

NATURE | NEWS: EXPLAINER

Why great Olympic feats raise suspicions

'Performance profiling' could help to dispel doubts.

Ewen Callaway

01 August 2012 Corrected: 03 August 2012

At the Olympics, how fast is too fast? That question has dogged Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwen after the 16-year-old shattered the world record in the women's 400-metre individual medley (400 IM) on Saturday. In the wake of that race, some swimming experts wondered whether Ye's win was aided by performance-enhancing drugs. She has never tested positive for a banned substance and the International Olympic Committee on Tuesday declared that her post-race test was clean. The resulting debate has been tinged with racial and political undertones, but little science. *Nature* examines whether and how an athlete's performance history and the limits of human physiology could be used to catch dopers.



Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwen broke the world record for the women's 400-metre individual medley event at the Olympic Games on 28 July.

L. NEAL / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Was Ye's performance anomalous?

Yes. Her time in the 400 IM was more than 7 seconds faster than her time in the same event at a major meet in July 2011. But what really raised eyebrows was her showing in the last 50 metres, which she swam faster than US swimmer Ryan Lochte did when he won gold in the men's 400 IM on Saturday, with the second-fastest time ever for that event.

Doesn't a clean drug test during competition rule out the possibility of doping?

No, says Ross Tucker, an exercise physiologist at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Athletes are much more likely to dope while in training, when drug testing tends to be less rigorous. "Everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing," Tucker says.

Out-of-competition tests are more likely to catch dopers, he says, but it is not feasible to test every elite athlete regularly year-round. Tracking an athlete over time and flagging anomalous performances would help

anti-doping authorities to make better use of resources, says Yorck Olaf Schumacher, an exercise physiologist at the Medical University of Freiburg in Germany, who co-authored a 2009 paper proposing that performance profiling be used as an anti-doping tool¹. “I think it’s a good way and a cheap way to narrow down a large group of athletes to suspicious ones, because after all, the result of any doping is higher performance,” Schumacher says.

The ‘biological passport’, which measures characteristics of an athlete’s blood to look for physiological evidence of doping, works in a similar way to performance profiling (see ‘Racing just to keep up’). After it was introduced in 2008, cycling authorities flagged irregularities in the blood characteristics of Antonio Colom, a Spanish cyclist, and targeted drug tests turned up evidence of the banned blood-boosting hormone erythropoietin (EPO) in 2009.

How would performance be used to nab dopers?

Anti-doping authorities need a better way of flagging anomalous performances or patterns of results, says Schumacher. To do this, sports scientists need to create databases that — sport by sport and event by event — record how athletes improve with age and experience. Longitudinal records of athletes’ performances would then be fed into statistical models to determine the likelihood that they ran or swam too fast, given their past results and the limits of human physiology.

The Olympic biathlon, a winter sport that combines cross-country skiing and target shooting, has dabbled in performance profiling. In a pilot project, scientists at the International Biathlon Union in Salzburg, Austria, and the University of Ferrara in Italy, developed a software program that retroactively analysed blood and performance data from 180 biathletes over six years to identify those most likely to have doped². The biathlon federation now uses the software to target its athletes for drug testing.

Could an athlete then be disciplined simply for performing too well?

“That would be unfair,” says Tucker. “The final verdict is only ever going to be reached by testing. It has to be.” In recent years, cycling authorities have successfully prosecuted athletes for having anomalous blood profiles, even when banned substances such as EPO could not be found. But performance is too far removed from taking a banned substance and influenced by too many outside factors to convict someone of doping, Tucker says. “When we look at this young swimmer from China who breaks a world record, that’s not proof of anything. It asks a question or two.”

EDITOR’S NOTE

The comments below are a sample of the outrage with which this news story was greeted. We are sorry that it has offended so many readers, but we stand by the piece. We strongly reject suggestions that it was motivated by bias or racism; our intention was to investigate the science behind a controversy arising from the current Olympic Games. The first paragraph states that Ye has never had a positive drug test and notes that much of the discussion of her win “has been tinged with racial and political undertones”.

The article is a fair-minded look at a controversy that we did not initiate. It asks whether new developments in performance monitoring could dispel the unfortunate suspicions that the most extraordinary athletic performance raises these days, whatever the nationality of the athlete.

We are no longer accepting comments on this news story, and because of the volume of comments, some early posts have disappeared. We intentionally deleted only those posts that violated our Community Guidelines.

Nature doi:10.1038/nature.2012.11109

Corrections

Corrected: This article originally said that Ye's time in the 400 IM was more than 7 seconds faster than in July 2012. It should have said July 2011. This has now been corrected.

References

1. Shumacher, Y. O. & Pottgiesser, T. *Int. J. Sport. Physiol. Perform.* **4**, 129–133 (2009).
2. Manfredini, A. F. *et al. J. Sport. Med. Phys. Fit.* **51**, 153–159 (2011).

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Author information

Author details

Ewen Callaway

Ewen joined *Nature* in August 2010, after 2 years at *New Scientist* as Boston-based biomedical reporter. He attended the science-writing programme at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and earned a master's degree in microbiology at the University of Washington. He spends his free time learning...

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Comments

2012-08-02 11:10 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48049

I A said: Noah Adrian said: "I don't know if this was an anomalous performance compared to other recent time trials, but indeed, to defeat the best in the world by that much raises an eye brow. Perhaps this article should have used that performance as a peg. If it did, I highly doubt we would have seen similar reactions from 90% of the commenters above, because in that case, perhaps those concerned parties would have actually read the article without a veil of nationalistic pride blinding them to what was actually being said , or the point of the article."

I found the last paragraph especially amusing – editor of Nature surely knows HUMAN NATURE. Ironically, it applies to Mr. Adrian himself too. If this were an article on other journals, I highly doubt we would have seen a similar reaction from Mr. Adrian. Because in that case, perhaps Mr. Adrian would have actually read those in-depth analysis without a veil of arrogant pride blinding them to what was actually being pointed out.

2012-08-02 11:12 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48050

happyforever shen said: Nature should apologize in public and lay off this Ewen Callaway. Immediately!!!

2012-08-02 11:18 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48051

jennifer wingler said: nature should apology to Ye shiwen and all athletes. And this article is the biggest joke I have ever seen which makes me think it's Apr 1th today~ ¼~ ¼~ ¼ What a shame of you to accept this rubbish and put it into your dirty magazine~ ¼

2012-08-02 11:18 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48052

Victor ZUO said: I just registered specially for this shameful article! It is lack of scientific proving and full of racial discrimination. I believe most of the academic researchers in the world should be disappointed of that Nature has published such a rubbish article if they are speaking with conscience!

2012-08-02 11:18 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48053

Xuebo Hu said: Monkey: Donkey, this is the best summer I have ever had.
Donkey: what made you so excited?

Monkey:Something in London, for sure.

Donkey: I know, the Olympics.

Monkey: hey, I am not the sport guy. I just can do a little bit better in climbing.

Donkey: then what?

Monkey: I found the biggest science shit in the world.

Donkey: Come on, my mum always ask me to eat more. You know.

Monkey: serious, I am not joking at all.

Donkey: what are you talking about?

Monkey:the Nature.

2012-08-02 11:20 AM

Report this comment | #48054

Donald Guandong Chen said: By quoting the terms at section 7 regarding contents as follows:

1.You must not submit any material to the Site which;

is inappropriate. Material will be considered in appropriate if that material is:

defamatory, abusive, malicious, threatening, false, misleading, offensive, discriminatory, harassing, blasphemous, racist or sexist;

This article by Mr Ewen Callaway is allegedly violating the above-cited terms, against which specifically the article is suspected to be misleading and defaming by providing inaccurate figures(7sec against 5.38sec) and confounding readers with the incomplete doping examination process against de facto(6 months before games and 107 players got caught) and most impertinently misleading readers by suspiciously adopting an "Guilty unless proven innocent" manor and turning against scientific truth-pursuing fashion(by quoting Lai Jiang's article)

Second and very devastating to the fame of the Nature and the broader scientific and other American publications: the article of Lai Jiang was suspected to be anomalously censored/maliciously deleted/sanctioned by the publication authority, which is endangering the whole reputation of the Nature and all other (English) related journals with the protocols in more or less the same fashion, and therefore urgently call for an official explanation for this action.

Hereby followed is re-quoted the Lai Jiang's comment:

Lai Jiang said: It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly.

First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4:28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached

the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010¹. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec.

Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16². For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined with scientific and persistent training. But jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound.

Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on.

Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochter (29.10 sec)³ and Ye (28.93 sec)⁴: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochter would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of scientific rigorousness that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works.

Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug

that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it?

Let's be practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances. Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be?

Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of-competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention. Per WADA president's press release⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing? Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye.

Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

1 http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241

2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4>

3 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=swm054100/index.html>

4 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

5 http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-02 11:20 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48055

Yang Liu said: As soon as this article is published, Nature will only be a joke of the world. Shame on the author and the editor.

2012-08-02 11:22 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48056

John Smith said: Nature, you are not some gossip entertainment magazines. If you don't have enough proof, just make some wild guess, which is not a correct way to write an article to publish on Nature. Ewen Callaway, if you don't know how to write a scientific article, go to school and take some classes, OK?

2012-08-02 11:24 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48057

Yu Wa said: Next time you people complain about the Chinese government and the lack of freedom of speech in China, think about this very moment in which you are deleting valid comments from your own loyal, but concerned readers

2012-08-02 11:24 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48058

Wang LaoWu said: Shame on you, Ewen Callaway.
Shame on you, Nature, either.

2012-08-02 11:25 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48059

BTang BTang said: Nature, you know how hard it is to have a paper enlisted in your journal? It is dissapointing to see an article like this with a D.O.I. number. It does not have any data, all the questions are unanswered based on quoted sentence by so-called "authority". I don't see any difference between this article and a source from wikipedia. A D.O.I. number is just a layer of gold-plating on a piece of rusty iron. It makes it even cheaper.

2012-08-02 11:26 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48060

xin wang said: Shame for Nature.

2012-08-02 11:27 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48061

su dongliang said: Why don't you comment on Michael Phelps's 1/4

2012-08-02 11:28 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48062

T Liu said: By publishing this totally biased article (or news), the editor has ruined Nature's longstanding reputation as one of the most prestigious scientific journal in the world. Nature should retract this article and issue a formal apology to the victim and to the scientific community that is the most valuable asset of Nature.

2012-08-02 11:30 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48063

Zhuo Wang said: To Audrey Richard

I regret to learn you don't care about the initial debate here anymore. It's up to you. It's only about a 16-year swimmer, one of the brightest stars of this Olympics, getting singled out, questioned and attacked again and again, even after her drug test results came out clean.

Regarding whether Nature.com deliberately deleted or hid certain comments, you provided evidence suggesting there is a max number, after which a new post will push the oldest one out of the list. There is also evidence against that hypothesis. At the website:

<http://www.nature.com/news/index.html>, there is a number under the link to this piece of you-now-know-what, presumably the count of its comments, that kept increasing. It is 515 as of 8:17pm PDT. If this number keep growing, hope you adjust your hypothesis accordingly.

In this age of internet, it requires quite a jump in thought to come up with such a hypothesis that comments can easily max out at a site like Nature.com. It escaped me, but I'm willing to explore this a bit more with you.

Now here is the main take home message. If there is clear evidence proving your hypothesis, or if Nature comes out to say so, I believe most of the people here will believe it and move on from the issue. Hope you can appreciate the difference between such an approach and that of the author of this Nature news report.

2012-08-02 11:31 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48064

LuAn Guo said: Shame for Nature.

2012-08-02 11:31 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48065

Grace Hu said: Shame on you,nature.
This is noting but racial discrimination.
How dare you!

2012-08-02 11:32 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48068

Shame On Nature said: What a garbage paper!

2012-08-02 11:34 AM

Report this comment | #48070

Shi Chen said: In any case, as a rising power, China is now doing what need to be done and make progress step by step. This kind of noise and stereotype are annoying, but seems unavoidable, because it is a long race between the sinking and the rising power. We speak out only because the west (unfortunately the so-called scientific journal Nature joined the gang) are bullying a 16-year-old world champion and talented little girl in a shameful and hateful way. Nature, once a prestigious scientific journal, is doing the dirty tricks played by gossip journalist, which itself is a shame. I don't think we can get any justice from here, as I found out the editor actually is laughing at the reasonable comments in twitter.

2012-08-02 11:35 AM

Report this comment | #48073

Qiao Wang said: The anti-doping agency already showed that Ye is clean, and that is the end of the story. If anyone suspect Ye, then we should still suspect Michael Phelps, suspect Ryan Lochte, and suspect every athletes in the Olympic games.

Olympic spirit promotes people Faster, Higher and Stronger, but now we suspect a great athlete just because of her faster swimming. Ridiculous!

Nature should be a responsible scientific journal, but this biased news totally violates the rules that Nature should follow. Now, I urge that Nature withdraw this publication, stop the mistake, and investigate this scandal.

2012-08-02 11:35 AM

Report this comment | #48075

zhao zhao said: By publishing this article, nature is actually do a favor for us. When media like NYTimes publishes such articles, we do not have a good weapon because they are supposed to be biased. But when nature publishes such article, the rebound from academia community will be very strong, simply because it is a smear on scientific spirit. How stupid they are. lol.

My suggestion of our strategy is to just simply spread this article to academic community, and let as many scientist know as possible. We do not need even do any reasoning or arguing, just simply spreading.

2012-08-02 11:36 AM

Report this comment | #48076

Zhiguo Liu said: Obviously, there is no Science in Nature.

2012-08-02 11:38 AM

Report this comment | #48078

Zhiguo Liu said: Obviously, there is no Science in Nature.

2012-08-02 11:38 AM

Report this comment | #48080

Yang Bai said: Author: you are too far to be a scientist, if I write a rubbish paper, I will be shamed to submit it to any journal.

Editor: are you drinking too much when you review this garbage? If not, you should be fired.

NATURE: you should take this rubbish paper back if you still want to be the best journal of the world.

And you own YE an apology.

2012-08-02 11:40 AM

Report this comment | #48081

ZHANG AI said: What is the physiological limit for a female swimmer? Do you have evidence to support the physiological limit? How can someone obtain such an accurate "physiological limit"? If you don't state that, what is all your argument based on?

2012-08-02 11:40 AM

Report this comment | #48082

Daisy Zhang said: Congratulations, Nature! Your published article leaves me no choice but to register and comment on your website! I just can not believe my first time reading an article published in the "renowned science journal – Nature"™ is like this! You really surprise me.

2012-08-02 11:40 AM

Report this comment | #48083

yue jack said: science? nature? only conjecture and bias i can see!

2012-08-02 11:41 AM

Report this comment | #48085

Xiangxiong Zhang said: Perhaps the most ridiculous thing is, Lai jiang's comment (#47487) with solid evidence has been deleted by online editor. I re-post it here:

Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly.

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Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on.

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press release⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that

"everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing? Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye.

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1 http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241

2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4>

3 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=swm054100/index.html>

4 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

5 http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-

conference

2012-08-02 11:43 AM

Report this comment | #48088

J G said: Shame on You NATURE
I WISH SCIENCE COULD BE BETTER

2012-08-02 11:44 AM

Report this comment | #48089

J G said: Shame on You NATURE
I WISH SCIENCE COULD BE BETTER
APOLOGIZE

2012-08-02 11:44 AM

Report this comment | #48090

Jing Ren said: Editor: You should apologize. You must apologize! Say sorry to Ye, to Chinese people, to all the readers. Where is your attainment?! You are a shame of Nature, and Nature is a shame of a scientific journal!

2012-08-02 11:45 AM

Report this comment | #48091

Li Yumeng said: Shame on you, Nature! Shame on you, "Great Britain"!

2012-08-02 11:45 AM

Report this comment | #48092

Chao Yang said: shame on you ,Nature!!!!!!!!!!!!

2012-08-02 11:46 AM

Report this comment | #48093

Dejian Zhao said: Hi, Ewen Callaway. It is **CONFIRMED** through your article that **YOUR LEFT BRAIN HAS NOTHING RIGHT, AND YOUR RIGHT BRAIN HAS NOTHING LEFT.**

2012-08-02 11:47 AM

Report this comment | #48094

No Bias said: Great Job, editors of this post, you just down-graded the prestige of Nature into oblivion.
i would like to share something to educate you so called Nature editors, please don't feel embarrassed.
here's a most highly rated reponse posted by Buckus Toothnail, from a news on National post, regarding the similar insinuating subject matter on Ye Shiwen's success. (<http://sports.nationalpost.com>

/2012/07/30/chinas-ye-shiwen-pushing-realm-of-possibility-at-olympics/#comment-604038644)

original reponse:

"Wow, this is the dumbest, most ignorant article I've read in a long time. All Olympic medalists get tested immediately after the competition so if Ye's doping, then she'll be found out. But until that happens, and so far the IOC has gone on record as to saying they have zero suspicions of her, then all this chatter is just character assassination and defamation. These accusations simply have no grounding but rather is based on pure conjecture.

But one of the more laughable things about this "article" is how it is so blatantly biased against Ye and the Chinese (and quite transparently racist overall).

While Ye's amazing accomplishments are termed "unbelievable" in the literal sense and "suspicious", Ruta Meilutyte is given a completely free pass despite being only 15 years old, swimming over 2 seconds faster in the Final than she ever has before the Olympics, and only being ranked 14th in the world in this event. Not only that, but this is her first major international competition.

Ye, on the otherhand, is the world champion of the 200m individual medley having won the event at the 2011 World Aquatics Championships, and placed 2nd in the 400m individual medley TWO YEARS AGO at the 2010 World Championships (25 m). She is definitely not an "unknown" from out of "nowhere". What's more, she improved her personal best by only 2 seconds in the heats of these Olympics from her 2010 time, and then improved it again by 3 seconds in the finals of the event. So in two years, from when she was 14 to now when she is 16, she improved her time by 5 seconds. Stephanie Rice, on the other hand, swimming in the same event, improved her time by SIX seconds RIGHT BEFORE the Beijing Olympics. Of course no one has accused Rice of doping despite this.

And now Missy Franklin, who was able to WIN a finals events only 13 minutes after swimming an exhausting 200 meter freestyle semi-final, when the shortest rest period Michael Phelps got in Beijing was THIRTY minutes, is celebrated rather than have suspicions aroused, even though this feat is way more unusual and unheard of then Ye simply winning a race and breaking a world record.

Now do I really think we ought to be suspicious of Meilutyte and Franklin? Of course not!

Unless they have their tests come back as positive, there is absolutely NO reason why anyone should suspect their great accomplishments instead of hailing them. And that goes for Ye as well.

It's utterly ridiculous to celebrate the former two while defaming the latter simply because Franklin is from the US and Meilutyte is from Lithuania.

This is another ridiculous hypocrisy of this "writer" as Lithuania has hardly been known as a swimming powerhouse and yet also has a reputation for doping, the most recent case being that of Aurimas Didzbalis who failed a doping test just two weeks ago and stripped of his European silver medal and suspended for these Olympics.

The US team, let's not forget, has had it's share of doping cases as well like that of Jessica Hardy. She

is part of the bronze winning USA women's 4x100m freestyle team in these London Olympics, but was kicked off the US team for the Beijing Olympics for testing positive for a banned performance enhancer during the US Olympic trials and subsequently was banned from competition for a year.

But of course, this "journalist" would like to ignore all that when stating "Now, if Ye was Canadian, or American, or British, or German, we might be a little less suspicious."

Why would that be? Canadians don't dope? Right, of course, the BIGGEST Olympic doping scandal EVER concerned a Canadian by the name of Ben Johnson. But let's just brush that under the rug because it doesn't fit our narrative of "if Ye was Canadian, or American, or British, or German, we might be a little less suspicious."

The irony of Johnson's gold medal for the 100 meter dash in 1988 Olympics being awarded to second place finisher Carl Lewis is that it was reveal years later that Lewis had failed THREE doping tests during the US Olympic trials of that year, which should have gotten him kicked off the US team. And yet the United States Olympic Committee covered us these failed drug tests so that Lewis could compete. It was also revealed that the USOC covered up 114 positive tests between 1988 and 2000. All this has comes out and Lewis now even openly admits he used PEDs during his career.

And let's not forget Marion Jones, who because of biased attitudes like of this "writer", escaped unnoticed for years despite her husband, a shot putter also on the US team, being banned for doping during the 2000 Olympics for testing positive FOUR times for steroids, and the fact that she actually tested positive during a random drug test in high school and was banned for 4 years until OJ Simpson's attorney, Johnnie Cochran, got the ban revoked.

