

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft · 53170 Bonn, Germany

Personal / Confidential

“Claire Francis“

– Digital transfer –

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Your notification of a potential case of scientific misconduct

Dear Sir or Madam,

At the end of July 2024, you notified the DFG Head Office of a potential case of scientific misconduct by Professor Dr Margitta Worm and Dr Magda Babina (both Charité University Medical Center Berlin). The allegations related to supposed manipulations in several figures contained in a publication of Professor Worm's and Dr Babina's. We found that the following publication relates to DFG funding indeed:

Tarek Hazzan, Jürgen Eberle, Margitta Worm & Magda Babina, Thymic Stromal Lymphopoietin Interferes with the Apoptosis of Human Skin Mast Cells by a Dual Strategy Involving STAT5/Mcl-1 and JNK/Bcl-xL, Cells (2019), DOI: [10.3390/cells8080829](https://doi.org/10.3390/cells8080829)

Your allegations were:

- a) fig. 3a: two duplications
- b) fig. 3c: one duplication
- c) fig. 3a + 3b: two duplications
- d) fig. 5a: two duplications
- e) fig. 4c: one duplication with a twist and resizing

We ask you to continue to treat the allegations and especially the fact that the DFG is conducting an investigation as **confidential**.

The Research Integrity team conducted a preliminary review procedure to assess your allegations. Professor Worm and Dr Babina handed in comprehensive statements and provided additional materials to the publication. The procedure has now been discontinued due to a lack of at least gross negligence.

Professor Worm and Dr. Babina acknowledged the errors in the figures that you pointed out and thoroughly explained how the mix-ups occurred and why, as the last authors, they did not notice the mistakes during the final review of the manuscripts. Given the complexity of the publication processes in this particular case, as well as the number and breakdown of the figures included in the paper, we consider this negligent, but not grossly negligent.

As a consequence of your allegations, the two researchers submitted a corrigendum to the journal which was published in mid-December 2024.

Pursuant to section III item 1 (b) para. 4 VerfOwF, we are notifying you of our decision to discontinue the procedure first. Should you not agree with this decision, you have the right to remonstrate with the DFG Head Office within two weeks of receiving this letter. In this case, the Research Integrity team would then review its decision. Please note that a remonstration may be based on new facts only.

Yours sincerely,

The Research Integrity team
of the DFG Head Office