

METHODS NOTE · Peer-reviewed · Published · Live dashboard figures

Predatory Journal Risk and Structural Inequities in African Research Publishing: Implications for Uganda: Predatory Journal Risk

Christine Muhumuza, Njeodo Njongang Vigny, Mahmood Ahmad, Bitness Lyabagaga, Kanyesigye Edith, Amumpaire Olivia, Shamim Nabidda, Tukamushaba Bruce, Natinael Berhane, Eghaghe Osadebamwen Nibokun, Sebudde Nicholus, Munyole Samuel, Musoke Muhammad, Kirabo Jireh, Ruchius Philbert, Fadumo Said Hassan, Adrine Nyamwiza, Rhoda Chikula, Amina Mohamud Fidow, Ssenfuma Ronnie, Joy Osifo, Muhammad Murtala Yusuf, Tulengerayo Joshua, Mukisa Paul Brian, Anna Nakirabira, Derrick Tumwesigye, Kirabo Justine, Kumbukani Chikosa & Charles Bafaki

Methods Note · Volume 6

Published 2026-06-06 · Diamond open access · CC BY 4.0

Article 90 · Volume 6 · Published 2026-06-06 · DOI: not assigned

Abstract

Predatory Journal Risk and Structural Inequities in African Research Publishing: Implications for Uganda
BACKGROUND: Predatory journals exploit researchers by charging publication fees without providing credible peer review or editorial standards. Researchers in low-resource settings may be especially vulnerable because of publication pressure, limited mentorship, weak institutional support, and poor access to trusted publishing guidance. In Uganda, consultancy-driven academic work and fragile research support systems may further increase this risk among early-career scholars.

AIM: To examine whether patterns in African clinical trial activity reflect broader structural inequities that may increase predatory journal risk, with particular relevance to Uganda's emerging researcher pipeline. **METHODS:** We drew on a cross-sectional audit of interventional trials registered on ClinicalTrials.gov through April 2026, comparing African countries with the United States. Registry metadata were used to describe research volume and distribution, while the interpretation was informed by PubMed literature on predatory publishing, publication pressure, and research-capacity constraints in Africa and Uganda.

RESULTS: Africa contributed 3,515 relevant trials compared with 159,433 in the United States, indicating a marked imbalance in research volume, with activity concentrated in a few countries. Such uneven research ecosystems can leave young researchers in countries like Uganda with fewer supported pathways to publish in reputable journals, increasing susceptibility to deceptive invitations and low-quality outlets. Evidence from Africa links predatory publishing to publish-or-perish pressure, limited funding, and weak scholarly support structures.

CONCLUSION: Predatory journal risk in Uganda should be understood not only as an individual awareness problem, but also as a symptom of structural inequities in research investment, mentorship, and publishing support. Strengthening local mentorship, institutional library systems, and protected research career pathways is essential. **KEYWORDS:** Uganda; predatory journals; Africa; research capacity; mentorship; publication pressure; scholarly publishing.

Interactive dashboard figures

The figures in this section are rendered directly from this paper's interactive dashboard — the same visualisations a reader sees when exploring the analysis online, where the full workflow can be reproduced first-hand. **Interactive dashboard:** <https://mahmood726-cyber.github.io/africa-e156-students/governance-justice/dashboards/predatory-journal-risk.html>

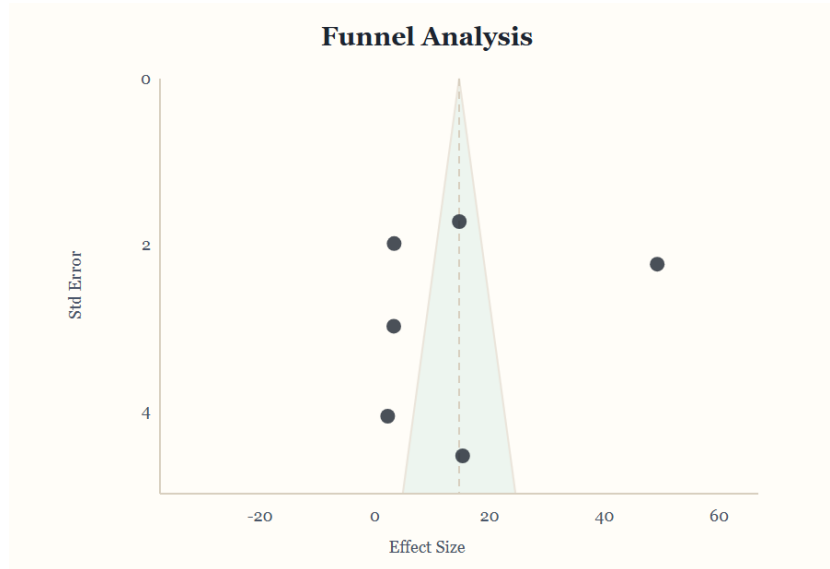


Figure 1. Funnel Analysis — Std Error Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

