

From: **James E. Enstrom** <jenstrom@ucla.edu>

Date: Mon, Aug 30, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Subject: Emory Gangarosa Investigators Misuse US Medicare Records

To: James W. Curran <jcurran@emory.edu>

Cc: Liuhua Shi <liuhua.shi@emory.edu>, Rebecca Rousselle <rebecca.rousselle@emory.edu>, Nelson Kyle Steenland <nsteenl@sph.emory.edu>, Timothy L. Lash <tlash@emory.edu>, Ravi V. Bellamkonda <provost@emory.edu>, Gregory L. Fenves <president@emory.edu>

August 30, 2021

James W. Curran, MD, MPH
Dean and Professor of Epidemiology
Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
jcurran@emory.edu

Re: Emory Gangarosa Investigators Misuse US Medicare Records

Dear Dean Curran,

I have strong evidence that Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health investigators in the Rollins School of Public Health, particularly The Environment and Seniors Health Research Group (<https://www.liuhuashi.com/>), are misusing confidential Medicare records in order to publish scientifically unjustified claims about air pollution health effects in the US.

These investigators possess detailed personal and medical data on at least 69 million US Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 years and above, including myself. They never obtained permission from me or the other beneficiaries for their use of this confidential medical information. In spite of repeated requests since June 28, 2021, the Emory Institutional Review Board (<http://www.irb.emory.edu/>) has not confirmed the validity of the investigators' claims "This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Emory University and a waiver of informed consent was granted" and "Written informed consent of individuals was not required due to the nature of the study."

Thus, please provide the justification for these claims and please explain how these investigators obtained access to Medicare data on 69 million Americans. Furthermore, please ask the investigators to release to me all the de-identified data that they possess on about 500 Medicare beneficiaries in one zip code that I will specify. I want to demonstrate that many of these beneficiaries can be individually identified, in violation of the Medicare privacy policy (<https://www.medicare.gov/privacy-policy>).

My grave concerns about epidemiologic misuse of Medicare records are contained in my July 8, 2021 detailed peer-review of the now rejected Environmental Science & Technology (ES&T) manuscript "Low-concentration air pollution and mortality in American older adults: A national cohort analysis (2001-2017)" by Dr. Liuhua Shi and other Emory investigators (<http://scientificintegrityinstitute.org/ESTJEEAdd070821.pdf>). I expressed similar concerns in a July 27, 2021 email message to Nature (<http://www.scientificintegrityinstitute.org/NatureJEE072721.pdf>) regarding a Dr. Shi, et al. manuscript submitted to a Nature Portfolio Journal: "Long-term air pollution exposure and incident dementia in American elderly population: a national cohort study (2000-2018)" (<https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-514522/v1>).

The ES&T manuscript is filled with aggressive and misleading claims like “In conclusion, long-term exposures to PM2.5, NO2, and O3 were significantly associated with an increased risk of all-cause mortality, particularly at levels below the current NAAQS standards, suggesting that implementing more stringent regulations in air quality may yield substantial health benefits.” Furthermore, the manuscript ignores the severe flaws of ecological epidemiology and falsifies the research record by not citing the strong evidence that there is NO relationship between air pollution and all-cause mortality in the US and that the linear no threshold (LNT) theory is invalid. Finally, there is NO public health justification for this study because the US already has extremely low levels of air pollution that will not be influenced by more stringent regulations, as explained in my review.

Please ask Dr. Shi to respond to my above concerns in a timely manner. Thus far, she has ignored my requests for a response. I have copied this message to other Emory University officials who should be aware of the misuse of Medicare records.

Thank you very much for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely yours,

James E. Enstrom, PhD, MPH, FFACE
Retired UCLA Research Professor (Epidemiology)
President, Scientific Integrity Institute
<http://scientificintegrityinstitute.org/>
jenstrom@ucla.edu

cc: Liuhua Shi <liuhua.shi@emory.edu>
Rebecca Rousselle <rebecca.rousselle@emory.edu>
Nelson Kyle Steenland <nsteenl@sph.emory.edu>
Timothy L. Lash <tlash@emory.edu>
Ravi V. Bellamkonda <provost@emory.edu>
Gregory L. Fenves <president@emory.edu>