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Dedication
We would like to dedicate this issue to Nyanyukweni Pandeni Tshifugula, a member of REASA, ARESA alumnus and friend. It is with deep sadness that we say goodbye to Pandeni. We will remember your sense of humor, love for ethics, but most of all your personhood. Our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones.

Chairperson’s message
The establishment of the Research Ethics Committee Association of Southern Africa (REASA) in 2015 marked a commitment to bring members of research ethics committees across Southern Africa together to exchange ideas, knowledge and experience relating to the theory and practice of research ethics. During the first biennial meeting on 11 May earlier this year in Cape Town, a clarion call was made to extend REASA’s service to Africa, and to open membership to those persons with a vested interest in research ethics governance. Since the launch of this non-profit membership association in 2015, our membership has gradually grown. At present, we have 67 paid up members.

I am pleased to announce that the REASA website will be launched during October to align with Global Ethics Day. We chose this date to mark our commitment to collaborate in building an Africa that
demonstrates good governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. I am confident that visibility on the World Wide Web will provide us with many opportunities to accelerate our membership numbers and reach out to our members. We also embarked on re-branding, and the new logo will go live with the launch of the website.

In Section 1 of the newsletter, I have the pleasure to introduce REASA’s Executive Committee to you. In addition, Prof Wayne Towers provides some reflections on REASA’s first biennial meeting, complemented by the Executive Committee’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

Section 2 of the newsletter acknowledges the nexus between the theory and practice of two interrelated knowledge areas – research ethics and research integrity. The REASA Executive Committee supports the view that trust and accountability are integral to the production of scientific knowledge. We are honoured to have Prof Brenda Morrow, the deputy chairperson of REASA, and Dr Marianne Engelbrecht, Unisa’s first permanently appointed Research Ethics and Integrity Advisor, and a REASA member, sharing their views on a number of issues relating to research integrity. Brenda raises awareness on the threat of “big/little lies” eroding the integrity of health research. She positions dishonest researcher practices on a continuum, ranging from serious academic fraud with legal implications, to questionable behaviour. It is of concern that the scientific community tends to underrate the long-term negative consequences of the latter, thus, condoning conduct that could systematically erode society’s trust in the research enterprise. Marianne’s contribution provides practical advice to researchers to protect themselves against the trap of self-plagiarism and predatory publications. These contributions are timely. Alleged cases of research misconduct regularly receive media attention. In one of the latest reported cases in South Africa, City Press reported on an alleged case of “almost a dozen” academics at the North West University being under investigation for plagiarism. The headline reads, “Academics stole work”\(^2\). In 2015, a similarly reputation-damaging headline, “Dodgy academics also in firing line”\(^3\), referred to academics who were either found guilty of plagiarism, or resigned prior to formal investigations for plagiarism, at a few South African Universities.

One merely has to engage with scholarly literature on this topic, and visit the website of the Research Integrity Office of the USA, to realise that cases of research misconduct, inclusive of clinical research, is of global concern. As early as 2009 the Research Integrity Office identified the role of the REC in

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preventing research misconduct as a critical topic for discussion. However, I am of the opinion that many RECs would argue that the prevention of research misconduct is either not part of their mandate (some Universities have appointed research integrity officers for this purpose), or that they do not have the resources available to extend their traditional human participant/animal protection role to include concerted efforts to promote research integrity.

You are welcome to share your thoughts on this topic with us by sending an e-mail to secretary.reasa@gmail.com or visagrg@unisa.ac.za. Once the website is active, an interactive forum will provide opportunity for members to share ideas and to request advice that forms part of the operations of a REC.

Be on the lookout for the next quarterly newsletter that will focus on the theme: “The role of leadership in research ethics committees” and a description of the symbolism inherent to the new logo.

Retha Visagie

SECTION 1 - BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING OF 11 MAY 2017

