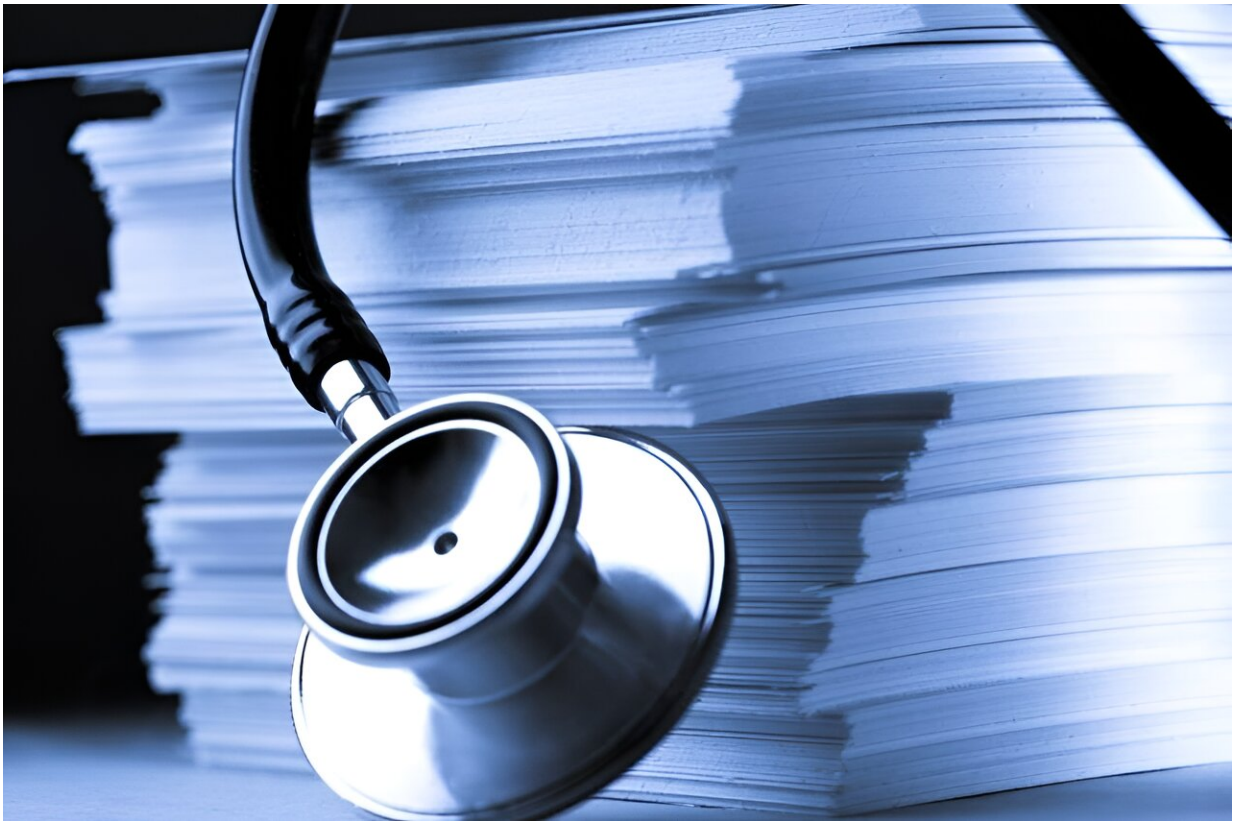


Dana Farber Cancer Center to retract or fix dozens of studies

January 23 2024, by Robin Foster



The Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston will retract six studies and correct 31 more as part of an ongoing investigation into claims of data manipulation.

The action follows allegations that a British molecular biologist posted in a [blog](#) earlier this month suggesting researchers involved in those studies falsified data by manipulating [images](#).

More than 50 papers are included in the review of four Dana Farber researchers. Four of the papers under review were authored by Dana-Farber CEO Laurie Glimcher, *CNN* reported.

"We are committed to a culture of accountability and integrity. Therefore, every inquiry is examined fully to ensure the soundness of the scientific literature," Barrett Rollins, Dana-Farber's research integrity officer and chief science officer emeritus, told *CNN* on Monday. "Dana-Farber has been swift and decisive in this regard."

Six manuscripts have retractions underway, 31 have been "identified as warranting corrections" and another one with a reported error "remains under examination," Rollins said.

The papers under review reported experiments on multiple myeloma, a [blood cancer](#), and [immune cells](#), among other topics, according to the *New York Times*.

Dana-Farber has not yet determined whether [scientific misconduct](#) has occurred, *CNN* reported.

The issues with the studies first came to light earlier this month, when British scientist Sholto David published a blog post that claimed Dana Farber scientists manipulated images and data in numerous reports. David suggested that Adobe Photoshop was used to copy and paste images in some of the papers.

David, who earned a doctorate in cellular and [molecular biology](#) from Newcastle University, told the *Times* that he routinely checks out the

research of others, and he simply stumbled on irregularities in work from some Dana-Farber scientists. At that point, he visited the institute's website and began checking out those researchers' papers.

He said he identified problems with the help of AI software before checking them himself. Others issues he found on his own.

"You've got a cluster of people at one institution with image problems," David said. "How many mistakes are we happy with people making and just kind of saying, "That's an innocent error'?"

Among the irregularities he said he found were results from a western blot, a method used to detect proteins, that were copied and pasted across different experiments. Sometimes, the images appeared copied and rotated or stretched in a way that looked like deliberate manipulation.

In one study, he found that an image of mice from day one of an experiment seemed to reappear in the results on day 16, in a different part of the experiment.

"I'm concerned about the whole process, rather than specifically this blot or that blot," David told the *Times*. "Clearly something has gone awry along the way."

According to Rollins, Dana-Farber was already reviewing "potential data errors" in some of the cases that David pointed out and stressed that those errors do not definitively amount to misconduct.

"The presence of image discrepancies in a [paper](#) is not evidence of an author's intent to deceive," Rollins said. "That conclusion can only be drawn after a careful, fact-based examination which is an integral part of our response. Our experience is that errors are often unintentional and

do not rise to the level of misconduct."

He added that some allegations raised in the blog against Dana-Farber researchers are "wrong," while others concern data generated in outside labs.

Rollins is actually an author on a few of the papers that were flagged, but the institute said he would be recused from any investigation touching on his own research, the *Times* reported.

More information: The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences has more on [ethics in research](#).

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