And of course, aside from the Olympics, American sports are NOTORIOUS for doping. Take the case of American baseball. From Mark McGwire, Jose Canseco, Alex Rodriguez and dozens more players that have admitted to doping to Barry Bonds, Sammy Sosa and Roger Clemens, who are largely suspected and some being charged by the government of doping, these are the greatest players in the past two decades and they have ALL doped.

The British don't dope??? Just on THIS Olympics' Great Britain team are THREE dopers who were previously given bans, namely David Millar the cyclist who tested positive for EPO and missed out the 2004 and 2008 Olympics, sprinter Dwain Chambers, and shot putter Carl Myerscough.

And let's not forget British wrestler and Commonwealth Games champion Myroslav Dykun just being banned for doping earlier this year.

The Germans don't dope? Are you serious? The East Germans for decades ran one of the most wide-spread and sophisticated state-sponsored doping programs EVER, far exceeding China in the 90s and rivaling the USSR's program if not surpassing it.

If we are taking about recent times, Germany's own anti-doping agency and the World Anti-Doping Agency are currently investigating the German doctor "Dr. Andreas Franke, who extracted blood from athletes, treated it with ultraviolet light and injected it back into the same athlete."

28 athletes are named in the case including "Olympic speedskating champion Claudia Pechstein, former 800-meter Olympic champion Nils Schumann, [and] rising German cycling star Marcel Kittel".

So tell me again, why is it that "if Ye was Canadian, or American, or British, or German, we might be a little less suspicious"? Is this based on factual reality or rather, just another obvious example of your transparent and blatant bias, discrimination and racism?

Not only are the arguments presented in this "article" full of holes and mostly laughable, the "journalism" is also extremely suspect and blatantly dishonest.

For example, he mentions, "China won a record 51 golds in their home Games, and continue to win medals here, in all sorts of disciplines. The last similar factory was East Germany, and their hulking man-women".

East Germany, of course, was famous for state-sponsored doping and thus this "journalist" is basically insinuating through his weasel phrases that China was doing the same during 2008 and as a result, won their "record 51 golds". There accusations, of course, come without any examples, proof or references.

The reality is that of all the athletes that tested positive during the 2008 Beijing Olympics games (not including the previously mentioned athletes that tested positive BEFORE the Olympics and therefore didn't attend), NONE of them were from China.

There were, however, athletes from the US and Germany, two of the countries this "writer" claims we shouldn't be suspicious of, as well as athletes from Ireland, Norway, Spain, Greece, Italy, North Korea, Vietnam, Croatia, Ukraine, Poland, Bahrain and Brazil.

Another dishonest tactic of this "writer" is that he bases much of the "impossibility" of Ye's achievement in that her "final 50-metre freestyle split that was faster than the gold medal-winning equivalent by Ryan Lochte in the men's race". Naturally, many readers, as demonstrated in the comments below, have interpreted that to mean the Ye actually BEAT Lochte's time, which is hilariously off-base and untrue.

The fact is and what this "journalist" fails to mention is that Lochte swam the 400m individual medley over TWENTY seconds faster than Ye in their respective finals, and that he also BEAT her in the 100m freestyle split when considering BOTH laps.

It is well-known that Lochte often goes all out in the beginning of races, and fades near the end. That was well demonstrated in the 4x100 relay finals in which Lochte himself said he was "too excited" and over-swam the first 50m and therefore not leaving enough gas for the final lap, and as we all know, ended up losing the race to Yannick Agnel and the French team.

It is also well-known the Ye employs almost the opposite strategy. Like many other swimmers, she conserves her energy for much of the race and then explodes at the end. Like even John Leonard admitted, her splits from the other 300 meters were "quite ordinary". She did not expend all her energy at the beginning and was letting her competitors beat her until the final 100 meters which is when she made her move.

Given the different strategies employed by Lochte and Ye, it's much less surprising that Ye was able to swim tenths of a second faster on the final 50 meters, while keeping in mind Lochte still had a faster 100 meter split on the freestyle and was over 20 seconds faster overall in the entire 400 meters.

The real sad thing about this "article" is that this "journalist" basically praises Franklin for employing the same strategy when she had to swim her 200m freestyle semi-final right before her 100m backstroke final, saying "she swam her freestyle with as much arm work as possible, to save herself for the leg-deadening backstroke. It was quite a feat."

Rather than praising Ye for "quite a feat", instead he accuses Ye of being like a superhero character from "The Incredibles", of having "superhuman speed" and "told by his parents to ease up at the track meet, and go just slow enough to finish a close second", "holding back to whatever part of the race that suits her, and then casually making every other world-class swimmer in the field look like sheâ€™s drowning".

So rather than praise Ye's successful strategy of conserving her energy initially so she could have more in the tank at the end, similar to the strategy employed by Franklin, this "writer" is insinuating that Ye could go full blast like she did on the final 100m freestyle during the ENTIRE race, and is only "holding back" to not make her "superhuman speed" (i.e. her "doping") appear so obvious.

Not only is this assumption completely ludicrous and mind-blowingly insipid, it's also astonishing that this type of tripe could be published in so-called "respectable" publication.

If the Olympics had an event for "Worst Olympics Coverage and Analysis", this "writer" would win by such a margin that he would not be able to escape accusations of doping with some sort of newly invented super "stupid pill". And like Ye, he would be falsely accused.

He really is this stupid."

2012-08-02 11:47 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48095

Tao Wang said: I happened to have a Ph.D. degree from Fudan University in Shanghai (is it comparable to U Cape Town?) so that I guess I am qualified to comment on this work of Mr. Ewen Callaway. But, after reviewing, I am feeling that Mr. Callaway, together with Nature, is kidding me in a serious way. Mr. Callaway, if statistics fail with drug test, it will also fail with your profiling method and all Nature papers, unless you "innovate". I see that correlation and agree that you did fail in statistics.

I don't want to give further analysis, for I have already seen so many questions dogging Mr. Callaway and Nature. Let me paste Lai's questions and comments here again so that Mr. Callaway and Nature have better chance to defend their work. Mr. Callaway, please read it carefully to understand what makes quality research work.

Furthermore, I encourage Nature to contact Lai and publish his work in next issue to present more balanced views to its readers. (Obviously and unfortunately, when I do statistics on comments below, I

find most of Nature's readers are Chinese. I wish Mr. Callaway is not citing me to explain the reason of fast progress of drug development in China. To share a top secret with you, similar to its spaceship, China is stealing drugs from US swimming team.)

Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly.

First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4:28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec.

Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16. For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined with scientific and persistent training. But jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound.

Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on.

Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochte (29.10 sec)³ and Ye (28.93 sec)⁴: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochte would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of

scientific rigorousness that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works.

Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it?

Let's face it, the author's argument is not practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances. Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be?

Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of-competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention. Per WADA

press release⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that

will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition

testing. Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye.

Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected

doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

1 http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241

2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4>

3 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=swm054100/index.html>

4 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

5 http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-02 11:48 AM

Report this comment | #48096

xiaoyang zhang said: çœ·â^°â,,è- æ·«æ°çš,,ç¥žžæ§¹²¼CEè™¹²ç,,¶ā,æ™ āšç§‘ç”çš,,ĩ¼CEæ-£ā,,äººé f½è f½æ f³æ™žç™¹²¼CEæ— è®ºä»žæ•°æ®æ”¶é,†èç~æ™ æ•°æ®â†æžé f½ä,é è°±ĩ¼CEâ°ç¼-ä½ æ™ è,çä¹°äº†ĩ¼ÿ

2012-08-02 11:49 AM

Report this comment | #48097

KGV Bazinga said: Not to even mention Callaway's paper, which is full of prejudice, biased facts, and presumption of guilt, it is really hopeless to see Nature published such a crap. My undergraduate lab report was even more persuasive than this.

Funny to see the author even cited two articles as references, which makes even more like a joke

2012-08-02 11:49 AM

Report this comment | #48098

Yu Chen said: For those who doesn't understood what's going on here, please go to Scientific American website and check out the original titles of this article, which is already surreptitiously changed by the editor of Nature News here.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=why-great-olympic-feats-raise-suspicions>

2012-08-02 11:51 AM

Report this comment | #48099

Kai Zhou said: None of the evidence in this article is convincing to suspect Ye's performance. If the results of the drug test are suspicious, why should we believe the performance of all the other athletics?

2012-08-02 11:55 AM

Report this comment | #48100

Ying Zhang said: Ewen Hallaway, as well as Nature, should withdraw this article as soon as possible and apologize to Ms Shiwen Ye formally for making totally unfounded accusations and mislead the public. Had this article not been centered around the single claim: Ye Shiwen cheated, the writer might still be able to say something marginally counted as "scientific". But now the whole article is just full of logical fallacies, unfounded claims, guess and accusations. This is unbelievably low. Aren't they afraid of legal trouble?

2012-08-02 11:57 AM

Report this comment | #48102

Wei Xie said: I suggest the moderator/online editor in charge of this article to remove the comment by lam withNature--Yes, just as you remove Lai Jiang's reply. The reasons are the following (note the last paragraph also serves as my reply to lam withNature):

First, lam withNature's reply is not relevant to the theme of discussion in this article, not at all. lam with Nature's reply (a) is mainly arguing that Chinese people, Chinese researchers and Chinese students on the whole are cheating very frequently as "a whidespread trend"; (b) He or she also implied that US people, US researchers and US students do not cheat or at least cheat much less often as "ethics" exists in "civilized world including the US" while "non-existent" in China. However, the current online article is mainly discussing "'Performance profiling' could help to dispel doubts" as the subtitle suggests after it was change from "Performance profiling' could help to catch cheater". lam withNature's reply themes is completely not related to the article and thus should not be posted here.

Second, this reply violates Nature Community Guidelines item 9: No libel or other abuse (including no racist). The author is attacking China and Chinese throughout his reply as the sole theme and only conclusion that they are cheaters. This reply is completely and noxiously racist in any single aspect.

Last, the claims of lam withNature was absolutely groundless because they were supported by invalid evidence and poor logic. lam withNature's only grounded his argument on the following information: (a) Chinese students often score "nearly perfect" in GRE tests; (b) he has seen Chinese researchers did not cite previous researches properly; (c) the Yao-Perelman affair which is not a determined cheating case at all--at least Harvard, a US university thinks not because Yao is still working there as a professor. (d) his subjective "discovery" that some Chinese students are "pathological liars" which is not supported by any detail or evidence as to what specifically he "discovered". It is surprising a people claims to be researcher and professor in a country that he thinks so high of develops his/her argument with such

poor evidence--most of them can not even be regarded as evidence in scientific standard at all. Even when we step back and assume that what these are all solid evidence, lam withNature's logic in developing his argument is also wretched. The most notorious logical fallacies that lam withNature had in his/her argument was hassle generalization. How can one claim a nation and its people are cheaters as "a trend" based on a few specific cases? Can I claim generally that US researchers have "a widespread trend" to cheat based on previous scientific misconduct cases in US as listed on wiki here (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_misconduct#United_States)? Note ironically the wiki page lists more cases of scientific misconducts in US than in China. Further, how come "near perfect" GRE scores have necessary link to cheating? Just like how come Ye's excellent performance in London must come from doping? There are more examples of logic fallacies in lam withNature's reply, as pointed out by many others' comments on this page, for example in the one by Venti Awake at <http://www.nature.com/news/why-great-olympic-feats-raise-suspicions-1.11109?nc=1343953136585#/comment-47886>.

2012-08-02 11:59 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48103

Tony Zhang said: If China does has such drug that can not be found, they will certainly use it for football athletes. They care this much more than caring swimming.

2012-08-03 12:01 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48104

Bill Capricorn said: Why ridiculous news articles in a prestigious academic jounal raise suspicions
'Regular brain monitoring of editors' could help to dispel doubts.

For news in an academic journal, how ridiculous is too ridiculous? That question might have dogged the editor of the British academic journal "Nature". The recent news report by this journal "Why great Olympic feats raise suspicions" has raised ubiquitous concerns about whether its editor has experienced severe brain damage.

Was the ridiculousness of that news article anomalous?

Yes. Since Nature's first publication in 1869, never have people seen news articles this ridiculous approved by its editors. The decision of publishing this article is absolutely out of readers' expectations.

Dosen't serving as the editor of an academic journal rule of the possibility of brain damage?

No, says Sister Pheonix, a well-known expert in the field of bran damage research.

How would ridiculousness of articles be used to test for brain damage of editors?

Readers need a better way of flagging anomalous ridiculousness of news articles, says Sister Lotus. The Global Times, a news paper that views China as simply freaking awesome and the rest of the world pretty much piece of crap, dabbled in regular brain monitoring of its editors.

Could an editor then be hospitalized simply for publishing articles too ridiculous?

"That would be unfair", says Sister Pheonix. "The final verdict is only ever going to be reached by medical examination. It has to be." Publishing ridiculous articles is too far removed from brain damage of the editor and influenced by too many outside factors, Sister Pheonix says. "When we read this wickedly ridiculous news article approved for publishing by it editor, that's not proof of anything. It asks a question or two."

2012-08-03 12:02 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48105

dayu lu said: Shame on Nature!

2012-08-03 12:06 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48106

Wenjie Liang said: It's astonishing to see a such unfounded article on this site. The data is unfounded and the conclusion is also not supported by the finding in the past. Lochte didn't do a good job in his last split and ranked 5th also in the same pool. so what's so surprising? And as a teenager and world champion, sudden improvement as their body change is not big deal and has been seen in the past. that really fail this conclusion. Yes, there are rumors (or should I say they are rumors 'cause there even no story but only judgements) Ye was doped. But at this sensitive time putting out such a total unfounded "research" article saying "anormalous" achivement refers to cheating citing Ye's greating performance, I don't know whether you want Nature's reader to buy the argument using your logics to charge Ye as cheating (I am sure you will deny that publicly) or WADA is a tatal failure. Or you would say, man, I am just doing a scientific research, nothing more.

I always regard Nature as a top norch scientific journal (you are) and a very inspring source of scientific research and critical thinking. Please keep make me convinced.

2012-08-03 12:06 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48107

KUN ZHANG said: I strongly suggest you to double check you master thesis if there is something plagiarized, and indeed I believe you will do that after reading all these guys' comments. Cause you are a great potential politician to consider thins by you feet.

2012-08-03 12:06 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48108

Peng Qian said: I guess the author of this journal was pretty disappointed to see that Ye won the 400m game, by assembling up such "facts" and so called "preformance profiling" method. The author was hardly detached and unbiased as he ran over his "evidences". And his ignorance to the world swimming committee's clarence regarding Ye's issue reminds me a phrase "innocent untl prove guilty"...

The author tried to advocate for the "preformance profiling method". Technically, the method is to find anomalies in the OLPC games and so to judge the potential dopers. There is a major problem regarding the causal relation of the judgement. It is never the case that good preformances come from doping (if

you are not cynical). This belief leads to a bifurcated discussion. On one side, your performance profiling method suggests serious treatments towards athletes with abnormal performances, which was already undergone by the swimming committee and the OLPC committee. And this come back to my previous point that Ewan was somehow blinded and unable to see the official clarence regarding Ye's test results. On the other side, is outperformance a result of doping or it is actually a result of OLPC spirit that is to compete and become better and faster? A doper will probably be more sophisticated if he/she chooses to dope in EVERY game rather than SPECIFIC game he/she participate. Thus, it is probably more plausible to see steady performers involved in doping. This is probably why Ewan avoided to provide names of past dopers such as these on the racing court who were NOT known for anomalous performance but rather steady and ingenious type. Thus the profiling method was flawed in testing dopers(since they were actually steady performers) and in non-dopers (who are able to improve greatly giving the spirit of OLPC and their graduately perfected body/mind). With such major flaws embedded, Ewan should not draw these strong conclusion towards a 16 year old girl who are still on her way to her culmination!

2012-08-03 12:07 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48109

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2012-08-03 12:07 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48110

Michael Chisnall said: To Wie Xie -If there are more cases of scientific misconduct in the US than in China it is because the US has a culture of transparency, and institutional support for it, that encourages investigation. Contrast this with China which has a culture of covering up corruption or dishonesty if there is even a hint that it might be linked to someone in the Party.

2012-08-03 12:08 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48111

Summer Xia said: OK, let me summarize and extend the disgusting "logic" used in this crap and lots of other craps in these days,

- 1) Shiwen was doped to win simply. Why? Because her performance was "anomalous".
- 2) Other players such as Phelps or Ian Thorpe did the same thing at a similar age. Why they are not considered as doping? Because Ye is Chinese, and China has a "history record" of doping.
- 3) How to explain that she passed all the doping tests? Because she used some high-tech drugs which are not detectable by current technologies.
- 4) Since it is high-tech drugs, it should be stolen from some other countries, let's say US or UK, by some Chinese spies. (If you can not understand it, go back to study point 2 and do some google search using "China steal technology" which can give you 14,300,000 results.)
- 5) OK, so those high-tech drugs were intentionally developed by US or UK or whatever other high-tech countries originally.
- 6) Then why did those countries want to develop such things?

Now, please write and publish a new story!

2012-08-03 12:10 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48112

Lucy Hong said: Wow, it's really a good way to become notorious! Mr. Callaway, you did it!! And Nature, you've proved your level of profession and scientific knowledge. Should I doubt that your high impact factor has been achieved by cheating?
Nature, you owe Ye and everyone an apology.

2012-08-03 12:10 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48113

Shame on Nature said: What a shameless pseudo-scientific article! It deserves retraction X 100! What a shame for Nature editors to get this cheap shots on a scientific journal.

2012-08-03 12:13 PM

Report this comment | #48114

Fuxing Zhang said: I did my best to suppress my anger not to say that word. However, that couldn't stop me thinking what kind of editors Nature have: a bunch of racists? or ones without any scientific reasoning mind? What a crap! This is the biggest shame in scientific community in years! Nature, don't risk ruining your reputation by doing this.

2012-08-03 12:13 PM

Report this comment | #48115

zhao zhao said: How stupid nature is, considering that it gives us a very good weapon. The following is a paragraph that we can spread to our academic colleagues. (I've done so already.)

"Nature today published a paper titled "Why great Olympic feats raise suspicions".

<http://www.nature.com/news/why-great-olympic-feats-raise-suspicions-1.11109>

Though it is not peer-reviewed but I'm still amazed at how a bad reasoned article can be published in a serious scientific website.

I believe the way of drawing conclusion in this report is what we should avoid in writing scientific articles.

And this article is already gaining attentions among biologists."

2012-08-03 12:14 PM

Report this comment | #48116

Shuai Zhao said: shame for you nature

2012-08-03 12:15 PM

Report this comment | #48117

Alias Lin said: Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly. First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4 :28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec. Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16. For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined

with scientific and persistent training. But jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound. Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing , probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on. Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochter (29.10 sec)³ and Ye (28.93 sec)⁴: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochter would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of scientific rigorousness that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works. Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it? Let $\tilde{A}f\tilde{A}'\tilde{A}, \hat{A}\tilde{A}f\hat{A}\tilde{A}\hat{A}, -\hat{A}_i\tilde{A}, \hat{A}-\tilde{A}f\hat{A}\tilde{A}\hat{A}, -\hat{A}^3/4\tilde{A}, \hat{A}\tilde{A}$ be practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances. Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be? Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of- competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention.

Per WADA president's press release⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that 'everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing' Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye. Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

1http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241 2<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4> 3<http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=swm054100/index.html> 4<http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html> 5http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-03 12:15 PM

Report this comment | #48118

KUN ZHANG said: Wow, this article is so wonderful to publish on NATURE. How stupid I am, why have I never realized that this kind of article can be published on NATURE? Is the editor a politician to run for presidency? But Americans might not be that stupid to buy your story.

2012-08-03 12:16 PM

Report this comment | #48119

wrong argument said: what? so what you editors only can do is to delete readers' comments which frankly point out the problems of this article? Really disappointed!

2012-08-03 12:20 PM

Report this comment | #48120

Zhuo Wang said: The count has now grown to 563, 9:19pm PDT.

Zhuo Wang said: To Audrey Richard

I regret to learn you don't care about the initial debate here anymore. It's up to you. It's only about a 16-year swimmer, one of the brightest stars of this Olympics, getting singled out, questioned and attacked again and again, even after her drug test results came out clean.

