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Re: Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

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From Inke Nathke (Staff) <i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk>

Date Thu 08/08/2024 14:18

To [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for letting me know. I look forward to hearing from you in due course

With many good wishes

Inke

*Please note, I work flexibly and my emails may arrive at non-standard working hours. I completely respect your working pattern and I look forward to a response when you are next working according to your own schedule.*



**Professor Inke Näthke, FRSE** (she/her/hers)

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**From:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** Thursday, 8 August 2024 at 13:37

**To:** Inke Nathke (Staff) <i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

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Dear Inke,

Thank you for your message and for following up about this case. We had initiated an investigation, but recently had some staffing changes so things may have gotten side-tracked.

We are following up internally now and will be in touch soon.

Cordially,

██████████  
FEBS Letters

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**From:** Inke Nathke (Staff) <i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 8, 2024 12:21 PM  
**To:** ██████████  
**Subject:** Re: Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

Dear ██████████

I hope this finds you well.

We have recently undertaken a review of issues the Research Integrity Group in the School of Life Sciences has dealt with to assure ourselves that we have fully resolved them and that they are concluded. This reminded me of the FEBS Letters publication that is subject of the discussion below. According to my records this is the last exchange we had about it and I wondered if you could please let me know where things stand. (Just as a reminder the publication was: Mora A, Sakamoto K, McManus EJ, Alessi DR. Role of the PDK1-PKB-GSK3 pathway in regulating glycogen synthase and glucose uptake in the heart. FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8).

Thank you!

With many good wishes

Inke

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**From:** Inke Nathke (Staff) <i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk>  
**Date:** Friday, 6 October 2023 at 14:13  
**To:** FEBS Letters <febsletters@febs.org>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Further to Professor N athke's email below, I wondered if you are in a position to provide an update?

Best wishes



*On behalf of Professor Inke N athke*

*Please note, I work flexibly and my emails may arrive at non-standard working hours. I completely respect your working pattern and I look forward to a response when you are next working according to your own schedule.*



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**From:** Inke Nathke (Staff) <i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk>  
**Sent:** 12 September 2023 10:09  
**To:** FEBS Letters <febsletters@febs.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for taking the matter related to the retraction forward. I wondered if you had any update on the situation for me to share with my colleagues

With best wishes

Inke

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**From:** FEBS Letters <[febsletters@febs.org](mailto:febsletters@febs.org)>

**Date:** Thursday, 15 June 2023 at 10:02

**To:** Inke Nathke (Staff) <[i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk)>

**Subject:** Re: Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

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Dear Inke,

Thank you for your message regarding this issue. I have brought it to the attention of our Managing Editor, and will bring it to the attention of our Image Integrity Analyst when [REDACTED] returns from holiday.

This may take some time to look into. I will reach out when our editorial office has an update to share. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance in the meantime.

All best,

[REDACTED]

FEBS Letters Editorial Assistant

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**From:** Inke Nathke (Staff) <i.s.nathke@dundee.ac.uk>

**Sent:** 06 June 2023 13:13

**To:** FEBS Letters <febsletters@febs.org>

[REDACTED] Dario Alessi (Staff) <d.r.alessi@dundee.ac.uk>; [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Issue related to FEBS Lett. 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

Dear [REDACTED],

*I am writing in my role as the Research Integrity Lead in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Dundee to share the letter below from Prof Dario Alessi.*

*Best wishes*

*Inke*

I would like to inform you about an issue that has arisen related to one of our publications in *FEBS Letters* in 2005:

Mora A, Sakamoto K, McManus EJ, Alessi DR. Role of the PDK1-PKB-GSK3 pathway in regulating glycogen synthase and glucose uptake in the heart. *FEBS Lett.* 2005;4;579(17):3632-8

The story relating to uncovering this issue started in April 2018, when I became aware of a PubPeer comment suggesting irregularities in one of our publications.

I immediately informed the University of Dundee School of Life Sciences (SLS) Research Integrity Group (RIG) so they could independently investigate this. I provided them with all relevant lab books, autorads and computer files of the publication figures, which had been carefully stored. As the employing organisation at the time the research was conducted the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) was also immediately informed of this situation.

The SLS RIG obtained authorisation from the Dean of SLS to perform a preliminary investigation according to University process. A sub-group of the SLS-RIG undertook the preliminary investigation and found evidence of inappropriate image manipulation in the 2005 *FEBS Letters* paper:

The sub-group found the following inconsistencies:

- Fig. 2A & 2B Western Blot duplications.
- Fig. 3 Data reuse from Fig 2.

The preliminary investigation was completed in January 2019, and recommended an independent formal investigation be undertaken. The Dean of SLS and the University Secretary agreed with this conclusion. Following consultation, it was decided that the investigation should be undertaken by the MRC (as the employing organisation at the time when the research was conducted). In line with due process according to MRC policy, an independent MRC Investigation Panel was appointed and confirmed in July 2021.

This panel conducted a detailed, formal investigation, which included interviews with relevant authors, that was concluded in December 2022. The MRC panel confirmed the findings of the SLS RIG and recommended that the *FEBS Letters* publication should be retracted. I would therefore like to request that the publication is retracted as soon as possible. I would be happy to work with you on a suitable text for the retraction.

We shared this information with all the authors and let them know that we would be sending this information to you. We gave them the opportunity to provide feedback to be included.

On a personal note, I would like to share that this situation has been incredibly stressful and difficult. I have always tried to work to the highest standards and my priority from the moment of learning about this possible data manipulation, was to ensure that the original data was robustly and independently investigated, and that the truth of what happened was discovered so that lessons can be learned, and the literature be corrected. In hindsight, I should have been more diligent in verifying that all of the final figures in the paper matched the original primary autorad immunoblotting data. In recent years I have made major changes in the way in which our laboratory and Unit operate, and we no longer use autorads for routine immunoblotting and spend much more time discussing and ensuring data integrity. I have also attended courses on data integrity and plan to engage in discussions in this area much more in the future to minimize the possibility of this happening again.

I am truly sorry about what has happened in this publication and am happy to discuss this further.

Best wishes

Dario Alessi

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