

## Investigation report regarding allegations of fraud in articles by Yuhji Saitoh

The Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists (JSA) received a report in May 2016 that editors of overseas journals had made allegations of fraud regarding articles written by Yuhji Saitoh (a member of the JSA at that time), and assembled an ad hoc ethics committee in response.

The committee investigated approximately forty articles published by Yuhji Saitoh. Drs. John Carlisle and John Loadsman, in their original article for the anesthesia journal “Anaesthesia” (1), have made allegations of fraud in articles written by Yuhji Saitoh, and the committee has confirmed that either data manipulation or data fabrication likely took place in most of those articles. The committee has also confirmed that there were ethics violations in several articles not included in Drs. John Carlisle and John Loadsman’s report.

Saitoh submitted a notice of withdrawal from the JSA once the investigation commenced, and in view of the Society’s laws and articles, the Society had no choice but to accept it. Nevertheless, after the publication of [Drs. John Carlisle and John Loadsman’s] article, the JSA considers that Saitoh has severely damaged the credibility of [Japanese] anesthesiologists and researchers, and has had a serious adverse effect on the safe provision of medical care to the people of Japan. The Society has therefore judged that he lacks the qualities required for an anesthetist and for a researcher, and that he should be dismissed from membership in the JSA. As he has already left the Society, the Society has decided that he is permanently banned from membership. The

committee's report, based on the results of investigations by various institutions, identified ten publications with clear ethics violations, one of which has already been retracted.

Therefore, the society believes that at the very least, the remaining nine publications (Appendix 1) should be retracted. This is not to say the other publications cited in the analysis by Dr. Carlisle et al. do not contain instances of fraud, only that the committee did not find clear evidence of fraud for these publications from various institutions. The JSA encourages the respective journals to make retractions or take any other actions they deem necessary.

For the future, JSA will make every effort to ensure such incidents do not happen again. The "Ethical Guidelines on Medical Research on Human Subjects" and the "Guidelines on Dealing with Misconduct in Research Activities" released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare in Japan, respectively, will be presented at our conferences and seminars, and published in our newsletters, journals, and articles to ensure that authority figures at research institutes, and the first authors and coauthors engaged in medical research and reporting, are aware of their responsibilities in this regard.

1. Carlisle JA, Loadsman JA. Evidence for non-random sampling in randomised, controlled trials by Yuhji Saitoh. *Anaesthesia* 2017; 72: 17-27.

No.	Title	Authors	Full Citation
1	Recoveries of post-tetanic twitch and train-of-four responses after administration of vecuronium with different inhalation anaesthetics and neuroleptanaesthesia.	Saitoh Y, Toyooka H, Amaha K.	Br J Anaesth. 1993 Apr;70(4):402-4.
2	Recovery of post-tetanic and train-of-four responses at the first dorsal interosseous and adductor pollicis muscles in patients receiving vecuronium.	Saitoh Y, Tanaka H, Toyooka H, Amaha K.	Can J Anaesth. 1996 Apr;43(4):362-7.
3	Train-of-four and double burst stimulation fade at the great toe and thumb.	Saitoh Y, Koitabashi Y, Makita K, Tanaka H, Amaha K.	Can J Anaesth. 1997 Apr;44(4):390-5.
4	Neuromuscular blockade can be assessed accelerographically over the vastus medialis muscle in patients positioned prone.	Saitoh Y, Nakajima H, Hattori H, Aoki K, Katayama T, Murakawa M.	Can J Anaesth. 2003 Apr;50(4):342-7. English, French.
5	Monitoring of neuromuscular block after administration of vecuronium in patients with diabetes mellitus.	Saitoh Y, Kaneda K, Hattori H, Nakajima H, Murakawa M.	Br J Anaesth. 2003 Apr;90(4):480-6.
6	Reversal of vecuronium with neostigmine in patients with diabetes mellitus.	Saitoh Y, Hattori H, Sanbe N, Nakajima H, Akatu M, Murakawa M.	Anaesthesia. 2004 Aug;59(8):750-4.
7	Delayed recovery of vecuronium neuromuscular block in diabetic patients during sevoflurane anesthesia.	Saitoh Y, Hattori H, Sanbe N, Nakajima H, Akatu M, Murakawa M.	Can J Anaesth. 2005 May;52(5):467-73.
8	Reversal of vecuronium with neostigmine: a comparison between male and female patients.	Saitoh Y, Aoki K, Okazaki M, Hirama T, Isosu T, Murakawa M.	Fukushima J Med Sci. 2009 Dec;55(2):61-70.
9	Monitoring of vecuronium-induced neuromuscular block at the sternocleidomastoid muscle in anesthetized patients.	Saitoh Y, Oshima T, Nakata Y.	J Anesth. 2010 Dec;24(6):838-44. doi: 10.1007/s00540-010-1012-4. Epub 2010 Aug 20.