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November 02, 2020

Time-Sensitive Retraction and Replacement Request: Manuscript title:
“Serpentinization-induced lithospheric long-wavelength magnetic anomalies in Proterozoic bedrocks in a weakened geomagnetic field mediate the aberrant transformation of biogenic molecules in COVID-19 via magnetic catalysis.” *Sci Total Environ.* 2020 Oct 8;142830. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.142830.

Dear Damià Barceló

We are writing this urgent note to request an immediate retraction and replacement with a revised version (enclosed) of our recently e-published COVID-19 manuscript referenced above. The earlier version might pose a serious health risk based on the increasing negative feedback since its e-publication ahead of print.

I (Moses Bility) developed a complex idea for predicting the spatiotemporal dynamics of COVID-19-associated deaths and proposed a plausible future research direction in disease prevention that was based on traditional Chinese medicine and frameworks/concepts from other scientific disciplines outside of the biological/biomedical sciences. I (Moses Bility) used this approach, based on the previous use of traditional Chinese medical knowledge as an insight for addressing a major global health problem, namely, the discovery of Artemisinin for the treatment of chloroquine-resistant malaria.

Indeed, some of the implications and conclusions are drawn from the data have been called into question, particularly our hypothesized prevention strategy, among others. Indeed, we have yet to provide mechanistic data to substantiate some of our claims, and the provided associative data alone are low-level evidence and therefore insufficient to establish causal links to support the preventive measure.

One of the major concerns of the scientific community expressed via the online press or social media platforms includes statements that appear to endorse the use of jade amulets in preventing COVID-19 infection. We did not intend for this to be our message, but we must contend with the fact that it did elicit such interpretation. In this era of conspiracy theories and fake news, it is not unreasonable to believe that such a claim could further undermine public trust or adherence to governmental agencies (e.g., NIH, CDC) prevention guidelines such as mask wearing and social distancing. Although, we mentioned in our article that these guidelines should be followed, comments from our

peers have revealed a misunderstanding caused by our statements regarding jade amulets.

Therefore, following an open discussion about the pros and cons, all the authors listed below support this immediate retraction and replacement. This request will provide the opportunity to refocus the article's main message and better highlight the proposed explanation about temporal and spatial distribution of outbreaks rather than focusing on proposed COVID-19 preventive or therapeutic effects. Additionally, a revision of the current article may prevent the unintended public health risks related to the current online version.

Additionally, the inclusion of the co-authors in this manuscript was an error in my (Moses Bility) judgment. Although the co-authors assisted in the various stages (except conceptualization) in developing this work as outline in the article, the conceptual understanding and far-reaching implications of such an unconventional approach and complex idea that employed concepts/frameworks from geology, geophysics, and Condensed Matter Physics may have not been fully clear to them all. Indeed the expertise of the co-authors is in the biological/biomedical sciences, thus they only contributed to that aspect of the work. Therefore, upon reevaluation of the co-authorships, I have determined that all my co-authors did/do not meet one or more of required STOTEN' or ICMJE's authorship criteria for this work, they requested to be removed from the author list of our revised manuscript.

Thank you for considering our request and due to the time-sensitive nature of this request, we look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely yours,



Moses Turkle Bility, PhD, (Senior and Corresponding author)



Yash Agarwal



Sara Ho



Isabella Castronova



Cole Beatty



Shivkumar Biradar



Vanshika Narala



Nivitha Periyapatna



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