

Letter to the Editor: In Response to the Retraction Notice of an Article

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Keywords: Plagiarism, Retracted papers, Thesis.

Indian Journal of Critical Care Medicine (2024): 10.5005/jp-journals-10071-24766

Dear Editor,

We are writing to you regarding an article published by Ramaswamy et al. in the October 2023 edition of the *Indian Journal of Critical Care Medicine*, using stolen data.¹ I worked on my thesis titled, "Role of Parasternal Intercostal Muscle Ultrasound during Weaning from Mechanical Ventilation and Prediction of Extubation Success in ICU—A Prospective Observational Study" from July 2020 to August 2022. A prospective Clinical Trial Registry of India (CTRI) registration of the study (CTRI/2020/07/026427) was obtained on 8th July 2020. Institutional Ethics committee clearance was also obtained before the commencement of the study. After 2 years of painstaking work and complex statistical analysis, the thesis was submitted by August 2022. The findings of the study were also presented at EuroAsia 2022 conference where it was selected as one of the ten best poster presentations. But, using my thesis data and using the data of patients from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, a study has been made up and published in an article by Ramaswamy et al.¹ I was shocked to see that, the exact same data of the thesis including demographic characters, baseline data, and the primary and secondary objectives were used in the publication. This was not done by the explicit knowledge of me, who had originally worked on the thesis, or my guides and co-guides. We can prove the ownership of data beyond doubt using the electronic thesis submission portal of AIIMS, New Delhi, and the EuroAsia 2022 poster (submitted to ISCCM), which has the same demographic and outcome data and was submitted prior to the publication of the article in question. We came to know of this, only when doing a literature search for drafting a manuscript by our author group on 19/05/2024. Immediately, the corresponding author was confronted with evidence of data theft/plagiarism, after which they decided to withdraw the manuscript. But it was disheartening to see the authors citing "major errors in data" as the reason for retraction, as this is not true and we demand the retraction of the article citing the proper reason. We also have proof that a manuscript of the

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How to cite this article: Kannan S. Letter to the Editor: In Response to the Retraction Notice of an Article. *Indian J Crit Care Med* 2024;28(12): 1184.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

study from our author group was submitted to another journal in July, 2023. It pains us to see our work stolen and published in this manner. We thank the IJCCM for the timely retraction of the journal. We now write with urgency because a manuscript from our original data has been sent to another journal and is in the correction stages. If we publish our findings, which include more secondary objectives and analysis, that should be considered the original data and can be used anywhere for publication by the original authors. I kindly request you to take cognizance of this fact and publish the appropriate reason for retraction.

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REFERENCE

1. Ramaswamy A, Kumar R, Arul M, Ish P, Madan M, Gupta NK, et al. Prediction of weaning outcome from mechanical ventilation using ultrasound assessment of parasternal intercostal muscle thickness. *Indian J Crit Care Med* 2023;27(10):704–708. DOI: 10.5005/jp-journals-10071-24548.