Regarding whether Nature.com deliberately deleted or hid certain comments, you provided evidence

suggesting there is a max number, after which a new post will push the oldest one out of the list. There is also evidence against that hypothesis. At the website: <http://www.nature.com/news/index.html>, there is a number under the link to this piece of you-now-know-what, presumably the count of its comments, that kept increasing. It is 515 as of 8:17pm PDT. If this number keep growing, hope you adjust your hypothesis accordingly.

In this age of internet, it requires quite a jump in thought to come up with such a hypothesis that comments can easily max out at a site like Nature.com. It escaped me, but I'm willing to explore this a bit more with you.

Now here is the main take home message. If there is clear evidence proving your hypothesis, or if Nature comes out to say so, I believe most of the people here will believe it and move on from the issue. Hope you can appreciate the difference between such an approach and that of the author of this Nature news report.

2012-08-03 12:21 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48121

Ava Lin said: I agree with Tony Zhang, If China does has such magic drug that can not be found, they will certainly use it for football athletes firstly! The author may be too envious and bored to write this article which is against nature & Nature.

2012-08-03 12:22 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48122

Elaine Kim said: I appreciate all the scientific comments here.

So why did Nature publish the unscientific news?

The only reason is that, it comes from London, GBR.

Just kidding.

Never mind.

2012-08-03 12:23 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48123

Hongkai Zhang said: I feel shame for many of these nonsense comments whose authors have obviously even not finished reading the article. The author is treated unfairly, especially given those charge on racism. I am also shocked by their abuse of this forum by publishing the same thing repeatedly, either correct or wrong.

I feel so disappointed by the readers of Nature, and I will no longer read this journal (This is just mocking some of the funny comments...)

Anyway, not all Chinese students are like some of the commentators below.

2012-08-03 12:24 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48124**Audrey Richard said:** To Daniel Daniel:

"To Audrey Richard, Why the website is overloaded with so many comments??? Think about it "in the name of science!!!"

=> As I said, my comment was not about the debate per se. I do understand why maybe the site is having trouble. People made it pretty clear and they have every right to share their anger and disappointment (to some extent). Many pointed out that several contributors wrote very interesting comments shedding another light on the subject and they were right: that was interesting. But then it went ugly. Many (often claiming they are scientists) became aggressive, offensive & condescending ; not to mention the stunning generalizations about either Westerners or Asians, or just British, American and Chinese people. I'm a Westerner and I don't want anybody to think for me, thank you very much. And apparently, "the majority of the viewers here are not normal citizens that can be fouled and stirred up easily". Oh really?

If some scientists are so angry with pieces published in the News section of Nature because those lack scientific rigor and accuracy, they'd better look at themselves before making any very serious allegations about the ethics of a journal (censorship for example) without any evidence and before demanding (?) that people resign (??????) and apologize.

Their belief that there is some sort of conspiracy aiming at hiding the comments reporting robust data combined with their failing to check facts is, again, kind of ironic considering the number of inappropriate comments (amongst many other inappropriate comments. Please see comment #48043) that were made about the author's education and supposed inability to deal with scientific method.

So, don't worry Daniel, I think about it. I really do. And as justified as the debate might have been to begin with, now I'm just wondering, as a scientist, a regular reader of Nature and its News section, a normal citizen but mostly a simple human being actually: who the Hell do PhDs think they are?

2012-08-03 12:25 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48125**Tao Luo said:** Comments here are good enough for a normal person to make a right judgement. So all I need to say is SHAME ON NATURE!

2012-08-03 12:25 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48126**Pablo Tangent said:** It's shameful! Shameful!!!! I can never believe Nature would publish such news!

2012-08-03 12:25 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48127**Michael Chisnall said:** Yes, the total number of comments on this article is increasing. However if you go back to the top and look at the first few comments, wait a while, then look again, you will see that old

comments are disappearing. There aren't being singled out and deleted. This is happening automatically due to the software.

2012-08-03 12:26 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48129

Xiang Gao said: Shame on the author and the JOURNAL!

After reading "It asks a question or two", I wanna ask TONS of it! Compared with all those scientific and reasonable criticism provided below, this paper only expressed the prejudice and arrogance under the cloak of faked, artificial science, nothing else! Jesus is this the journal we always dream to publish on? Be Scientific, not politic.

And, you owe Shiwen an apology for the ridiculous paper

2012-08-03 12:31 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48130

Howard Hoffman said: I would have to agree with most of the posters here. The author apparently have not even googled the event to gather the basic facts. This "article" does not really fit in a journal such as Nature.

2012-08-03 12:32 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48131

Shao Yi said: I am wondering if you have read the terms or community guidelines of Nature. the articles suited for published here should not be defamatory, abusive, malicious, threatening, false, misleading, offensive, discriminatory, harassing, blasphemous, racist or sexist [quoted from Terms]. Yet somehow you have achieve all except for the last one. Your view is based on the only fact that she swam faster than US swimmer Ryan Lochte did. And you try to unfairly suggest she doped. And that is racist and discriminatory. Another issue you address "the result of any doping is higher performance" is not logical. For many factors may contribute to a higher performance. Hence, with the only and indirect index, higher performance, you can not draw any conclusion. Your methodology is of low quality. Maybe editors should consider retracting this unscientific "article".

2012-08-03 12:33 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48132

Yue Peng said: I just can't believe NATURE would post artical on this level! Without any fact but full of suspicion and prejudice. Shame on you, this "Master degree" author and NATURE.

2012-08-03 12:34 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48133

big joke said: Why nature selected this garbage article to be published?? What exactly do you want?

WHY Ye Shiwen WHY not the other athletes? Nature,, you are disappointing people who trust you who respect you and who are proud of you.. Now i only have to say, i will protest this until the end! the author has to apologize, you should get off this garbage and apologize!

2012-08-03 12:38 PM

Report this comment | #48134

guangyu guo said: I came here just want to grab a bottle of soy sauce.

2012-08-03 12:41 PM

Report this comment | #48135

big joke said: Why nature selected this garbage article to be published? what do you want exactly?? Why Ye Shiwen why not other athletes? you are disappointing people who trust you who respect you and you are proud of you! I am gonna to say, I will protest this until the author apologizes, until you take off this garbage and apologize!! You are losing your reputation and honor, no doubt.

2012-08-03 12:43 PM

Report this comment | #48136

Allon Field said: After reading the article by Mr. Callaway, I am very concerned about the quality of the Nature magazine. I am very sad to see such a biased and unscientific article was allowed to show up in the highest ranked academic journal in the world. I will suggest our library to reconsider the subscribe of this journal. Because of Mr. Callaway's article, we have every reason to suspect all the publications from Nature. They may not be trusted until they can be continuously proved.

This is a huge stigma for Nature magazine. The author should apologize for what he did. The magazine should apologize for what happened. Otherwise, Nature will become "No Nature".

2012-08-03 12:43 PM

Report this comment | #48137

bio statistician said: For an article published on a leading scientific journal by a self-claimed biomedical reporter, the allegation "Was Ye's performance anomalous? Yes" does not live up to the scientific standard.

The author's "anomalous" conclusion is based on — a) 7 sec improvement and b) comparison to Ryan Lochte. But the author fails to provide the typical distribution of a) performance improvements of teen-age female top swimmers and b) distribution of top swimmers in the last split of the 400 IM (no offense to Ryan Lochte but he could be the anomalous — the slowest swimmer in the last leg).

In either case, the author fails to showing the overall distribution data, and whether Ye's performance is statistically and significantly different (in terms of Z scores and probabilities) from other top swimmers such as Missy Franklin, etc.

Given that nature is a top tier science journal known for rigorous proof on any claim, the appearance of

this article is truly anomalous. The "anomalous" conclusion about Ye, a female Chinese, seems a sexist and racist vent veiled in a "scientific" news without scientific proof . The author & and editor of nature need to prove their innocence.

2012-08-03 12:44 PM

Report this comment | #48138

L F said: NPG become more disgusting after messing up all scientific fields with those crap sub journals. Now they are ready to screw up everything like BBC (Bloody British Crap). Wow!!! What a fantastic journal publisher!!!

2012-08-03 12:45 PM

Report this comment | #48139

Kimberly Zhang said: æµ·è·ã€ã€,

2012-08-03 12:49 PM

Report this comment | #48140

Li Mingsong said: Get off this garbage and apologize!

2012-08-03 12:50 PM

Report this comment | #48141

Chen ZHANG said: Seems the author do not have any real data to support your arguments. Please publish the supportive data if there's any.

2012-08-03 12:50 PM

Report this comment | #48142

Li Mingsong said: get off this garbage and apologize!

2012-08-03 12:51 PM

Report this comment | #48143

lin min said: The original subtitle is 'Performance profiling' could help to catch cheaters in sport
<http://esciencenews.com/sources/news.nature/2012/08/01/why.great.olympic.feats.raise.suspicions>

2012-08-03 12:52 PM

Report this comment | #48144

Scarlett Yan said: To Michael Chisnall:

Really? It's because American culture is more transparent? LMAO!! Do you think in international contests drug tests are performed by each team's own country? "If there are more cases of scientific misconduct in the US than in China it is because the US has a culture of transparency" Please provide evidence for the argument. FYI, "hint", "might be linked" do not count as evidence.

Michael Chisnall said:

To Wie Xie -If there are more cases of scientific misconduct in the US than in China it is because the US has a culture of transparency, and institutional support for it, that encourages investigation. Contrast this with China which has a culture of covering up corruption or dishonesty if there is even a hint that it might be linked to someone in the Party.

2012-08-03 12:53 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48145

big joke said: I have to say, he is "anomalous".....

Ewen joined Nature in August 2010, after 2 years at New Scientist as Boston-based biomedical reporter.....blablabla,.....The most amazing part is... He spends his free time learning to bicycle on the left side of the road..... could any1 explain this?

2012-08-03 12:54 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48146

Enoch - said: During these days I see not only the decay of Olympic spirit but also the corrupt of scientific spirit in UK! What a shame on Nature!

2012-08-03 12:55 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48147

Felix Ma said: What a shame, Nature! What you have done seriously destroy your dignity! You totally humiliate your predecessors. All the scientists around this world would rather treat Nature as a entertainment magazine for now on. Oh, what a junk!

2012-08-03 12:55 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48148

Wei Xie said: To Michael Chisnall: Of course less listed on wiki does not necessarily mean less happend. I did not argue or even imply that "there are more cases of scientific misconduct in the US than in China" at all. If you read the last paragraph of my reply above again and you will find that I just mentioned the fact that there are more cases listed on that particular wiki page. That was a supplementary insertion, not even an evidence along my line of reasoning because my actual argument there was we should not and could not judge (or attack, which is more what I am with Nature did) a whole nation and all its people--either US or China or any country based on several isolated cases. That is hassle generalization and racist.

Please don't drag me back to comparing US and China again. In fact, general statements comparing two countries here are mostly overly generalized and racist. I noticed you did a comparison in your reply to me. Since I do not favor doing so, I will not comment here as a reply to you on any aspect in which people generally regard that China has an edge on US. Let's just stop this racial comparison, as it

only brings hassle and hatred--I already smelled that from your reply.

2012-08-03 12:56 PM

Report this comment | #48149

Allon Field said: Is that the way he trained his biased mind?

2012-08-03 12:56 PM

Report this comment | #48150

Kimberly Zhang said: Please follow Mr. Gallaway on Twitter. @ewencallaway

2012-08-03 12:59 PM

Report this comment | #48151

Michael Chu said: Since when the Nature becomes Gossip Girl by ditching the test evidence and quoting "A said blah blah" and "B said blah blah" to spread rumors and unfounded thoughts?

2012-08-03 01:02 AM

Report this comment | #48152

Richard Johnson said: It is appalling to see ppl still saying she swims faster than male. She did not! Overall Lochte is 23 seconds faster than Shiwen, while Shiwen was ONLY faster in the "LAST 50m" of the game (talking about 400m medley here). This could mean many different things. IT could be just a shift in strategy. Check your facts before publishing on such a prestigious journal, even it is just the news portion.

2012-08-03 01:06 AM

Report this comment | #48153

james blunt said: according to this article, Nature, i respect before, turn out to be a tool, a tool for western racist, for western government, for western commercial interests, for western values. Nature doesn't know how to respect a person, a group of people, even human beings!
shit!!! shit!!! shit !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2012-08-03 01:08 AM

Report this comment | #48154

Jingbo Wang said: Lai jiang's comment (#47487) has been "anomalously" deleted by online editor . I re-post it here:

Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this

is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context , which they failed to do blatantly.

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Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

¹ http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4>

³ <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

⁵ http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-03 01:09 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48155

Jingbo Wang said: Lai jiang's comment (#47487) has been "anomalously" deleted by online editor. I re-post it here:

Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly.

First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m

IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4:28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010 ¹. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec.

Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16 ². For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined with scientific and persistent training. But jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound.

Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on.

Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochter (29.10 sec) ³ and Ye (28.93 sec) ⁴: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochter would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of scientific rigorousness that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works.

Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it? Let's be practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances. Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be?

Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of-competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention. Per WADA president's press release ⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing? Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye.

Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair

and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise , but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

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⁵ http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-03 01:14 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48156

Bright Liang said: I bet the author is going to jail or the nature will be going down

2012-08-03 01:18 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48157

Boyoung Zheng said: After all, you have no direct evidence. Yes, you have the right to doubt. But here is Nature, not your twitter or facebook. Show your evidence but not your nonsensical guess. So, I think your reasons are also suitable in doubting Phelps who won 8 gold medals in Beijing but only one in London. I wonder do you think Phelps is a doper? I find it perfectly match if I replace "Ye Shiwen" with "Michael Phelps" here in your passage.

2012-08-03 01:18 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48158

Michael Chisnall said: Wie Xie – there is nothing racist in my comment, and there is no hatred in it either. If you think there is then this is a reflection of your own prejudices. The simple fact is that Mainland China has deep seated problems with corruption. This is obvious to many people, including many in China. Contrast this with say, Singapore, which is much more transparent.

2012-08-03 01:20 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48159

Y Rokumi said: Tob Autumn said:

For new readers, here are some good comments being deleted. To the author: Below are your arguments (in quotation marks): (1) "Her time in the 400 IM was more than 7 seconds faster than her time in the same event at a major meet in July." In your logic, if a swimmer's best match is a few seconds faster than his/her another match, then it's abnormal. Isn't it ridiculous? (2) "But what really raised eyebrows was her showing in the last 50 metres, which she swam faster than US swimmer Ryan Lochte did when he won gold in the men's 400 IM on Saturday, with the second-fastest time ever for that event." Ok, if you want to compare last 50 meter, let's compare it in a fair way. Mr. Lochte ranked 5th or 6th out of all 8 swimmers that attended his event if we compare the last split only, and nobody in that even did not even break the Olympic record; Ms Ye ranked 1st out of 8 swimmers in her event, broke the world record, but still was slower than 3 or 4 men swimmers in Mr. Lochte's match in last 50 meters. Do you mean any women's phenomenal performance should not be comparable to some men's so-so performance since you said it's "anomalous" (in your words)? I earned my PhD degree in statistics from a top-tier university and used to teach statistics. I hate to say but I would certainly fail you if you were my student. Based on her performance, Ms Ye was asked directly if she took drugs. Well, let me ask you an outright but legit question as well based on your performance, Mr. Ewen Callaway. Did you ever CHEAT to pass your Statistics 101 exam? Philip Campbell, Ph.D. and Editor-in-Chief of Nature, I am a neurobiologist in University of California, Berkeley, USA. I (as well as many of my colleagues) found an article that appeared in Nature yesterday, titled "Why great Olympic feats raise suspicions", completely groundless and extremely disturbing. In that article, Mr. Callaway questioned China's 16-year-old swimmer Ye Shiwen, who won two gold medals in women's 200-meter and 400-meter individual medley (400 IM); in London Olympics, and said her record-breaking performance "anomalous". However, the evidence he used to support his reckless statement is simply groundless. As many have pointed out in the major media, it is not uncommon for an elite and young swimmer to increase his/her performance in a relatively short time window. An Australian swimmer and Olympics gold medalist, Ian Thorpe, said that he improved his 400-meter performance by 5 seconds around the same age as Ye. UK's Adrian Moorhouse, a Seoul Olympics gold medalist, also testified openly that he "improved four seconds" at the age of 17. He also called the suspicions around Ye's performance "sour grape". The other point that Ewen Callaway used to support his accusation, that Ye swam faster than US swimmer Ryan Lochte in the last 50 meters when he won gold in the men's 400 IM, is unfortunately also unprovoked. First of all, Ryan Lochte did not perform the best in the final 50 meters. He only ranked 5th in the last 50 meters, at 29.10, which was significantly slower than Japan's Yuya Horihata (27.83) and three other swimmers competing in the same event. (Ye's performance was 28.93). It could be that Lochte was away ahead of his competitors in the first three splits so he did not have to strike too hard in the final 50 meters, or that he had used up all his energy. So one cannot only look at the final 50 meters of Ye and Lochte and conclude that Ye swam faster than a men's champion. In fact, Ye's record-breaking performance in women's 400 IM (4'28"43) was significantly slower than Lochte's 4'5"18;. Secondly, even if one only looks at the performance of

the final 50 meters, women can certainly surpass men and Ye's performance shouldn't be accused as "anomalous" *ŃfÆ'Ăĉâ, -ĂĵĂĉšĂ,Ă*. For example, in last year's World Championships in Shanghai, UK's swimmer Rebecca Adlington won a gold medal in women's 800-meter freestyle. In that event her performance in her final 50 meters (28"90) was faster than both Ye and Lochte in London. It is worth pointing out that all the facts I listed above can be easily tracked in major media and from the Internet. With just a little effort Ewen Callaway could have avoided raising groundless and disturbing charges against China's young athlete in a professional scientific journal. Even worse, Ewen Callaway further argued that Ye's clean drug test in Olympics *ŃfÆ'Ă,ĂĉĂfĂĉĂĉâ, -ĂĵĂ,Ă-ĂfĂĉ!Ăĉâ, -Ă* "doesn't rule out the possibility of doping *ŃfÆ'Ă,ĂĉĂfĂĉĂĉâ, -ĂĵĂ,Ă-ĂfĂĉšĂ,ĂŃfÆ'Ăĉâ, -ĂĵĂĉšĂ,Ă*, implying that Ye might have doped *ŃfÆ'Ă,ĂĉĂfĂĉĂĉâ, -ĂĵĂ,Ă-ĂfĂĉ!Ăĉâ, -Ă* "during training *ŃfÆ'Ă,ĂĉĂfĂĉĂĉâ, -ĂĵĂ,Ă-ĂfĂĉšĂ,Ă* and escape the more rigorous tests during Olympics. Such a statement is disrespectful to Ye and all professional athletes. Following this logic, Mr. Callaway can easily accuse any athlete *ŃfÆ'Ă,ĂĉĂfĂĉĂĉâ, -ĂĵĂ,Ă-ĂfĂĉ!Ăĉâ, -Ă* "doping *ŃfÆ'Ă,ĂĉĂfĂĉĂĉâ, -ĂĵĂ,Ă-ĂfĂĉšĂ,ĂŃfÆ'Ăĉâ, -ĂĵĂ* without any evidence; and ironically, according to him, those being accused have no way to prove themselves innocent: even if they pass all rigorous drug test, they could still have doped at a different time, or even doped some unidentified drugs! I cannot help wondering if presumption of innocence (innocent until proven guilty) still has people's belief nowadays, or it is considered outdated in Nature, or in UK? Last but not least, although Mr. Callaway claimed that he was attempting to discuss science, instead of "racial and political undertones" *ŃfÆ'Ăĉâ, -ĂĵĂĉšĂ,Ă*. Readers can easily smell the hidden (yet clearly implied) racism and discrimination. Yes, we may all agree that better methodology for drug test (such as "biological passport") is needed for the anti-doping effort. But why the stunning performance from this 16-year-old gifted swimmer can lead to such a proposal? Was Mr. Callaway suggesting that Ye was found drug-clean simply because the drug detection method was not advanced enough? At the end of the article, Mr. Callaway even quoted "When we look at this young swimmer from China who breaks a world record, that's not proof of anything. It asks a question or two." *Ń*, So athletes from China, despite their talent and training, are supposed to perform bad and never break world records, otherwise they deserve to be questioned, suspected, and accused? *Ń*, Backed up by technological progress and better training/supporting systems, athletes worldwide are maximizing their potentials. World records are being refreshed every year. USA's Michael Phelps just won a record 19th medals in Olympics and he has broken numerous swimming world records. Shall we also "ask a question or two" *ŃfÆ'Ăĉâ, -ĂĵĂĉšĂ,Ă* about his "anomalous" *ŃfÆ'Ăĉâ, -ĂĵĂĉšĂ,Ă* performance? Nature is considered one of the most prestigious scientific journals in the world; many scientists, including myself, chose Nature to publish their best work (I myself have co-authored three papers published in Nature and Nature sister journals). However, Mr. Callaway's article, which is not only misleading, but also full of racial and political bias, has tainted Nature's reputation in the scientific community, and among the general audience. Unless Nature takes further actions (e.g. publicly retract this article and apologize to Ye and all athletes), I hereby decide not to send my work to Nature any more-and believe me I will not be the last one to protest. Liming Wang, PhD Bowes Research Fellow Department of Molecular and Cell Biology University of California, Berkeley CA 94720 USA

2012-08-03 01:21 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48160

zhao zhao said: This is a webpage on facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/ShameOnYouNature>

2012-08-03 01:21 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48161

Y Rokumi said: Nature is DELETING COMMENTS. Comments posted on Aug. 1 are all gone!

