

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors:

I request that *Mathematical Biosciences and Engineering* publish this Letter of Correction to an article published in the journal for which I was the corresponding author, “The Effect of Global Travel on the Spread of SARS” (2006;3(1):205-218). The goal of this article was to study the effect of global travel on the geographic spread of SARS. A multiregional compartmental model was proposed, mathematically analyzed, and numerically simulated to study how SARS spread out from Guangdong, China. The article consists of six sections: (1) an introduction, (2) a background section on medical geography theory, (3) the mathematical model, (4) mathematical analysis and results, (5) numerical simulations, and (6) discussion. Sections 3, 4, and 5 are the main parts of the article which are all original work.

I wrote the second section by myself. In drafting the section on the geographic spread of SARS, I found several very interesting articles and cited all of them in the reference section, including the article titled “Implications of SARS: Medical Geography and Surveillance in Disease Detection,” published in the *Annals of Pharmacotherapy* (2003; 37(11):1841-1849) by Drs. John R. Litaker, Jennie Y. Chou, Suzanne Novak and James P. Wilson. While medical geography theory has been widely written about, Drs. Litaker et al. did an excellent job of summing up the development of medical geography theory with a case example using SARS in their article. The background section was intended to connect medical geography theory with the mathematical model we had developed. In writing the background section, I mistakenly mixed several paragraphs of nearly verbatim text describing medical geography theory from their article into a draft of the paper. Although Drs. Litaker et al.’s article was cited in the background section for their having applied medical geography theory to SARS as well as in the reference section, I never went back to finish the background section and so did not correct my mistake. While I now recognize that particularly time-pressured circumstances, my focusing too heavily on the mathematics of the article, and other factors contributed to my mistake, the only important thing is that the article went to print still containing the insufficiently quoted and cited paragraphs in the background section. My failure to have caught my mistake was a disservice to the insufficiently cited authors, to both journals, to my coauthors, my university and the scholarly community; it saddens me, and I will endeavor to not ever let it be repeated.

I apologize to Drs. Litaker, Chou, Novak and Wilson, for not having caught my mistake and for not having properly credited them for their fine work; to the *Annals of Pharmacotherapy* and *Mathematical Biosciences and Engineering*, their staff and readers; and to my coauthors, who had no knowledge of and were in no way responsible for this mistake. I also ask that you publish this letter so that your readers will be made aware of the contribution to the study of medical geography theory and my paper made by Drs. Litaker et al. and to link the correction to the article on the electronic version of your journal.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to publish this Letter of Correction, and for your time and kind attention to this matter.

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November 14, 2008