



Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!

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4/24/23

Dr. Runko,

I am writing to you to insist that ORI launch a full Research Misconduct review regarding multiple federally funded publications, which are connected to the University of Wyoming (UW). UW research staff, including Jun Ren, are clearly involved in a major case of Research Misconduct. Internal investigations conducted by the school have led to admissions of Research Misconduct in connection to the retraction of a journal article, and have resulted in a call for the retraction of dozens of publications.

The most recent retraction is relevant to this article: *Activation of Akt Rescues Endoplasmic Reticulum Stress-Impaired Murine Cardiac Contractile Function via Glycogen Synthase Kinase-3 $\beta$ -Mediated Suppression of Mitochondrial Permeation Pore Opening* ( <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3176349/> )

The publication states: “This work was supported in part by NIH/NCRR P20 RR016474 (J.R.)”

Wyoming IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence

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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING 2011

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\$3,259,722

The Retraction notice states: “*The Editor-in-Chief of Antioxidants and Redox Signaling (ARS) was notified by the University of Wyoming (Laramie, WY) that as a result of recent institutional findings of research misconduct against a former employee, Dr. Jun Ren, the University was requesting retractions from four journals<sup>1-4</sup> which are not associated with ARS. However, the University subsequently delved further into an “examination of other selected publications of Dr. Ren’s under the direction of the HHS Office of Research Integrity. Based on th[ose] findings of this examination, the University of Wyoming is recommending retraction of 29 additional publications,”\*\* including an article published in ARS entitled, “Activation of Akt Rescues Endoplasmic Reticulum Stress-Impaired Murine Cardiac Contractile Function via Glycogen Synthase Kinase-3 $\beta$ -Mediated Suppression of Mitochondrial Permeation Pore Opening,” by Yingmei Zhang, Zhi Xia, Karissa H. La Cour, and Jun Ren (Antioxid Redox Signal 15(9); 2011:2407–2424; doi: 10.1089/ars.2010.3751) because of “concerns regarding data irregularities inconsistent with published conclusions.” The University found evidence of “data irregularities and image reuse in Figures 3, 6, 8, and 9 that significantly affect the results and conclusions reported in the manuscript.”*”

This retraction statement says that the University of Wyoming is calling for a total of 33 retractions. This is a huge case of Research Misconduct/Fraud, and it must be dealt with swiftly.

This falsified experimentation must be removed from the public record.

Since the University of Wyoming has admitted that the data for this publication has been either fabricated or falsified, as the retraction notices clearly states, this publication would qualify as Research Misconduct. The definition of Research Misconduct, as stated on the Office of Research Integrity website:

“Research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

(a) Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

(b) Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

(c) Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.”

The pubmed journal article database currently shows two dozen retracted journal articles of which Jun Ren is listed as an author. At least six of these publications list Jun Ren affiliated with the University of Wyoming.

Since the data/conclusions in these articles was falsified and/or fabricated, there must be consequences for these heinous acts. Therefore, you must launch a full investigation of these University of Wyoming publications, and all the associated authors.

It is even worse that many mice and sheep died - their hearts were literally cut out — for fraudulent experiments. This project, took the lives of animals to produce data that was, according to the University of Wyoming itself, falsified.

At the end of the investigation I am certain that the events surrounding these retractions will be judged to constitute Research Misconduct. A multi-year pattern of fabricated/falsified data involving many of the same staff in multiple publications would appear to be intentional.

I will expect a response from your office within 5 business days.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T.,  
Executive Director, SAEN

Attachment: 2 Journal Article Retractions

# ***Retraction of: Activation of Akt Rescues Endoplasmic Reticulum Stress-Impaired Murine Cardiac Contractile Function via Glycogen Synthase Kinase-3 $\beta$ -Mediated Suppression of Mitochondrial Permeation Pore Opening (Antioxid Redox Signal 15(9);2011:2407–2424; doi: 10.1089/ars.2010.3751)***

 This article retracts the following: 

Published Online: 18 Apr 2023 | <https://doi.org/10.1089/ars.2010.3751.retract>

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The Editor-in-Chief of *Antioxidants and Redox Signaling* (ARS) was notified by the University of Wyoming (Laramie, WY) that as a result of recent institutional findings of research misconduct against a former employee, Dr. Jun Ren, the University was requesting retractions from four journals<sup>1-4</sup> which are not associated with ARS. However, the University subsequently delved further into an “*examination of other selected publications of Dr. Ren's under the direction of the HHS Office of Research Integrity. Based on th[ose] findings of this examination, the University of Wyoming is recommending retraction of 29 additional publications,*”<sup>\*\*</sup> including an article published in ARS entitled, “Activation of Akt Rescues Endoplasmic Reticulum Stress-Impaired Murine Cardiac Contractile Function via Glycogen Synthase Kinase-3 $\beta$ -Mediated Suppression of Mitochondrial Permeation Pore Opening,” by Yingmei Zhang, Zhi Xia, Karissa H. La Cour, and Jun Ren (Antioxid Redox Signal 15(9);2011:2407–2424; doi: 10.1089/ars.2010.3751) because of “*concerns regarding data irregularities inconsistent with published conclusions.*” The University found evidence of “*data irregularities and image reuse in Figures 3, 6, 8, and 9 that significantly affect the results and conclusions reported in the manuscript.*” (See [Supplemental Figure 1.](#))

Upon receipt of the report, the publisher of ARS notified Dr. Ren of the University of Wyoming's request for retraction. Dr. Ren appealed the university's decision to retract based on his failure “*to catch this series of JC-1 staining mistake already made earlier by his misconduct or mistakes by inexperienced undergraduate students,*” and requested that a correction statement be issued instead of a full retraction. After informing the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) at the University of Wyoming of Dr. Ren's appeal, the request for a correction was denied as the RIO stated that the university stands by their initial findings and requested an official retraction.

The publisher of ARS also ran independent checks of the images and verified the stated misuse.



Retraction notice

## Retraction notice to "Maternal Nutrient Restriction Predisposes Ventricular Remodeling in Adult Sheep Offspring" [The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry 24 (2013) 1258-1265]

Wei Ge<sup>a b</sup>, Nan Hu<sup>b</sup>, Lindsey A. George<sup>c</sup>, Stephen P. Ford<sup>c</sup>, Peter W. Nathanielsz<sup>c d</sup>,  
Xiao-Ming Wang<sup>a</sup>, Jun Ren<sup>a b c</sup>

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnutbio.2022.109243> ↗

Refers to [RETRACTED: Maternal nutrient restriction predisposes ventricular remodeling in adult sheep offspring](#)  
The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry, Volume 24, Issue 7, July 2013, Pages 1258-1265  
Wei Ge, Nan Hu, Lindsey A. George, Stephen P. Ford, Peter W. Nathanielsz, Xiao-Ming Wang, Jun Ren  
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This article has been retracted: please see Elsevier Policy on Article Withdrawal (<https://www.elsevier.com/about/our-business/policies/article-withdrawal> ↗).

This article has been retracted at the request of the Editor-in-Chief.

The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry and Editor have been informed by the University of Wyoming's Research Integrity Officer that the University conducted an examination of selected publications of Dr. Ren's under the direction of the HHS Office of Research Integrity. Based on the findings of this examination, the University of Wyoming recommended retraction of this paper, due to concerns regarding data irregularities inconsistent with published conclusions.

Specifically, the University found evidence of data irregularities and image reuse in Figures 3, 5, and 6 that significantly affect the results and conclusions reported in the manuscript.