2012-08-03 01:25 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48162

Chao Cao said: If this article meets the publication standard of the Nature, I believe all my previous papers warrant publication in Nature.

2012-08-03 01:25 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48163

Allon Field said: No Nature until apology!!!

No Nature until apology!!!

No Nature until apology!!!

2012-08-03 01:27 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48164

Ming Yi said: I have refrained from commenting on this because I had believed that only a minority of ignorant and closed minded people were thinking this way, until this appeared in Nature. Putting all politics and biases aside, this was a pathetically anti-scientific message. Using a model to predict the outcomes as a way to decide who is fake? Then what is the point of the games if the outcomes is already decided? How is this different from someone saying that your experimental result must be made up because it does not fit with my theory? Science makes progress when new discoveries are made that do not fit with the current theoretical model so that the model is modified to include the new discoveries. No one not a single human being can say they have the incontrovertible theory that cannot be shown wrong tomorrow. If this article had appeared in Playboy I would have laughed at it. But Nature? Where many hard working scientists sweat blood for years to make appearance on just a few pages? Really? I am sorry but that is just extremely demeaning to the scientific community.

2012-08-03 01:27 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48165

Jiangbo Zhang said: Shame on you, Nature!

This article should be taken down. Editor and the author should apologize to all the readers for

publishing such a biased and non-scientific article.

2012-08-03 01:30 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48166

victor liu said: I should acknowledge that it is meaningful and interesting to incorporate the statistics methods with suspecting athletes taking drugs. However, as a rigorous and authoritative journal, Nature, should not publish this illogical paper with insufficient evidences.

Firstly, Albeit the author is skilled in his critical thinking, his mind is constrained by the commonsense that there is seldom opportunity for female surpass male in various fields. He should know swimming requires not only physical strength, but also or more focuses on the skills and morphology, of which female possessing more advantages. Secondly, the presumption of guilty indicates the prejudice of author to a Chinese girl only 16 years old. The analogy between Ye and Ross Tucker is meaningless, but chaotic logic. Because the particular case could not prove that all the other athletes perform such perfect in swimming pool should be doubted of taking drugs.

2012-08-03 01:31 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48167

YIMING ZHU said: Why so serious everyone?

Any one who can write or read this article is a human being, of a certain race, or with a certain religious belief, or belong to certain interest group. Bias is everywhere, in authors' mind or in readers' mind. That is the nature of nature. I understand why some westerners challenge YE's gold prize and as a Chinese I understand why Chinese are angry. However, USA is still the big brother of the world and NATRUE the No 1 journal. Articles only represent their author's point of views, not the journals' opinion. I may not agree with what the author said, but I will respect the right of saying, as NATURE did.

p.s. I really want to say go to hell to those prettily raise-a-scientific-method disguised biased opinions, as this is my natural reaction of reading something like this piece of news. And of course I am biased, too. hahaha

2012-08-03 01:35 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48168

Jon Song said: Groundless report charging Chinese Athlete of doping 1 message Song, Qiang

<*****> Thu, Aug 2, 2012 at 10:28 PM To: Philip Campbell <*****>, Diane Yorke <*****>

Cc: Brian Owens <*****> Dear Editor,

I am writing to bring your attention to a recent report by Mr. Ewen Callaway, which intentionally associate a great Chinese athlete Ye Shiwen with "cheaters" and "doping" without any solid evidence and rigorous statistical support (<http://www.nature.com/news/why-great-olympic-feats-raise-suspicions-1.11109#comment-47487>).

This report suffers from several fallacies. First, Mr. Callaway cherry-picked the example that Ye outperformed Lochte in the last 50meter of 400 meter IM, and tried to prove that Ye's performance is

abnormal. But he obviously failed to mention that Ye was 23.25 seconds slower than Lochte in the 400meter swimming, and the Ye's good at free style swimming.

Second, Mr. Callaway seems to ignore the principle of "presumption of innocence". While International Olympic Committee on Tuesday announced that Ye's post-race test was clean, and Mr. Callaway has no additional evidence to support his prejudice. It is unprofessional for Nature to publish this groundless report.

Mr. Callaway's report has seriously damaged the reputation of Nature as one of the most prestigious scientific journals. The argument and the statistical methods presented in that report is misleading to the general public. Additionally, it hurts the feeling of those Olympiad athletes who have been sweating to compete in Olympic Games.

I hope that you and your editorial board look into this issue as soon as possible. Mr. Callaway should respond to the critical comments posted by other reads in your website. It is also advisable for Nature to retract the report if Mr. Callaway cannot address those issues raised by other comments.

Sincerely,
Song Qiang

University of Southern California

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Readers of Nature have commented on the report in the past two days. Below are two excellent commentaries by Mr. Echt Warsteiner and Mr. Lai Jiang.

For unknown reasons, these two commentaries have been deleted from Nature website. I have archived them and attached them below for your reference.

2012-08-02 04:02 AM Report this comment | #47760 Echt Warsteiner said: Congratulations, Nature! Mr. Callaway has single-handedly helped your smooth transformation from prestigious scientific landmark towards a brand new tabloid, successfully. Instead of "International Journal of Science", now you are busy with rumors and second-guessing, and backed up by strong conviction "I don't have any proof, as a matter of fact, all official testing result just proven my suspicion unfounded and completely wrong, but I don't care about truth. I just stay firm on my belief, those Chinese are cheaters. Half truth is sometimes a lot worse and deliberately misleading than a whole lie. For instance, the headline "Ye is faster than the fastest man in her last 50M. How wrong could that be? If I hear that I would immediately raise the same question as well, is Ye clean? However, as we all know now, that 50M from that supposedly fastest man Lochte, was a completely slowed down cruising to his gold medal, which only ranked 5th in the same race. As if put the word "scientific" in front of your profiling, makes all the consistent accusation without proof, or even proven to be wrong, "scientific". Thorpe smashed his own record by 8 seconds at age of 15; Phelps improved his own record by 4 seconds at age of 15; Rice even shortened her own record by 6 second; Missy Franklin won gold only 13 minutes after her exhausting 200 free semi; Ruta Meilutyte came out of nowhere and jumped from 14th place in the world to Olympic gold. Those were all exceptional and dramatic improvement achievements, in other words

"incredible" or "unbelievable". But those data would not trigger your "scientific" profiling, because they don't pass the MOST important criteria – China. As American hero Carl Lewis put it clearly, "Who cares I failed drug tests?". Exactly, he's no Chinese. Mr. Callaway, thank you for being honest with us on the end. As you cited "Tucker says. 'When we look at this young swimmer from China who breaks a world record, that's not proof of anything. It asks a question or two.'"

2. 2012-08-02 02:18 AM

Report this comment | #47487 Lai Jiang said: It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly. First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4:28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec. Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16. For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined with scientific and persistent training. But jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound. Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve

energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on. Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochter (29.10 sec)³ and Ye (28.93 sec)⁴: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochter would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of scientific rigor that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works. Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it? Let's be practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances. Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be? Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of-competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention. Per WADA president's press release⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing, ? Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The

author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye. Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done. 1http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241 2<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4> 3<http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html> 4<http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html> 5http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-03 01:36 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48170

lingxiao li said: Go f#ck yourself, nature!

2012-08-03 01:37 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48171

Long Zhang said: Answer these questions or apologize:

1. Is this report unbiased, undiscriminated or based on any supportive data or facts?
2. Where is the original comments by Dr. Lai Jiang?

2012-08-03 01:38 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48172

c zhao said: It seems the Olympic motto should be "A little bit faster, a little bit higher, a little bit stronger".

2012-08-03 01:40 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48173

ding jiacen said: This article is totally a joke!

2012-08-03 01:42 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48174

Audrey Richard said: To Zhuo Wang

First, you are right, it is a shame that the debate made me kind of sick. And I was inaccurate myself since I still do care about something, or rather someone: the girl, indeed. I am wondering how you can

handle something like that when you are 16. Yes, this is concerning.

Second, if ultimately there is clear evidence that the relevant comments have been deliberately deleted, I will not keep arguing and admit that unfortunately, someone at Nature made a bad decision. But you know, as top-notch as Nature may be as a journal, it is only as good as the people who run it can be. And they ARE people. I do not see why they would be any better than anyone else and would not ever make any mistakes. And as I write, the number of comments keeps increasing indeed. There is still the possibility that they fixed the limitation to adjust to this unusual activity but maybe you are right. Anyway, I never regret it when I give someone or something the benefice of the doubt and do not jump to conclusions. As a matter of fact, I am not even saying that Nature is innocent, I am only suggesting they might not be guilty. So, if I am wrong, fine, but I will not regret my first stance.

Either way, nothing will ever excuse the insults and aggressiveness from people "scientists" who claim they defend certain values. Because you know who I am also worrying about? The young author who is being attacked again and again just as Ye Shiwen is, and mocked because he "only" has a Master degree in Microbiology. Again, who do PhDs think they are? I cannot believe that he wrote the piece knowing that people would find it so bad and offensive. And although I might be wrong about that as well, what is done to him is just as disgusting as harassing a 16-year old swimmer is. I did not need any further proof of that but having a PhD definitely does not make people any better and I do not see the point of defending the so called values of science we seem to cherish so much if we cannot even be decent human beings first.

That said, thank you Mr Wang for your very courteous reply. This is very refreshing over here.

2012-08-03 01:44 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48176

Jazz zuo said: I can't say anything when I read this paper.The author is Injustice and Narrow....you konw.....Ye is a supergirl...

2012-08-03 01:45 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48177

Qingyang Zhao said: lack of scientific literacy
wrong data& Subjective prejudice
Joke than Science
Just play to the gallery

2012-08-03 01:45 AM

Report this comment | #48178

Anthony Girk said: I find no insightful analysis in this article but just the opinion of Ross Tucker. Contents are too simple and definitely not convincing. Nature shouldn't publish this article on such sensitive subject.

2012-08-03 01:47 AM

Report this comment | #48179

Tao Wang said: I noticed a reply from Brian Owens, which I posted behind. I am just wondering, if you are so dedicated to scientific purpose, why deleting Lai's post? Isn't his post a good example to educate your readers? Can you reply again to my comment, Brian?

Brian Owens said:

We appreciate that the case of Ye Shiwen is a sensitive one for some readers. However, I would like to point out that this story was not intended to insinuate that Ye is guilty of anything. As we point out in the first paragraph, she has never failed a drug test and so is the rightful Olympic champion.

We wanted to use the controversy as a way to highlight what science can and can't tell us with respect to athletes' performance. We have done similar stories before, for example in the case of South African runner Caster Semenya

Congratulations to Ye Shiwen on her incredible win!

Brian Owens

Online news editor

2012-08-03 01:48 AM

Report this comment | #48180

Qingyang Zhao said: Could i submit an "article" about Michael Phelps?

2012-08-03 01:49 AM

Report this comment | #48181

Lang Chen said: At the very beginning, I would like to say that the appearance of this article is really entertaining in the sense that Nature, as a leading "scientific" journal, INDEED accepts articles (or commentary, whatever you want to call this) making claims based on "evidence" that is anything but scientific. Maybe some day I can also get one publication like this in Nature. Wait a minute. No, my dignity and morality won't let it happen.

The author used one piece of information that Shiwen improved her performance by more than 7 seconds with several weeks in order to support this poorly-supported claim that Shiwen's performance was anomalous. Well, what does this "7 seconds" mean? Is it really anomalous? How can we decide whether it is anomalous or not? If you look at the number, it may look quite astonishing; however, is there any data from the whole population of swimmers (or maybe more specific, of female swimmers) ?

What is the average improvement time that all swimmers can improve within about a month? What is the standard deviation of that data set? Without these crucial parameters, there is no way that we can assertively argue that this number is anomalous. If the swimming experts and editors have the least knowledge of statistics (let's put aside those audience who are uncritical believers. Sorry guys, Nature is not, and should not be, a pop magazine for you to read!), this piece of evidence can never be convincing and this article cannot appear here. More importantly, even though 7-second improvement within several weeks is probably somewhat unlikely in the whole swimmers population, it does not inevitably suggest that this dramatic improvement is IMPOSSIBLE. It can occur purely due to statistical chance (not to say that swimmers can put into their practice!). Furthermore, the low probability of this improvement cannot be used as an evidence of drug-using behaviors of Shiwen and any other athletes (as implicitly but intentionally suggested by this article). There is no causality here. Low probability event can occur due to many reasons. Besides the natural chance I mentioned above, it can also be achieved by hard work, biological arousal due to emotion, motivation, strong-will and so on. Failing to rule out other possible reasons but solely focusing on suspicion of drug-using to explain the results cannot possibly indignify the great champion or China Olympic team, but only showed the strong bias and unscientific attitude of this author and arguably, the editor who decided to publish this article online in order to make the clear water muddy.

In sum, this article provided no solid evidence to support its argument but just filled itself with bias and discrimination. But I am very glad to see this article here so that more people can realize that Nature is not that sacred and pure. The halo is gone. It is just some kind of journal we used to read.

2012-08-03 01:49 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48183

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2012-08-03 01:52 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48184

jingchu hu said: @editor: If you can not take any evidence to proof your comment, you should apologize. The paper is bias!!

2012-08-03 01:53 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48185

Michael Chisnall said: Audrey, the comments weren't deliberately targeted. Old comments are disappearing. This may be software bug. I'm not sure what package Nature is currently using, but a few years ago the software that they were using was so notoriously buggy, especially at handling comments, that lots of bloggers dropped it and moved to wordpress.

2012-08-03 02:05 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48186

Qi Feng said: Did anyone who was against this article read it carefully or understand what it said? In which sentence it has the meaning of "Ye is guilty"? This article only means "abnormal score takes more risk of cheat and should be tested."

To all my Chinese fellow:"Kan zhun le zai pen, hao bu?"

2012-08-03 02:06 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48187

Liang Huang said: To lam withNature: re: Chinese GRE and TOEFL scores.

I am a faculty member from a top-notch university in the US and I serve on our department's PhD

admissions committee every year. I can tell you that we (esp. white American professors) treat GRE and TOEFL scores from China **very** seriously, and those scores are far from perfect and are distributed with a huge variance. We have a cut-off line at 100 points in TOEFL, for example, which rules out about 70% of Chinese applicants.

To lam withNature: since most of your Chinese students and colleagues cheat shamelessly, I wish you a productive career without any Chinese students.

2012-08-03 02:07 AM

Report this comment | #48189

Venti Awake said: To Audrey Richard:

Don't just give up on us PhDs yet. :-) I agree with you: accusing Nature of deleting comments on purpose is premature at this stage. However, there is no clear endorsement from most of the scientists who have clearly identified themselves. I think Nature has made sure this article reach the minds of non-scientists by positing it on Twitter. Scientific America has contributed their fair share of effort.

Here's my take on Nature's stance: they are arrogant, supercilious, and unprofessional. As you point out, you agree there are scientific fallacies in this article. As a matter of fact, anyone with a clear mind and sufficient training in science would have questioned the quality of this article. Yet, the editors chose to endorse the author which I actually have no problem with. The problem is they did not take the matter seriously. Please take a look at Mr. Noah Gray's tweet. SNIDE is the word. As an editor, he should have presented himself with more decency.

Please keep posting your thoughts. We PhDs would greatly appreciate your input since they are far better than cherry pick and fabrication of data in this article.

2012-08-03 02:09 AM

Report this comment | #48190

Feng Wang said: First of all, I am extremely shocked to read such an unprofessional article at Nature, which is used to be considered as one of the most prestigious scientific journals in the world. Yes, used to be, maybe not any more after today. It just hard to believe such a high-profile professional journal would hire someone as the editor, such as Mr. Ewen Callaway, lacks the basic scientific spirit, which including objective, critical thinking as well as respecting evidence.

I don't want to waste any of my time arguing with all the ridiculous points in this article (Mr. Lai Jiang has already posted a fabulous argument comments here and has slam the author's face a thousand times.), which might probably come up to the author's mind when he needed a cup of morning coffee desperately, otherwise how could such a professional editor with "high level of education background wrote anything like this? I swear to god that Mr. Callaway would definitely get an F if he submitted this paper as the Critical Analyses Course assignment to his graduate school professor. I suggest Mr. Callaway go back to his graduate school and re-take that class more seriously. In addition, I am more concerned about the quality of all the publications on Nature from

now on since the editor himself can't be objective.

To lam WithNature: You claimed yourself as a faculty member and scientific researcher. Well, may God save your students. From what you have said, I saw nothing but discrimination. Do you have ANY evidence about those so-called facts that you listed in your post? Yes, you tested lower in GRE than many of the international students so you blamed they were cheating. I feel sorry about you being a loser in those tests, I really am. You should go back to check yourself, maybe with less time blaming others, you would have picked a little bit more time to study your GRE. Ah sorry, I forgot you've already passed your GRE since you hold a faculty position and might still keep your own lab. Wait a minute, do you still have enough funding to run your lab? As you mentioned, your ideas have been stolen by many Chinese groups. Shame on you, Prof. lam WithNature, you can't even compete with your colleagues in science, and how could you have to face to pathetically blame them without any evidences? This won't give you any additional credits on your NIH grant proposal, I am sure. Moreover, ideas are cheap and everybody has his own brain. If your project was screwed once, maybe you were just unlucky. If you're consistently screwed, probably you are just too stupid and I suggest you find yourself another job and please do not waste your students' time and taxpayer's money.

The last but not least, I just want to tell the Editor-in-Chief of Nature, please focus on the science only, since you guys suck at commenting other things, especially sports.

2012-08-03 02:10 AM

Report this comment | #48191

Hao XU said: That is Nature? I think I'm reading a paper on Nature and Science

(<http://www.sciencepub.org/nature/>) or Nature Science (<http://www.scirp.org/journal/ns/>).

In fact, the two Journals must not publish such a racial discrimination paper.....So, the author only can try to submit it on Nature website.

2012-08-03 02:12 AM

Report this comment | #48192

Lu Yang said: I am so disappointed for Nature to publish so a garbage!

2012-08-03 02:13 AM

Report this comment | #48193

mocca lin said: OK, as a Chinese, I was certainly very angry when first reading the post. After following the comments a whole afternoon and Noah's Twitter, I decided to read the news three more times as objectively as I can. Well, I understood now the main purpose of the article is to advocate usage of performance profiling to detect any abnormal improvement of athletes for further rigid drug screening. OK, that idea itself is not bad. In academia, there is a plenty of fabulous data hard to reproduce. It is for the benefit of the whole community to detect them, scrutinize them and eliminate them if proven fake. Nearly in every other Nature issue, there are reports and discussion regarding this issue. That is all fine

and welcome. However, one biggest mistake in this news is that it uses a sample not proven fake. When we discuss how to detect scientific misconduct, we don't use a scientist who had astonishingly good results as our example. We only use examples that have proven fake. Along the same logic, this news should simply use examples which this performance profiling has tried on and worked. Then, you got your data to support the need and efficiency of this approach. I do believe that if this performance profiling approach is in place, Ye will be detected as significantly improved and thus receive rigid drug screening in the future. The same will be true for many other talented athletes regardless of nationality. That is all acceptable as long as the same standard is applied.