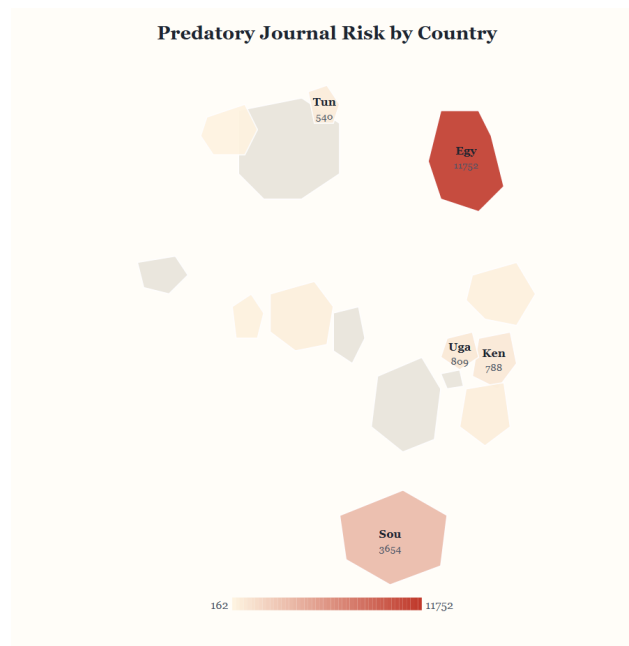


Figure 2. Predatory Journal Risk by Country Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

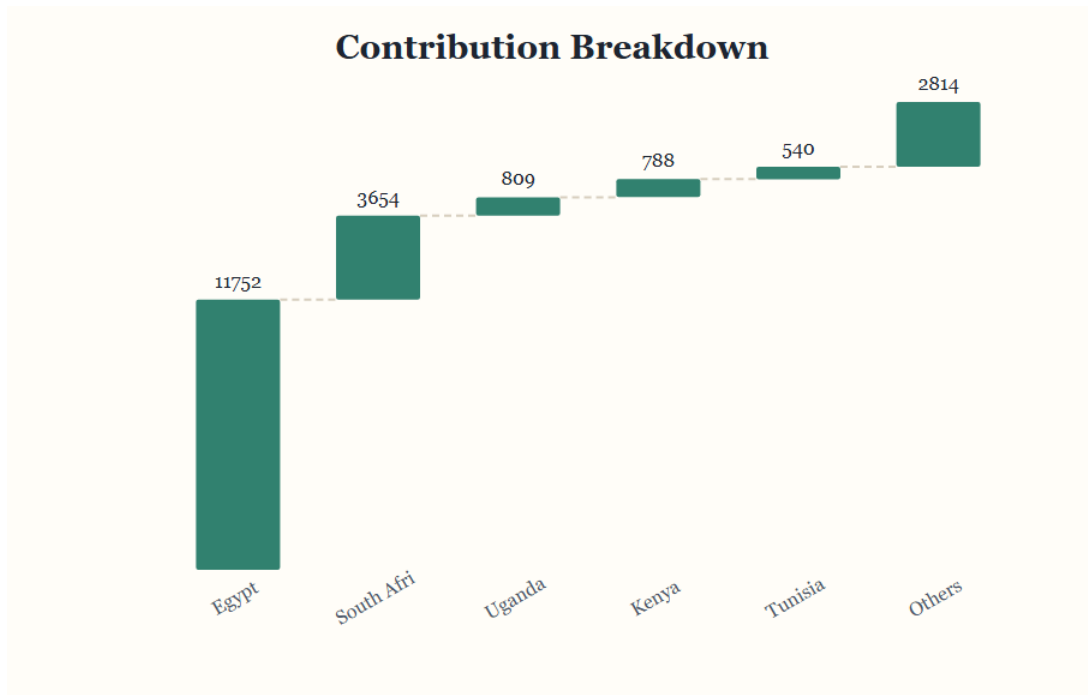


Figure 3. Contribution Breakdown Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

