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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

JOURNAL OF
FORENSIC SCIENCES

JFS Editor-in-Chief Preface

See Original Dror et al Article *here*
See Peterson et al Commentary on *here*
See Authors' Response to Peterson et al Commentary on *here*
See Peterson et al Response to Authors' Response *here*
See Authors' Response to Peterson et al Response *here*
See Gill et al Commentary on *here*
See Authors' Response to Gill et al Commentary on *here*
See Gill et al Response to Authors' Response *here*
See Authors' Response to Gill et al Response *here*
See Duflou Commentary on *here*
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See Tse et al Commentary on *here*
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See Graber Commentary on *here*
See Authors' Response to Graber Commentary on *here*
See Speth et al Commentary on *here*
See Authors' Response to Speth et al Commentary on *here*
See Obenson Commentary on *here*
See Authors' Response to Obenson Commentary on *here*

Dear JFS Readers:

In my tenure as the Editor-in-Chief and Editor of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences (JFS)*, the article by Dror et al on cognitive bias in forensic pathology decisions [1] has received the most attention and generated the most commentaries and responses of any article that *JFS* has published. This is not surprising given the topic and the emotions that it can generate. In total, *JFS* received nine commentaries and the article's authors responded to all of them. *JFS* allowed the authors of two of the original commentaries to respond to the comments reviewed and then allowed the article's authors to respond to those further comments. This resulted in twenty-two letters.

As you might imagine, the initial commentaries received varied, with five of them being critical [2–6] and four recommending further discussion of cognitive bias [7–10]. As was mentioned, the authors of the article responded to all of them [11–19]. The further commentaries [20,21] were also critical and the authors responded to them [22,23].

Three of the initial commentaries [2,3,6] and one of the subsequent responses to the authors' response [20] called for *JFS* to retract the article, as did two letters received from the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). *JFS* investigated the concerns raised in these two letters, following guidance from Wiley's Integrity in Publishing Group (IPG) and the Committee on Publication Ethics [24]. The University of Alabama at Birmingham's Institutional Review Board was also asked to review certain concerns raised by NAME relating to IRB approval. All of the findings of investigations did not support the requests for retraction.

Some comments [5] were received questioning the statistical analysis used by Dror et al [1]. *JFS* asked a well-respected biostatistician to review Dror et al's article. His/her conclusions were that the authors' conclusions were supported by the statistical analysis.

As you read the commentaries and responses, you will note significant discussion on experimental design. In my view, this is a worthwhile discussion, and this forum is the best place for that to occur.

In one of the original commentaries [2], Peterson et al stated that "This study represents an abject failure of the peer review process at the *Journal of Forensic Sciences.*" I take issue with that statement. The article by Dror et al [1] was subject to the same double-blind peer review process that all papers submitted to *JFS* are. I want to assure all authors and others considering submission to *JFS* that our double-blind peer review process is comprehensive and performed by reviewers with extensive knowledge in the subject matter areas under review. As a point of information, *JFS* rejects over 60% of the manuscripts that undergo double-blind peer review. This is certainly indicative of a stringent peer review process.

I wish to conclude by offering some personal comments. It was not disappointing to me that this article received such scrutiny; however, the "emotional" nature of some of the letters was. I certainly recognize that we all have differing opinions and we all have biases. However, it is important that we discuss these issues openly and professionally and we encourage all concerned to do so. In my opinion, discussion is the best means for resolving issues, both in science and elsewhere in today's world. We should not lose sight of that.

Thank you for your continued support of *JFS*.

Michael A. Peat Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Forensic Sciences

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The opinions reflected in these Commentaries and Responses are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, its editors, members, and representatives.