

PDF via email

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

12th February 2024

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the recent paper *Violence on Reddit Support Forums Unique to r/NoFap* (<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2023.2280795>) by Nicole Prause and David Ley, published in the journal *Deviant Behavior*.

Your initial complaint, received on 20th November 2023 by the Editors and Editorial Board of the journal, makes a number of statements about the authors and the paper, including breach of contract from prior litigation, defamation of Alexander Rhodes, as well as a number of concerns about the academic content of the paper. Your letter calls for the retraction of this article on the grounds of those concerns.

Following receipt of your letter, Taylor & Francis and the *Deviant Behavior* editorial team conducted an investigation into the editorial handling, the peer review process, and the integrity of the article. This investigation was conducted in adherence to our editorial policies and the COPE guidelines. The findings of this investigation follow.

1. Concerns on the academic integrity of the article

We confirm that the article was handled in line with the *Deviant Behavior* peer review policy of double-anonymous review; two independent, anonymous referees with appropriate expertise on this topic reviewed the article and those reviews informed the editorial decision to accept the article for publication.

Concerning the ethical integrity of the article, we have reviewed the documentation from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UCLA; we believe that the correct approval was in place for the study. Additionally, the Open Science Foundation have confirmed that read-only access was given to the project data.

Regarding the data sampling, the authors' methodology and explanations for cleansing their data set was reviewed by the Editors and found to be in line with the journal's expectations.

2. Concerns of defamation

Taylor & Francis engaged a third-party defamation expert to review the article and is comfortable with its content.

3. Concerns of conflict of interest

The Free Speech Coalition have confirmed in writing that there was no collaboration from them, financial or otherwise, on this project.

The paid expertise and video content provided by David Ley to the Sexual Health Alliance has been deemed as an association which could be perceived to be a conflict of interest, and which our editorial policies require to be declared.

4. Concerns of breach of contract

Your complaint references a settlement agreement, arising from prior litigation between the authors and Rhodes. Our understanding is that this settlement agreement is sealed; as such, without sight of the agreement, we cannot conclude whether the settlement has been breached.

Conclusion and next steps

To conclude, we have found the processes to ensure the academic integrity of the paper were robust, and we stand behind the publication of this paper. However, we have requested that the authors agree to an updated Disclosure statement that will clarify the association with the Sexual Health Alliance. This update will be published as a correction to the article in due course.

This concludes our investigation and actions for this article, unless new evidence should be forthcoming.

We thank you for your patience during our investigation.

Kind regards,
Taylor & Francis Editorial