

Editorial

Citation of Two Retracted Papers Shows Both the Impact Advantage and an Unintended Consequence of Open Access

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Recently we have observed and commented on the negative effect of non-Open Access (non-OA) papers published in 2005 on the impact factors of the MDPI journals *Molecules* and *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* [1]. Since the end of 2006 we have ceased non-OA publishing and now publish only in Open Access form. We feel that this full Open Access publishing policy has been welcomed by authors, as reflected by the greatly increased number of papers submitted and published in 2007 [2].

Another interesting phenomenon, which simultaneously reveals in a powerful fashion both the advantages of Open Access publication and an unintended downside, has been noted in the cases of two withdrawn *Molecules* papers [3a, 4a]. Briefly, the circumstances are that these two papers were never cited by other authors when they were published in a traditional non-OA format [3b, 4b], but since their Open Access release, and even when withdrawn, they have been cited by other authors, perhaps not too careful about checking their sources (Table 1).

Table 1. Citation of withdrawn Open Access (OA) papers and the original non-Open Access (non-OA) versions *.

Reference	Times cited by other chemists	
	Withdrawn Open Access <i>Molecules</i> paper	The original Non-OA paper
[3a]	3 [5]	0 [3b]
[4a]	2 [6]	0 [4b]

* citation numbers according to Web of Science, recorded on 16 September 2007.

In addition to these two cases of self-plagiarism [7], very recently a case of more obvious plagiarism was brought to our attention by an alert reader [8]. We feel that this is another benefit of Open Access – papers are subject to the scrutiny of many more readers and therefore potential

unethical behavior like plagiarism is easier to detect. The same reasoning applies to factual errors [9]. While gratified by this impact power of Open Access (and somewhat amused by the unintended outcome), we have decided to henceforth add a watermark to the original PDF files of withdrawn papers, clearly identifying their status, in order to hopefully prevent further citation of such papers, as we feel that it would be unfair to not do so if a withdrawn OA paper were to be cited, potentially benefiting its author(s), while an original paper published in another language or a more obscure journal and in non-OA form were not cited appropriately.

As always, we welcome our reader's opinions on these matters [10]. Messages with a suitable Subject header should be sent to lin@mdpi.org.

References and Notes

1. Lin, S.-K. Non-Open Access and Its Adverse Impact on Molecules. *Molecules* **2007**, *12*, 1436–1437 (PDF format 16 K at <http://www.mdpi.org/molecules/papers/12071436.pdf>; HTML format at <http://www.mdpi.org/molecules/html/12071436.htm>). The raw data are available at the end of <http://www.mdpi.org/molecules/html/12071436.htm>.
2. Lin, S.-K. Editorial: Full Open Access Publishing Policy Imposed in 2007: Molecules Publishes Many More Papers This Year – More than 2000 Pages Published up to Issue 8. *Molecules* **2007**, *12*, 2001–2002.
3. (a) The withdrawn paper: Parish, E.J.; Sun, H.; Kizito, S.; Terrence L. Boos, T.L. An Improved Synthesis of 3 β -Acetoxy-lanost-8-en-24-one (24-Ketolanosteryl Acetate). *Molecules* **2000**, *5*, 114–117; (b) this paper was a duplicated publication of the following paper: Parish, E.J.; Sun, H.; Kizito, S.; Terrence L. Boos, T.L. A facile synthesis of 3 beta-acetoxylanost-8-en-24-one (24-ketolanosteryl acetate). *Org. Prep. Proced. Int.* **1999**, *31*, 702–704; (c) Editorial Note: Withdrawn Paper: "Edward J. Parish, Hang Sun, Stephen Kizito and Terrence L. Boos, An Improved Synthesis of 3 β -Acetoxy-lanost-8-en-24-one (24-Ketolanosteryl Acetate). *Molecules* 2000, 5, 114–117". *Molecules* **2000**, *5*, 992.
4. (a) The withdrawn paper: Zuo, D.S.; Jiang, T.; Guan, H.S.; Qi, X.; Wang, K.Q.; Shi, Z. Synthesis, Structure and Antitumor Activity of Dibutyltin Oxide Complexes with 5-Fluorouracil Derivatives. Crystal Structure of [(5-Fluorouracil)-1-CH₂CH₂COOSn(n-Bu)₂]₄O₂. *Molecules* **2001**, *6*, 647–654. (b) [4a] was a duplicate publication of the following paper: Zuo, D.S.; Jiang, T.; Guan, H.S.; Qi, X.; Wang, K.Q.; Shi, Z. Synthesis, structure and antitumor activity of dibutyltin oxide complex with 5-fluorouracil derivatives. *Chin. J. Chem.* **2001**, *19*, 1141–1145; (c) Editorial Note: Withdrawn Paper: *Molecules* 2001, 6, 647–654. *Molecules* **2003**, *8*, 520.
5. The following three papers cited the withdrawn OA paper [3a]: (a) Khan, M.I.; Baloch, M.K.; Ashfaq, M.; Malik, A. Biologically potent new organotin(IV) complexes of N-maleoyltranexamic acid. *Bull. Chem. Soc. Jpn.* **2006**, *79*, 1054–1059; (b) Khan, M.I.; Baloch, M.K.; Ashfaq, M.; Stoter, G. In vivo toxicological effects and spectral studies of new triorganotin(IV)-N-maleoyltranexamates. *J. Organomet. Chem.* **2006**, *691*, 2554–2562; (c) Huang, J.; Qu, J.Q.; Wang, L.F.; Liu, Y.Q.; Wang, Y.Y.; Song, Y.M.; Zhang, C.J.; Zhan, R. Synthesis, characterization, and antioxidative activity of ternary rare-earth complexes of 5-fluorouracil-1-acetic acid and 2,2'-bipyridine. *Chem. Pap.-Chem. Zvest.* **2005**, *59*, 267–270.

6. The following two papers cited the withdrawn OA paper [4a]: (a) Chaudhuri, M.K.; Dehury S.K.; Dhar, S.S.; Sinha, U.B. The economic synthesis of pyridinium fluorochromate (VI), $C_5H_5NH[CrO_3F]$ (PFC), and solvent-free oxidation of organic substrates with PFC. *Synth. Commun.* **2004**, *34*, 4077-4087; (b) Bora, U.; Chaudhuri, M.K.; Dehury, S.K. Green chemistry in Indian context - Challenges, mandates and chances of success. *Curr. Sci.* **2002**, *82*, 1427-1436.
7. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism#Self-plagiarism>.
8. See: Editorial Note: Withdrawn Paper: Li, M. D.; Zheng, Y. G.; Ji, M. Synthesis of Gefitinib from Methyl 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxybenzoate. *Molecules* 2007, *12*, 673-678. *Molecules* **2007**, *12*, 2160.
9. Bueno, J.M. Comments on “Antibacterial Effect of Five Zingiberaceae Essential Oils” by Laohakunjit et al., *Molecules* 2007, *12*, 2047-2060. *Molecules* **2007**, *12*, 2179-2180.
10. For more information, visit the www.mdpi.org/oaj-supports.htm website.