

*Note: None of the co-authors on the Shu et al. (2012) paper read this memo before it was posted.*

I want to thank Leif, Uri, and Joe for bringing this issue to our attention. The analyses they and the anonymous team conducted are thorough and convincing and point to serious anomalies in the Study 3 data of Shu et al. (2012). The work they do takes talent and courage and vastly improves our research field. I am grateful for their efforts.

Being notified about this issue was exceedingly difficult. I start all my research collaborations from a place of *trust* and assume that all of my co-authors provide data collected with proper care and due diligence, and that they are presented with accuracy. In the case of Study 3, I was not involved in conversations with the insurance company that conducted the field experiment, nor in any of the steps of running the study or analyzing the data. I did not have any suspicion about the quality of the data at the time we published the paper.

While working on the second PNAS paper, published in 2020, that failed to replicate our original effect (titled “*Signing at the beginning versus at the end does not decrease dishonesty*”), the lead author of that paper re-analyzed the data from this same Study 3 of Shu et al. (2012) and discovered a randomization failure which we reported in the 2020 PNAS paper. I did not analyze the data from the field experiment at that time either, as I did not have any suspicion about their quality.

In July 2020, PNAS reached out to us after a reader asked whether we intended to retract the 2012 PNAS paper. I regret not taking a stronger stance in support of that decision. My logic was the following: unless we believed the data were problematic, the proper course of action was, in my mind, to leave the paper on record and demonstrate that the results failed to replicate. Science moves forward only when we correct the record. I believed scholars needed to be informed about how the research had evolved over the years, and how embracing Open Science and the rigor of properly powered studies can help us advance knowledge.

Though very painful, this experience has reinforced my strong commitment to the Open Science movement. As it clearly shows, posting data publicly, pre-registering studies, and conducting replications of prior research is key to scientific progress. During my time as Editor at *OBHDP*, I organized a special issue on Open Science and co-authored an editorial titled “The Future is Now: Full Reporting at *OBHDP*” that serves as the introductory article to this special issue. I wanted to bring positive change to *OBHDP*, and organizing this special issue was one of my proudest moments during my editorship. In the last few years, I also consistently pre-registered studies, posted data on OSF, included transparency disclosures in my papers, and made sure my students follow the same steps.

Based on this painful experience, there is more I will commit to doing. I will approach all future projects with more diligence and attention, no matter how much respect and trust I have for the people I work with.

I want to again reiterate my gratitude towards the Data Colada team, as well as the anonymous researchers who discovered the serious concerns with Study 3’s data. Our field is a stronger place because of their efforts.

Sincerely,  
Francesca Gino