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Journal of the American Heart Association

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14 February 2020

Stanton A. Glantz, PhD
Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education
University of California, San Francisco
530 Parnassus Ave, Suite 366
San Francisco, CA 94143-1390

RE: Electronic cigarette use and myocardial infarction among adults in the US Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health.
Journal of the American Heart Association 2019;8:e012317. DOI:10.1161/JAHA.119.012317.

Dear Dr Glantz,

We are in receipt of your letter dated February 12, 2020. Prior to receiving it, the editorial committee had begun revisions to the proposed retraction notice that should address several of your concerns. Here are a few comments in response to your specific points:

1. **Avoid Litigation.** We agree that litigation would not be positive or productive and hope that, after reading this letter and the retraction, you will understand that *JAHA* does not have any alternatives to publishing the retraction.
2. **No Access to PATH and Inaccurate Retraction Statement.** We understand that you no longer have access to the PATH survey. Phrasing in the third paragraph was revised to make it clear that the agreed upon revised analysis was not completed because “the authors are unable to access the PATH database.”
3. **Failure to Follow Normal Scientific Protocol.** All AHA Journals, including *JAHA*, follow the [Committee on Publication Ethics \[COPE\] 2019 Guidelines for Retraction](#). The COPE guidelines explain the purpose for retraction as “a mechanism for correcting the literature and alerting readers to articles that contain such seriously flawed or erroneous content or data that their findings and conclusions cannot be relied upon. **Unreliable content or data may result from honest error, naïve mistakes, or research misconduct.**” (Emphasis added.)
4. **No Misconduct.** The retraction notice is intentionally absent of any language suggesting scientific misconduct.
5. **Good Faith Efforts During the Peer Review Process.** The first paragraph acknowledges that the peer review process was flawed as the editors and reviewers missed an opportunity to clarify and confirm the request for additional analysis.
6. **Ongoing Public Relations Attack.** We hope you appreciate how seriously the editors take *JAHA*'s journalistic integrity. The editors have a duty to present accurate scientific evidence without bias, regardless of the threats or pressure by outside interests. This action is taken in strict compliance with the COPE standards,

which *JAHA* has followed for many years, and in no way accuses you or anyone of misconduct.

After carefully considering all options, the editors and the AHA Scientific Publishing Committee have determined *JAHA* will proceed with publication of the enclosed retraction notice at our earliest convenience. We hope you understand that this was not an easy decision for the editors to make.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry London". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Barry London, MD, PhD
Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of the American Heart Association*