

Dear Adam Marcus,

Since you are willing to discuss with me in person, it is fair not let you without an answer although presumably risky to find this later on the internet.

i) Dr. Mohseni's paper in IJMR is presumably science fiction. Independent of the material shown, the "incriminated SEM" micrograph is scientifically useless and any experienced researcher will come himself to this conclusion easily. Luckily, I was not in office when the decision of accepting this paper was made. However, I do think the same failure could happen also under my editorial, if an unfortunate choice of reviewers respond.

ii) The authors of the alternative papers, who, according to the statement of A., claimed property of the figure, could easily address to me (since my personality and address are open to the public), present proof and ask me to withdraw the paper in IJMR. But they have not done so, yet.

iii) "COPE", "retraction watch" and obviously also "Artemisia stricta" are self-made entities without any legal foundation. They are initiated by personalities who would like to push society into directions they judge as the most important. It goes without saying that other people may come to different order of priorities. Personally e.g., I do not like their priority on a moral impetus which goes for me too much into the direction of a "clean" science. Frankly, I don't think that they have understood how the process of science really works. It is a free discussion process, experiments are claimed by some individuals and checked by many others. Only those aspects that are frequently and independently confirmed will then become accepted facts of science. So, even hundred articles of Iranian cheaters will not affect the core of this science process.

iv) It goes without saying that we all would prefer that only real facts were reported. But we call this preference the "ethics" of science and not the "law" of science. For good reason: at the bottom end, an article is the original work of an author and he/she has the freedom to also present bullshit and fiction (which I hope to filter out by our editorial process, but nothing without failure). It is one side to behave ourselves ethically and we should, but it is another side acting as policemen watching whether other people behave ethically. The latter is not the task of my first priority.

v) The above sketched process of science needs that we all do know who is presenting stuff and who is contributing to a discussion so that we can see his/her motivation behind and come to our own conclusion whether we can trust. Meaning, we need to know the persons with whom we interact. Do you really mean an "avatar" addressing to me with the obviously artificial name "Artemisia stricta", without further introducing himself, explaining his background, his education, his profession, can make me trust so that I can act in office?

vi) I am absolutely willing to indicate the article of Mohseni as fraud, and I think it is necessary in support of the ethics of science, if I receive clear proof by the researchers of the related articles. Those who claim that their pictures have been stolen or misused could address me and explain the situation. (A. may convince them to do so.) Alternatively, the guy behind A. can discover himself, telling me about his motivation and his degree of engagement in science so that I can see whether I could trust him without checking the hundred papers of the Iranian

gang myself, for which I simply will not use my precious working time, as other things are more important in my priority list.

Sincerely  
Guido Schmitz