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By Theresa Defino

Former Director of Experimental Radiology at Emory Accepts Exclusion for Misconduct

A professor and former director of experimental radiology at Emory University retired last year, but her tenure is continuing to have a ripple effect. On Sept. 15, the HHS Office of Research Integrity (ORI) said that Dr. Ya Wang committed research misconduct "by knowingly, intentionally, and/or recklessly falsifying data" included in an NIH grant application in 2019 and in six papers published from 2010 to 2017. ORI said Wang "falsified protein immunoblot data by reusing and relabeling the same images to represent different experimental conditions in mammalian tissue culture models of DNA damage and repair in eighteen (18) figure panels in eleven (11) figures." Further, "western blot images for proteins from chromatin DNA complexes in mouse cell lines transfected with control or expression vectors and in the absence or presence of irradiation were falsified by reusing immunoblot bands and relabeling them to represent different experiments in three (3) figure panels in one (1) paper." Wang agreed to voluntarily exclude herself from applying for Public Health Service funding and from advising PHS for a four-year period that began Aug. 4.

Under the settlement agreement, Wang, who was with Emory's Winship Cancer Institute, is also required to request the retraction of four papers. ORI noted that Wang "neither admits nor denies ORI's findings of research misconduct." *RRC* was unable to reach Wang for comment as her Emory email address has been deactivated. Emory officials did not respond to *RRC's* request for comment, including on whether Wang's retirement was the result of the misconduct finding or its investigation. According to a news item about Wang's retirement, she "joined the faculty in 2008. Her research, which has led to significant advances in the field, has focused on elucidating the mechanism by which mammalian cells respond to DNA double strand breaks."

Link to ORI announcement

Link to retirement announcement