

Re: Concerns raised to the attention of COPE

From helmy.m@protonmail.com <helmy.m@protonmail.com>

To Iratxe Puebla <cope_assistant@publicationethics.org>

Date Saturday, February 13th, 2021 at 7:24 AM

Dear Iratxe,

Regarding editorial practice by George Augustine not aligned with *Frontiers* Guidelines for Guest Associate Editor; the following publications are involved:

- 1. Lee et al. (2016):** First, second, and corresponding authors are affiliated with the *Center for Functional Connectomics, Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST)*, Seoul, South Korea, with which Augustine was and is also affiliated (perhaps founded), see for example Hernandez et al. (2014) and https://eng.kist.re.kr/kist_eng/?sub_num=449
- 2. Hong and Park (2016):** Both authors are affiliated with the *Center for Functional Connectomics, Korea Institute of Science and Technology*, see point 1. above.
- 3. Nakajima et al. (2016):** First, second, and corresponding authors are affiliated with the *Center for Functional Connectomics, Korea Institute of Science and Technology*, see point 1. above. In addition, Augustine is a co-author of two authors in this article he edited (Nakajima et al. 2016), see Kwon et al. (2014) and Song et al. (2014).
- 4. Dore et al. (2016):** Augustine is affiliated with the authors at A*STAR, Singapore. In the correspondence I received from Grace Jones, Research Integrity Specialist, *Frontiers* Research Integrity Team, it is stated: "...The submissions he handled from authors with Singapore affiliations are in fact different institutions...". This is false, the Institution is A*STAR, Singapore, see for example Lo et al. (2015) or Ma et al. (2015 and correction 2019) and see <https://www.a-star.edu.sg/gis> and <https://www.a-star.edu.sg/imcb>
- 5. Nakahata and Yasuda (2018):** Augustine and Yasuda are co-editors and shared an affiliation at Duke University, see Yasuda and Augustine (2008).
- 6. Lee et al. (2017):** The corresponding author is affiliated with the *Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology* or *KAIST* which I believe is separate from *KIST*. Given points 1. to 5. above and that Augustine has published at least one article in collaboration with both *KAIST* and *KIST* (see Kim et al. 2017), perhaps Augustine's editing of this publication also warrants investigation.
- 7. Li and Blanpied 2016:** The authors are affiliated with the University of Maryland, Baltimore from which Augustine attained his doctoral degree and I was informed by library staff at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, that the thesis was *not* obtained from the University of Maryland, Baltimore and was referred to the University of Maryland, College Park. I am waiting for a response from the University of Maryland, College Park library regarding this. Given points 1. to 6. above, perhaps Augustine's editing of this publication also warrants investigation.

Should any point require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,
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----- Original Message -----

On Monday, January 25, 2021 4:28 PM, Iratxe Puebla <cope_assistant@publicationethics.org> wrote:

Dear Dr Helmy,

I am writing to you in relation to the case you raised with COPE regarding several publications at Frontiers journals.

COPE has a process to review concerns raised about member journals, but we can only review cases once the process at the journal and publisher has been exhausted. I note from the correspondence you shared that your last exchange with the journal was today, could you please let us know whether you receive a response from the journal to that email?

You raise concerns about the handling of several publications by a Guest Associate Editor, could you please provide a summary of the publications involved, and for each one, details on the competing interest you are concerned about in relation to the editor?

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Iratxe

Iratxe Puebla

Facilitation and Integrity Officer

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

www.publicationethics.org

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