Problem publishers are considered to be those who exploit authors for commercial gain, charging them to publish without providing any editorial services. Use this checklist as a guideline to assess a publication but be careful not to use any of the factors in isolation and always use your judgement.

TRANSPARENCY
Is the publisher open about its practices? Do they publish on a vast range of topics? Assess the quality of the invitation to publish - does it come from a named individual and an official email address?

FEES
Are the author fees clearly explained and easy to find? Are there any hidden fees you need to be aware of e.g. are you or library expected to buy a copy of the publication?

COPYRIGHT
Are the rights of the author after publication clearly explained and easy to find? If the work is to be published Open Access, is a Creative Commons licence mentioned?

PEER REVIEW
Is the review process clearly described? Is the stated time for review realistic? If an impact factor is given for the journal is it correct?
EDITORIAL BOARD
Are the members of the Board listed on the publisher website? Is there a named Editor in Chief? Are any of the names recognisable as experts in your field? Are Board members aware that they are listed?

ASSOCIATIONS
Is the publisher connected to a recognised institution? Are they affiliated with a recognised industry association?

WEBSITE QUALITY
Does the website have a professional look and feel? Are there spelling or grammatical errors?

INDEXING
Is the journal indexed by the typical databases in the field? Are other journals by the same publisher indexed?

QUALITY
Are these of a high standard? Are there basic spelling and grammatical errors? Are there errors in the title or abstract that may indicate that the publisher or reviewers are not familiar with the field?