Bi-Annual Meeting of REASA On 11 May 2017

The new Executive Committee of REASA was introduced during the Biennial General Meeting that took place on 11 May 2017, as a satellite event during the Advancing Research Ethics Training in Southern Africa (ARESA) conference held at the Vineyard Hotel, Newlands, Cape Town. The meeting was furthermore an opportunity to introduce the updated goals and vision of REASA to the members of REASA and other interested parties. During the Chairperson’s report, Dr Retha Visagie highlighted that although the REASA committee arose from the ARESA programme, it is an independent, not-for profit membership association with the vision of “Connecting research ethics committees in Southern Africa through the 5 Cs i.e. Cooperative engagement – promoting ethical human and animal research, Communication, Care by fostering a sense of community, Connection (networks) by establishing regional networks, and Capacity strengthening”.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Retha Visagie. She highlighted the main achievements of the steering committee in setting up REASA, which included the registration of REASA as a non-profit organisation (NPO), collaboration with the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), a SOAR analysis of the committee, the distribution of the first newsletter, the selection of a website provider, and the nomination and voting for the Executive Committee for REASA. She
continued by indicating that the committee would not rest on their laurels, but would soon begin with critical stakeholder engagement e.g. the National Health Research Ethics Council, and actualising the commitments made regarding service delivery by the newly elected Executive Committee.

Dr Nanette Briers provided the Treasurer’s report which indicated that the committee had a total of 48 members registered, the majority of whom were affiliated with UNISA or other entities outside of South Africa. A breakdown of the members further revealed that 79% of the membership were REC members, 9% research ethics administrators, 8% research integrity officers/managers, while 4% indicated that they had a vested interest in ethics. The treasurer further indicated that the new 2017 membership application form would soon be sent out and that the main target populations for new members would be ethics administrators and research integrity officers. An accountant was identified and would assist with ensuring transparency and documentation requirements.

The newly elected Executive Committee was introduced by Dr Visagie as indicated later on in the newsletter. Following this discussion, the constitution of REASA was tabled for approval. A discussion lead by Prof Bert Mohr was then undertaken regarding the use of the term President vs Chairperson for the person heading up the REASA committee. It was decided that the terminology of “chairperson” would be used in the interim, but that the discussion could again be undertaken in future.

Another discussion regarding the constitution centred on the definition of individuals who are eligible to join REASA as members. Following this discussion, a fourth category was added to the constitution indicating that individuals with a vested interest in research ethics governance could also be members. Following these deliberations, it was decided that the constitution would be accepted with the changes made according to the discussion.

A final matter that was discussed was a request the committee had received for the development of an electronic advisory service by REASA to RECs. It was indicated by the attendees that this would be a very useful opportunity and it was decided that placing it on the website to be developed, would potentially be the best way forward. The attendees were thanked for their inputs and the meeting was adjourned.

The Executive Committee of REASA hope to always be at your service.

Prof Wayne Towers
Some of the newly elected members during the Biennial General meeting on 11 May 2017. From left to right: Prof Wayne Towers, Dr Matsheliso Molapo, Dr Retha Visagie, Prof Stuart Rennie, Mrs Tanya Coetzee, Prof Lizeth Roets and Prof Keymantri Moodley. Absent in photo: Dr Dudu Jankies and Dr Nanette Briers.

Introducing the new Executive Committee of REASA

The members are working in different portfolios and form part of teams in different working groups with team leaders.

Chairperson

Dr Retha Visagie is the Manager: Research Integrity at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Aim and Motivation for REASA: I have been an advocate for research ethics reform since 2012. As the chairperson of REASA’s Executive Committee, I aim to provide leadership necessary to build the capacity of Research Ethics Committees across Southern Africa. I believe that research ethics governance should take into consideration the rights and wellbeing of diverse stakeholders, including participants, researchers, members of RECs, administrators, and funders. I support REASA’s vision of being an independent multidisciplinary membership association ‘Connecting research ethics committees in Southern Africa’. One of my key priorities is to co-construct strategies to meet the needs of REASA’s membership. I endeavour to engage in a spirit of collegiality with national and regional research ethics bodies, such as the NHREC, as well as research ethics communities to promote the practice of ethical human and animal research in Southern Africa.
Deputy Chairperson

**Prof Brenda Morrow** is a Professor in the Department of Paediatrics, University of Cape Town.

**Aim and Motivation for REASA:** Health research ethics, particularly related to child health research in low and middle income countries, and child health advocacy, are areas of special interest to me, and a focus area in my academic and clinical practice. I feel more attention is needed throughout Africa to increase awareness and training opportunities in research ethics, in order to positively impact the conduct of appropriate and responsive human research on the continent. REASA has the potential to fill a gap which currently exists, in making such opportunities accessible to a wide range of stakeholders in different African countries. I hope I can help make the sustainability of this association a reality, having been part of the steering committee tasked with establishing REASA *ab initio*.

Treasurer

**Dr Nanette Briers** is a senior lecturer in the School of Anatomical Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

**Aim and Motivation for REASA:** I served on the REASA steering committee and have been the treasurer since the inception of REASA in 2015. I also have previous treasurer experience as part of the organising committee that arranged the biennial meeting of the International Association of Craniofacial Identification in 2013 in South Africa, with a budget of R1million.

