

## RETRACTION

# Retraction: Alpha-Fetoprotein Promoter-Driven Cre/LoxP-Switched RNA Interference for Hepatocellular Carcinoma Tissue-Specific Target Therapy

The *PLOS ONE* Editors

Following the publication of this article [1], concerns were raised regarding Figs 2, 3, and 4. Specifically:

- In Fig 2C, lanes 2 and 6 in the left Beclin 1 panel appear similar.
- In Fig 2C, the left and right GAPDH panels appear similar despite representing different conditions.
- In Fig 4A Beclin 1 panel, when levels are adjusted to visualize the background, there appears to be vertical discontinuity between lanes 1 and 2.
- In the Beclin 1 panel in Fig 4C, when levels are adjusted, there are similar patterns in the background above the bands in lanes 1 and 5. In addition, in lane 5, the signal around the band appears to be discontinuous with the overall background of the panel.
- The L-02 cell line used as a control for healthy human hepatic tissue was found to be potentially contaminated by HeLa cells in a later study [2].

The authors stated that the original, underlying data for the Western blots in this article are no longer available; however, they provided versions of the images that were cropped wider than the published panels.

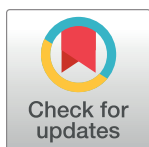
Regarding the concerns in Fig 2, the authors stated that the bands in lanes 2 and 6 were similar but were not identical. The authors stated that the similarities observed in the GAPDH panel were caused by an error during figure preparation and provided a replacement panel. In the absence of raw data, the *PLOS ONE* Editors remain concerned about this figure.

The authors stated the vertical discontinuity in Fig 4A may be caused by a smear on the Western blot film. In the absence of original image data, these issues cannot be clarified.

Regarding the Beclin 1 panel in Fig 4C, several repeating patterns were observed in the background of the uncropped panel provided by the authors, in addition to the concerns raised in lanes 1 and 5 of the published panel. The authors stated that the discontinuous background was potentially caused by blemishes on the original film. The *PLOS ONE* Editors remain concerned about the issues involving this figure.

The authors stated that they were not aware of the potential contamination issues with the L-02 cell line at the time of this study, and they no longer have a sample of these cells to investigate. They commented that the morphology of L-02 and HeLa cells in this study was not similar as shown in Figs 1 and 3C of [1].

In light of the concerns affecting multiple figure panels that question the reliability of these data, the *PLOS ONE* Editors retract this article.



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YFP did not agree with the retraction. YHS, ZBD, JZ, SJQ, BH, CYG, HY, WRL, and JF either did not respond directly or could not be reached.

## References

1. Peng Y- F, Shi Y- H, Ding Z- B, Zhou J, Qiu S- J, Hui B, et al. (2013) Alpha-Fetoprotein Promoter-Driven Cre/LoxP-Switched RNA Interference for Hepatocellular Carcinoma Tissue-Specific Target Therapy. *PLoS ONE* 8(2): e53072. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0053072>
2. Ye F, Chen C, Qin J, Liu J, Zheng C. Genetic profiling reveals an alarming rate of cross-contamination among human cell lines used in China. *FASEB J.* 2015 Oct; 29(10):4268–72. doi: [10.1096/fj.14-266718](https://doi.org/10.1096/fj.14-266718). Epub 2015 Jun 26. PMID: [26116706](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26116706/).