

July 20, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION:

The Honorable Francis S. Collins, MD, Ph.D.
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Collins:

I write today with great concern for the integrity of current scientific research regarding the novel coronavirus. On July 14, 2020, Eva Xiao reported in the Wall Street Journal that multiple scientific journals have withdrawn from publication more than a dozen papers written by Chinese researchers due to concerns about their scientific integrity.¹

This report follows an investigation by Dutch microbiologist Elisabeth Bik, who found 121 allegedly scientific papers that all shared at least one graph or image.²

Shockingly, Dr. Bik reported that one of the authors whose research has come into question offered her money to avoid being named in the report.

The affected publications represent the work of Chinese researchers hailing from 50 cities, all across China.³ Although a handful of individuals have offered to produce their original data and validate their research, at least 19 authors have asked to withdraw their work entirely.

As we learn more about the novel coronavirus responsible for the current pandemic, it is imperative that research be above reproach.

To that end, no later than July 31, 2020, please provide my office with an accounting of any funding provided by the National Institutes of Medicine to these researchers and the institutions who employ them.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
U.S. Senator

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/scientific-journal-pulls-over-a-dozen-papers-by-chinese-researchers-11594743872?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=1>

² <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-research-papers-raise-doubts-fueling-global-questions-about-scientific-integrity-11593939600>

³ Ibid.