

At MDPI, we broadly agree with the overall sentiment of the article. MDPI fully recognizes the responsibility of publishers to correct scientifically relevant errors and to address ethical issues that have been brought to attention, offering maximum transparency when post-publication updates are made. To this end, we have fully updated our [correction process](#) to increase the overall transparency of our post-publication updates, using “minor correction” as a way of publicly announcing non-scientific changes to a manuscript. As a general approach, MDPI strives to standardize and transparently disclose every aspect of the editorial processes.

Regarding the study you shared with us, we have examined the list of publications relating to journals published by MDPI, all of which were approved by journals’ Editorial Board members. The authors of this study seem to have made a significant error in categorizing these articles as requiring some form of correction notice. They also appear to fundamentally misunderstand MDPI’s editorial process relating to Special Issue articles and the way Special Issue websites are curated.

The reasoning is as follows:

Special Issues (SIs) are collections of papers centred around a subject of special interest and are organized and led by subject experts. However, an SI is not an issue of a journal.

All submissions to SIs follow the same peer review process as regular papers and are published in the regular issues of a journal, if they are accepted. They are additionally labelled as belonging to a Special Issue and are discoverable within the collection website. We would like to emphasize that these collections contain publications from several regular issues of a journal, depending on the journal’s publishing frequency. The individual articles are always discoverable through their regular issue; the SI website is only a container that serves to highlight recent publications on a specific topic.

All publications at MDPI are assigned DOIs following this nomenclature: prefix/journalname(abbrev.)-volume-issue-articleID). Based on an article’s DOI, the industry-standard persistent identifier, one can directly see the publication’s assignment to its specific regular issue. Therefore, whether or not an article is additionally labelled as belonging to an SI does not impact the version of record (VoR) and does not indicate any change in the editorial process.

As such, we completely refute the allegation that removing a Special Issue article from the digital SI website can be considered a “stealth correction”. To be considered a stealth correction, the action would need to indicate that a scientifically significant change had occurred or that the editorial process had changed in ways that affected scientifically relevant elements of the article, which is not the case. Furthermore, we are very transparent on our process, and as this change does not impact the scientific record, we do not accept that a public correction notice is required.