While the intention of the news may be benign, it certainly picks a very eye catching and sensitive title and example. Under the context of the topic, it is misleading at the very least. When I glance the title and picture, my first reaction is: Nature found evidence to prove Ye is a cheater. I wonder how many readers will have the same reaction and fail to get the real message of the article.

2012-08-03 02:14 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48194

Xiaolong Liu said: Well I have to admit that this article gives me so much confidence! I think I can write something similar, too. Since something like this could be published in Nature, and for its very high impact factor, I could graduate right now!!!How excited about that!!!

2012-08-03 02:15 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48195

Kara Chung said: Shame on you, NATURE.

2012-08-03 02:19 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48197

LEE Rice said: What a shame! What I can only see from this article is that your tremendous glory and highly prestige are losing,undoubtly because of this article which are full of presumptuous of fatuous. All you are suspecting have sufficient evidence to convince nothing. That is a shame for such a "High-Prestige-Journal".

2012-08-03 02:23 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48198

Eeco Zhong said: A despising hypothesis and nauseous analysis...it's more like a gossip article from "the Sun". Maybe the Sun writes better than this author~

2012-08-03 02:23 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48199

He Pei said: Why don't the author suspect Franklin or Phelps? They all have marvelous performances at the Olympics...The athletes have to take very strict tests before the competitions, what the autor said

is kind of insult to Ye! I feel sorry that Nature has published this article, it hurts many people!

2012-08-03 02:24 AM

Report this comment | #48200

Such a Shame said: Shame on you Nature. And the racist writer.

2012-08-03 02:24 AM

Report this comment | #48201

hey u said: shame on you!¼¼¼¼¼¼

2012-08-03 02:25 AM

Report this comment | #48202

Eeco Zhong said: A despising hypothesis and nauseous analysis...it's more like a gossip article from "the Sun". Maybe the Sun writes better than this author~

2012-08-03 02:28 AM

Report this comment | #48203

Peng Sun said: I cannot believe Nature has published such a poorly grounded article, without any peer review process. Furthermore, as I saw in the previous comments, Nature editors even started to delete comments, which can be hardly tolerated. Nature, you should stand in the middle and be objective. You are not a government website so do not act like any of them. Academic people should always stay away from political bias and discrimination, which is self-evident ever since the first group of scientists. I cannot help doubting the basis of this article and could not believe the points of this article is objective and unbiased. Particularly, when no single article nor letter doubting Phelps when he won 8 gold medals in the last Olympics was published in Nature. Furthermore, the problems raised in this article, such as "stop doping several weeks before the game will give a negative results", is more unprofessional, even laughable. The officials of the International Olympic Committee have the right to conduct drug test at any time in a year, without pre-notification and Ye has passed the test ever since last June. The author simply overlooked this fact. As to the weird "performance profiling", I do not even know what to say about this ridiculous idea, particularly when we now possess so many state-of-art drug testing equipments, so many strict rules and regulations and above all so many hard-working officials. A "detective game" is simply not suitable for olympic games. In summary, the influence of this article, in my opinion, is nothing but disastrous. It impairs the professional and high level icon of Nature in the minds of millions of researchers, scientists, even students who want to pursue a career in academic areas. My advice is: delete this article immediately and issue an apology for such a biased, unscientific and fame-impairing article in Nature.

2012-08-03 02:30 AM

Report this comment | #48204

Wei Xie said: To Michael Chisnall: OK. So since when did we even started to talk about corruption and

transparency? You know they are not related to our theme of discussion under current article--doping at all.

You comment on a problem of China. I actually agree that is quite serious there and probably more so than in the States. I have also criticized the issue and the system fostering it publicly in many other places. That is why in my reply to you I did not say "you are attacking China on a false problem of her". I didn't say you cannot pick China's problem, either--actually, you are welcome to doing so because I am doing it constantly. My only objection then was that we should not make over generalization if we really want to compare two countries, especially in terms of aspects that are hard to quantify, for example integrity/ethics as I am with Nature did. I assume you live in the States, so you understand the sensitivity there--it's similar to comparing general aspects of two ethnical groups in the States is generally considered racist and usually avoided--at least on the public level.

Now may we ask what is the point of you mentioning transparency of China in your first reply by comparing China to US when I was merely arguing against overgeneralization of I am with Nature and restating it in your second by comparing to Singapore? Did you realize that they are not quite related or connected to my point of anti-overgeneralization? Admittedly I certainly could have misunderstood you--there may be no hatred or racist prejudice in your reply. If so, could you please explain your point of citing the transparency/corruption issue?

2012-08-03 02:33 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48205

Tommy Jiang said: Just a kind reminder to Nature

Please do not delete well written comments for the sake of freedom of speech and objectivity of science. Most chinese netizens are well trained against internet censorship (thanks to the communist party). Every single comment deleted will result in even more comments. So the best thing for you to do is either preparing enough evidence supporting this poorly written article, or to write "this article does not represent our opinion" (which as I believe will make you as shameless and entertaining as ordinary medias), or to close the "comment" function and let this BS stand here showing that you are even more shameless than CNN ;)

And probabaly you should be thankful to CPC for the internet censorship which blocks honkers and around another 120-150% of copy and paste~~

Pasting the best comments again ^ ^

Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context,

which they failed to do blatantly.

First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4:28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010 1. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec.

Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16 2. For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined with scientific and persistent training. But jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound.

Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call to cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on.

Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochter (29.10 sec) 3 and Ye (28.93 sec) 4: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochter would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of scientific rigorousness that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works.

Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should

warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it? Let's be practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances. Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be?

Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of-competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention. Per WADA president's press release 5, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore, there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing? Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye.

Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

1 http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241

2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4>

3 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

4 <http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

5 http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-

conference

2012-08-03 02:36 AM

Report this comment | #48206

Shenlin Wang said: This paper is more suitable for publication in some gossip magazine, but not even the worst scientific journal.

First, I didn't see any statistical data in the paper to support the so called "anomalous" improvement of swimming speed of a 16-year girl. The authors are obligatory to show the average of those values from all the other female swimming athletes in the same age.

For the same reason, comparison of the last 50m speed of Ye with that of only one male athlete does not prove anything. Statistical trends are mandatory, i.e. comparison of last 50m of 400m of male athletes with those of female athletes and, those of the whole 400m. With a single example, how could the authors know that that male athlete did swim as his fast speed in the last 50m? How could they prove that that man did not slow down his speed in his last 50m just for fun?

Second, the authors claimed that the athlete may use the banned substance, even he/she passed through the drug test. OK. No one can say this idea is wrong. But it is unfair to pick up a single girl as an example and mislead the readers to suspect her. To be fair, the authors should say something like all the athletes are potentially cheating in the game, including those from UK, even though they can pass the drug tests.

2012-08-03 02:36 AM

Report this comment | #48207

xx yan said: Nature is deleting comments which include their own comments. I wouldn't say anything, just re-list their comments at below. Let's see if Nature is going to delete my post and delete my account from their website as well. Oh, I think UK and US people are proud of their freedom of speech. where is it? Some guy thinks China government would like to put everything into silence. I agree. That's bad, everybody can say that. But if Nature is deleting comments, does that mean Nature is as terrible as China government?

#47837

I am with Nature said:

I tend to side with the opinion and suspicion conveyed in this article and I am afraid that these concerns have a wider basis than the facts relevant to the specific Olympic event.

Speaking of this wider problem, I have to reluctantly admit that I myself as both a faculty member and a researcher have witnessed numerous occasions of striking dishonesty and lack of integrity demonstrated by my Chinese colleagues and students on a regular basis.

Lets start with the GRE and TOEFL scores that we (in the US) often see in graduate applications coming from China (most scores there are nearly perfect). Is there a single University in the US that takes those coming from China seriously? Those scores are obviously and shamelessly rigged and are completely useless.

Research. I do see very often pure and simple theft of scientific ideas and results by various Chinese groups, sometimes in a rather outrageous form. For example, the following has become a rather routine mode of operation of one Chinese research group that works in a field very close to mine (so, I am much familiar with it): they often publish papers which closely follow up and sometimes simply repeat previously-published original works by others, but intentionally omit citations to those original papers that the authors are certainly aware of (of course, the goal is to take credit that belongs to others). Speaking further about theft, the more well-known example is the Yao-Perelman affair. Based on what I've seen myself and heard from my many other colleagues, these are not isolated incidents, but a widespread trend.

Working with my Chinese students, I have discovered to my dismay that some of them (sometimes quite brilliant and gifted) are pathological liars, who seem to have absolutely no remorse about twisting the facts around and lying , whenever they think it might benefit them.

My feeling is that there is a serious underlying problem with ethics, which appears to be pretty much a non-existent concept in this part of the world. Actually, it is not very surprising if we recall that the political system in modern China is based on a big lie (Politbureau, communist party etc), that nobody believes in but everybody has to adjust to in order to survive. Add to it huge human rights abuses (that the outside "civilized" world including the US chooses to ignore), virtual absence of free speech, and yet all this co-exists with the obvious success of China as a country. So, what is the message that a young person gets growing up in such a society? I do not think honesty is placed very high on the priority list.

2012-08-03 02:37 AM

Report this comment | #48208

Haojun Ji said: Why can people like Mr.Callaway be so sure about these things with no proof at all? This is what you people called science and NATURE? Oh, come on, a 9-year-old boy can do better than you. So childish.

"No doubt The 2012 British Olympics is the most successful one ever in the history from the perspective of revealing arrogance, ignorance and prejudice accumulated over a hundred years in the

mind some people, in just a few nights" quote from Xuchen Liu.

We Chinese fears no challenge!

2012-08-03 02:37 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48209

Kris J said: To Audrey Richard: Oh, I get it! You are not suggesting the editors are not wrong, you are just suggesting they are not guilty. And this article is not suggesting Ye is innocent, it's just suggesting Ye is not caught. I see your logic here.

2012-08-03 02:39 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48210

J.J. Wu said: To Qi Feng: (post #48186) Sorry friend, I am afraid it is you who has not read the article carefully. The main criticism for this article is its lack of scientific scrutiny when stating facts (that are only in favor of his opinions), which constitutes "cherry-picking". It is a common sense to avoid such mistake and people are simply appalled that it appears in Nature. In this case, your sense of righteousness is silly and immature.

To Audrey Richard: (post #48174) I agree with you. As posts increase the overall quality of it would inevitably decrease, as the irrationals will eventually appear. But in this case I have to say most of the comments are warranted and are logically sound. PhDs do not consider themselves special (trust me.. PhDs are among those of very low self-esteem :)), and SCIENCE, is one of the few grounds they are familiar and proud of, and will fight to protect (sometime may even over-react a little.) This article is inarguably flawed in terms of its interpretation of facts (regarding Ye's performance being "abnormal", by using only simple questions and "yes" "no" answers). I think in this case, the author deserves every bit of ridicule. Please be aware, this ridicule is very different from what Ye is suffering, which is smearing and slander. It is the author's job as a journalist (or some other title...) for Nature to state facts SCIENTIFICALLY. He is entitled to his opinion, but it has to be of scientific standard. If not, he should receive every bit of ridicule from his peers, who work hard to keep up with this standard. If you can't do the time, don't do the crime. It's that simple.

2012-08-03 02:40 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48211

Michael Chisnall said: Wie Xie, no I live in the Southern Hemisphere, not the US. I was simply rebutting one particular point you made. I actually agree with you about overgeneralising.

2012-08-03 02:42 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48212

Lina Lee said: Shame on Nature!

2012-08-03 02:42 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48213

zi ran said: zi ran zhe ge za zhi jing ran hui chu xian zhe yang de wen zhang, zhen shi bu ke si yi. ta ma ma ye xu zhen de gai jiao ta hui jia chi fang le.

2012-08-03 02:47 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48214

Jeff S said: a loser's article
shame on nature

2012-08-03 02:50 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48216

kally R said: <http://www.nature.com/news/why-great-olympic-feats-raise-suspicions-1.11109#comments>

2012-08-03 02:50 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48217

Xinlun Cai said: I really can not be believe nature, as a prestigious magazine, published this kind of biased and really annoying article. I am very very depressed indeed, and I am also violated.

2012-08-03 02:56 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48220

Jian Zhang said: Now, I understand why some call this journal as "tabloid".

2012-08-03 02:56 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48221

kally R said: Hey, CAME DOWN,PEOPLE. Remember the point is,never try to argue with such a person, who will drag down your IQ to his level and beat you with his abundant experience.

2012-08-03 03:01 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48223

Tony xu said: shame on nature, loser

2012-08-03 03:01 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48224

Yang SHEN said: As seeing this poorly demonstrated so-called article, I am no more worried about my essay for graduate admission in United States.

2012-08-03 03:04 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48225

Changhe Zhang said: It is very disappointed to see such a biased article published in Nature. If you

want to delete comments, I suggest you to learn from Chinese Communist Party.

2012-08-03 03:04 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48226

Spinozas God said: Ok, Nature succeeded in attracting people's attention, but not for the sake of Science. Scientists should not be surprised, since the Sun is part of Nature. :)

More serious comments coming in next couple of days, busy with papers. :(

HF

2012-08-03 03:08 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48228

li ly said: Garbage!¼!¼!¼!¼

2012-08-03 03:12 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48230

Zhuo Wang said: To: Dr. Philip Campbell, Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Nick Campbell (really?), Executive Editor

Dr. Mark Peplow, News Editor

Dr. Ananyo Bhattacharya, Chief Online Editor

Mr. Ewen Callaway, Reporter

You have collectively dented Nature's otherwise prestigious reputation by publishing Mr. Callaway's so-called news report. If you treasure the reputation of this journal nearly as much as an average scientist does, now is the time for you to do something. Simply withdrawing the article or issuing a generic apology won't do. Harm has been done as the misleading information propogated through your channel of mass distribution. I would suggest you find one or a team of capable investigative journalists to write a more thorough, unbiased report on this same issue. Confirmed misleading information in Mr. Callaway's piece should be itemized with the correct information next to them. I suggest you start with comprehensive comments by Lai Jiang, Liming Wang and Echt Warsteiner.

I believe most people who have posted comments are willing to move on if Nature and its leadership take responsibility and corrective steps. In the name of science, you won't be treated the way the innocent young swimmer was treated by Nature.

I have faith in your sense of honor and ability of critical thinking.

2012-08-03 03:13 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48231

hk China said: Shame on you, Nature!

But we may also give this poor guy a little break, as he is only a US master-graduate reporter (and He

also spends his free time learning to bicycle on the left side of the road). He may be a good writer, but not a good scientist. Has he ever thought of one mutant human being out from a 1.5-billion population? Ask Nature Genetics.

At least he is not like other Nature-series journal Editors, enjoying their luxury trips in China as they know China needs Nature impact factor desperately...

2012-08-03 03:16 AM

Report this comment | #48232

C Lin said: Dear Nature Editors,

When unfounded suspicion on Ye raised onto international stage, I actually wish Nature, among with other leading scientific journals, to take a leading role and write articles to educate the general public and the fellow scientists on the science of drug tests and the work of drug test scientists. How are drug test conducted? What analytic techniques are used? How many substances are tested and how often? What is the false positive / false negative rates? What is the confidence interval.

As a scientist, I believe that we scientists and scientific journals hold the very **responsibility** to explain science and scientific methods to our societies. Most importantly, we **must speak the truth with facts and scientific evidence**. Please remember, the general public puts **trust** and **faith** in what we say because science is backing us up.

Unfortunately, your prestige journal chose to publish this article with no scientific evidence whatsoever. The author utterly failed to explain anything about the science of swimming or the science of drug tests. Unbelievably, the author went further and insulted Ye the record-breaking swimmer, the scientists who work on drug tests day-in and day-out, as well as the scientific community whom uses scientific methods everyday (me included).

I am deeply disappointed at your decision to publish such an article.

2012-08-03 03:19 AM

Report this comment | #48233

zhan zhaoyao said: Performance profiling' could help catch athletes who use banned performance-enhancing drugs. yeah, good. I think the first one should be conducted this kind of testing is the American idol, the Beijing Olympic 8 gold Swimmer Michael Phelps. Let's have a look on his performance on the successive two Olympic games. Four years ago, he was a superman, however, this year, he is a mortal. So as per the logic developed by this author, four years ago, Phelps could not rule out the possibility of doping. So before you suspect Ms Ye, please suspect Phelps first.

Another concern is about the prestige of Nature magazine which is a flagship in all scientific journal, because such a prestigious journal can accept and publish such an ill-prepared, strongly biased paper which bases on such poor logic and fake truth. I think it is really a shame of the NPG. Though such a strong racial bias and entertaining on academic will help Nature to attract eyeballs, however such an act

has smashed the justice,sanctity and purity of academic. Anyway, Since the Nature has always been my favorite magazine,I will continue reading paper from Nature but with some different feeling.

2012-08-03 03:20 AM

Report this comment | #48234

Sun Hao said: It's so inconceivable that such an article full of prejudice and serious racial discrimination published in Nature. The author and editor should be ashamed of yourselves.

2012-08-03 03:21 AM

Report this comment | #48235

san xuan said: Obviously, this article lacks the evidence to support its points of view.

Even though this is a news article, the authors fails to address his/her perspectives rigorously and the doubts proposed are very irresponsible.

About the performance profiling, It is much more meaningful to analyze Ye Shiwen's outstanding performance profile to obtain the insights on how to improve atheletes' performance through scientific trainings, rather than just doubt and guess irresponsibly.

As It is always the small probability event that changes the world history!

2012-08-03 03:22 AM

Report this comment | #48236

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2012-08-03 03:25 AM

Report this comment | #48237

judy liu said: Nature editor, shame on you!!!

by following chauvinistic reporters to gain attention, you not only destroyed the very scientific integrity at the heart of this magazine, but will be eternally remembered for this shamelessly blatant and groundless attack on a swimming genius who has only done something so brilliant and exquisite.

Congratulations, you have successfully made the world know Americans are LOSERS that can't even stand talented people achieving brilliancy simply because they are not americans!

2012-08-03 03:25 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48238

Vincent Yu said: NATURE, your behavior is disgusting now. Mind that.

2012-08-03 03:26 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48239

Vincent Yu said: NATURE, your behavior is disgusting now. Mind that.

2012-08-03 03:27 AM

Report this comment | #48240

Shu Xiang said: In case this was not mentioned in previous comments, just want to add that **London Olympics officials DID employ the "biological passport" model in swimming to rule out possible dopers**. This article is misleading by implying that Ye did not go through the biological passport check.

Related reports include this one on sportsillustrated.cnn.com. (click for full article). BTW, in this report, **WADA president John Fahey claims London Olympics to be "the most tested Games in Olympic history"**.

Similar reports come from SBNation, and more. I'm quoting part of this SBNation's report (click for full article) as follows:

[Another new tactic, known as the biological passport model, tracks athletes'™ blood levels over many years in order to detect irregularities that would creep up if the athlete started using drugs. In effect, it looks for the performance boost in an athlete's™ body, rather than for a specific drug. This is helpful because, in the past, cheaters could keep a step ahead of testers by using new or altered drugs that were undetectable by contemporary testing capabilities.

The biological passport model "— which in London will be used in cycling, modern pentathlon, rowing, swimming, track and field, and triathlon — has delivered promising results. Performances in the most grueling mountain stages of the Tour de France, for example, have diminished measurably since 2008, when the biological passports became standardized, indicating a decrease in drug use in the sport, which had become tattered from doping scandals.

In the week leading up to the Olympics six track and field athletes were banned after their biological passports confirmed "sophisticated doping." The first doping controversy of the Games involves 16-year-old female Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwe. A U.S. swimming official called Ye's times "unbelievable" and implied that doping was a factor, a fact the Chinese vigorously deny. An IOC spokesman, when asked about Ye, said: "We would only comment if we had any adverse finding. I am not commenting, so you can draw your own conclusions."]

2012-08-03 03:32 AM

Report this comment | #48241

Shu Xiang said: Just want to correct the broken link in my previous post:
SBNation's report

2012-08-03 03:35 AM

Report this comment | #48242

Earlier Comments said: 3. 2012-08-01 02:07 AM

Report this comment | #47439

Zhenxi Zhang said:

I just want to add this: Phelps improved 4+ seconds in his 200 fly between 14-15 years old. Ian Thorpe also had a similar performance improvement. Ye is now 16. She was 160 cm in height and now 170 cm. Human biology also play a role " she gets stronger and bigger naturally. Yes she can make up 5 seconds (NOT 7 seconds in the article) in a 400 IM that has more room for improvement, with good training she got in Australia.

