

Nov 26th 2020,
To: Editorial Board Eurosurveillance
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
Gustav III:s Boulevard 40
16973 Solna
Sweden

Subject: External Review and request to retract the paper of Corman et al, published in Eurosurveillance January 23, 2020.

Dear editorial board Eurosurveillance,

We, an international consortium of life-science scientists, write this letter in response to the article "Detection of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by real-time RT-PCR" published in Eurosurveillance (January 23rd, 2020) and co-authored by Victor M Corman , Olfert Landt , Marco Kaiser , Richard Molenkamp, Adam Meijer, Daniel KW Chu, Tobias Bleicker , Sebastian Brünink, Julia Schneider , Marie Luisa Schmidt , Daphne GJC Mulders , Bart L Haagmans , Bas van der Veer , Sharon van den Brink, Lisa Wijsman, Gabriel Goderski, Jean-Louis Romette, Joanna Ellis, Maria Zambon, Malik Peiris, Herman Goossens, Chantal Reusken, Marion PG Koopmans, and Christian Drosten.

This paper (hereafter referred to as "Corman-Drosten paper"), published by "Eurosurveillance" on 23 January 2020, describes an RT-PCR method to detect the novel Corona virus (also known as SARS-CoV2). After careful consideration, our international consortium of Life Science scientists found the Corman-Drosten paper is severely flawed with respect to its biomolecular and methodological design. A detailed scientific argumentations can be found in our review "External peer review of the RTPCR test to detect SARS-CoV2 reveals 10 major scientific flaws at the molecular and methodological level: consequences for false positive results", which we herewith submit for publication in Eurosurveillance.

Further, the submission date and acceptance date of this paper are January 21st and January 22nd, respectively. Considering the severe errors in design and methodology of the RT-PCR test published by "Eurosurveillance", this raises the concern whether the paper was subjected to peer-review at all.

A previous request from our side (Dr. P. Borger; email 26/10/2020) to the editors of "Eurosurveillance" to provide the peer review report of the Corman-Drosten paper has not been complied with. We have enclosed your email reply (dated 18/11/2020) indicating that you do not wish to disclose important information to solve this conundrum.

We are confident that you will take our scientific objections seriously and recognize that there is no alternative but to accept our request to retract the Corman-Drosten paper.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pieter Borger (MSc, PhD), Molecular Genetics, W+W Research Associate, Lörrach, Germany

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Kämmerer, specialist in Virology / Immunology / Human Biology / Cell Biology, University Hospital Würzburg, Germany

Prof. Dr. Klaus Steger, Department of Urology, Pediatric Urology and Andrology, Molecular Andrology, Biomedical Research Center of the Justus Liebig University, Giessen, Germany

Prof. Dr. Makoto Ohashi, Professor emeritus, PhD in Microbiology and Immunology, Tokushima University, Japan

Prof. Dr. med. Henrik Ullrich, specialist Diagnostic Radiology, Chief Medical Doctor at the Center for Radiology of Collm Oschatz-Hospital, Germany

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