

Från: PLOS Pub Ethics <pub-ethics@plos.org>

Skickat: den 23 november 2023 16:42

Till: NUAF <nuaf@uu.se>

Ämne: RE: SV: PLOS ONE: Reporting publication ethics concerns involving researcher at Uppsala University

Dear Dr. Ringholm,

Thank you for your swift reply and for confirming that you are the correct contact to receive this report. I am writing in relation to an Associate Professor in the Department of Game Design in Uppsala University, Zhihan Lv (also known as Zhihan Lyu, <https://www.katalog.uu.se/profile?id=N21-2049>).

We recently retracted an article for which Dr. Lv is listed as an author. The article in question is "Deployment Optimization of Multi-Stage Investment Portfolio Service and Hybrid Intelligent Algorithm Under Edge Computing," (DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0252244). Despite the alternative name spelling, I am certain that the PLOS author is Zhihan Lyu from Uppsala University as he included his Uppsala affiliation in an email to the journal when discussing this retraction.

We also retracted two articles for which Dr. Lv was the Academic Editor who handled peer review. These articles are:

1. "Analyzing the regional economic changes in a high-tech industrial development zone using machine learning algorithms" <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250802>
2. "Application of deep learning in automatic detection of technical and tactical indicators of table tennis" <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245259>

Concerns were raised about these articles and others following publication, including about similarities across articles, peer review integrity, and potential manipulation of the publication process suggestive of paper mill activity. We followed up as per guidance of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and on the basis of our editorial assessment and information obtained in follow-up discussions, PLOS ONE retracted the articles in September and November of this year. The retraction notices are available on the articles' webpages.

Our investigation into this case is ongoing and there is a possibility that more articles will be retracted due to these concerns. The articles awaiting further assessment include some for which Dr. Lv handled the peer review or was listed as an author.

I also wanted to bring to your attention that Zhihan Lv is listed as the Guest Editor for over 100 articles that have been retracted from journals published by Hindawi. The list of retracted Hindawi articles is available at this publicly-available GoogleSheet: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CWG84ncHW7-7mgzq9EZBoPC6Sw5n9mS6pInStNs78gA/edit#gid=0> (please note that PLOS does not own this file and we have not contributed to it).

Given the sensitive nature of this information, please consider this email confidential. I would be happy to provide further details about our findings via Zoom, so please do let me know if you'd like to discuss this further. Additionally, I am happy to provide further updates if we take action on any more articles that were authored or handled by Dr. Lv.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best wishes,
Clare

Clare McFadden, PhD
Senior Editor, Publication Ethics | She/her

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2023-11-29

Dear Dr. Ringholm,

Thank you for the reply, and for considering the information I provided. In relation to Dr. Lv's affiliation at the time these articles were published, the submission, acceptance and publications dates for the three PLOS ONE are on the articles' webpages so you can use this information to determine if Dr. Lv was employed at Uppsala University at the time. In relation to the Hindawi articles, I spot checked a few and saw that some were submitted/published in 2021.

Dr. Lv was a member of the PLOS ONE's Editorial Board until March 2022, at which point he was removed due to the concerns described in my previous email (potential manipulation of the publication process suggestive of paper mill activity). He does not appear to have informed us

that he changed affiliation to Uppsala University so if he handled the peer review of any articles during this time period, his affiliation is inaccurate on the published articles, unless he was affiliated with multiple institutions during this time period.

I understand that you can only investigate research that was carried out at Uppsala University, so these issues may not be within your remit. However, I wanted to make you aware given the nature and extent of the concerns related to Dr. Lv's editorial work for PLOS and Hindawi articles. We do not require input from Uppsala University to continue with our investigation.

Thank you for the information regarding confidentiality law in Sweden, and for your consideration of this information. If you have any questions about the above, please do feel free to get in touch.

Best wishes,

Clare

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