

## Predatory Journals

Predatory journals, which mimic academic journals but lack the standards and ethics of true scholarly publications, have increasingly become a problem in scholarly literature. Warnings and editorials have been published, attempting to steer authors away from publishing in these journals.

Researchers may encounter articles published in predatory journals in the course of their literature search. Without awareness that predatory journals exist, these articles may be viewed and used as legitimate. Health professionals are at particular risk, as there are a high number of predatory journals in health fields.

## Low Initial Awareness

During an education session delivered to health professionals on assessing information, an outreach library team discovered low levels of awareness regarding predatory journals – session attendees indicated learning “a lot” from even a very brief introduction to predatory journals:



## Developing an Education Session

As a result of the identified low awareness levels of health professionals regarding predatory journals, the outreach team created a one-hour education session on predatory journals. It was presented in-person and virtually. Topics covered in the session included:

- The history and nature of predatory journals
- Issues with scholarship from these journals being incorporated into the academic record
- Issues with health decisions being made based on information in these journals
- Identifying and avoiding predatory journals



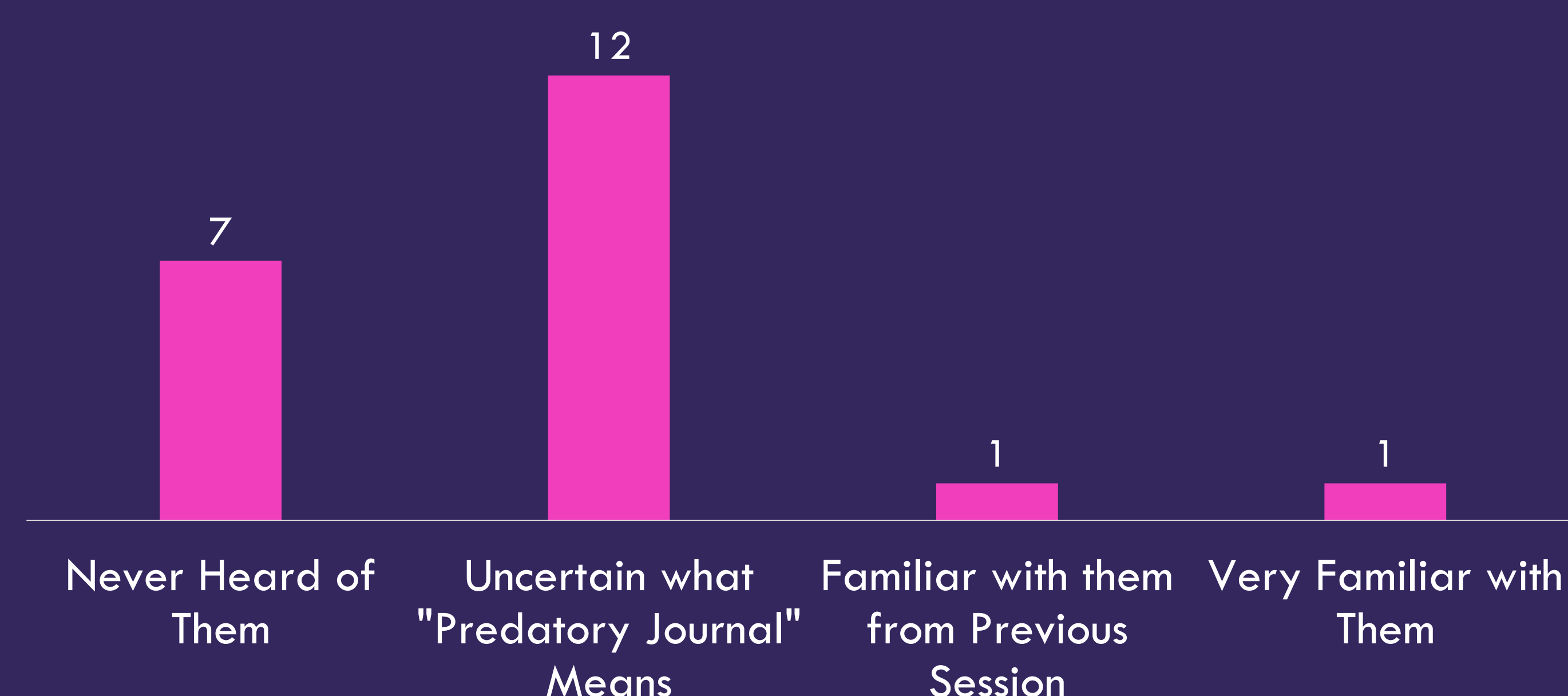
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# Health Professionals' Awareness of Predatory Journals

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## Session Outcomes

Session attendees were asked about their previous familiarity with predatory journals:



Post-session surveys indicated that participants started the session with limited knowledge, but had confidence at the end of the session that they could identify predatory journals some of the time.

## Discussion

The awareness of health professionals about predatory journals is extremely low. As health professionals regularly use and publish research, it is critical that they be aware of predatory journals, so they may accurately assess the information they use, and the journals they publish in.

Participants valued the information provided in the education session, several of them noting that they would apply the information to their use of journals in the future. The session was effective in presenting the information, though only a subset of outreach clients attended them. Health librarians should raise awareness of predatory journals through education sessions and providing resources on the topic.

## Areas of Future Study

This work has identified a gap in the knowledge of health professionals and therefore an area which health librarians should seek to address in their educational initiatives. The sample considered here was small, and a study of the awareness levels of a larger sample of health professionals would be beneficial.

The degree to which, and how, materials published in predatory journals are used should also be assessed, to determine the magnitude of the problem posed by predatory journals.