

Retraction: Homocysteine-induced extracellular superoxide dismutase and its epigenetic mechanisms in monocytes

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Yideng, J., Jianzhong, J., Jiantuan, X., Jun, C., Nan, L., Guizhong, L. and Shuren, W. (2008). *J. Exp. Biol.* 211, 911-920.

After careful examination of the above paper published in *The Journal of Experimental Biology* (Yideng et al., 2008), we have realised that we made a number of serious errors.

These errors relate to (1) inaccurate writing and textual discrepancies, particularly in the Materials and methods, (2) mislabelling of figures and inappropriate presentation of data and (3) re-use of western blot bands in Fig. 6B, some of which we previously published in a recent paper in *DNA and Cell Biology* (Yideng et al., 2007) to represent different samples.

At the request of *The Journal of Experimental Biology*, an investigation into how these errors arose was carried out by a multi-disciplinary academic committee at Ningxia Medical College. Their findings were as follows: (1) the textual inaccuracies resulted from our carelessness and limited English language skills; (2) all images within the paper were obtained from our experimental results; and (3) the reuse of images resulted from unscientific file-naming conventions and negligence on the part of the corresponding author. During the period of completing this article, we kept copies of the images on both our office and home computers and also on portable hard disks. Due to our carelessness in file-naming, we mistook previous images that should have been deleted from our computers as images relating to the current article, resulting in the re-use of our previously published images and mislabelling of figures and inappropriate presentation of data.

As a consequence, we wish to retract the paper (Yideng et al., 2008). In line with the recommendations of the committee, we also intend to repeat all experiments to verify the results.

We have learnt many valuable lessons from this experience and sincerely apologise to the editors and readers for our carelessness.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Journal of Experimental Biology was made aware of an anomaly in one of the figures in this paper (Fig. 6B), namely that the MeCP2 and β -actin bands on the western blot appeared to be identical but with different exposure times. The authors confirmed that there was indeed an error in the published Fig. 6B images and they provided a new version of the figure. They gave no indication of any other concerns about their paper.

To verify the findings of the original paper as thoroughly as possible for the scientific record, the journal appointed an independent expert to review the paper more thoroughly. In addition to the initial anomaly reported, our independent expert identified anomalies at several levels; most seriously, re-use of previously published images and re-use of bands to represent data in multiple unrelated experiments. Specifically, four bands shown for β -actin controls in Fig. 6B had been used in a previous publication (Yideng et al., 2007) to represent different samples. Our expert was of the opinion that these anomalies could not be explained by involuntary errors.

The Journal of Experimental Biology and its publisher, the Company of Biologists, take issues relating to the authenticity of data very seriously. We therefore sent a copy of the report to each of the authors and their institutes and lodged a request with each of the institutes (Ningxia Medical College and West China College of Preclinical and Forensic Medical Sciences) that they initiate a rigorous investigation. The Rector of Ningxia Medical College, the institute of six of the seven authors, confirmed that they had carried out an investigation on behalf of the institute and provided us with a copy of their report, the results of which are summarised in the retraction statement above. We have received no acknowledgement, as yet, of our letters and emails to West China College of Preclinical and Forensic Medical Sciences and are unable to confirm that they received our messages. In response to the findings of the Ningxia Medical College investigation, we have asked the authors and institutes to verify the results of all papers from this group and to alert other relevant publishers to any potential concerns so that they can carry out their own independent enquiries.