



**A second chance for authors of hijacked journals to publish in legitimate journals**

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**Type of article:** Editorial

**Abstract**

This article proposes the republication of articles that have previously been published in counterfeit websites of hijacked journals. The paper also discusses the technical and ethical aspects of republishing such articles.

**Keywords:** Hijacked journal, Legitimate journal, duplicate publication

The world of academia has seen an unprecedented outbreak of so-called “hijacked journals,” where hackers create counterfeit websites that pose as the legitimate of actual journals (1-4). After publishing several scientific papers about hijacked journals and phony publishers, I have received a lot of email from scholars around the world who express their distress about being cheated by journal hijackers and losing their own hard-won academic reputations. They are also concerned about others stealing their research findings. Consistently, the most frequent question I receive in these emails concerns one important issue: Is the legitimate author allowed to republish her/his article in a legitimate journal – or would that constitute duplicate publication? In this short article, I want to share important information and an idea with readers and scholars in the academic world about this timely topic.

I believe that journal publishers and the publication ethics organizations must give the authors who published in hijacked journals a second chance to publish their articles in legitimate publications. Specifically, I talked to the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE) to find a proper way to help those authors. I do not think that authors are breaking ethical rules related to duplicate or redundant publications if they republish their hijacked articles in legitimate journals. In my opinion, articles that were fraudulently published in hijacked journals should be considered stolen papers, and the authors should have the right to properly publish their articles in a legitimate, authentic journal. A second rationale behind this recommendation is that most of the fraudulent websites of hijacked journals have gone offline and the articles on their servers have disappeared, so those articles are neither searchable nor accessible.

This is merely my recommendation to the academic world. It has yet to be accepted by the international organizations concerned with publication and research ethics. In the meantime, we should develop a precise flowchart for the republication procedure for these stolen articles.

**Conflict of Interest:**

There is no conflict of interest to be declared.

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