



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03080043

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An allegation received¹ from an undergraduate student conveyed his admission that fabricated data first appeared in a poster presentation² describing the work of undergraduate researchers, and was subsequently included without his knowledge in a publication³ that described some of the same work, and which acknowledges NSF support. The poster presentation serves appropriately to highlight the research accomplishments of undergraduate students, but the scientific impact of the poster presentation on the larger field of research is minimal. The poster presentation is not listed in scientific databases, nor does the poster presentation appear to be cited in a Science Citation Index search. Therefore, the possible appearance of fabricated data in this particular poster presentation is of no substantial consequence to NSF or to the scientific community.

Within the published paper, the alleged fabricated experimental data is used only as a template to demonstrate a computational algorithm, and the values that can be derived from its application. The data is not connected to any particular chemical material, and the data appear in a tertiary journal that has had no discernible scientific impact. Because the scientific merits of the paper are metrological (dealing with process) rather than phenomenological (dealing with a particular scientific property of a specific material), the appearance of the alleged fabricated data is not of significant scientific consequence, and therefore does not intrinsically harm NSF's interests. Consequently, the appearance of potentially fabricated data in the tertiary publication does not justify further action.

Accordingly, this case is closed.

¹ redacted.

² redacted.

³ redacted.