Secretary

**Tanya Coetzee** is currently serving as a member of the TUT Faculty of Science Ethics Committee.

**Aim and Motivation for REASA:** I am committed to the belief that the research ethics community should be given a platform for interaction to share experience and knowledge to enable them to build a strong unified approach to research ethics in Africa. We need to encourage scholarship and academic capacity building in Africa, for Africa. I am passionate about
research education starting from the first year of undergraduate studies to increase capacity in moral reasoning and professional integrity to enable leadership.

Marketing and Communication

Prof Wayne Towers is the academic advisor for the Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support in the Faculty of Health Sciences, North-West University (Potchefstroom campus).

**Aim and Motivation for REASA:** I am a motivated and committed individual with a strong drive to build research ethics capacity within Africa in an egalitarian and supportive manner. I see membership on the Executive Committee of REASA as an opportunity to contribute to establishing a strong network of research ethics committee members in Southern Africa, to be better able to promote, support and nurture the establishment and implementation of research ethics in our continent. I have a deep passion for ethics and ensuring that research that is undertaken in Africa is justified, sustainable, and relevant to our local needs. The opportunity that this committee provides will allow this community to develop and implement strategies to best reach these goals.

Dr Dudu Jankie is a senior lecturer in the area of language education in the Department of Languages & Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education at the University of Botswana.

**Aim and Motivation for REASA:** Through my participation in the REASA Executive Committee I hope to collaborate with colleagues in sharing experiences, knowledge, skills and insights that would guide the membership in adequately carrying out their diverse mandates on advancing research that is ethical, relevant or responsive to the needs of specific communities and is compliant with both local and international research ethics guidelines. I believe that it is necessary to create an environment that enhances respect, tolerance and acceptance for REASA’s diverse membership to engage in life-long learning, and as part of that to continuously reflect on the processes and practices that they engage in as persons involved in promoting research ethics. I believe that I have the knowledge and skills to contribute to establishing an environment of this nature.
Education and Training

Mrs Melany Hendricks is Head of Clinical Psychology Department, Stikland Hospital.

Aim and Motivation for REASA: I have a keen interest in research ethics and would like to contribute to the expansion of ethical practices in research in South Africa across the continent. I believe that the education portfolio offers the opportunity to not only raise awareness of ethical research practices but also improve expertise in research ethics. My experience as a member of the research ethics committee since 2009-2017, as well as a Master’s level education in biomedical ethics, equipped me well to add value to the portfolio.

Dr Annie Temane is the Head of the Department of Nursing Sciences, University of Johannesburg.

Aim and Motivation for REASA: I am passionate about research ethics and training. I am a lecturer at the University of Johannesburg at the Department of Nursing, lecturing in Psychiatric Nursing Sciences. I have been actively involved in the development of research ethics among researchers and members of research ethics committees since 2015 by giving seminars and workshops. I am a team player and will not shy away from taking responsibility or assisting the REASA Executive Community and REASA’s members in achieving their goals. I have already established a national footprint and serve on the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Mental Health. My interest to serve as a REASA Executive Committee member is anchored in a desire to promote honesty and accountability in research practices.

Prof Lizeth Roets is in the School of Social Sciences, UNISA.

Aim and Motivation for REASA: I am committed to scholarship development, but with the emphasis on ethical research, the protection of the human research participant, as well as the researcher. As the chairperson of a research ethics committee, I initiated the registration process to the NHREC and promoted statutory compliance by ensuring the registration of this committee. I am convinced that my ability to work as an individual as well as a member of a team will be an attribute to REASA and its members.
RESEARCH /AD HOC PROJECTS

Dr Matsheliso Molapo, Acting Director: Directorate of Institutional Research: UNISA.

Aim and Motivation for REASA: I am interested to serve as a member of the REASA committee in my capacity as a researcher. My contribution to the committee would entail more than 20 years of research experience both in quantitative and qualitative research in biomedical and social science research. Other additional experience include proposal writing or grant application skills, presentation and communication skills, writing skill, leadership and management skills, great interpersonal relationship skills, and a great passion for ethics.

