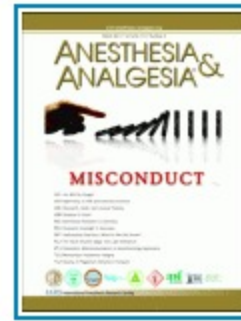


Retraction record broken, again: University report should up Fujii total to 183

without comments

Keeping up with the various investigations into the activities of Yoshitaka Fujii — the assumed record holder for retractions by a single author, with 172 likely — can be a challenge. Between the journals pulling his papers and the institutions looking into his misconduct, it's hard to keep everything straight.



But we have a new report, from a past employer, that makes for interesting reading and helps tie up some loose ends. The document is from Tsukuba University, where Fujii worked more than a decade ago when questions about the propriety of his findings first surfaced.

According to the Tsukuba report, released in late December, Fujii wrote 68 papers involving human subjects while working at the university. All were tainted by evidence of misconduct. Fujii has acknowledged falsifying data in two of those articles:

“ Dr. Fujii admitted that he manipulated the research period on purpose in these papers. The fact was confirmed by available evidence.

We take “manipulated the research period on purpose” to mean that Fujii said he manipulated the data, and should note that we found the report hard to follow, even in English. (Read the whole thing here.)

Fujii also failed to obtain IRB approval — perhaps because he was making stuff up — and, in many cases, falsely claimed to be conducting randomized controlled double-blind trials. And in eight cases, Fujii did not provide any evidence that he had conducted the experiments or that backed the authenticity of the data, according to the report.

Fujii also published 35 papers with co-authors about his purported work on animals, including dogs and guinea pigs. Here his record is a bit better: investigators concluded that five contained no evidence of misconduct.

In the rest of the studies, in which he described his own research, investigators couldn't find conclusive evidence of misconduct, but neither could they verify his results:

“ It was confirmed that some experiments were actually carried out. However, from a limited set of data made available by Dr. Fujii, it was not possible to confirm that the experiments were conducted exactly in the way described in each paper.

So what's the bottom line? It looks like Fujii's retraction total will settle at a number around 183. That figure is what's left of the original 193 suspect papers minus the nine articles investigators in Japan — university officials and the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists — were able to validate. The rest either contain clear signs of data fabrication or lack of IRB approval and no supporting evidence, or inconclusive supporting evidence.

In light of the new report, Anesthesia & Analgesia, whose editor, Steven Shafer, has been leading the editorial response to the Fujii case, will be retracting an additional 20 of the researcher's articles. The journal has posted this notice on its website:

“ The articles in Table 1 by Dr. Yoshitaka Fujii were retracted last year. At that time, the articles in Table 2 were under review by the University of Tsukuba. The University of Tsukuba completed its review in December, 2012. Based on that review, the articles in Table 2 are hereby retracted.

The retraction of Dr. Fujii's research is based on overwhelming statistical evidence of fabrication. (1,2) Dr Fujii's institutions were asked to attest to the integrity of published investigations conducted under their auspices, as set out in the Joint Editors-in-Chief Request for Determination of April 9, 2012.* The response from each institution, as well as an analysis of Dr. Fujii's published research by the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists, is available online.†

The University of Tsukuba affirmed the validity an article by Dr. Uemura(3) for which Dr. Fujii was a coauthor. This article remains part of the unimpeached medical literature. It is the only surviving manuscript by Dr. Yoshitaka Fujii in Anesthesia & Analgesia.

The Uemura paper, for the record, is:

“ Uemura A, Fujii Y, Toyooka H, Suzuki S, Sawada K, Adachi H. Olprinone for the treatment, but not prevention, of fatigue-induced changes in guinea-pig diaphragmatic contractility. Anesth. Analg. 2003;96:1679-782

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Written by amarcus41 January 15th, 2013 at 6:25 pm
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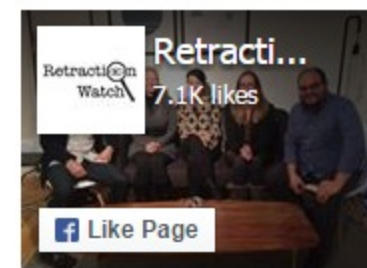
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