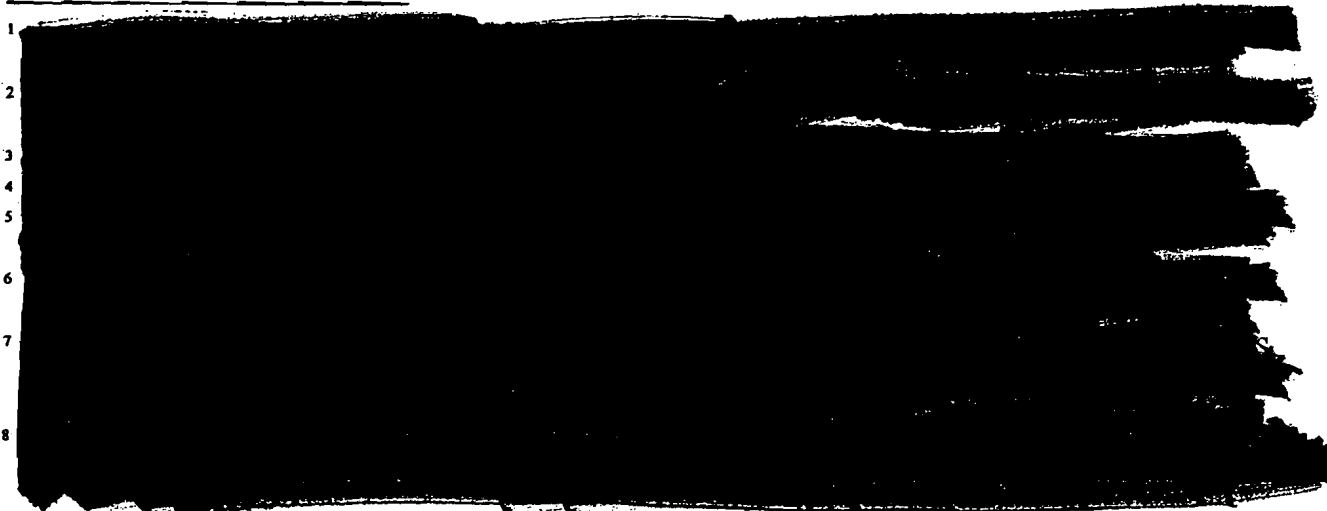


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On 9 April 1996, an NSF program director¹ brought two allegations of misconduct in science to OIG's attention. First, two *ad hoc* reviewers, complainants 1² and 2,³ independently alleged that the subject's⁴ research project in his NSF proposal⁵ had already been completed. Complainant 1 explained that he received the subject's co-authored manuscript⁶ and his NSF proposal for review, simultaneously. He said that the manuscript, which was not cited in the NSF proposal, discussed the results of the proposed research project. Complainant 1 described the subject's NSF proposal as a reworded version of the manuscript. The program director obtained a copy of the manuscript from the subject and determined that about half of the research in the proposal appeared to have been described in the manuscript. Complainant 2 explained that he had attended a conference, prior to his receipt of the subject's proposal for review, at which the subject presented results of the proposed research project.

Second, complainant 1 alleged that the subject misrepresented information in the NSF proposal. He said the subject's manuscript listed outside support that he had not included in his NSF Current and Pending Support (CPS) form in the proposal.

OIG's comparison of the subject's NSF proposal and manuscript confirmed that they contained similar text and figures and that the subject had not referred to the manuscript in the proposal. OIG also observed that the CPS form in the proposal did not include two awards acknowledged in the manuscript. OIG's review of the events surrounding the submission of the subject's proposal and manuscript showed that: 1) NSF received the subject's proposal about 2 weeks after the subject and his institution's Authorized Organizational Representative signed and dated the Cover Sheet; 2) the co-authored manuscript was received by the journal 3 days after NSF received the subject's NSF proposal; and 3) the manuscript was published about a year later.⁷ OIG also determined that the subject had submitted four proposals about the same idea⁸ over a 3-year period. The first



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three proposals were declined, the third of which is the focus of this inquiry. The fourth proposal was awarded.

OIG sought an explanation from the subject. The subject told OIG that his NSF proposal "should have been more explicit in stating that what [they] intended to do was a re-evaluation and a re-testing of the methods, data, etc, of the earlier pilot study." He said he was "remiss" by not providing a full explanation about the completed pilot study in the third proposal. He explained that the pilot study was completed as part of his ongoing project to gather more information to improve his chances for funding. Further, he said that the pilot study was initially discussed in an earlier co-authored manuscript⁹ with two graduate students that was submitted about 6 months before he submitted his third NSF proposal. He explained that he had been told several months before he submitted his NSF proposal by the chief editor of the journal, who was also a colleague at his institution, that the earlier manuscript would probably be rejected. He documented that he received official notification of the rejection at about the same time he prepared his third NSF proposal. OIG also determined that the manuscript sent to complainant 1 was received by the journal after the third proposal had been signed and submitted to NSF.

OIG concluded that the subject was not required to list either manuscript in his proposal. Further, the subject was not requesting funds for work he had already completed. In fact, the subject's fourth proposal contained evidence that he had continued gathering data to strengthen his ongoing project.

The subject acknowledged that he should have been more careful in preparing the CPS form in the proposal. He said he failed to list two awards involving stipend support for himself and a student.¹⁰ OIG observed that the subject had appropriately listed all his active awards in his fourth NSF proposal. OIG concluded that the subject's omission of the two awards from his CPS form, in this case, was careless and, as such, not misconduct in science.

This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken.

cc: Staff Scientist, AIG-Oversight, Legal, IG