In both the 400 IM and 200 IM finals, Ye were behind until freestyle. Well I guess there is "drug" that just enhances freestyle, but not the backstroke, breast, and fly. Does that make sense? Also, it is not professional to only mention that 'her showing in the last 50 metres, which she swam faster than US swimmer Ryan Lochte did when he won gold in the men's 400 IM'. The whole fact is that Ye is more than 23 second slower than Lochte in 400 IM. Plus, Freestyle isn't Lochte's best leg, but it is Shiwen's best leg. Lochte had a huge lead on the field, and almost coasted to the finish. He wasn't pressured by the field to go all out that last few meters.

And before we get into the fact there's no way a woman should be able to come close to man's time for a final leg of 50m. May I present the following: Kate Ziegler set a WR in the 1500m freestyle. In the last 50m of her race she had a split of 29.27, which is ONLY 0.17s slower than Lochte final 50m. This was after she swam for 1100m longer than Lochte!

I feel the author would probably not write such a piece if Ye is an American or British. Neither country is clean from athletes caught by doping (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Use_of_performance-enhancing_drugs_in_the_Olympic_Games). Let's try not to use double standards on the great performance from countries other than US and European countries.

5. 2012-08-02 02:18 AM

Report this comment | #47487

Lai Jiang said:

It is a shame to see Nature, which nearly all scientists, including myself, regard as the one of the most prestigious and influential physical science magazines to publish a thinly-veiled biased article like this. Granted, this is not a peer-reviewed scientific article and did not go through the scrutiny of picking referees. But to serve as a channel for the general populous to be in touch with and appreciate sciences, the authors and editors should at least present the readers with facts within proper context, which they failed to do blatantly.

First, to compare a player's performance increase, the author used Ye's 400m IM time and her performance at the World championship 2011, which are 4:28.43 and 4:35.15 respectively, and reached the conclusion that she has got an "anomalous" increase by ~7 sec (6.72 sec). In fact she's previous personal best was 4:33.79 at Asian Games 2010. This leads to a 5.38 sec increase. In a sport event that 0.1 sec can be the difference between the gold and silver medal, I see no reason that 5.38 sec can be treated as 7 sec.

Second, as previously pointed out, Ye is only 16 years old and her body is still developing. Bettering oneself by 5 sec over two years may seem impossible for an adult swimmer, but certainly happens among youngsters. Ian Thorpe's interview revealed that his 400m freestyle time increased 5 sec between the age of 15 and 16. For regular people including the author it may be hard to imagine what an elite swimmer can achieve as he or she matures, combined with scientific and persistent training. But

jumping to a conclusion that it is "anomalous" based on "Oh that's so tough I can not imagine it is real" is hardly sound.

Third, to compare Ryan Lochte's last 50m to Ye's is a textbook example of what we call cherry pick your data. Yes, Lochte is slower than Ye in the last 50m, but (as pointed out by Zhenxi) Lochte has a huge lead in the first 300m so that he chose to not push himself too hard to conserve energy for latter events (whether this conforms to the Olympic spirit and the "use one's best efforts to win a match" requirement that the BWF has recently invoked to disqualify four badminton pairs is another topic worth discussing, probably not in Nature, though). On the contrary, Ye is trailing behind after the first 300m and relies on freestyle, which she has an edge, to win the game. Failing to mention this strategic difference, as well as the fact that Lochte is 23.25 sec faster (4:05.18) over all than Ye creates the illusion that a woman swam faster than the best man in the same sport, which sounds impossible. Put aside the gender argument, I believe this is still a leading question that implies the reader that something fishy is going on.

Fourth, another example of cherry picking. In the same event there are four male swimmers that swam faster than both Lochter (29.10 sec)³ and Ye (28.93 sec)⁴: Hagino (28.52 sec), Phelps (28.44 sec), Horihata (27.87 sec) and Fraser-Holmes (28.35 sec). As it turns out if we are just talking about the last 50m in a 400m IM, Lochter would not have been the example to use if I were the author. What kind of scientific rigorousness that author is trying to demonstrate here? Is it logical that if Lochter is the champion, we should assume he leads in every split? That would be a terrible way to teach the public how science works.

Fifth, which is the one I oppose the most. The author quotes Tucks and implies that a drug test can not rule out the possibility of doping. Is this kind of agnosticism what Nature really wants to educate its readers? By that standard I estimate that at least half of the peer-reviewed scientific papers in Nature should be retracted. How can one convince the editors and reviewers that their proposed theory works for every possible case? One cannot. One chooses to apply the theory to typical examples and demonstrate that in (hopefully) all scenarios considered the theory works to a degree, and that should warrant a publication, until a counterexample is found. I could imagine that the author has a skeptical mind which is critical to scientific thinking, but that would be put into better use if he can write a real peer-reviewed paper that discusses the odds of Ye doping on a highly advanced non-detectable drug that the Chinese has come up within the last 4 years (they obviously did not have it in Beijing, otherwise why not to use it and woo the audience at home?), based on data and rational derivation. This paper, however, can be interpreted as saying that all athletes are doping, and the authorities are just not good enough to catch them. That may be true, logically, but definitely will not make the case if there is ever a hearing by FINA to determine if Ye has doped. To ask the question that if it is possible to false negative in a drug test looks like a rigged question to me. Of course it is, other than the drug that the test is not designed to detect, anyone who has taken Quantum 101 will tell you that everything is probabilistic in nature, and there is a probability for the drug in an athlete's system to tunnel out right at the moment of the test. A slight change as it may be, should we disregard all test results because of it?

Let's be practical and reasonable. And accept WADA is competent at its job. Her urine sample is stored for 8 years following the contest for future testing as technology advances.

Innocent until proven guilty, shouldn't it be?

Sixth, and the last point I would like to make, is that the out-of-competition drug test is already in effect, which the author failed to mention. Per WADA president's press release⁵, drug testing for olympians began at least 6 months prior to the opening of the London Olympic. Furthermore there are 107 athletes who are banned from this Olympic for doping. That maybe the reason that everyone will pass at the Olympic games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing? Because those who did dope are already sanctioned? The author is free to suggest that a player could have doped beforehand and fool the test at the game, but this possibility certainly is ruled out for Ye.

Over all, even though the author did not falsify any data, he did (intentionally or not) cherry pick data that is far too suggestive to be fair and unbiased, in my view. If you want to cover a story of a suspected doping from a scientific point of view, be impartial and provide all the facts for the reader to judge. You are entitled to your interpretation of the facts, and the expression thereof in your piece, explicitly or otherwise, but only showing evidences which favor your argument is hardly good science or journalism. Such an article in a journal like Nature is not an appropriate example of how scientific research or report should be done.

1http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=1241

2<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ETPUKIOwV4>

3<http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/men-400m-individual-medley/phase=swm054100/index.html>

4<http://www.london2012.com/swimming/event/women-400m-individual-medley/phase=sww054100/index.html>

5http://playtrue.wada-ama.org/news/wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wada-presidents-addresses-london-2012-press-conference

2012-08-03 03:43 AM

Report this comment | #48243

Zhu Liu said: To: p.campbell@nature.com , e.callaway@nature.com , n.campbell@nature.com , d.yorke@nature.com , r.campbell@nature.com

Dear editors

I seriously recommended you reconsider the spirit and purpose of Nature, as it now seems far away from uncovering nature itself and contribute to human's knowledge. In Nature's fresh News/opinion "Why great Olympic feats raise", Ewen Callaway proposed the reasons why Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwen's performance in Olympic games is unusual, with content full of unrepresentative sampling, poor reasoning, biased and ignorant conclusion, and it have no scientific evidence at all. I can't see any scientific reason driving Nature publish such opinion but just racial and political undertones, it is definitely a dereliction of duty for the editors. Now I do know that Nature can publish something without any kind of concrete mathematics and experiments, and I feel shame for been authors in several papers

published in Nature and Nature sister journals.

I regret to see such opinion in Nature, which just let Nature become be a joke of the world and lose its fame. As the name of science I kindly asked Nature's public apologize.

Zhu Liu

Phd Student

Graduate University of Chinese Academy of Sciences

2012-08-03 03:43 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48244

Xiaobai Young said: Such bullshit could be published on Nature, what to say, my views of the world and life are changed, I believe in love again.

2012-08-03 03:48 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48245

Peng Xia said: Thanks to the author, I especially registered an account for this article.

I have to say that at the first moment when I saw this article, it really shocked me. Immediately, I realized that this is nature.com, not thelawer.com, so the quote "innocent until proven guilty" does not work.

2012-08-03 03:49 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48246

Mingshou Lu said: This article would make the impact factor of NATURE to be MINUS 30, how shameful.

2012-08-03 03:49 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48247

Yu Chen said: As a scientist, I hope that comments for this article won't rise to another ethnic conflict online, which is contrary to the spirit of science that we are all respect.

It would be a nice topic in medicinal and health care science if the author used the current subheading 'Performance profiling' could help to dispel doubts at the first time, instead of the original one: 'Performance profiling' could help catch athletes who use banned performance-enhancing drugs; It would be a nice article if the author didn't use an example of a talent athlete who has a clean drug test during the competition---doesn't matter if she/he is a white, yellow or black. However, what the author did was totally in contrast to what he should. To suspect a clean athlete without any evidence even in front of the result given by IOC only proved the fact that the author is discriminative and biased. The only evidence that the author used to prove his point of argument is not strict and the logic in the whole article does not hold. (Please see Jiang Lai's comment for detailed scientific analysis)

Just as what June Thomas said in her article today (http://www.slate.com/articles/sports/fivering_circus

/2012/08

/ye_shiwen_doping_the_unfair_smear_campaign_against_the_chinese_swimming_sensation_.html) :

â€œTo that, I would say: Why shouldnâ€™t we (believe them)? In 1987, a 15-year-old who weighed 95 pounds broke the 800-meter freestyle world record by more than two seconds. Janet Evansâ€™ triumph was rightly celebrated as the amazing achievement of a once-in-a-generation athlete.

We should open our minds to the possibility that a young woman from China could be a similar talent. We donâ€™t know if training, the amazing improvements that teenagers (like the young Michael Phelps) sometimes make seemingly overnight, or something else altogether is responsible for Yeâ€™s amazing success. But as Lord Moynihan, the chairman of the British Olympic Committee, pointed out in her defense, Ye has been drug tested repeatedly and has passed every single time.â€

And finally, although Nature News is not publishing peer-review articles, it is no double that publishing an irresponsible article full of bias and discrimination on Natureâ€™s website would be a disappointing thing for the whole scientific community (Actually, this is an unacceptable behavior even when it happened on any other tabloids). I think the author and the online editor of Nature News owe Ye and whole Chinese community an apology. This article should be removed from the website.

2012-08-03 03:53 AM

Report this comment | #48248

ding dong said: This is a very "interesting" article. Indeed, I am surprised to see such article showed up in a scientific forum that it provides non-scientific arguments nor any scientific evidence or proof to backup what the author trying to say. One important core value in scientific statement is to prove and backup your points and argument. I am very disappointed.....

2012-08-03 03:54 AM

Report this comment | #48249

John dz said: NATURE international weekly journal of shits!

2012-08-03 03:56 AM

Report this comment | #48250

Qingyun Li said: "Inspire a generation"--London Olympics official slogan. I love it, but till this moment Iâ€™m concerned London can hardly make it. I thought what London would like to show to the next, and next next,.. generations was the brilliant side of human nature, showing them human beings can put enormous effort to achieve marvels, showing them we can conquer physiological extremes to be higher faster and stronger, showing them hard-work would eventually being paid-off, showing them most people, no matter where theyâ€™re from, are still moral citizens in the world village, showing them mutual understanding is possible despite some ideological/political/religious discrepancies. So you can watch the games with your family after a long day and tell your teenager girl, â€œlook, sheâ€™s your age. I told you nothing is impossible!â€

Unfortunately, we are not living in an ideal world. Ugly things happen. Bad people exist. We ought to point them out when they emerge and tell the next generation "that is not common, and that's what you shouldn't do." Please ask these questions to yourself: do you really want to tell your kids that marvelous things are rarely true no matter what other people have done, that people from one part of the world should always be doubted solely due to their disgraceful history, that people would always try to get around and cheat to win?

Nature is not a political entity, nor having anything to do with sports, and therefore it was not supposed to be involved in this controversy. However, since it is an influential journal based in the UK, and had this news report published on this issue regardless of the reason, it is expected, by your readers, to show your share of social responsibility. True, your kids and other people's kids may not directly read this article, but they would eventually hear the message you were trying to convey. I think you would agree with me that the blunt cynicism and prejudice showing here would never inspire a new generation. Do the UK a favor. Help them to fulfill the promise.

2012-08-03 03:57 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48251

wayne wong said: I think Nature and the author are just playing the role as a Chinese person called Fang Zhouzi

2012-08-03 03:59 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48252

Liu ZhuangZhuang said: Thank you Nature for changing many Chinese students' western-oriented attitude. It is so called spirit of internationalism that you sacrificed your precious reputation to enlighten us. Oh I forget to say, I used to believe Nature is a scientific journals.

2012-08-03 03:59 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48253

Yingpei Cao said: NOT PREJUDICE MY ASS

2012-08-03 04:02 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48254

macro macro said: When has Nature degraded itself to the level of English Tabloids by publishing such a biased article? Or in perspective, such biased articles? Or does Nature simply want to make a splash in public media in order to attract more advertisers?

Ian Thorpe used his own performance to dispute the claim of "anomaly". How fast do you swim, Ewen Callaway? Whenever you see a new record broken so soon, you raise your eyebrow and say it is doping? How about the Phelps's medals? Can you please make a convincing "profiling" of his medals, and compare it to "normal distribution"? I think that's definitely anomaly! Using your logic, that must be some undetectable drug! Though the swimmers' pee is clean, your brain is NOT. Thus you

would say it must be drug. Oops, I forgot to mention he is American. That factor may change your mind filled with faulty logic. (Thorpe said, "We have to take the nationality out of this.")

Take this for example: when a person see you, Ewen, riding your bike on the left side of on the road in Boston, as you like to do, he/she may think you are nuts, and call you nuts. I would say, this person is perhaps too narrow-minded. It is not such an anomaly just because you saw few people do it. In the UK and Japan, together with many other countries, driving on the right side is anomaly! Widen your mind! Statistics never say too much for individual cases! If a car hits you, take it, though statistics may say the chance is 0.0001%. That's what I learned from life! And, if you still believe in Olympic spirit (which I don't do): Olympic records are there to be broken!

Maybe you still think human landing on moon is a lie, since nobody have ever done it before! That's such an eye-brow riser ! Oops, I forgot again that those were American. That may play a role again in your logic.

2012-08-03 04:03 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48255

Qingyun Li said: "Inspire a generation"--London Olympics official slogan. I love it, but till this moment I am concerned London can hardly make it. I thought what London would like to show to the next, and next next,.. generations was the brilliant side of human nature, showing them human beings can put enormous effort to achieve marvels, showing them we can conquer physiological extremes to be higher faster and stronger, showing them hard-work would eventually being paid-off, showing them most people, no matter where they are from, are still moral citizens in the world village, showing them mutual understanding is possible despite some ideological/political/religious discrepancies. So you can watch the games with your family after a long day and tell your teenager girl: look, she is your age. I told you nothing is impossible!

Unfortunately, we are not living in an ideal world. Ugly things happen. Bad people exist. We ought to point them out when they emerge and tell the next generation: that is not common, and that's what you shouldn't do. Please ask these questions to yourself: do you really want to tell your kids that marvelous things are rarely true no matter what other people have done, that people from one part of the world should always be doubted solely due to their disgraceful history, that people would always try to get around and cheat to win?

Nature is not a political entity, nor having anything to do with sports, and therefore it was not supposed to be involved in this controversy. However, since it is an influential journal based in the UK, and had this news report published on this issue regardless of the reason, it is expected, by your readers, to show your share of social responsibility. True, your kids and other people's kids may not directly read this article, but they would eventually hear the message you were trying to convey. I think you would agree with me that the blunt cynicism and prejudice showing here would never inspire a new generation. Do the UK a favor. Help them to fulfill the promise.

2012-08-03 04:05 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48256

Xin Liu said: Shame on you, Nature!

2012-08-03 04:06 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48257

ding dong said: BTW, scientists should have the bravery to uncover mistakes and clarify invalid statement. Is the author able to clarify the statement here or owe an apology to the 16-year-old Chinese athlete??

2012-08-03 04:09 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48258

Jim Z said: Why? it's because the writer is so jealous.

2012-08-03 04:12 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48259

Rose LEE said: shame on you,nature! i think the true reason for the author writing this paper is he may be a racist. maybe we need to blame Ye is a Chinese NOT an American or English?

2012-08-03 04:13 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48260

wo cao said: LZSB! No evidence, you'd better talk about your J8!

2012-08-03 04:14 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48261

macro macro said: Hi, ding dong, I would not call Ewen a scientist. He does not do science. He is a reporter. And he learned scientific-writing by attending "science-writing programme at the University of California" instead of doing any real science. Don't ruin the term "scientist", though it is not a clean word anyway.

2012-08-03 04:14 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48262

Rachel Chen said: First of all, I feel very sad for Ye Shiwen because she has to face the media questioning her ability over again and again after the Olympic committee chief has declared she's clean and she has passed all the drug test. Are you questioning the authenticity of olympic anti-doping agency who perform Ye's test? If so, then, all the "so-called unbelievable" athlete should be doubted. Why specifically pick on her? I've never heard of Phelps being questioned when he won 8 gold medals in 2008 Beijing Olympics, perhaps, he was greatly admired by so many fans all over the world.

Personally, I feel like this article needed to be removed or changed based on the numerous critical

observations concerning the data analysis, collection and interpretation. These extensive comments should be considered constructive because they provide a listing of the issues that would have to be answered in order to become more professional.

2012-08-03 04:22 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48263

Liwei Wang said: Illogical is the only word I want to say.

2012-08-03 04:27 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48264

Audrey Richard said: To Venti Awake

To be honest, when I read the piece, I was not shocked because I didn't feel that there was any endorsement whatsoever as to whether or not the young swimmer was guilty of whatever it is she is being accused of. I don't know, maybe it is because I had heard so much about the story earlier and had been kind of prepared. To me, the author summarized what is the current controversy about (because it is the News section) and used it to explain what could be done (according to the people in the field) to improve anti-doping controls (he is not responsible for the studies that are actually conducted). And that's pretty much it. I did not particularly think that this young swimmer had done something wrong before I read the article and it did not change my mind at all.

What would quite shock me would be the editors of the News Section, who are actually responsible for the content, not supporting the author. Assuming Nature made a mistake by letting the article go live, would you honestly consider that it would have been professional and ethical to put the blame on the author? I am actually glad they did not let him down when they realized that things were getting bad! The opposite would have been unforgiveable.

Also, I'm following Noah Gray on Twitter so I read his tweets (which he says are his and I believe him) on a daily basis and those you are referring to are no exceptions. As a matter of fact, I told him that maybe something was wrong with the comments on the website and I think he tried to do what he could to figure it out. But he should tell about that.

Anyway, I have to say that I make a "whether rightly or not" quite a difference between the Nature News Section and Nature Magazine. To me (but anyone correct me if I'm wrong), the editors of the latter have nothing to do with what happens in the former and vice versa. Had he got involved in such matter clearly identifying himself as a Nature Editor, it would have been really weird, no? How could the fact that he handles neuroscience manuscripts be relevant in the debate occurring in the News section? Is his opinion supposed to count more or less than yours or mine because he is an NPG employee? I am certainly willing to recognize that editors can have some sort of legitimacy or authority on their own field but that's it.

Likewise, I hope that your opinion about the relevance of my input won't change when you know that I

am a PhD myself.

2012-08-03 04:29 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48265

YUMING SUI said: nature?oh,my god.

2012-08-03 04:30 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48266

Xi Yang said: Is this article a sign that *Nature* is beginning to fall?

2012-08-03 04:30 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48267

Mono Dai said: I couldn't be more disappointed in Nature and the U.K.

Yes, right, envy us, please.

2012-08-03 04:37 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48268

Ying Li said: I read the author graduated from microbiology, which means she/he should have had plenty of scientific training on thinking, writing, and probably experimenting. However, in this article, I read nothing but biased opinions and guess, majorly racism. How would such an article be published in Nature, which always delivers very exciting scientific work and news?

