

Dear Mr. Horton,

We are all current and several former members of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health* (IJOEH), a journal Taylor & Francis (T&F) acquired in taking over the former publisher, Maney, in 2015.

We have expressed grave concerns about several matters to Dr. Andrew Kelly at T&F in the past several months. As we have received no answers, we are writing to you now with some urgency about questions central to the scientific integrity of this journal. IJOEH has stood in a class by itself in publishing critical analyses and challenges of improper corporate influence on the standards of practice and scientific literature in our field.

Originally, we raised serious concern that the Editorial Board was never consulted or informed by T&F about the change of editors, replacing Dr. David Egilman with corporate consultant Dr. Andrew Maier. We wrote to the publisher on February 11 requesting to know the process and justification for changing editors of a scientific journal without involving the Editorial Board. We also asked for assurance that all the new, reviewed and already-accepted papers would soon be published in the journal.

We illustrated our concern over the change of editors with the example of diacetyl:

“A measure of what such a change in IJOEH editors would mean is indicated by the contrast between occupational exposure limits recommended for diacetyl by Dr. Maier (Reg. Tox. Pharmacol. 58: 285-296, 2010) and by Dr. Egilman (IJOEH 17: 122-134, 2011 and 20: 4-8, 2014). Diacetyl is a flavoring chemical used in microwave popcorn that caused devastating lung damage to workers. Dr. Maier and his co-workers at [corporate consulting firm] TERA recommended a limit of 200 parts per billion in air, based on a study in which 15 mice were exposed up to 30 hours/week for 12 weeks. Dr. Egilman and co-workers criticized the TERA authors for discarding epidemiologic data and recommended 1 ppb or less in their analysis including extensive human data. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommended a limit of 5 parts per billion in air. The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists recommended 10 ppb. Egilman et al. also included significant information revealed in litigation from Con-Agra, the corporate sponsor of the TERA report, while of course acknowledging Dr. Egilman’s involvement in that litigation.”

This month, T&F sent Dr. Egilman a “Withdrawal Statement” about a paper he had published in IJOEH in 2016 (“The production of corporate research to manufacture doubt about the health hazards of products: an overview of the Exponent Bakelite simulation study”). T&F stated, without any explanation, “This content has been removed by the publishers.” As most of the members of Editorial Board and several past members, we asked T&F to tell us what had happened, as no Editorial Board members were consulted or informed about the decision taken by the publisher.

We closed our message of April 13, asking about papers slated by T&F to be withdrawn/retracted, saying: “The concerns we raise relate to a desire to ensure the credibility and reputation of IJOEH both as a journal that publishes independent research free of corporate influence and one that is run efficiently and in line with good academic and scientific practice.”

We wish to see the following actions taken:

1. The contract with Dr. Egilman as IJOEH editor will be renewed or the Editorial Board authorized to choose his successor as Editor-in-Chief.
2. All already-accepted papers will be published promptly.
3. Taylor & Francis will recognize that the Editorial Board shares full responsibility with the Journal Editor, and as such must be party to any decision to retract published papers, and that only after accepted procedures for scientific journals are followed.
4. T&F will agree that any decisions to add or drop members of the Editorial Board will be made by the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board, not by the publishing company.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Andrew Watterson on behalf of those listed below.

Other current IJOEH Editorial Board members

Aurora Aragon
Arthur Frank
Bhaswati Ganguli
Morris Greenberg
Fu Hua

James Huff
Tushar Kant Joshi
Barry S. Levy
Leslie London
David Madigan
Jock McCulloch
Rene Mendes
Iman Nuwayhid
Domyung Paek
Alison Reid
Ellen Roskam
Vilma Sousa Santana
Ken Takahashi
Jukka Takala
Benedetto Terracini
Andrew Watterson
David Wegman

Past IJOEH Editorial Board members

Barry Castleman
Thomas Gassert
Peter Infante
Rob McConnell
Ron Melnick
Daniel Teitelbaum
Jung-Der Wang
Catharina Wesseling

Founding Editor-in-Chief

Joseph LaDou