repository of ethics codes and guidelines in the world^{xviii}.

Sting operations and hoax papers should be explicitly prohibited (banned). In rare situations, if a sting is the only available tool *and* is necessary to expose wrongdoing, academics should coordinate with the appropriate authorities, i.e., law enforcement authorities who have the power to investigate stings, expose misconduct and impose penalties. Ultimately, academics are not above the law. In addition, there needs to be explicit IRB approval.

Major publishers and their journals, both traditional, hybrid OA and OA, must include clauses in their instructions for authors which clearly indicate that sting operations, hoaxes or any fake elements, for whatever purpose, are unethical and that creators of such elements will be subjected to strict institutional ethical vetting.

Ethics and publishing organizations such as COPE, ICMJE, WAME, CSE and others should add clear and explicit statements to their organizations’ ethical principles and codes of conduct, including their 16 ‘Principles of

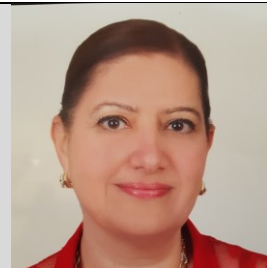
Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing^{xix}, to emphasize that sting operations, hoaxes or any fake elements are considered to be unethical, or to clearly state any limitations of their use. Their members should also carry the same clause.

In the spirit of a zero-tolerance approach, which is the only effective way to deal with a growing scourge of such fake operations, if the identity of the individual or group that orchestrated such an operation is known, then an ethical investigation should be initiated by research institutes in close coordination with editors (**Wager & Kleinert, 2021**), as a solution to b and c. In some cases, it is likely that the identity of the perpetrator is unknown, masqueraded by pseudonymous or anonymous identities, or whose communications may be masked by TOR-based communications or other means to avoid being traced, how then can moral 'justice' be served without involving the relevant authorities? Two tangible methods involve the retraction of fake papers, or of papers that have employed fake elements to base them on, and to mark fake editors with a prominent mark on the editor board. Retracted fake papers should be labeled as misconduct and, to be fair to all others who have retractions, should indicate the true identities of the author(s), if known, in the retraction notice. The risk of course, especially for POAJs or publishers, or other journals or publishers who in fact were guilty of poor or no vetting processes, is that such fake editors and papers may just suddenly disappear, i.e., silent retractions (**Teixeira da Silva, 2016**).

Wherever available, authors should use institutional emails for submission and publication, and editors should do their best to attempt to confirm the veracity of authors (curriculum vitae, institutional profile, etc.).

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Aceil Al-Khatib is an oral medicine specialist at King Abdullah University Hospital, and an associate professor at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). She received a fellowship in Responsible Conduct of Research (FRCR) from the University of California at San Diego and JUST, a Bachelor of Law (LLB) from Yarmouk University, Board certification by the American Board of Oral Medicine, Certificate in Oral Medicine and a Master of Stomatology from the University of Iowa, and Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) from Damascus University. Her research focuses on the integrity of the biomedical record, patient management, research and publishing ethics.



Annex 1

Media coverage (non-exhaustive list) in 2017 and 2018 of the sting operation that employed the Daube-owned dog as editor. The last Google search was conducted on July 6, 2018 using the terms 'Daube ollie dog editor'. All sites were verified once in May, 2020, and last verified on March 27, 2022, except where indicated otherwise. We note that five originally listed websites (not indicated in the list) have now disappeared.

<https://www.cuteness.com/13707807/heres-how-this-dog-became-the-editor-of-several-medical-journals>

<https://thewest.com.au/news/health/is-this-the-worlds-smartest-canine-or-has-science-gone-to-the-dogs-ng-b88479075z>

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2017/05/21/dr-doll-is-on-the-board-for-7-medical-journals-shes-also-a-doctor-a-22102550/>

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ollie-the-dog-awarded-phd-in-medical-research-vetting-test-rtbqm6g6b>

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/olivia-doll-predatory-journals>

<http://mashable.com/2017/05/26/dog-sits-on-editorial-board-for-medical-journals/#.yp7.EEBZOqq>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/meet-ollie-the-australian-dog-now-peer-reviewing-academic-papers-for-international-journals-2017-5>