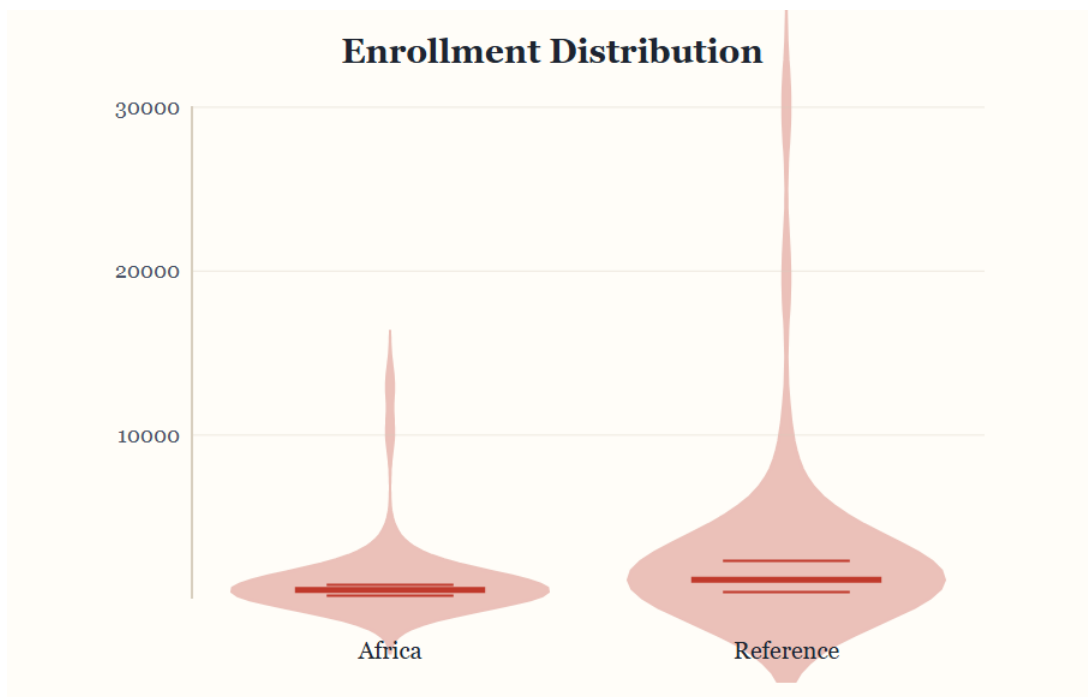


Figure 4. Enrollment Distribution Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

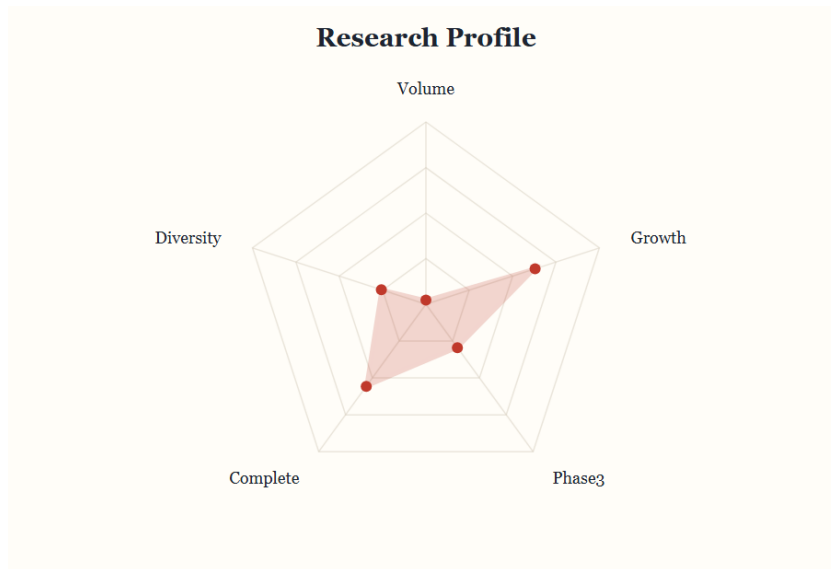


Figure 5. Research Profile Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

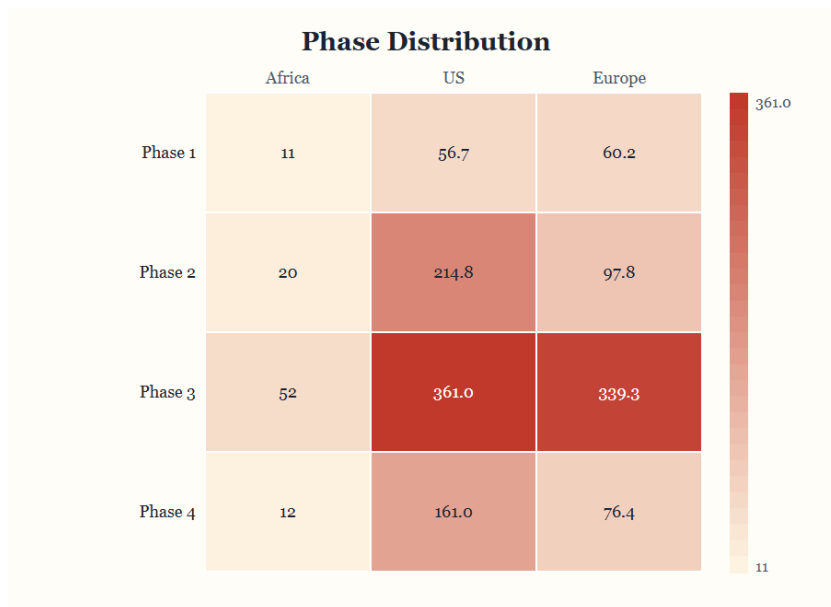


Figure 6. Phase Distribution Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

