

Painful bites: Publication invitations from online journals

On August 6, 2021, at 0:05 a.m., I received an e-mail requesting submission of a manuscript for the first issue of an online dental journal with the euphonious but hitherto unknown title *Journal of Dentistry and Oral Medicine* (Fig. 1).

Already in the cover letter, some conspicuous features stand out: besides the time (which can still be justified because of the six-hour time difference), the inappropriate salutation (“Dear jens.tuerp”) and the unusual introductory wording (“Welcome...!!”), the wide range of content covered by the journal (“all types of articles”), the emphasis on the professional qualifications of the editorial board, and the extremely short deadline of 10 days for submitting a manuscript, among other things, caught the eye.

When one receives such an e-mail, there are two options: you delete it right away (which is not bad

advice) or you take a closer look to get an idea of its level of seriousness (not bad advice either). I decided to go with the latter.

The *Journal of Dentistry and Oral Medicine* is, according to the self-description on its website, an “international peer reviewed open access journal primarily focused on research and clinical aspects of dentistry and oral medicine”. It claims to cover all areas of dentistry in terms of content and lists 46 subject headings to that end, from *Bone Regeneration* to *Traumatology*. The journal is launched by *Inquest Publications*, an online publisher based in Urbana, Maryland (USA). Its website (www.inquestpublications.com/) lists 49 other online medical journals. As far as presentation and content (including some grammatical and orthographical errors) are concerned, the website does not differ from those of comparable providers.

The editorial board presents 21 members from 9 countries: Brazil (1 person), France (2), India (4), Italy (6), Malaysia (3), Romania (1), Saudi Arabia (1), Serbia (1), and Turkey (2).

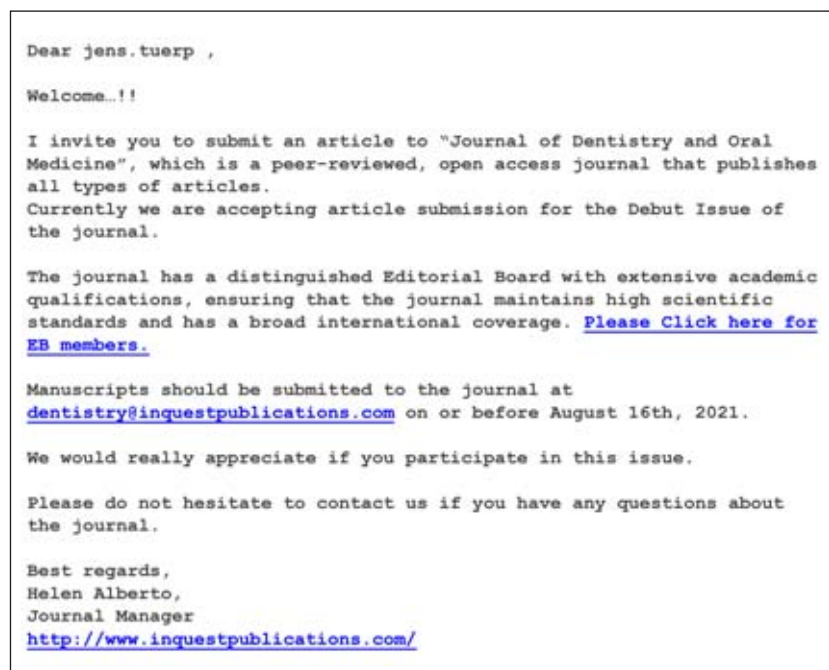


Figure 1 The e-mail from August 6, 2021.

Name	Number
LR	115
FD	72
FE	70
LL	65
RX	32
PA	30
MM	29
AI	29
NM	23
SP	23
CF	18
HI	14
RA	11
KM	10
PP	10
OB	8
BA	5
VL	4
AD	3
SO	2
CD	2

Table 1 Number of PubMed-listed articles of the 21 editorial board members. These are indicated by their initials (last name, first name).

Article Types	Costs
Funded Research	\$2,200
Research	\$1,200
Review	\$1,000
Short Article	\$500

Table 2 Article processing charges.

An analysis of the PubMed-based publication performance of the 21 board members shows that only 4 (invariably Italian) individuals have a strong presence (65 to 115 articles) in this meta-database. In contrast, 6 members are moderately represented (in the range of 20 to 30 publications), while the remaining 11 members have a weak presence (less than 20 publications). In view of this composition, to speak overall of a “distinguished Editorial Board with extensive academic qualifications” (Fig. 1) seems daring – the 4 colleagues from Italy are explicitly excluded from this statement.

Inquest Publications points out that readers of the published articles are not charged for accessing them. However, this should generally be assumed for purely online journals. On the other hand, once a submitted manuscript has been ac-

cepted, authors are charged a considerable fee for processing their article (Tab. 2).

Irrespective of the question about the quality of the review process of submitted manuscripts, i.e., whether peer review worthy of its name is really carried out, there is another point to take into account: it is not guaranteed that the journal will be listed in the foreseeable future in the well-known medical databases, such as PubMed, Livivo, and Directory of Open Access Journals. In any case, limiting access to the (largely unknown) *Inquest Publications* website is a barrier to the dental community’s reception of the publications. Moreover, it is quite possible that published articles will eventually no longer be accessible. A look at the other 49 journal titles reveals (www.inquestpublications.com/journals.html □ “Articles”) that so far articles have been published in only 15 journals, and in modest numbers (total 35, minimum 1, maximum 5, median 2 articles per journal [not per issue!]).

Whether one would like to consider publishing in this journal or in online journals of comparable providers under these circumstances is something everyone may decide for themselves. But actually, the answer should be clear.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest as defined by the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.



Photo: Basilisk, Basel

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