



(Billing Code: 4150-31)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Findings of Research Misconduct

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, HHS

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) has taken final action in the following case:

Alec Mirchandani, Florida Atlantic University: Based on the report of the inquiry conducted by Florida Atlantic University (FAU), the Respondent's admission, and analysis conducted by ORI, ORI found that Mr. Alec Mirchandani, former post-baccalaureate research volunteer in the Center for Complex Systems and Brain Sciences, Florida Atlantic University (FAU), engaged in research misconduct in research supported by National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institutes of Health (NIH), grant 1 R15 MH099590-01A1.

ORI found that Respondent engaged in research misconduct by knowingly and intentionally:

(1) fabricating the results of the T-maze behavioral experiment for control mice, (2) falsifying the laboratory and vivarium entry logs in an effort to cover up his actions, and (3) reporting the fabricated and falsified data to his laboratory supervisors.

Specifically, ORI found that Respondent knowingly and intentionally:

- fabricated the results that he recorded for the T-maze behavioral experiment in three of the five TMZ control mice on the laboratory data sheets and white board on fourteen (14) of the sixteen (16) eligible days in June 2016, to make it appear as though he had conducted the experiments
- falsified the animal transfer logs on twelve (12) of the sixteen (16) eligible days in June 2016, to make it appear as though he had conducted the experiments
- fabricated the times he recorded on the laboratory data sheets on fourteen (14) of the sixteen (16) eligible days in June 2016, to make it appear as though he had conducted the experiments
- incorporated and recorded the fabricated and falsified data with his previous data in his laboratory notebook and reported the results to his laboratory supervisor and principal investigator, such that the experimental control data (five animals) for experiments conducted from January 2016-June 30, 2016, were not accurately represented

Mr. Mirchandani has entered into a Voluntary Settlement Agreement with ORI, in which he voluntarily agreed, beginning on June 29, 2017:

(1) that if within two (2) years from the effective date of the Agreement, Respondent receives or applies for U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) support, Respondent agrees to have his research supervised for a period of one (1) year, beginning on the date of his employment in a position in which he receives or applies for PHS support, and agrees to notify his employer(s)/ institution(s) of the terms of this supervision.

Respondent agrees that prior to the submission of an application for PHS support for a research project on which the Respondent's participation is proposed and prior to Respondent's participation in any capacity on PHS-supported research, Respondent shall ensure that a plan for supervision of Respondent's duties is submitted to ORI for approval. The supervision plan must be designed to ensure the scientific integrity of Respondent's research contribution. Respondent agrees that he shall not participate in any PHS-supported research until such a supervision plan is submitted to and approved by ORI. Respondent agrees to maintain responsibility for compliance with the agreed upon supervision plan.

(2) to exclude himself voluntarily from serving in any advisory capacity to PHS including, but not limited to, service on any PHS advisory committee, board, and/or peer review committee, or as a consultant for a period of one (1) year, beginning with the effective date of the Agreement.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Director  
Office of Research Integrity  
1101 Wootton Parkway, Suite 750  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(240) 453-8200

---

Kathryn M. Partin,  
Director

Office of Research Integrity

[FR Doc. 2017-15159 Filed: 7/18/2017 8:45 am; Publication Date: 7/19/2017]