



## **Editor's Note**

As the middle of 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation is still dire in many parts of the world, and the number of cases is continuously rising. COVID-19 has made changes to many things in our society, so-called “New Normal.” In the scientific publication, COVID-19 has exposed previous ignorant loophole, peer-review process.

On June 4, two articles from the highest profiled medical journals (*The New England Journal of Medicine* and *The Lancet*) were retracted due to issue of data validation.<sup>1,2</sup> Both articles got data from a healthcare analytics company called Surgisphere. The company claimed to house a system of fully integrated data from the electronic health records of at least 671 hospitals across six continents with thousands of patients’ data. However, it seems unlikely that the data exist as advertised. After rushing to the publication of anything titled COVID-19 as most the journals, there were many concerns from correspondents around the world sent to journal editors. Both journals have conducted official investigations and Surgisphere refused to show the raw data.

Not only the retractions of both articles, but also one of the authors was terminated the faculty appointment from The University of Utah.<sup>3</sup>

In case that our readers are interesting in retraction of research paper about COVID-19. There is a continuously updated list maintained by Retraction Watch website.<sup>4</sup>

In the aftermath, some may concern why peer review process did not identify the articles as questionable. How did the reviewers miss what, in retrospect, seems obvious? Currently, peer review process is the main quality-control system for the integrity of the medical literature. But journal editor is equally important as “the first line of defense against fraudulent, hyped, deceptive, or just plainly bad papers.”<sup>5</sup>

Asst. Prof. Dr. Chusak Okascharoen

Editor in Chief



## References

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