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REF: Statement from the Marchand Institute for Minimally Invasive Surgery Regarding the Retraction of Our 2023 Meta-Analysis

Unfortunately, following the removal of Dr. Ladapo's data from the Florida Department of Health's servers, the publisher of our study on the side effects of COVID-19 vaccination has decided to retract the article. We find this to be an unfortunate decision, as the data being removed from public access is not the same as data being retracted or having been found to be incorrect. Nonetheless, in accordance with COPE guidelines, it ***is acceptable*** to retract a meta-analysis under these circumstances, and our institute agrees with this guideline, and accepts a retraction is reasonable at this time, for those reasons.

HOWEVER — the retraction notice as currently printed is ambiguous and gives the impression that a COPE-compliant query was performed that may have found evidence that the "validity of the findings remains in question." This is ***absolutely untrue.*** There was no COPE-compliant query that took place, and no evidence of any invalid findings. All questions were answered to absolute resolution, and no further concerns were raised by the editors or outside reviewers. Their ambiguous statement — "We have been informed in our decision-making by…COPE guidelines." — gives the completely misleading impression that a COPE-compliant query took place, when it certainly DID NOT. To restate, they may have been "**informed**" by the guidelines, but they certainly did not "**follow**" them, with regards to the query.

We have compiled our full, final defense of the findings in this 33-page thesis:

https://marchandinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Second-Requested-Response-Full-Thesis-in-Defense-of-Findings.pdf

In the interest of full disclosure, we also offer our full communications with the publisher, which clearly show that no COPE-compliant review ever indicated that a retraction was necessary. Quite the contrary, the COPE-compliant review that was launched showed only that a correction may be indicated. Following this, an "editorial decision" was made to retract this paper, which is very different from an actual COPE-compliant query of the facts. The full communication can be found at this link:

http://marchandinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Taylor-and-Francis-All-communications-Full-Email-Thread-with-Ms-Boyd.pdf

In summary, our institute has defended this paper for three years since its publication in 2023. We stand behind the paper's findings as well as the methods used, which were appropriate to the data and tools

available at that time. While we respect the publisher's right to withdraw a paper when substantial portions of the data become unverifiable, we take extreme insult at even the appearance of an accusation of error in the validity of our findings. To this end, we will report this incident to the COPE consortium, and will consider legal action for libel against our authors for their ambiguous wording, which could portray our authors and their considerable work on this paper in a negative light.

Sincerely,

Greg J. Marchand, MD, FACS, FICS, FACOG
Institute Director