

From: Giancarlo Di Renzo <giancarlo.direnzo@unipg.it>

Date: Sunday, 10 September 2023 at 11:43 pm

To: Ben Mol <ben.mol@monash.edu>

Subject: your complaints

Ben,

I made some reflections for your personal consideration and provide them to you confidentially. I will refrain from entering in any debate over the matter about your letter to the Italian Society SIGO. I say this to ensure that you do not end up conflating the two matters. My feedback to you is honest and provided in good faith as a scientist responding to the comments you made.

I think you made a series of mistakes writing to me in connection with allegations of scientific errors in papers, some of which I co-authored.

The **first** mistake is that you didn't follow the COPE rules at all, so you wrote to me that I am neither the first nor the corresponding author of any publication and not to the author concerned. I suggest therefore to follow the proper channels in accordance with the prescribed rules.

The **second** is that you did not write to the journal as it should have been and if you did, you did so after sending a letter to the Italian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (SIGO), not only pointing out my possible scientific misconduct but even asking it to reconsider my candidacy for FIGO less than two months before the election. To my knowledge it is this the first time that authors alleged for scientific misconduct are referred also to their national society asking for sanctions without any proof of guilt ! I think you ought to offer an apology for this, Please reassure me that as an honorable scientist you are interested in correction of scientific records , not in personal attacks.

The **third** is that after about ten days from your first emails, you invited Jim Thornton to post your (which will have become his!) concerns on PubPeer always referring to me and not to the authors concerned.

The **fourth** is that you also wrote to some members of GLOWM to point out my alleged scientific misconduct, again without complying with the rules of ethics and professionalism but trying to "shoot zero" on my person.

I would like to point out that your complaints refer to works of over twenty years ago and that in any case I am preparing detailed answers to your accusations with the authors. Among other things, you are hasty and superficial in your allegations since you accuse me of having reported identical data in two tables, when in the work which would be the one in which there would be copying, my name does not exist as co-author!

I think you ought to offer an unreserved, full apology for this.

I remind you, if you had forgotten it, that I have always behaved more than correctly with you and I have often helped you without asking for anything in return, as I do by my nature: as a reminder of everything, I point out to you when you asked me many years ago to introduce you to Vietnamese researchers and doctors since you didn't know any

of them, and I very effectively introduced you to people with whom you have since published dozens of scientific papers. I don't think there are many colleagues who would ever do what I did for you on that occasion. Not to mention the many congresses I organized where you were invited as a faculty.

In the face of all this, your scientific accusations only sound like outright slander, as SIGO pointed out to you, at a time when you would also claim to interfere with the elections of an important scientific society, evidently believing that I am not suitable, in your unquestionable judgment. It may be that this has been suggested to you by others, but then your position is even worse because you would only be a puppet who lends himself to malicious actions. Please be open about your conduct as an honorable scientist.

For all this, if you don't want us to end up in court, there is still an opportunity to bring closure. I ask you to formally apologize to me for your behavior and for the allegations made such as those relating to the candidacy or the emails to members of GLOWM. The apology should be full and unreserved, informing the parties to whom you made contacts.

On the matter of correction of scientific records, I assure that like any co-author, I will help the first author and the corresponding author of the three papers in which I am involved, to respond to the allegations on PubPeer and to the journals where they have been published (for one paper it has already been done).

In conclusion, it seems to me that what you have written about me is not to protect science from possible research errors but rather to defame the undersigned. And for that I ask apologies immediately on your part.

I think I was clear and I wish you to respond within three days of receiving this communication.

Regards

Gian Carlo