ANIMAL ETHICS

Dr Bert Mohr is the Director of the UCT Research Animal Facility and in the Faculty of Veterinary Scientific Services, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Aim and Motivation for REASA: I am passionate about research quality and animal welfare. I present training in animal ethics and welfare, ethical review, legislation and standards, policy development, research study design and scientific procedures. I am a member of several Animal Ethics Committees, and have contributed substantively to the advancement of national standards for animal care and use for scientific purposes. I am also president of the South African Association for Laboratory Animal Science (SAALAS); Co-Chair of the African regional committee of the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS); a council member on the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC); and a council member on the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC).

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the REASA Executive Committee

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Members of the Executive Committee of the Research Ethics Committee Association of Southern Africa (REASA) sets out the principles and values that form the basis for the way we conduct ourselves as members of the Association.
The ethical values that guide the conduct of members include integrity, accountability, dignity (expressed in fair, caring, transparent and respectful relationships), and excellence. These require that REASA Executive Committee members:

- comply with the stipulations set out in the REASA constitution and all applicable laws, regulations and policies;
- treat others with respect;
- protect confidentiality of information;
- avoid conflicts of interest and/or declare potential conflicts of interest in a timely fashion; sign conflict of interest agreements regarding meetings, deliberations and related matters;
- execute assigned duties diligently, honestly and to the full benefit of the Association;
- provide portfolio reports at quarterly meetings, where applicable;
- attend and participate actively in meetings and events, provide timely apologies if unable to attend, and acknowledge receipt of communication within 72 hours;
- use resources with academic honesty and integrity; and
- strive towards collegial relationships with peer groups and associations.

SECTION 2 - RESEARCH INTEGRITY

**Big/little lies - The problem of research misconduct**

Brenda Morrow (PhD; PG Dip Health Res Ethics)
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Brenda.morrow@uct.ac.za

Human health research has the potential to impact on health and health-care practice at an individual and population level. It is therefore imperative that such research is conducted according to the highest ethical and methodological standards, without dishonesty and with the minimum of biases (Lohsiriwat & Lohsiriwat, 2007). Unfortunately, dishonesty in published health research studies has become increasingly prevalent over the past few decades, along with the exponential increase in health research globally (Rossouw, et al. 2014).

Research misconduct is broadly described as the “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results” (Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 2002). For the purposes of this article, research misconduct will exclude other unethical research practices and human rights abuses.
The spectrum of research misconduct is broad, ranging from so-called “little lies” to the “big lies”. The most blatant forms of misconduct include the fabrication or manipulation of data to make it match a hypothesis, and plagiarism (“big lies”). But there are also a number of less clear, or grey areas, including self-plagiarism and dual publication (Bird, 2002); not publishing or withholding negative or undesirable research results; not fully declaring potential conflicts of interest, and undeserved (“guest”) authorships – the so-called “little lies”.

An example of a “big lie” is that which lies behind the widely held, yet spurious, belief that the MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine is associated with autism in children. In 1998, Andrew Wakefield, a British former surgeon and medical researcher, published the now infamous paper in the Lancet, which raised the possibility of a link between inflammatory bowel disease, autism and the MMR vaccine. The study claims were not able to be replicated and subsequently it was proven that Wakefield had presented fraudulent data, and had also not declared a number of important financial conflicts of interest – Wakefield had actually received money from lawyers engaged in lawsuits against vaccine-producing companies (Rao & Andrade, 2011).

Interestingly, the Lancet paper itself did not state a causal link between MMR and autism, however Wakefield publically claimed that the MMR vaccine could be a cause of autism in a sub-set of children receiving it. The damage was done – despite the Lancet retracting the article, and 10 of the 12 co-authors publicly retracting their support for the research, the anti-vaccination movement gained momentum. This case of research misconduct has been largely responsible for a spate of measles outbreaks with associated child deaths, most of which were completely preventable (Rao & Andrade, 2011).

The so-called “little lies” of research misconduct are also damaging to the scientific enterprise and research integrity. Authorship confers credit for work done with academic, social, and financial implications. Authorship also implies responsibility and accountability for the research. Examples of misconduct in relation to authorship include “guest” or “gift” authorships – where, usually senior, researchers are included in the authorship list without having substantially contributed to the work – and “ghost” authorships – where people other than the officially accredited author actually write the articles/books/other texts, usually on a pay-for service basis which is often not disclosed (Elsevier Publishing Campus 2015).

To be listed as an author, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) now requires that a person must:
Interestingly, new research has confirmed that “little lies” can often lead to “big lies” (Garrett, et al. 2016), with an empirical study showing that the extent of “self-serving dishonesty” increases with repetition.

