



# ACTAS Derma-Sifiliográficas

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Inappropriate References in “Oral Leukoplakia: Clinical, Histopathologic, and Molecular Features and Therapeutic Approach” to the Sudbø Fraud

#### Citas inadecuadas en «la leucoplasia oral: definición de parámetros clínicos, histopatológicos y moleculares y actitud terapéutica» referentes al fraude Sudbø

to the Editor:

On reading with interest the article entitled “Oral Leukoplakia: Clinical, Histopathologic, and Molecular Features and Therapeutic Approach”,<sup>1</sup> I was surprised to see repeated citations of the works of Sudbø et al<sup>2</sup> and a comment regarding these having been “called into question”, while also noting that the retraction of the journal that published those articles has been included in the references.<sup>3</sup>

The cited works were the subject of an investigation that demonstrated that much of the data was modified or invented, making this a clearcut case of scientific fraud. Consequently, these works should not be cited or reproduced,

and most especially when the data they contain could be used to guide prognoses and the treatment of patients.

### References

1. Martorell-Calatayud A, Botella-Estrada R, Bagán-Sebastián JV, Sanmartín-Jiménez O, Guillén-Barona C. La leucoplasia oral: definición de parámetros clínicos, histopatológicos y moleculares y actitud terapéutica. *Actas Dermosifiliogr.* 2009; 100:669-84.
2. Sudbø J, Lippman SM, Lee JJ, Mao L, Kildal W, Sudbø A, et al. The influence of resection and aneuploidy on mortality in oral leukoplakia. *N Engl J Med.* 2004;350:1405-13.
3. Curfman GD, Morrissey S, Drazen JM. Retraction: Sudbø J et al. DNA content as a prognostic marker in patients with oral leukoplakia. *N Engl J Med.* 2001;344:1270-8 and Sudbø J et al. The influence of resection and aneuploidy on mortality in oral leukoplakia. *N Engl J Med.* 2004;350:1405-13.

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## Replay

### Réplica

To the Editor:

It is indeed true that the Sudbø articles have been retracted by the journal where they were published, as has been pointed out in our article. However, it is also true that what Sudbø did was increase the number of cases with a view to obtaining significant results for something that was showing a tendency towards statistical significance. I have no idea why the author performed this statistical falsification, given his reputation among European stomatologists and the many articles written by him on the subject of leukoplakia.

Nevertheless, I think it is interesting to comment on the 2 citations for 2 reasons:

1. Despite the retraction, the line of research pursued by Sudbø et al seems to be a promising one, and a number

of European centers, our own included, are evaluating the Sudbø hypothesis.

2. Oral leukoplakia reviews published to date have attached great importance to the Sudbø et al article and have ignored the fact that it has been withdrawn. In our own review we have made it quite clear that the article has been withdrawn. When we referred to its having been “called into question”, we referred to the hypothesis, not to the falsification of data.

I am grateful to Dr. García-Doval for his comment and will be happy to respond to any other doubts he may have.

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