

Food and Chemical Toxicology's bungled handling of Séralini publication fiasco permanently damaged biotech movement

The apology from *Food and Chemical Toxicology* over its handling of French scientist Gilles-Éric Séralini's now retracted paper purportedly showing that genetically modified corn causes cancerous tumor growth in rats has led scientists to seriously question the journal's peer review process. The study—although rejected by the scientific community—has done considerable damage to the reputation of biotechnology. It led the Russian government to ban imports of GM corn and French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault to attempt to have GM corn banned from the European Union. Although the paper is rife with scientific errors—according to thousands of independent scientists—the journal is only retracting the study now, claiming that this has been done after a “time-consuming review process.” The journal's editors apologize, saying that “The peer review process is not perfect, but it does work. The editorial board will continue to use this case as a reminder to be as diligent as possible in the peer-review process.”

However, according to David Spiegelhalter, Winton Professor of the Public Understanding of Risk at the University of Cambridge, “It was clear from even a superficial reading that this paper was not fit for publication.” The authors concluded that cancerous tumors were more likely to grow in the rats that consumed the GM corn, but the raw data does not support this conclusion.

Because of the lack of statistical tests on the data that could differentiate random tumor growth from tumor growth related to consuming the GM corn, says Christopher Preston, a weed expert at the University of Adelaide, it seems like the authors were “trying to make the data fit their conclusion.”

Read the full, original story here: [Half-hearted apology, but Séralini damage done](#)