There are many consequences of the spectrum of research misconduct, including potential harm to patients if healthcare practitioners recommend a course of treatment based on false or biased data. Although it is accepted that people may interpret data in different ways, and aspects of the study design and methodology may be debatable, the science itself and the researchers who conduct it must be trustworthy, failing which the public’s faith in science will be corrupted (Sledge, 2000). On an individual level, when one’s integrity is called into question, there are personal consequences including employment prospects, reputation, and loss of research funding (Sledge, 2000).

But how big a problem is research misconduct really? Alarmingly, in one study up to 40% of researchers were found to be aware of misconduct but did not report it (Gupta, 2013); a systematic review and meta-analysis reported that 33% of researchers were personally involved in irresponsible research conduct (the “little lies”) (Fanelli, 2009); and 17% of clinical trial authors were personally aware of cases of data fabrication in research (“big lies”) (Sheehan, et al. 2007). Closer to home, in Nigeria 68% of researchers admitted to having conducted at least one form of scientific misconduct (Okanta & Rossouw, 2013). A paper looking at the extent of, and response to research misconduct in low and middle-income countries reported that at face value South Africa seemed to be performing well – with a national ethics council and established institutional review systems in place, and only one high profile case of research misconduct. However, it was also noted that in South Africa the topic of research misconduct was rarely touched on and openly discussed (Ana, et al. 2013). It is therefore likely that the known cases of research misconduct represent the tip of the iceberg, with the full extent of the problem as yet unrecognised.

Researchers have an ethical responsibility to ensure that they use and report only the highest standards of research design; data collection, analysis, and reporting; and interpretation of findings (Rao & Andrade, 2011). The temptation for research misconduct is, however, a real and present danger. The academic environment requires researchers to “publish or perish”, which tempts researchers to add
authors or manipulate results to yield a higher impact factor publication. It is easy to rationalise that one’s data are wrong when convinced of a certain hypothesis; and there is ample opportunity for manipulating data during the research process (Wessel, 2014).

It is the author’s opinion, therefore, that to address the problem of research misconduct, we need to first change academic culture. Perhaps we should be placing more emphasis on the *quality* of research outputs rather than the *quantity*, for subsidy generation and academic advancement. African countries need established, clear and accessible regulations and processes to report and act on cases of research misconduct (Ana, et al. 2013) – both the little lies and the big lies – without consequence to the “whistle blowers”.

References

As part of this section on Research Integrity, the following two articles by Dr Marianne Engelbrecht will assist authors in reflecting about self-plagiarism and selecting journals to guard against predatory journals. They are published here with the permission of Dr Engelbrecht, the research ethics and integrity advisor at the College of Economic and Management Sciences, UNISA. She can be contacted at: engelm1@unisa.ac.za.

### Self-plagiarism - What every author should know

The term ‘self-plagiarism’ might seem like a paradox to many authors. After all, if you are the original author how can it be considered plagiarism if you decide to reuse your own material? Shouldn’t you be able to reuse your own work in another format or for another purpose?

The short answer is “no”.

However, there are a number of ongoing debates about the boundaries of self-plagiarism as traditional definitions of plagiarism do not always account for self-plagiarism, and consequently authors may not be aware of the ethical and legal implications of reusing or repurposing their own work.

**What is self-plagiarism?**


Self-plagiarism occurs when an author presents their own previously published work as though it is a ‘newly’ written work without indicating to the reader that the content has already been published elsewhere. A republished text is an example of self-plagiarism. The author is required to cite her/himself when using previously written work.

Another form of self-plagiarism is called data fragmentation or salami slicing. This occurs when the author of a study separates aspects of a study and publishes it in more than one publication, or breaking
up a single research paper into their ‘least publishable units’ with each paper reporting different findings from the same study.

**Legal and ethical implications**

Whether from an ethical, academic, or legal standpoint, it makes sense for authors to always provide attribution whether the work is another author’s or their own.

Self-plagiarism can infringe upon a publisher’s copyright. For authors who have published a particular research study or academic article, the copyright may have been allocated to the research journal or publication. In addition, self-plagiarism raises ethical concerns (and possible academic misconduct) when the author claims benefit for two closely aligned publications. The central issue is with the author’s intention to misrepresent previously published work as a new and original study.

For example, can an author present a conference paper and then later submit it to a journal for publication? While the assumption is made that the journal submission would be a substantially revised version of the conference presentation, the author might unknowingly be committing self-plagiarism by neglecting to mention the original conference paper and infringing on the copyright of the Editor of the conference proceedings. Only where a conference paper has been presented but never published in any format would it be acceptable to not make reference to the former presentation.