Highly recommend Nature publishing group get into investigation on such an article, which really leads Nature to a low quality of scientific journals the No. 1 basis of which was based on trust-able evidence and data. Both editor and author should be investigated. And this article needs retracting immediately and Nature is responsible to post the apology announcement to the little girl and probably to those athletes who have created and are creating great results in their sporting lives, esp. in this Olympics occurring in London right now.. Show some respects!

2012-08-03 04:39 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48269

Ye Zhu said: Dear Mr Ewen Callaway:

Before you could imagine it, female pigs are already climbing up the trees!

2012-08-03 04:42 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48270

Brocken up Western Criteria said: Hey Ewen, as a reader of a prejudiced article on the 'righteous' journal website, I would like to title you--JERK. Ewen JERK, how come you are a scientist instead of a 'glorious' witch-hunter back to 16th century? With childish thoughts and comparisons without any actual

proofs, your academic contribution is only limited to making up rumors and spreading them. Well done, now you finally successfully become an ArschrhÃfÃhle. Congrats! and congrats to NATURE for finally being a shitty magazine!

2012-08-03 04:43 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48271

Brocken up Western Criteria said: Hey Ewen, as a reader of a prejudiced article on the 'righteous' journal website, I would like to title you--JERK. Ewen JERK, how come you are a scientist instead of a 'glorious' witch-hunter back to 16th century? With childish thoughts and comparisons without any actual proofs, your academic contribution is only limited to making up rumors and spreading them. Well done, now you finally successfully become an ArschrhÃhle. Congrats! and congrats to NATURE for finally being a shitty magazine!

2012-08-03 04:45 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48272

gip hsilgne said: That's horrible!!

The drug she used must be the evil Dihydrogen Monoxide!!!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!!

2012-08-03 04:47 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48273

Eric Guo said: Nature Editors, please confirm whether this article has been through any peer-review process and who recommend to accept this article to be published! Remember that the reputation can be earned slowly through years, but Nature can easily loose it by one HUGE mistake like this!!! BTW: I was deeply shocked by Nature Editor's 'unnaturally' slow response to this serious mistake! Seriously, I couldn't be more disappointed in Nature — International Journal of 'Non-Science'!

2012-08-03 05:00 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48274

alex song said: When a racist become his so-called scientist, that brings science field a shame. Mr Calaway, a NATURE editor, tried to ruin a 16-year old girl's fame by imposing her drug user for the competition, which has been clearly asserted no by international Olympic committee. I am totally shocked by his unscientific words and reports. Just saying July instead of july 2011? Compare Locket's last 50 meters recording with Ye's, then he make a conclusion of Ye's and Chinese Olympic team's cheat without any direct evidence. This is amazingly anti-scientific!!! I hereby wonder if the NATURE committee could check this guy's article recording and make a report to state if he made any dishonesty or cheat in the past several years. This is the thing about not only himself, but also NATURE group.

2012-08-03 05:03 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48275

Trousien Chang said: What a shame! Nature magazine, the authority and lighthouse for scientists, published such an article based on biased and default opinion and confusing logic. Westner's prejudice and superiority seem to be beyond my imagination.

2012-08-03 05:04 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48276

Chang Ye said: å²,å¹½çš„ãººæžœçœŸç”Ÿæ€šçç,és~

2012-08-03 05:07 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48277

Chang Ye said: Island people are really narrow and limited! So you can delete this post!

2012-08-03 05:08 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48278

Chan christ said: Cannot believe Nature really allow this shit published.What a shame! Nature!

2012-08-03 05:08 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48279

Wendy WONG said: I couldn't be more disappointed at the fact that NATURE, a magazine that I once respected so much, would publish such a biased and sexist article against a great Chinese athlete who smashed the OR and won the world's respect. I'm furious about what has been said in this article and I believe so are people around the whole world who are sensible and righteous. Why can't a Chinese woman win and stand up in front of the world fair and square? Burning satire and belittling others presented in this article is not what grown-ups are supposed to do.

2012-08-03 05:09 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48280

xinsong chen said: I am so sorry for your journal to publish such an article, which is hardly can be called research at all. No hypothesis, no argue, no data proof, no convincing evidence. What you want to get from the readers? Take it seriously, you are ruining your own reputation.

2012-08-03 05:15 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48282

FYM UK said: THIS IS BRAINWASHING

2012-08-03 05:17 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48283

Roger Luo said: I just registered an ID to say SHAME ON YOU NATURE!

2012-08-03 05:28 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48284

Tingting Lu said: It's enough, Nature! I don't believe Nature stands on a suitable point this time as this author's view is so weak and ridiculous. Obviously, Nature has put itself at an embarrassing situation, and will make a dent in its reputation.

2012-08-03 05:34 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48285

Haochen Tian said: Dear anthor,according to your article,I suppose we should also build a "performance profiling" system to catch ACADEMIC CHEATERS in scholarism.

"Academic specialist need to create databases that record how scientific researcher's research ability improve with age and experience. Longitudinal records of scientific researchers' performances achievement would then be fed into statistical models to determine the likelihood that they PUBLISHED the ARTICLE and GOT the DEGREE too easy, given their past results and the limits of human wisdom."

As a result, two major questions will be solved:

Was Ewen Callaway's MASTER DEGREE anomalous?

YES.

Doesn't a clean ACADEMIC test during SCIENTIFIC RESARCH rule out the possibility of cheating?

NO.

2012-08-03 05:37 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48286

Eric Li said: he.he.

2012-08-03 05:39 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48288

Oliver Chen said: To FYM UK,

Being a Chinese, I share the same emotional rage as all of you. But let's keep the argument within the rational and scientific arena. Cursing will not people respect us, it will weaken, not strengthen our points.

To Nature, this article is a shame for sure. It is unveiled prejudice and deliberate misguiding. There's no doubt that the Editor and the magazine should apologize publically to Miss Ye.

2012-08-03 05:41 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48290**Oliver Chen said:** To FYM UK,

Being a Chinese, I share the same emotional rage as all of you. But let's keep the argument within the rational and scientific arena. Cursing will not people respect us, it will weaken, not strengthen our points.

To Nature, this article is a shame for sure. It is unveiled prejudice and deliberate misguiding. There's no doubt that the Editor and the magazine should apologize publically to Miss Ye.

2012-08-03 05:41 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48291

Han Zhu said: Chill, folks. Have you guys really read through the whole article without a prejudice at first hand? The Ye phenomenon is sth like a anecdote which the author used to attract readers' attention and to start his article. There is no conspiracy, no prejudice, no speculation, and not even a concrete conclusion regarding whether ye has cheated or not. "Anomalous" is just a term used in statistics to describe any data that has an unexpected value. It contains no negative meaning that suggests fake, cheating or whatsoever, unlike the corresponding translation in Chinese.

Besides, it is a textbook example of a kettle calls a pot black when some posted comments like "the article has no scientific value at all". Not only is it a sweeping generalization, it is also simply untrue.

Bear in mind, just like that Australian journalist who should bear all legal consequence for the irresponsible speculation and invasive question, we will be held legally accountable for the hurt and reputation damage induced from our comments on the author.

However, I still want to say it is such a stupid strategy and inappropriate moment to mention Ye in an article that is talking about performance-enhancing drugs and cheating.

2012-08-03 05:45 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48292**Bo Huang said:** Dear Sir Editor,

Greetings!

Excume me, can you send me the review details of my comment? It was removed last night. Thank you very much!

I understand that you removed Lai Jiang's article, because he is proofing in a sound way and hurted your fame and feeling. I would also be sorry if my naive humor hurted your heart. Since there is still a long list of frantic "Shame on you" and "Disgusting" from others, I guess – thanks to your Gentleman tradition – you love dirty words much more than rationality or humor. However, sorry, after 1 minute of painful thinking, I am still too shy to type anything dirty here.

Please forgive my bothering, and send me the review details when you have time and when it is possible at all. Thanks!

With Bests Regards!

Bo

PS My comment from yesterday:

Nature Essential:

1, Was Ye ' s performance anomalous?

Yes, usually we do not say "amazing" or "Superstar" for Asian athletes.

2, Doesn't a clean drug test during competition rule out the possibility of doping?

No, although the drug signal is far below 0.1 sigma, but there is still a chance that we cannot rule out completely. Especially, we guess China has High-Tech new drugs that can fool the test by taking effect two weeks after using it, or can just change the Gene and muscle structure of athletes.

3, How would performance be used to nab dopers?

We suspect the athlete who plays much better than others or progresses too much in a big match, or his/her performance fluctuates a lot. If the athlete is Austrian, we take 6 years to have a statistic result; if he/she is Chinese, we will double check him/her immediately and repeatedly.

4, Could an athlete then be disciplined simply for performing too well?

No, That would be unfair. We should only defame and libel him/her in a moral way.

2012-08-03 05:45 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48293

David Zheng said: From the author Ewen Callaway:

"Was Ye's performance anomalous?"

Yes. Her time in the 400 IM was more than 7 seconds faster than her time in the same event at a major meet in July. But what really raised eyebrows was her showing in the last 50 metres, which she swam faster than US swimmer Ryan Lochte did when he won gold in the men's 400 IM on Saturday, with the second-fastest time ever for that event."

The author's first statement of evidence is factually incorrect: her time in the 400 IM was 5 seconds faster, not 7 seconds.

The author's second statement of evidence (i.e., in the last 50 meters, she swam faster than Lochte did when he won gold in the men's 400 IM, with the second fastest time ever in that event) is factually misleading, because it fails to mention that Lochte swam the last 50 meters rather slowly – 5th place among his male co-competitors. There are several male swimmers that failed to win gold in the men's 400 IM that swam the last 50 meters faster than Ye.

By selectively picking only the facts that are favorable to his viewpoint that Ye's performance was anomalous, Callaway appears to be either negligent or intellectually dishonest. By failing to check all the facts on a reporting of a significant controversy, the editors of Nature have disappointed their readers who expect a high level of intellectual integrity from a leading scientific journal.

There are many people that first make up their mind, and then cherrypick facts to support their point of view. We see them all the time in BBC and CNN, but I was under the impression that Nature, as a journal of the scientific community, holds itself to a higher standard. After all, being unbiased and non-prejudicial, and letting the facts guide us to the truth, are ideals that should be more commonplace

in the scientific community than the general public.

I am sorry to say that on this story, I have been disappointed by Nature. I hope that your journal will do better next time.

2012-08-03 05:46 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48294

Elise Z said: It's really a great disappoint to see a "paper" like this in Nature. As someone who works for biology, it used to be my dream to publish on Nature. Now, Nature is just a gossip magazin for me. Pubilshing someting like this tells us Nature is not Science and it's nature to be gossip like a paparazzi!!!!!!!!!!

2012-08-03 06:02 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48297

Messy Shen said: haha,it's kinda interesting to read the comments. plz try to learn english better!

2012-08-03 06:16 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48299

Wailum Li said: Nature,

I think your user list will actually INCREASE based on this "disturbing" article. I felt compelled to create an account to voice more distaste for the lack of scientific method on show.

I consider myself British, but of Chinese origin, with scientific grounding at Oxford University. If this is what you consider as impartial, scientific journalism worthy of being published on Nature, you should be ashamed. I've never read such a sloppy and selective use of statistics in a scientific website before (in tabloid trash, maybe). As someone who considers himself western and chinese, I am ashamed by many of the articles I am reading in the west. Only in the last day or two has there been a softening of the criticism of Ye Shiwen.

Furthermore, to deliberately delete reader comments that were presented rationally, logically and with supporting evidence (albeit used to refute many of your erroneous claims and blatant insinuations), goes against the very spirit of scientific openness and the peer review process. It makes Nature appear dishonest and cowardly. Don't be so sloppy/cowardly as to parrot sensationalist headlines without exercising an iota of scientific rigor.

May I suggest that Nature does some real scientific research and be brave enough to provide a comprehensive and unbiased review of the actual swimming times to earn back the respect of your readers. Also, compare the number of doping incidents across different nations (US are no better). Compare Ye Shiwen's improvements against other elite swimmers when they were young. Compare her track record over time and mention how much she has grown physically. Mention the "disturbing" achievements of other recent record holders to put things into context.

Nature, I challenge you to be brave, admit your mistakes and redeem yourself with some real science.

2012-08-03 06:28 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48303

Sean Dong said: So i understand.

Next :Time to talk about about Michael Phelps and his eight gold medals.

2012-08-03 06:38 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48305

Jie XU said: Wow this article is still here? With a slightly different subtitle...Shame on you Nature!

2012-08-03 06:50 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48306

Eric Liu said: I totally agree with what Chen said:

"evidence, no data, only full of baseless suspicions and conjectures."

Truly a shame for Nature to publish such an article on the website.

2012-08-03 06:56 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48307

Sun Feng said: Is Nature a Gossip journal ?

Is Nature the representative of UK gentleman?

2012-08-03 06:58 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48308

Jason Smith said: can't believe this article is still featured on Nature's website. Nature seems comfortable to become a subway free newspaper.

2012-08-03 07:00 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48309

Veya Yang said: The editor of Nature shows lack of competence and tact in running a speculative story in the website, let alone placing it in such a prominent place. In terms of the reporter, it is obvious that he does not understand what science is about or what could be counted as a sound and valid scientific articles. There are hundreds of PhDs here waiting to discuss the validity of your article.

2012-08-03 07:11 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48311

lucy hou said: shame on you! Nature! where is your conscience and dignity as a worldwide scientific journal?!!!!

2012-08-03 07:15 AM

[Report this comment | #48312](#)

B Stone said: Is this article published in Nature?

Yes.

Really?

Really.

...

2012-08-03 07:15 AM

[Report this comment | #48313](#)

Feihu Zhao said: She won due to her name, which is pronounced as "Yes! We win!" in English. So...

2012-08-03 07:19 AM

[Report this comment | #48314](#)

kai he said: Thanks for those guys who reposted the deleted comments. I would say it is OK if NATURE delete them. Because those comments have been translated into different languages and transported through internet.

2012-08-03 07:19 AM

[Report this comment | #48315](#)

kai he said: Thanks for those guys who reposted the deleted comments. I would say it is OK if NATURE delete them. Because those comments have been translated into different languages and transported through internet.

2012-08-03 07:22 AM

[Report this comment | #48316](#)

John dz said: NATURE international weekly journal of jokes.

2012-08-03 07:29 AM

[Report this comment | #48317](#)

Yanbo Jia said: Dear Editors,

Stepping away from this ill-written article first, you've said those comments didn't abide by the Community Guidelines were deleted. Yes, I agree, but my question is: on what basis do you think Lai Jiang's comment violated the Community Guidelines? Explain this, or you are just too afraid of being scientifically and logically rebutted, aren't you?

Yours sincerely

2012-08-03 07:30 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48318**Yanbo Jia said:** Dear Editors,

Stepping away from this ill-written article first, you have said those comments did not abide by the Community Guidelines were deleted. Yes, I agree, but my question is: on what basis do you think Lai Jiang's comment violated the Community Guidelines? Explain this, or you are just too afraid of being scientifically and logically rebutted, aren't you?

Yours sincerely

2012-08-03 07:36 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48319**Levent Jackson said:** From now on, I believe in Science instead of Nature.

2012-08-03 07:43 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48320

jingye zhou said: As a top tier scientific journal with highest standard of excellent contents and objectiveness, NATURE disappointed and insulted all readers who truly believe in drawing scientific conclusions based on unbiased analysis of facts and data by publishing this article "Why great Olympic feats raise suspicions".

Unlike scientific publications which publicize best experimental results, athletes' performance in major events may or may not reflect their best performance in daily training. A few seconds difference in events that occurred years apart with no supporting data to reveal whether Ye's improvement was incidental or gradual can't lead to the conclusion that Ye's performance was anomalous.

I strongly recommend Nature to retract this article and give a sincere apology to Ye and all the readers who were offended by the lack of basic scientific discipline in Nature's publications.

2012-08-03 07:50 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48322

jingye zhou said: A number of comments which were based on facts and scientific analysis were deleted. These are the comments showed biased nature of this article. Readers who see Nature as a top tier objective journal that based on science need a fair explanation on why these comments were removed.

2012-08-03 07:50 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48324

jingye zhou said: A number of comments which were based on facts and scientific analysis were deleted. These are the comments showed biased nature of this article. Readers who see Nature as a top tier objective journal that based on science need a fair explanation on why these comments were removed.

2012-08-03 07:57 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48325

Augix G.H. Xu said: Maybe only limited amount of latest comments were displayed on this webpage. Lai Jiang's comment might still be in the database.

2012-08-03 07:57 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48326

Ruby Li said: Lol...

Please don't delete my comment! I just laugh at u Nature, that's it!

2012-08-03 08:13 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48327

Allan McNish said: It is disturbing that Nature.com is deliberately deleting comments, the same feat Big Brothers in Communist China have been doing.

2012-08-03 08:18 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48329

Xiaohang Zhang said: Look at my statistical analysis presented below. It's much more thorough and convincing than the guardian's.

I think they debunk the view that her swim was 'unbelievable' .

So I would appreciate it if you read through it.

#1. Ye Shiwen's last 50m split in the 400IM 28.93

Ryan Lochte's split 29.10

seems unbelievable? that's until you find out that Rebecca Adlington swam a last 50 split of 28.91 when she won gold in the 800m free in the 2011 World Championships. If a swimmer can do that last 50m split in an 800m race, what's so unbelievable about doing it in a 400 m race??

Fact 2# Let's compare Ye with Stephanie Rice, the gold winner in the 400IM in Beijing.

Ye 's 400 IM time in the 2010 Asian Games 4:33.79

her time in London '12 4:28.43

Rice's 400 IM time in the 2007 World championships 4:41.19

her gold medal time in '08 Beijing 4:29.45

Which set of times makes you sit up and wonder???

Fact 3#

Look at the gold medal times in the 400IM and Freestyle in Beijing and London.

400 m Beijing: 4:03.22 (Adlington) London: 4:01.45(Muffat)

400 IM Beijing 4:29.45 (Rice) London: 4:28.43(Ye)

A 1.45 sec improvement vs a 1 second improvement in times.

I'll let the facts speak for themselves.

2012-08-03 08:25 AM

Report this comment | #48331

Lei Wang said: The key part of this article is about anomaly, given it's published on Nature. But I found it astonishing that the author used only 4 lines without any statistics to back his claim, not mentioning part of his facts were obviously false. Actually if you look at the 40 fastest last split of 400M Medley Female performances given here:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/datablog/2012/aug/02/olympics-2012-ye-shiwen-400-medley-statistics-data?fb=native>

assuming the 40 numbers are a normal distribution, you can see that Ye's performance is just a 2.3 sigma event, far from a 5 sigma event, what we usually claim significantly anomalous in science.

Finally, the author of the article might want to write another article about Micheal Phelps of 2008 Olympics, where he grabbed 8 gold medals, 7 world records amid more than 20 heats, sounds like a 10 sigma anomaly? But I guess it's just natural for the western world to have supermans.

2012-08-03 08:35 AM

Report this comment | #48332

Shiwei Qumu said: I respect Nature. Controversial, though poorly substantial articles are usually popular topic which you editors should already know before publishing it. However, deleting Lai Jiang's well-grounded, quite prudent argument is a poor action which reflects that you editors do not respect comments at all. So please just shut the commenting function and announce that arguments are not welcomed.

2012-08-03 08:39 AM

Report this comment | #48333

Hongsheng Dai said: The journal makes me angry and I wrote something yesterday to express my anger. I thought this should be an end, since it is nature's choice to keep the paper or not. However, my comments were soon deleted. And I am really surprised that they deleted all the comments with reasonable arguments, but just keep those with angry tone. Is this the so called freedom of speech.

I WANT THINGS TO FINISH, BUT NATURE DOES NOT. SO I POST MY COMMENTS AGAIN. I ALSO COPIED BRIAN OWENS COMMENTS.

Here are my comments:

There are so many good comments. I here do not want to say anything more. But the comments from the online news editor, Brian Owens, really make me irritated.

Brian Owens comments: We appreciate that the case of Ye Shiwen is a sensitive one for some readers. However, I would like to point out that this story was not intended to insinuate that Ye is guilty of anything. As we point out in the first paragraph, she has never failed a drug test and so is the rightful Olympic champion. We wanted to use the controversy as a way to highlight what science can and can't tell us with respect to athletes' performance. We have done similar stories before, for example in the case of South African runner Caster Semenya. Congratulations to Ye Shiwen on her incredible win!

