



Federazione SIGO

Società Italiana di Ginecologia e Ostetricia

Presidente
N. Colacurci

Past Presidente
A. Chiàntera

Presidente Eletto
V. Trojano

Vice Presidente
V. Dubini

Consiglieri
G. Canzone
L. Nappi
G. Quintarelli
G. Stellin

Tesoriere
M. G. Salerno

Segretario generale
I. Cetin

Via di Porta Pinciana, 6
00187 Roma
Tel. 06/6875119
Tel./Fax 06/6868142
P.IVA 05435881007
C.F. 80402170585
www.sigo.it
federazione@sigo.it
PEC: sigo@legalmail.it



SIGO Ricerca e
Comunicazione Srl
Unipersonale

Presidente CDA
A. Chiàntera

Consiglieri
V. Maritati
M. Massacesi
G. Scambia
P. Scolio
N. Surico
E. Vizza

Dear
Professor Ben W. Mol
Monash University Monash Medical Centre
246 Clayton Road
Clayton Victoria 3168
Australia
ben.mol@monash.edu

Rome, 22.08.2023

Dear dr. Mol,

I received your email of August 18th in which you make allegations against a member in good standing of the Italian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Professor Gian Carlo Di Renzo. Your email alleges some form of irregularity in papers published by a group of investigators from Italy, and your intention is to raise questions about decisions of our Society, namely, to nominate Professor Di Renzo to the highest office of FIGO.

There are several issues that we need to consider to assess the validity of allegations such as yours.

1) Nature of your complaint: your email includes some papers published in the years 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007 and a PowerPoint presentation. It seems that the basis of your allegations is what you called "concerns" outlined in some of the PowerPoint slides. It appears that you are alleging plagiarism and insinuating a misdeed. Let's evaluate the facts.

Timing and role of prof Di Renzo: You have raised questions about papers published between 16 and 23 years ago. The corresponding authors of these papers are Professor Vittorio Unfer, Professor Sandro Gerli, Dr. Loredana Costabile, and Dr. Maria Louisa Cassini. Professor Gian Carlo Di Renzo is not the corresponding author in any of these papers. We have contacted Professors Unfer and Gerli. They both indicated that they are corresponding authors and responsible for the papers. They also represented that they were responsible for the data, analysis, and publication of the work. They both indicated that Professor Di Renzo helped with the editing of the papers and the discussion of the findings.

How and when you verified the "misconduct": It seems to us that your statement that "you are preparing the guidelines for PCOS" is false, as the guidelines with your name were published on August 15th, a few days ago. So surely you have notion of the works that you have mentioned in the mail for quite some time. It seems that you want to use publications from Italy to target Professor Di Renzo, regardless of his role and whether he is an author





or not.

Absence of an official procedure against the Authors: Have you contacted the first authors and the corresponding authors of all these papers? It does not appear that an official procedure has been launched against these papers: moreover, this denunciation should have taken place beforehand against all the Authors or at least the corresponding Authors.

Lack of justification for any official procedure: Most scientific associations and journals do not consider allegations of scientific misconduct in publications older than 10 years. We are aware that you have been the subject of allegations of scientific misconduct and that you have attempted to defend yourself by indicating that the allegations were time-barred. The complaint you make is evidently time barred: despite this you are prepared to launch this complaint, something that features seriously in our consideration.

2) **Reason and timing of the complaint:** From what has been written so far, it is clear that your considerations on the publications in question represent only a pretext for targeting Professor Di Renzo, regardless of the role he played in these publications. The timing of the complaint suggests that there is above all the will to prevent Prof. Di Renzo from carrying out a normal electoral campaign for the role for which SIGO has nominated him. It is difficult to ignore that your allegations target Professor Gian Carlo Di Renzo at a time when there are only 50 days to vote to elect the next president of FIGO. The timing of your allegations and your inappropriate focus on someone who is neither the first author nor the corresponding author of any of the papers declares that your intention is to damage the reputation of Professor Di Renzo and the Italian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. It is transparent that you are intending to interfere with the process of election of FIGO by using your standard tool of calling into question the integrity of others.

3) **Credibility of the complainant:** I don't have the pleasure of knowing you personally, but, having received your letter, it would appear from the information received that:

Charges have been brought against you for your previous investigative activity against other scholars, deemed intimidating. We are aware that there have also been accusations of racism. We would not like this initiative of yours to represent only a ploy to demonstrate to the scientific world that you are "impartial" in your accusations, demonstrating that you are even focusing on an Italian researcher, who is even a candidate for the FIGO presidency.

We have come to know through objective evidence that you are a serial complainer, that your own papers have been retracted and withdrawn, there are many objectively demonstrated problems in your own trials in PubPeer nad PrePrints and you have failed to adequately respond to these published concerns, as it should be expected by a honest scientist.

From all these facts it can be deduced the lack of reliability of your work.

4) **Consequential attitude of SIGO:** As for your statements, we believe



that your email with the related allegations, all yet to be proven, is nothing more than a way to discredit and defame a very high-ranking person with an excellent human, academic and professional profile which the Italian Society is proud to present to the role of the highest office in the world of obstetrics-gynecology. We don't know if on a personal basis or otherwise, your is a slander, made coincidentally in a timely manner, to alter a judgment that from our point of view is not in the least affected by your feeble accusations.

5) Legal implications of your actions: You have published allegations of scientific misconduct against Professor Di Renzo to the point that you have questioned the appropriateness of our nomination of Professor Di Renzo for an office at FIGO. Please note that we have been advised that your statements constitute libel and defamation per se. An allegation is not sufficient to prove scientific misconduct. You are aware that an error does not constitute scientific misconduct, and for this, you would need to prove intent.

Please note that we have been advised that:

- 1) you have made false statements purporting to be fact;
- 2) you have written officially these statements;
- 3) you are aware of the standards of proof of scientific misconduct, and, therefore, your acts represent negligence and/or reckless disregard;
- 4) you have caused Prof. di Renzo and SIGO damage by falsely denouncing hypothetical scientific misconduct and by asking us to reconsider our appointment.

We ask you to retract immediately these statements. In the meantime, we will inform our attorneys so that they take the appropriate actions to protect our Society, Prof. Di Renzo and all our members.

Sincerely

Prof Nicola Colacurci
the President of SIGO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicola Colacurci", written in a cursive style.