

from: **Ashraf Basalilah**

to:

date: Aug 28, 2025, 10:36 PM

subject: Re: Media Request: Ectopia cordis interna concerns [Retraction Watch follow up]

Thank you for your email. It was a trap made by someone who wants to destroy my career intentionally and he is the same person who contacted you anonymously to raise the concerns, I cannot say his full name as it is a legal process now and we discovered that from a Facebook post posted just after you published about the case in Retraction Watch in an Arabic academic group and the post was in Arabic that was talking about the authors badly and after doing investigating the group admin who posted it, we found out the same person who sent these photos for patients who is (MSS) as I cannot say his full name, contacted the group admin to post these details as the admin was not a doctor or involved in any medical profession. However, I received all the case details and documentations from "MSS" who told me that he doesn't want to be on the list of authors for his personal reasons and signed an agreement for that. I gathered a team to write the case and we submitted it to the journal who peer reviewed it and accepted it without even noticing that the photos were fake or plagiarized. I trusted that guy and his documentation done everything based on that, we all the authors were not involved in the patient's care or management. However, the institutions' investigation found that this guy has done all this to destroy the reputation of the authors for personal issues with them and he contacted you from anonymous email and fake name to create this story so he could not be discovered. I, the corresponding author, take the full responsibility for this as I trusted him and invited the other authors to write without knowing the case was fake and plagiarized as we did not check that. As the responsibility is on me and I take it fully because my coauthors were not involved in this and they were not aware of the situation, it is on the peer reviewers who recommended the acceptance and on the journal's editors who accepted the paper without even checking for plagiarism as they supposed to do!!

However, a high-level institutional investigation is running right now and the case will be handled by the legal authorities for defamation. I cannot provide any evidences (WhatsApp chats, Facebook post that has been removed after, Telegram chats) because the case is legal now and maybe you will be asked to provide the "sleuth" email and IP address for legal authorities.

Regarding my other case report, the journal said that lost validity in the other cases written by me and they retracted them even they do not have enough data on their own to justify retraction! as stated in the following statement submitted by the editor:

- The journal also has several concerns that while not enough on their own to justify retraction, taken with the allegations above, present a pattern of submission and authorship that raises serious questions about the validity of the content as submitted.
 - Authors generally lack public records and contact information that confirm their stated institutional affiliations.
 - Listed affiliations are in some cases outdated.
 - The corresponding author's information as submitted to the submission system is incomplete; selected classifications do not match the stated area of expertise.

As a result of this investigation, we have concluded that we can no longer support the validity of the content submitted by the corresponding author, and the articles will be retracted. Accompanying notices of the "ectopia cordis interna" case as well as an example of the notice used in the other 5 cases have been attached for your reference.

All these case are real, credible and valid and the authors on these cases were involved in them and they were their patients and the journal has not found any mistakes or justification for retracting them, yet they are insisting on retraction which is weird and I think the journal is involved in covering on the that guy's identity and claim which has legal consequences later as this case has happened to many high figure researchers to destroy their careers by "psychopath" people and enemies.

In conclusion, I admit that Ectopia cordis is not real case based on our investigation and t was faked by MSS to destroy authors' reputation as we are not aware of that until you notified us. I, the corresponding author, take full responsibility for any misconduct or damage happened here the other coauthors had nothing to do with this. My other cases, I do nit agree with the journal's decision as they are real and documented and written by high level authors from high accredited affiliations.

I hope your report this time be fair and transparent and open the light in this new serious and concerning ethical breach that will recur with others in the aim of destroying their careers. The journals and publishers must be more strict and organized in reviewing the submissions and criticizing the authors or revealing the IDs of these concerning readers or as you called him "Sleuth"!!

Warm regards,

Ashraf.