<https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/wa/the-perth-dog-thats-probably-smarter-than-you-ng-a4de0d201ce420e0302c69532a399419>

<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/brisbane/programs/evenings/very-good-girl-on-the-board-of-seven-very-bad-medical-journals/8574036>

<https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/when-youre-in-academia-but-no-one-knows-youre-a-dog>

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/2017-06-18-a-staffordshire-terrier-has-worked-her-way-onto-the-boards-of-7-international-medical-journals/>

<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/dogs-bollocks/1443087>

<http://bigthink.com/robby-berman/you-know-these-studies-are-good-since-theyve-been-reviewed-by-a-dog>

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20171209/NEWS/171209892>

<https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2017/19/dog-of-a-dilemma-the-rise-of-the-predatory-journal/>

<https://www.livescience.com/59311-dog-serves-as-science-advisor.html>

<https://boingboing.net/2017/11/20/predatory-journals.html>

<https://www.science.org/content/article/australian-dog-serves-editorial-boards-seven-medical-journals>

<https://retractionwatch.com/2017/05/27/weekend-reads-editor-whos-dog-fake-author-monument-peer-review/>

Annex 2

List of seven biomedical journals that appointed Daube's dog Ollie to their editorial boards^{xx}. The presence of these journals on the ICMJE list of journals claiming to follow the ICMJE Recommendations (<http://www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations/>) was last verified on March 27, 2022. The veracity of editors on the editorial boards of these journals has not been independently assessed, nor has any other scholarly aspect of their publishing process. Although the listed titles are identical to those that appeared in the media, it is impossible to confirm, with certainty, that they are the same journals that were stung, even when searching on the Internet Archive (Wayback Machine).

EC Pulmonary and Respiratory Medicine:

https://www.gavinpublishers.com/journals/journals_details/pulmonary-and-respiratory-medicine-open-access.html (present)

Journal of Community Medicine & Public Health Care:

<https://www.heraldopenaccess.us/journals/journal-of-community-medicine-public-health-care> (absent)

Journal of Tobacco Stimulated Diseases:

<https://www.peertechzpublications.com/index.php/journals/journal-of-tobacco-stimulated-diseases> (absent)

Journal of Psychiatry and Mental Disorders:

<http://austinpublishinggroup.com/psychiatry-mental-disorders/> (present)

Austin Addiction Sciences:

<http://austinpublishinggroup.com/addiction-sciences/> (present)

Global Journal of Addiction and Rehabilitation Medicine:

<https://juniperpublishers.com/gjarm/index.php>

Journal of Alcohol and Drug Abuse^{xxi}:

<http://smjournals.com/alcohol-drug/> (absent)

Alzheimer's and Parkinsonism: Research and Therapy^{xxii}:

<http://smjournals.com/alzheimers-parkinsonism/index.php> (absent)

Annex 3

Another two journal titles that were identified in select media sources that did not appear in the original set of seven targeted journals that were widely publicized in most of the media sources in Annex 1. It is unclear if an application was submitted to more than seven journals.

Psychiatry and Mental Disorders^{xxiii}:

<https://gslpublishers.org/journals/editorial-board.php?title=psychiatry-and-mental-disorders#journals/editorial-board.php?title=>

American Research Journal of Medicine and Surgery^{xxiv}:

<https://www.arjonline.org/american-research-journal-of-medicine-and-surgery>

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Endnotes

- ⁱ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraud> (although we recognize that some scholars do not encourage the use of Wikipedia as a reliable source of information, for this purpose, i.e., to broadly introduce the concept of fraud, we feel that this collection of sources, including academic papers, offers ample coverage for highlighting this term within our paper). [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ⁱⁱ <http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/the-perth-dog-thats-probably-smarter-than-you/news-story/a4de0d201ce420e0302c69532a399419> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/wa/the-perth-dog-thats-probably-smarter-than-you-ng-a4de0d201ce420e0302c69532a399419> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{iv} We do not exclude the possibility that Business Insider may have made an error with one journal title.
- ^v <http://www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations/> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{vi} <https://www.econicon.com/journals.php> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{vii} <https://austinpublishinggroup.com/open-access-journals.html> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{viii} <https://www.peertechzpublications.com/journals> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{ix} <https://juniperpublishers.com/journals.php> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^x http://www.icmje.org/news-and-editorials/fake_predatory_pseudo_journals_dec17.html [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xi} <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/2017-06-18-a-staffordshire-terrier-has-worked-her-way-onto-the-boards-of-7-international-medical-journals/> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xii} <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ollie-the-dog-awarded-phd-in-medical-research-vetting-test-rtbqm6g6b> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xiii} We remind readers that at the time of application, the ‘individual’ that was applying for the position of an editor was in fact a dog (or more precisely, the owner of the dog). It is thus likely that, in the application, there was no reference to a dog, i.e., a fake editor who used the dog’s name was appointed.
- ^{xiv} See for example the website of EC Pulmonary and Respiratory Medicine <https://www.econicon.com/ECPRM.php> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xv} Figure 1: A fake editor (‘Dr.’ Olivia Doll), in that it is a dog in reality, affiliated with a fake institute (Subiaco College of Veterinary Science), and using a photo of the Australian pop-star, Kylie Minogue, continues to be listed on the editorial board of Psychiatry and Mental Disorders, published by Global Scientific Library, a journal that ceased publication after only a single volume/issue (A). In another case, ‘Dr.’ Doll was briefly listed as an Associate Editor of Global Journal of Addiction and Rehabilitation Medicine, published by Juniper Publishers (B). The veracity of other editors and of other aspects of these journals and publishers were not assessed. Screenshot date: March 27, 2022. Sources: (GSL Publishers, 2022; Web Archive, 2022).
- ^{xvi} https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/183mRBRqs2jOvP0qZWXN8dUd02D4vL0M0v_kgYF8HORM/edit#gid=1650882189 [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xvii} <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/01/08/author-recent-academic-hoax-faces-disciplinary-action-portland-state> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xviii} <http://ethicscodescollection.org/> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xix} For COPE: <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing>; for the DOAJ: <https://blog.doaj.org/2018/01/15/principles-of-transparency-and-best-practice-in-scholarly-publishing-version-3/>; for OASPA: <https://wame.org/principles-of-transparency-and-best-practice-in-scholarly-publishing>; for WAME: <https://wame.org/principles-of-transparency-and-best-practice-in-scholarly-publishing> [Accessed: August 25, 2022].
- ^{xx} <http://www.businessinsider.com/meet-ollie-the-australian-dog-now-peer-reviewing-academic-papers-for-international-journals-2017-5> [Accessed: March 25, 2022].
- ^{xxi} Attempts to access the last two journals published by JSMCentral LLC (<https://smjournals.com/>) returned this warning (Chrome, Explorer and Firefox browsers): ‘Attackers might be trying to steal your information from smjournals.com (for example, passwords, messages, or credit cards). Learn more...’
- ^{xxii} The last two listed journals can no longer be found. They are indicated as one journal entitled *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Alzheimer’s and Parkinsonism: Research and Therapy* according to two sources: <https://www.cuteness.com/13707807/heres-how-this-dog-became-the-editor-of-several-medical-journals> and <https://www.businessinsider.com/meet-ollie-the-australian-dog-now-peer-reviewing-academic-papers-for-international-journals-2017-5>

[reviewing-academic-papers-for-international-journals-2017-5](#). [Accessed: March 25, 2022]. Hence the discrepancy in numbers (seven versus eight). Thus, seven journals accepted the fake (dog) editor.

^{xxiii} This journal is listed according to this source (see Fig. 1A; <https://gspublishers.org/journals/editorial-board.php?title=psychiatry-and-mental-disorders#journals/editorial-board.php?title=>) but not according to Business Insider. [Accessed: March 25, 2022].

^{xxiv} This journal is listed according to this source (<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20171209/NEWS/171209892/public-health-expert-submits-dog-for-spots-on-medical-journal-editorial-boards>) but not according to Business Insider. [Accessed: March 25, 2022].