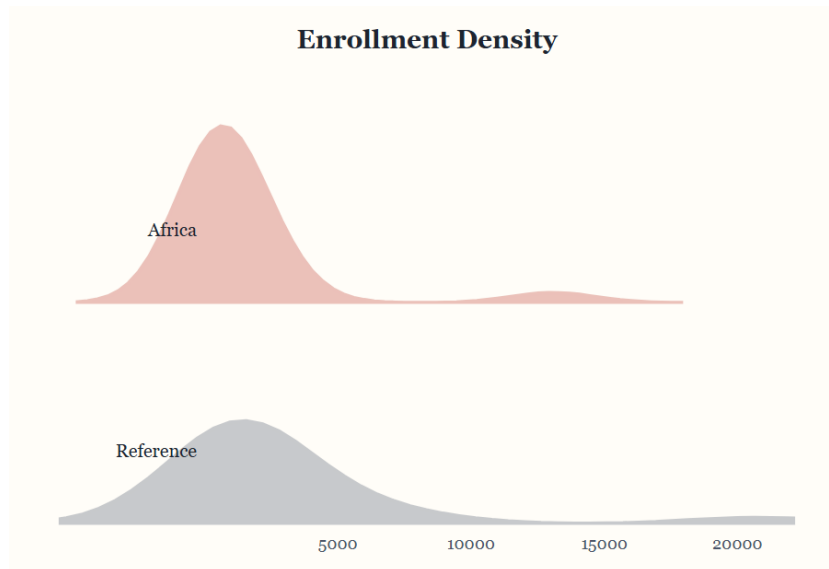


Figure 7. Enrollment Density Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

HOW TO CITE

Christine Muhumuza, Njeodo Njongang Vigny, Mahmood Ahmad, Bitness Lyabagaga, Kanyesigye Edith, Amumpaire Olivia, Shamim Nabidda, Tukamushaba Bruce, Natinael Berhane, Eghaghe Osadebamwen Nibokun, Sebudde Nicholus, Munyole Samuel, Musoke Muhammad, Kirabo Jireh, Ruchius Philbert, Fadumo Said Hassan, Adrine Nyamwiza, Rhoda Chikula, Amina Mohamud Fidow, Ssenfuma Ronnie, Joy Osifo, Muhammad Murtala Yusuf, Tulengerayo Joshua, Mukisa Paul Brian, Anna Nakirabira, Derrick Tumwesigye, Kirabo Justine, Kumbukani Chikosa & Charles Bafaki. *Predatory Journal Risk and Structural Inequities in African Research Publishing: Implications for Uganda: Predatory Journal Risk*. Synthesis. 2026;6(1). Article 90. Available at <https://synthesis-medicine.org/index.php/journal/article/view/90>. Licensed under CC BY 4.0. DOI: not assigned.

Reproducibility & data provenance. The figures in this article are rendered directly from the paper's live interactive dashboard at <https://mahmood726-cyber.github.io/africa-e156-students/governance-justice/dashboards/predatory-journal-risk.html>, where the complete analysis — data, methods and every estimate — can be explored and reproduced. This open path from published figure back to the underlying analysis is part of how the journal works. The article's text, authors, abstract, issue and licence follow the journal's published record.

Copyright (c) 2026 Christine Muhumuza, Marakiya Moetlediwa , Njeodo Njongang Vigny , Mahmood Ahmad, Bitness Lyabagaga, Kanyesigye Edith , Amumpaire Olivia , Shamim Nabidda, Tukamushaba Bruce, Natinael Berhane, Eghaghe Osadebamwen Nibokun , Sebudde Nicholus, Munyole Samuel , Musoke Muhammad , Kirabo Jireh , Ruchius Philbert , Fadumo Said Hassan , Adrine Nyamwiza, Rhoda Chikula, Amina Mohamud Fidow, Ssenfuma Ronnie , Joy Osifo, Muhammad Murtala Yusuf , Tulengerayo Joshua, Mukisa Paul Brian, Anna Nakirabira , Derrick Tumwesigye , Kirabo Justine, Kumbukani Chikosa, Charles Bafaki. Open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0): free to share and adapt with attribution.

Published in Synthesis · synthesis-medicine.org