

EXSUM

Investigation into allegations of research fraud

In September of 2008, LTC Romney Anderson, MC, Chief, Orthopaedic Surgery Service, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, informed the WRAMC command that a former military doctor (retired COL Timothy Kuklo) assigned to WRAMC prior to his retirement, submitted, and successfully achieved publication, of an article in a British medical journal (The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, British volume 90-B, Issue #8), that contained "forged" signatures of purported co-authors, and that was not properly reviewed prior to publication. COL Anderson also questioned the validity of the data in the article and noted that the article should be retracted.

On 30 September 2008, in response to LTC Anderson's allegations, the Walter Reed Hospital Commander appointed a 15-6 investigation. The investigating officer, COL J. Edwin Atwood, completed his findings and recommendations on 24 October 2008 and found that:

- a. Dr. Kuklo listed 4 other doctors as "co-authors" on the article without their knowledge, and that these 4 doctors did not participate in the article's preparation or submission for publication.
- b. The signatures of the 4 doctors listed as co-authors on the copyright release forms for Dr. Kuklo's article were forged.
- c. The number of cases cited by Dr. Kuklo in the article differed from the number of cases contained in a Wartime casualty database, with no explanation for the discrepancies in the article.
- d. Dr. Kuklo failed to obtain publication review or clearance from Walter Reed prior to submitting the article for publication.
- e. The published results of the Article suggested a much higher efficacy of the product being researched in the article than is supported by the experience of the purported co-authors.

The findings and recommendations of the investigating officer were approved by the Walter Reed Hospital Commander, and per his direction, a synopsis of the investigations findings were forwarded to Dr. James Scott, editor of The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery. Dr. Kuklo's article was withdrawn from the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery (by the journal editor) in January of 2009.

In addition to notifying the editor of the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, letters were also sent to the CEO of MEDTRONICS (a company that employed Dr. Kuklo as a consultant, and whose product was referenced in the article), and the Dean of Washington University, ST. Louis, (where Dr. Kuklo is a staff member), informing them of the results of the investigation.

Washington University of ST Louis is currently conducting its own independent investigation into the allegations against Dr. Kuklo.

It is important to note that from the information available there is no indication that anyone on the staff at WRAMC was complicit in, or even aware of, Dr. Kuklos' involvement in researching or drafting this article. Dr. Kuklo, who we believe was well aware of WRAMC research procedures, failed to submit the article through the office of clinical investigations, or the Public Affairs Office for review as required by Army regulations before submitting the article for publication.

It is also important to note that there is no record of any protocol having been filed with Walter Reed Army Medical Center in regards to a comparison study on the management of Gustillo-Anderson Type IIIB and IIIC segmental tibial fractures from Iraq treated with autologous bone grafting or rhBMP-2, as described in the article written by Dr. Kuklo.

Accordingly, there is no evidence of an approved study being conducted by Dr. Kuklo while he was assigned to Walter Reed. In fact, although we cannot prove it conclusively, it appears that the article was likely written in whole or part after Dr. Kuklo retired from the military. The article was certainly submitted for publication after his retirement.