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*Original Story “Despedida una científica premiada con dos millones de euros de la UE” from El Pais http://elpais.com/elpais/2016/03/04/ciencia/1457090679\_248492.html*

**Scientist awarded 2 million euros by the EU is dismissed**

One of Spain's most prestigious research centers, the CNIC, dismisses researcher for alleged fraud

One of Spain's most prestigious scientific institutions, the National Center for Cardiovascular Research (CNIC in Spanish), has dismissed Susana González with immediate effect. The molecular biologist, with an impeccable résumé, had just been awarded two million euros from the European Commission for her studies on heart disease. According to sources close to the research body, a recent internal investigation has revealed an alleged ongoing fraud. The CNIC, run by the cardiologist Valentín Fuster, issued the dismissal on February 29. In her statements to Materia, however, González “categorically” denies having falsified any results during her career and talks of a “complete injustice”. According to her version of events, the dismissal was for “purely work-related" reasons, of which she has not provided any details. The case is now in the hands of her lawyers.

González has published her papers in some of the world's leading scientific journals, including Cell Stem Cell and Nature Communications. In 2014, the European Research Council awarded her a Consolidator Grant, reserved for the elite of European science and worth two million euros. This followed her success in getting mice with life-threatening heart failure to make a remarkable recovery. Her experiments opened the door to the rejuvenation of the heart in old or ailing people.

One of the first parts of her findings was published in the journal Nature Communications. Her results have been brought into question on the PubPeer website, where scientists comment anonymously on colleagues' articles. Users of the site report that some images have been duplicated or taken from other experiments, an action that could force the study to be withdrawn. González has described the PubPeer website as “a kind of Twitter for scientists, full of anonymous accusations and distorted data, and lacking in scientific rigor”. A spokeswoman for Nature, the publisher of the journal, said that the group never reveals whether investigations are underway into specific studies. “They have never retracted any of my articles", González says in her defense. She admits to “possible errors”, but never fraud. The PubPeer website includes more accusations of falsified results with regard to other research projects led by the molecular biologist. “My reputation should not be questioned on the basis of anonymous complaints. And that goes for the whole scientific community”, González insists. The CNIC will only confirm that the researcher was dismissed on Monday, but it refuses to give more explanations for the time being. Sources close to the investigation exonerate the other co-authors from bad practice.

Before working at the CNIC, González spent time at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Columbia University, both in New York. She later joined the National Cancer Research Center (CNIO in Spanish) in Madrid. A former colleague of González at the CNIO, who prefers to remain anonymous, indicated that “her results could never be reproduced”. Science is explicitly based on the premise that successful experiments can be repeated by other scientists who then reach the same conclusions. Another ex-colleague at the CNIC, who also did not wish to give his name, confirmed the bad practices that have been discussed at length on PubPeer. However, a third colleague, with whom she last worked a decade ago, claimed he had not had “the slightest suspicion” about her. The CNIC has a Code of Good Scientific Practice, approved on November 20, 2015, that aims to “prevent failings of an ethical nature, in the area of scientific activity, that may have legal implications”. Following her dismissal from CNIC, González retains her tenured post as a researcher at a state agency, the CSIC (National Research Council) — Spain's largest public research body. She also retains the two million euros of funding she received from the European Commission.