**Avoiding self-plagiarism**

- Authors are strongly encouraged to become familiar with what constitutes good academic writing practices with regard to copyright law.
- Authors can use technology platforms, such as iThenticate, to help detect potential self-plagiarism before submitting work for publication to ensure originality and protect copyright (For more information: [http://www.ithenticate.com/about](http://www.ithenticate.com/about)).
- If there is any doubt as to whether a paper submitted for publication represents fragmented data, authors should enclose other papers (published or unpublished) that might be part of the paper under consideration.
- While there might be some instances where text reproduction is an acceptable practice, it may not be in other situations. Authors should adhere to the principles of academic integrity and ethical writing and avoid reusing their own previously published text, unless it is done in an appropriate manner that considers the rights of all stakeholders (For more information: [https://ori.hhs.gov/avoiding-plagiarism-self-plagiarism-and-other-questionable-writing-practices-guide-ethical-writing](https://ori.hhs.gov/avoiding-plagiarism-self-plagiarism-and-other-questionable-writing-practices-guide-ethical-writing)).
It's a wilderness out there - Protecting yourself against predatory journals and conferences

As a researcher, chances are that you’ve received questionable correspondence inviting you to publish in the *Journal of Everything that Matters* or present a paper at the *Conference of Stuff that has Nothing to do with your Expertise*. The ‘author-pays’ open access model for publishing scholarly, peer-reviewed journals on the internet, although noble in its intent, has involuntarily become a platform for some publishers and editors to exploit aspiring, and especially young, researchers.

Researchers, eager to publish, submit their papers to dubious journals that often accept many or all submissions and subject them to little, if any, peer review or editorial oversight. Often referred to as *predatory journals*, they exist primarily to extract fees from authors and the researcher is deceived into believing the work has been accepted by a legitimate journal.

**Blacklisting predatory journals**

In February 2017, the only ‘blacklist’ of such journals (Beall’s list) was shut down due to legal complications. This was followed by *Cabell’s Blacklist*, that aims to make the list less subjective, and more robust and consistent. Besides the blacklist, Cabell’s also publishes a *Whitelist* of journals (For more information: https://cabells.com/about-blacklist).

**How do I identify predatory journals?**

- Ask questions: How long has the journal been in existence? Is the journal indexed in major academic databases?
- Does the publisher provide full and transparent details of the peer review process?
- Examine the quality of research published within the journal in previous issues.
- Do you feel uncomfortable with the marketing approach or payment model?
- Ask your colleagues if they have published in or are familiar with the publication.
- Do not pay publishing fees unless it is a mainstream publisher.

Mouton and Valentine (2017) provide a useful comparison between the characteristics of good practice in scholarly publishing and those of predatory publishing (For more information: http://www0.sun.ac.za/scistip/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Mouton_Valentine_A.pdf).
### Standard publishing practice vs. Predatory publishing

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<th>Standard publishing practice</th>
<th>Predatory publishing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Authors usually submit manuscripts to journals out of their own accord</td>
<td>Solicit manuscripts by spamming researchers (especially using their Yahoo and Gmail accounts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually have field- and discipline-appropriate titles</td>
<td>Broad titles or titles with disjointed scopes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide accurate and appropriate contact information</td>
<td>Often lists false or insufficient contact information that does not clearly state the headquarters’ location</td>
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#### Trickery and mimicry – Bogus academic conferences

Presenting your research, especially at an international academic conference, can be one of the highlights of a researcher’s career so it is very important to make sure you pick the right event that is genuine and reputable. Bogus conference invitations are distributed in a similar fashion as predatory journals and are usually (poorly) organised by commercial entities with little or no peer review of submitted papers. It is common for these events to be hosted in high-profile and ‘desirable’ destinations, and often the organisers are more interested in marketing the tourist destination rather than the academic value of the conference (For more information: [http://www.authoraid.info/en/news/details/1156/](http://www.authoraid.info/en/news/details/1156/)).

As an aspiring researcher, it important to make sure that the conference you attend is suitable for your purposes – will you be presenting your research to the right audience where the content of the conference is relevant to your field? Does the conference prioritise the academic value of the conference and does the website seem knowledgeable about your subject field? Is there a report on the previous year’s conference? The answer to most of these questions should be ‘Yes’. If you are in any doubt, you should consider searching for a more reputable conference to attend.

Join us on the REASA Facebook page