Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor: Editorial: *CORR*® Thanks its Peer Reviewers

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To the Editor,

We read your recent editorial with great interest [2]. We highly appreciated you thanking *CORR*'s peer reviewers as well as your take on quality in scientific editing. We were surprised to read that open-access publishers have increased more than 5000% during the last 6 years [2]. You have written previously about the dilemma of open publishing [3], but the problem has exponentially grown since. This new "trend" in publishing is the main reason for our letter.

(RE: Leopold SS. Editorial: *CORR*® thanks its peer reviewers. *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2016;474:2551–2552).

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We are both clinical researchers who publish many papers a year, always aiming for highly respected journals within our specialty (orthopaedic surgery and perioperative management). Because of our frequent publications, our inboxes see a constant flow of unsolicited emails from open-access publishers. At this point, we consider the emails borderline harassment. We believe that unsolicited scientific emails of this sort are nothing more than spam, and we hope to work with our academically-oriented colleagues to find a solution to this new and rapidly growing problem.

These email solicitations—inviting us to publish whatever we want in various open-access journals—come

with exceeding frequency, sometimes dozens a day. We are also constantly invited to review submitted papers or become editorial board members. The invitations seek content from us on topics that often are way outside of our domains. We ignore these emails, treating them as nothing more than an irritation. But when we do not reply, we receive additional "you might have forgotten to reply" reminder emails. After two new reminders, we get a "your services are no longer required" email, as if we ever considered doing this to begin with.

Another issue is that the names of the new open-access journals often resemble those of highly-esteemed journals, creating confusion (perhaps intentionally) [1, 4]. Indeed, it is becoming more and more difficult to recognize and separate genuine invitations as an invited speaker from the daily spam we receive to participate in some obscure congress. More than once we deleted an email with a genuine invitation because we had estimated it to be one of the many unsolicited ones.

We realize that one option is to simply delete the 20 to 30 emails a day that we receive. But deleting or ignoring the emails seems to initiate

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additional “reminder” emails. Perhaps open-access journal publishers will read this letter and realize they need to change their business model or find a different avenue for discovering those who want or need open-access journal publications. Maybe we should request peer-reviewed journals to develop a brand new system of communication between academics keeping us all at a safe distance from the predator journals [1].

We look forward to the reactions and potential alternative solutions from other researchers on how to handle this growing problem.

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