

**From:** Wolinetz, Carrie (NIH/OD) [E] [<mailto:carrie.wolinetz@nih.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 31, 2015 11:20 AM  
**To:** 'JustinG@peta.org'  
**Subject:** Complaint regarding violations of HHS "Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of Information Disseminated to the Public"

Dear Mr. Goodman:

I am writing in response to your Information Quality Act Request for Correction ("RFC") of information dated February 20, 2015 and filed pursuant to the Information Quality Act (IQA) and the guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on behalf of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). You request that corrections be published on news stories published in Jewish Week and an online news site (Vokativ.com), that a statement acknowledging the details of the correction be published on the agency's website, and that HHS employees cease and desist from making additional statements about this case. I reviewed your request and appreciate your bringing your concerns about these news stories to our attention.

Regarding your first claim, you note several quotes from Dr. Stephen Suomi in an article published by the online news website Vocabiv. We agree that publicly disseminated, oral statements by NIH staff are subject to the Information Quality Act guidelines. However, the statements you cite in your letter are not direct quotes, but rather paraphrasing by the reporter or incomplete quotes presented without context. Because NIH has no control over a publication's interpretation of information disseminated by our staff, nor any way of knowing the original statements from which these stories are based, we do not believe that the statements you cite meet the criteria of being subject to the Information Quality Act (IQA). Moreover, because the publications in which the news stories appeared are not directly produced by our agency, NIH does not control either the content of the publication nor the ability to ensure its correction. NIH Guidelines state that documents "not authored by the agency and not representing the agency's views" are not covered by the IQA.

In addition, NIH Guidelines state that dissemination not covered under the IQA includes "Opinions where the agency's presentation makes it clear that what is being offered is personal opinion rather than fact or the agency's views." Dr. Suomi's statements were opinions, not scientific facts, nor was he speaking on behalf of the Agency.

Regarding the quotes of Dr. Constantine Stratakis, once again Dr. Stratakis was expressing a scientific opinion, and not making a factual statement.

We have investigated your claim regarding the picture you referenced in your letter and found that the picture is actually from another study.

the supplemental evidence you provided us on July 1, 2015, we have updated the website such that one report is in agreement with the other.

We completely agree that it is critical that information addressing concerns raised about research involving non-human primates, as referenced in your letter, be accurate, transparent, and reliable. As such, we have set up a website: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/air/statement\\_012615.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/air/statement_012615.htm) We believe the information provided on the website addresses the issues you raised in your letter.

I would like to let you know that you may appeal the agency's decision either in writing or electronically within 30 days of receiving this response. Your request should state the reasons for your appeal. The request may be sent electronically to [InfoQuality@od.nih.gov](mailto:InfoQuality@od.nih.gov) or in hard copy to the Associate Director for Science Policy, Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health, Building 1, Room 203, 1 Center Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20892. If the appeal is sent in hard copy, please clearly mark the appeal and outside envelop with the phrase "Information Quality Appeal."

Sincerely,

Carrie D. Wolinetz, Ph.D.

Carrie D. Wolinetz, Ph.D.  
Associate Director for Science Policy  
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

