

## Report on Research Compliance Volume 18, Number 9. August 26, 2021 In This Month's E-News: September 2021

---

By Theresa Defino

◆ **A former Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) researcher who was the principal investigator on a 2014 NIH award of \$939,495.27 and allegedly fabricated data in the award application has agreed to pay the government \$215,000.** The payment resolves potential violations of the False Claims Act that resulted from Sam W. Lee's alleged research misconduct, the Department of Justice announced Aug. 6. MGH conducted an "internal review," according to the settlement, and then "stopped drawing federal funds for [Lee's award] and voluntarily disclosed to the United States that Dr. Lee allegedly submitted grant applications to NIH containing inauthentic data. MGH repaid NIH the full amount of funds it received, \$939,495.27." It is not clear when MGH's repayment and the disclosure were made. (8/19/21)

◆ **A former associate professor at Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory agreed to a two-year supervisory plan and to request that three papers be retracted because they contain fabrications or falsifications, according to a notice by HHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI).** In only its second finding of the year, ORI said Viravuth Yin "neither admits nor denies ORI's findings of research misconduct." According to the Aug. 16 post on the agency's website, Yin "engaged in research misconduct by knowingly, intentionally, and/or recklessly falsifying and/or fabricating data" in three published and two submitted papers. One of the publications was itself a correction. The papers were published in 2015 and 2019; the unpublished manuscripts were submitted in 2018. Yin, ORI said, had reused and relabeled phosphate buffered solution controls as locked nucleic acids in 21 experiments and then created false images and data. ORI also cited five instances where Yin did not perform experiments but nonetheless reported "research methods and statistics." (8/19/21)

◆ **With the completion of its 10 reviews of universities' implementation of COVID-19 administrative flexibilities granted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) last year, the National Science Foundation (NSF) Office of Inspector General (OIG) has issued a "capstone" report on its findings.** The picture it paints is of the flexibilities providing some level of assistance but also of award recipients not making full opportunity of them, sometimes out of fear born of less-than-ideal implementation across the federal government. "Because OMB required federal agencies to issue their own guidance regarding whether and how recipients should implement the COVID-19 flexibilities, recipients did not believe they had access to sufficient, timely guidance that would allow them to ensure they were able to appropriately implement the flexibilities granted by each agency," the Aug. 3 report said. "Further, because federal agencies were not always timely in publishing comprehensive agency-specific guidance, many recipients were unable to implement the flexibilities and/or relied on guidance published by non-regulatory bodies." (8/12/21)

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)