

### Questionable Ethical Statement on Three Articles

Recently, the 5GH Team received an anonymous e-mail accusing the ethical statement in article [1] of being false. The e-mail states that the number SQ2018-039-01, which was reported in article [1] as an ethical approval number, is in fact an application number, not an approval number. It further explains that "SQ" stands for the Chinese word 申请 (application).

DOI	Title	Author	Participant	Ethical_Statement
10.1016/j.ijnss.2022.12.006	The relationship between cancer-related fatigue, quality of life and pain among cancer patients	Dun Liu (刘敦)   Jin-Sen Weng   Xi Ke (柯喜)   Xian-Yi Wu   Si-Ting Huang	A convenience sampling method was used to select cancer patients experiencing pain who were undergoing chemotherapy in two provinces (one in South China and another in East China) ... 224 registered patients	Ethical approval was granted by the ethics committee of Fujian Cancer Hospital & Fujian Medical University Cancer Hospital (SQ2018-039-01)
10.1186/s12904-022-01108-x	Willingness of patients with cancer pain to participate in end-of-life decisions: a multi-center cross-sectional study from three coastal provinces in southern China	Xi Ke (柯喜)   Hongyu Zhu   Yu Zhang   Ling Yang   Simei Shi   Fang Zhu   Huiyu Luo	This study was a cross-sectional study, which carried out in three tertiary cancer hospitals (Fujian Cancer hospital in Fuzhou, the affiliated cancer hospital of Zhongshan University in Guangzhou and the affiliated cancer hospital of Guangxi University in Nanning) in Southern China because the tertiary cancer hospital is a provincial cancer treatment center, which can accept cancer patients from all regions of the province (including rural and urban areas)	This study was reviewed and approved by the centralized ethics committee of Fujian Cancer hospital (SQ2018-039-01)
10.1038/s41598-024-53481-7	Analysis of the factors influencing moderate to poor performance status in patients with cancer after chemotherapy: a cross-sectional study comparing three models	Ke Xi (柯喜)   Lin Jingping   Liu Yaqing   Yu Xinyuan   Lin Hui   Yang Mei   Chen Qingyue   Liu Dun (刘敦)	A convenience sampling method was used to select patients with cancer who experienced pain and were receiving chemotherapy from May 2022 to January 2023 ... A total of 94 subjects in the case group had moderate to severe activity disorders, and 365 subjects in the control group had no or only mild activity disorders	Ethical approval was granted by the ethics committee of Fujian Cancer Hospital & Fujian Medical University Cancer Hospital (SQ2018-039-01)

A further investigation by the 5GH Team identified two additional articles [2–3] that also reported the same so-called ethical approval number, SQ2018-039-01. However, the participant recruitment described in articles [1–3] is inconsistent. Specifically, the participants were recruited from different hospitals, and the total number of participants varied across the three studies [1–3]. For example, the participants in study [2] were recruited from hospitals in a southern province and a northern province, whereas the participants in study [3] were recruited from hospitals in three southern provinces. These discrepancies suggest that the ethical statements in articles [1–3] are questionable.

Those three articles [1-3] share a common author, KE Xi (柯喜) with Fujian Cancer Hospital. LIU Dun (刘敦) with Fujian Medical University was also one of the core authors.

[1] 10.1038/s41598-024-53481-7

[2] 10.1016/j.ijnss.2022.12.006

[3] 10.1186/s12904-022-01108-x

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