Brian Owens's comment: We wanted to use the controversy as a way to highlight what science can and can't tell us with respect to athletes performance. This is not an excuse that this paper should be published. The paper highlighted a little bit that how statistics can be used by citing Yorck Olaf Schumacher's work, however, the aim and logic of this paper is not science, but prejudice. For example, in the section "Does not a clean drug test during competition rule out the possibility of doping?" the first paragraph mentioned Ross Tucker's comments: "No. Clean drug test cannot rule out the possibility of doping. Everyone will pass at the Olympic Games. Hardly anyone fails in competition testing" and also wrote "Athletes are much more likely to dope while in training". Note that this is the conclusion of this section and the later paragraphs are the evidence (Yorck Olaf Schumacher's paper and work) to support it. However the right logic should be: if Athletes are more likely to dope while in training, then Out-of-competition tests are better choices, which is Yorck Olaf Schumacher's argument. Tracking an athlete over time and flagging anomalous performances would help anti-doping authorities to make better use of resources. This is true, as anti-doping authorities can spend more resources on players with anomalous performances. Out-of-competition tests can be done with limited resources to catch dopers.

The paper however is using the condition as a conclusion. It concluded: Athletes are much more likely to dope while in training. Some athletes do dope while in training. But does that mean they are more likely to dope while in training and does that mean most athletes are more likely to dope while in training? What is the evidence for this argument? What are the science and statistics behind it? I cannot see how Yorck Olaf Schumacher's work is related to the arguments: Athletes are much more likely to dope while in training. I cannot see why these two paragraphs were put in the same section and mislead people in such a way. An impatient reader may follow the paper and believe that there already have been solid evidence that athletes are more likely to dope while in training. More importantly, the only athlete name mentioned in the paper is Ye Shiwen. This surely makes people to think that Ye is very likely to dope while in training. How could this paper with such a poor logic pass the editor's screening?

Brian Owen also commented that "We have done similar stories before, for example in the case of South African runner Caster Semenya". This is another poor excuse. Are these two cases similar? No. The case of South African runner Caster Semenya is a gender test. That paper in nature indeed introduced the biological science behind it. It clarifies a lot of things. However, behind this

paper, there are no solid sciences, no strict or even a tiny little bit statistics used and even no logic. Ye passed the drug-test, which is the most rigorous test with the latest technology in Olympic history. However, this paper ignores this and miss-leads people that Ye is very likely to dope while in training. For the above reasons, I really do not accept Brian Owens's excuse of publishing this paper. Formal apology from the editor and the journal should be made and the paper should be taken down. The author has the right to write anything he likes, he can send his paper to his friends and he can send this paper to journal for publishing. But the editor should not let it pass. Even if the editors do not take any action, I do suggest that the author took it down himself. By the way, I do not think Ye Shiwen will take Brian Owens's congratulation.

2012-08-03 08:44 AM

Report this comment | #48334

Bin Zhang said: 'Yes. Her time in the 400 IM was more than 7 seconds faster than her time in the same event at a major meet in July 2011.' This sentence does not scientifically correct. Ye's result in 2012 Olympic in 400IM is 4:28:43, while 4:35:15¹ in the event in July 2011 which is the 2011 World Aquatics Championships held in Shanghai (I wonder if the event you mentioned is the same one). The time difference should be 6s and 720ms (less than 7 seconds) and So the 'more than 7 seconds faster' is wrong.

¹ available at : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming_at_the_2011_World_Aquatics_Championships_%E2%80%93_Women%27s_400_metre_individual_medley

2012-08-03 08:49 AM

Report this comment | #48335

LAconfidential Jiang said: I am very disappointed that Nature allowed the publication of such an irresponsible and biased article lacking basic scientific sense. NPG always claims its reputation and influence as a scientific publishing group. But I am worried that its reputation is going to be destroyed if it keeps doing so. What is more joke is that NPG is now expanding its market in China. Nature shameless. I hereby call for boycott of Nature and Nature journals!

2012-08-03 09:07 AM

Report this comment | #48336

jennifer wingler said: What a shame of you to delete Lai Jiang's comment! That is what all you can do? Okay you've already shocked me with showing no respect to people's comment and argue as well as science.

2012-08-03 09:14 AM

Report this comment | #48337

Jerry Su said: I thought science is about proving something with solid evidence. What a shame.

2012-08-03 09:18 AM

Report this comment | #48338

Jerry Su said: Nature's point – how can a woman do better than a man?

2012-08-03 09:20 AM

Report this comment | #48339

Hongsheng Dai said: In fact, the author's comments does represent the journal's comments. Nature can simply forward all the comments to the author and ask the author to response. This is what most journals did. However, the online editor responded yesterday: We wanted to use the controversy as a way to highlight what science can and can't tell us with respect to athletes' performance. We have done similar stories before, for example in the case of South African runner Caster Semenya.

With this reponse, it is the journal which should take responsibility. The editor said the paper highlighted what science can and can't tell us with respect to athletes' performance. This comments implies that the editor does not read this paper carefully or may select it with prejudice.

2012-08-03 09:38 AM

Report this comment | #48342

Qi Hu said: I was totally stunned that Nature has published such an "article", and totally stunned by the "fact" that Ewen Callaway used to be a "scientist". It is totally suspicious and ridiculous! What a funny "Scientific Journal" ! What an absurd "scientist". Does he really know anything about "science"? I am deeply shamed of my viewpoint that Nature is a respetable and prestigious "scientific journal". What a shame!

BTW, Shit the guy named Alex!

2012-08-03 09:38 AM

Report this comment | #48343

George Sheng said: Ewen Callaway, are you related to Shi-Min Fang (Fang Zhouzi)?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fang_Zhouzi

2012-08-03 09:44 AM

Report this comment | #48344

Qi Hu said: I was totally stunned that Nature has published such an "article", and totally stunned by the "fact" that Ewen Callaway used to be a "scientist". It is totally suspicious and ridiculous! What a funny "Scientific Journal" ! What an absurd "scientist". Does he really know anything about "science"? I am deeply shamed of my viewpoint that Nature is a respetable and prestigious "scientific journal". What a shame!

BTW, Shit the guy named Alex!

2012-08-03 09:45 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48345

Gang Li said: Please stop these meaningless debate. It's a scientific journal, not a chat room. Never forget who you are ,who I am.

2012-08-03 09:50 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48346

Ran Xin said: In Reply to Alex

Alex . said:

I applaud the Nature Editor for publishing this, yes, controversial, but also pretty benign piece, if for no other reason, but to observe this (indeed) predictable outrage that it triggered. It's fun to watch unfolding at a comment per 10 seconds rate (I guess there is no shortage of pissed off Chinese willing to chime in). However, the degree of arrogance and latent hatred coming presumably from mostly US/UK-educated Chinese-born scientists towards the West mixed up with direct insults are frankly stunning.

Alex, the reason so many Chinese scholars are angered by this article is as follows: it is manipulating facts to lead people to think that Ye's performance is unbelievable so it implies that there must be cheating. The Chinese commentators are not just 'willing to chime in', they are truly outraged for a legitimate reason. And you think it's just funny to see them expressing their feelings? Did you even take the time to read through replies from Zhenxi Zhang and Lai Jiang? You do not have any respect for the feelings of these angered Chinese scholars, and then you call us arrogant? Think twice, Alex.

It's a good thing Chinese scholars are expressing their feelings. Easy bullies are those who do not respond. Cheap shots will keep coming if you do not respond.

2012-08-03 09:51 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48347

Gardner Jorn said: What the fuck!! How could a formal magazine become so mean and so foolish!! This paper makes me feel sick!! Fuck u!

2012-08-03 09:51 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48348

Qi Cheng said: Funny! Nature keeps letting well-written comments gone and changing the article little by little. Why don't leave the original one if you have nothing to hide? It's useless. People saved all the versions.

2012-08-03 09:53 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48349

Maggie Xu said: In searching after truth, a scientific skepticism need be maintained. But it does not equal to selectively suspect one young athlete without solid evidence. Especially she has been proved to be "clean" by latest testing with latest technology. If she can be suspected just by agnosticism, no one can be proved to be "clean" in whatever games.

As many people mentioned before, the data showed in this article were obviously wrong. It lacks basic science training and logic, but is full of scientific flaws. As a top academic journal, how did NATURE's editor not notice the wrong data in this article and allow it to be published??

Some professionals already pointed out and corrected the wrong data, why is the article still here? IT should be retracted!! Even it is a news article, it should respect the facts and use right data.

More unbelievably, NATURE is selectively deleting those comments and changed the sub-title of article!!!! Are you doing science or playing politics??

As a researcher and a reader of Nature, I am extremely disappointed by your unprofessional attitude. Of course, you do not care what I am concerned about because you do not care your reputation in science community.

2012-08-03 10:02 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48350

Shuai Yuan said: Shame on Nature to delete comments with solid data and true scientific analysis. Never thought Nature can be so low...

2012-08-03 10:05 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48351

Xiaoxi Zhu said: the nature is doing a great job as the Great Firewall. The nature deleted so many comments which are reliable and pointed out the false in this article. As a math student, I just feel sorry for the author's poor statistics.

There are many good point of view in Lai Jiang's comment. However, the nature would rather delete such a good comment than publish such a low-level paper of Ewen Callaway.

2012-08-03 10:10 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48352

macro macro said: Why don't you say that you also changed the subtitle? Why not give us the **original subtitle** to see if it is biased???

2012-08-03 10:22 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48353

Ying Zhang said: To Alex .:

One of the most common but illogical strategy in politics is to oppose one's view not because it is wrong, but because who says it. Sports should not be politics, but thank you for showing us one textbook example anyway. In Alex's view, all you people trying to reason, analyze, or looking for evidence to back up your view are so stupid. You don't have to do that. Simply group all the others into "arrogant" and full of "hatred" scientists who are "educated in UK/US" but "born in China". Done!

2012-08-03 10:23 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48354**macro macro said:** Dear Editor:

you claim "*The article is a fair-minded look at a controversy that we did not initiate.*"

I say you initiated part of the controversy by putting subtitle "'Performance profiling' could help to catch cheater" beside Ye's photo. (this skill sounds very familiar, like that TIME did when reporting news about Tibet). A lot of outrages resulted from that. Yet you silently changed the subtitle and now only stress "the science behind a controversy". That's not responsible way to address the controversy. I say you are a cheater wrt to that aspect!

2012-08-03 10:25 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48355

Yi Liao said: Shame on Nature to publish such foolish article. Nature used be a dream magazine for many scientists. But now No!!!

2012-08-03 10:42 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48356**Ran Xin said:** In response to the editor's notes:

No the article is not fair-minded. It is re-iterating false statements that tries to mislead people into thinking that Ye's performance is 'unbelievable' and thus implies wrong doing from Ye. It still says the '7 second improvement from personal best' and is not corrected. It is still saying that 'Ye swam fast than Lochte and that's anomalous', which has been pointed out by many as a pear to apple comparison. You dodged from the responsibility of correcting these mistakes, by saying that you did not initiate these comments. But you are "NATURE". The fact that you did not look into these misleading statements and simply helped spreading them is exactly why so many Chinese scholars are disappointed.

Sticking to "no bias or racism' is a good thing. At least you acknowledge these values. But denying the accusation of so many offended, whose arguments are very well put forward by comments like that from Jiang Lai, takes a lot of 'courage'. Actually, I think 'arrogance' would be the more appropriate word. Your editor's notes translates to me as a brief message " Shut up and I don't care ". You can accuse me of being unreasonable, let's just see how many unreasonably offended people are out there.

I personally ask for your thoughts about what I said.

2012-08-03 10:45 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48358

Maggie Xu said: Can anyone tell me why Nature is selectively deleting comments?

Why nature changed sub-title of this article?

This article is obviously full of scientific flaws and false data, why it can be published on Nature?

Do you think as a news article, you do NOT need obey the facts? Do you think you can report whatever

you want to suspect and tell the readers do not believe whatever evidence and results are here right now because no one knows in future how much science and technology can do??

Based on this logic, no one can be proved to be clean in whatever games because we do not have developed enough technology to prove anything. The only thing author and editor ask readers to do is Suspecting whole world, do not believe whatever have been proved.

No matter how much technology can do, the truth only has one side and will be there forever.

2012-08-03 10:55 AM

Report this comment | #48359

jennifer wingler said: ... excuse me for using Chinese above in order to make it more clearly and precisely. Please do not use dirty words in comments to show our angry attitude. If they really delete some good comments with solid facts and analysis and only left those with dirty words, we would do nothing but been thrown in the mud of "nonsense and dirty-word-user".

2012-08-03 11:30 AM

Report this comment | #48361

Ran Xin said: Oh my god my comment was deleted to! I feel so honored. - I wanted to add a comment in response to 'Alex': I don't hate the west. What I hate is the bias and racism that's harbored by a bunch of individuals and reflected in this article and your comment.

2012-08-03 11:33 AM

Report this comment | #48362

Venti Awake said: To Audrey Richard: Welcome to the PhD family! I am afraid I had a totally different feeling, as a matter of fact, very uncomfortable feeling, when I started reading the piece. If it is indeed about going against anti-doping controls, a target with proven doping history would be appropriate, and there is a long list of candidates at his disposal (Even so, I am not sure if he could get away from serious legal troubles). Can you imagine a news article about terrorism placing your picture aside the story after you being proved innocent? If so, congratulations, you have a

winning case!

I am not a fan of his "explanation" part either. A person with a biomedical background should have known better about "anomalous". It happens whether we like it or not.

Mother nature has her brutal side:

1. A Chicago girl Tinley was born with Apert syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that occurs in about 1 in 10,000 births.
2. PKU occurs in about 1 in 10,000 births (Steinfeld et al., 2004).
3. OCA2 in the United States occurs as approximately 1:36,000 (Lee et al, 1994)

...

The list goes on (<http://www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/rare-genetic-disorders-learning-about-genetic-disease-979>).

Are those anomalous cases? I think more so than Ye's case, statistically. Should we question their legitimacy? If the answer is no, why is it so hard for us to embrace the excitement Mother nature brought to us at the Olympic games when she shows her gentle side? If it still seems okay with you to dismiss the likelihood of Ye's "anomalous" performance at the Olympics (which has been proven not anomalous at all), let's add Rebecca Soni's picture to this article, side by side. After all, both of them are clean. Aren't they? Or by the author's standard, they are just dopers who have not being caught yet, not until some miraculous "performance profiling" is adopted.

As to the difference between Nature News and Nature Magazine, I agree with you. I do not expect the same level of qualities. However, I do not expect cheap insinuations which one often finds in paparazzi magazines. If I want a dose of something like that, Nature News is the last place I would think of.

As to Noah Gray, I have to add this. As professionals, we just do not behave like kindergarteners. He's not the editor of the News front, I get it. But he is related; otherwise he would not have the authority or means to check the count issue in the comment section. But I expect more out of him as a scientist, or maybe I am deadly wrong. In science, when it comes to right or wrong regardless of the subject, we debate, we do not mock however naive the other side appears. That's the bottomline. Respect your opponent, my friend. That's my take on the spirit of the Olympics.

This is the last time I visit Nature. Not that I have turned into a Nature hater, but my time will be better spent at other places where I can find real science instead of hyped fabrications. It was very nice exchanging ideas with you. Please keep up with your good posts. I am sorry I probably won't be able to read them. But I'm sure many people would appreciate your input just as I do. Good day!

2012-08-03 11:35 AM

Report this comment | #48363

Zhuo Wang said: Editor's Note: "The first paragraph states that Ye has never had a positive drug test and notes that much of the discussion of her win "has been tinged with racial and political undertones". "

Yet, Nature reiterated the very same half truth in its worst variation in the very next paragraph with straightface.

Editor's Note: "The article is a fair-minded look at a controversy that we did not initiate. It asks whether new developments in performance monitoring could dispel the unfortunate suspicions that the most extraordinary athletic performance raises these days, whatever the nationality of the athlete."

Shouldn't one start examining any controversy by looking at ALL the facts, i.e. collecting all the data without cherry-picking? If a so-called controversy couldn't even pass the smell test, why bother with any inclusive forensic software at all?

2012-08-03 11:46 AM

Report this comment | #48364

Zhuo Wang said: Apologize for the typos and wrong words used in the previous post.

Editor's Note: "The first paragraph states that Ye has never had a positive drug test and notes that much of the discussion of her win has been tinged with racial and political undertones."

Yet, Nature reiterated the very same half truth in its worst form in the very next paragraph with straight face.

Editor's Note: "The article is a fair-minded look at a controversy that we did not initiate. It asks whether new developments in performance monitoring could dispel the unfortunate suspicions that the most extraordinary athletic performance raises these days, whatever the nationality of the athlete."

Shouldn't one start examining any controversy by looking at ALL the facts, i.e. collecting all the data without cherry-picking? If a so-called controversy couldn't even pass the smell test, why bother with any inconclusive forensic software at all?

2012-08-03 11:47 AM

Report this comment | #48365

LENG T. said: Seriously, since this article is published through the scrutiny of nature editors as indicated in the editor's note, I have ABSOLUTELY no reason not to cast doubts on the credibility of say, half of the articles being published on nature. Absurd as my word might be, nature just did worse.

2012-08-03 11:48 AM

Report this comment | #48366

Chongzhi Zu said: Look like this "controversial" piece has generated a large number of page hits and quite some new user accounts for the Journal. Congratulation, Nature, for the savvy transformation from a scientific journal to a business guru. I'm pretty sure the page hits and the account count will continue rising as long as you leave this article on your Website. Way to go!

To Alex and alike, keep laughing at those "crazy", "angered", "biased", "racist" Chinese scientists all you want. But if you believe in Karma, the unfair treatment and ill wish that you threw at other races, countries, and their innocent girls will always come back to hit you. As I checked last time, Karma has a

"unbelievable", "anomalous" "performance profile."

2012-08-03 11:53 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48367

Allon Field said: Since they are intentionally deleting certain comments, please send your comments to the Editor-in chief. And also put your comments to the facebook.

Editor-in-Chief, Philip Campbell

p.campbell@nature.com

London

Education: BSc, aeronautical engineering, University of Bristol; MSc, astrophysics, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London; PhD and postdoctoral fellowship, upper atmospheric physics, University of Leicester. Areas of responsibility include: Co-Editor of Editorials, editorial content and management of Nature, long-term quality of all Nature Publications.

2012-08-03 11:56 AM

[Report this comment](#) | #48368

Allon Field said: Since they are intentionally deleting certain comments, please send your comments to the Editor-in chief. And also put your comments to the facebook.

Editor-in-Chief, Philip Campbell

p.campbell@nature.com

2012-08-03 12:00 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48369

Gerald Manton said: The author clearly has no preparation in critical thinking nor any scientific background to investigate issues like this. What a clown.

2012-08-03 12:01 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48370

Elaine Zhong said: It was really ridiculous!!! lots of reasonable comments were deleted here!!!! So cheap and stupid! No wonder most of you got poor score in maths!

Don't you always advocate FREE SPEECH? and criticise our CHINA democratic institutions and personal liberty???? Watch yourself in the mirror first before you open mouth!

You can delete comments though, we'll write again! u know how many Chinese are all over the world? every one of us who spit on your country, you will be drowned in 1 second!

2012-08-03 12:03 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48371

Allon Field said: Since they are intentionally deleting certain comments, please send your comments to the Editor-in chief. And also put your comments to the facebook.

Editor-in-Chief, Philip Campbell

p.campbell@nature.com

2012-08-03 12:03 PM

[Report this comment | #48372](#)

Di Yun said: It was astonishing to see Nature publishes such a low quality article. It doesn't take a real scientist's deep curiosity and truthful pursuit of facts to sense the elements that are deviating this article from a scientific one to a simple political propaganda. It is indeed so sad that more profound thoughts are seen occasionally from the hollywood produced movies than the supposedly rigorous and truthful scientific journals. Shame on those who are knowingly throwing their biased and unfounded points to pollute the field of science! Remember, if you want people to respect you as a scientist, you have to first respect the principles of science! You may take the glory at times, but time will eventually become your haunting nightmare because it will show who you are.

2012-08-03 12:08 PM

[Report this comment | #48373](#)

Helen Zhang said: We demand an explanation for deleting Lai Jiang's comments. Please tell us which community guidelines are violated and how. Jiang's comments are one of the most scientific one among all the above. It is really shameless for Nature to purposely delete his comments.

2012-08-03 12:15 PM

[Report this comment | #48374](#)

Nature Science said: As the online editor is constantly deleting comments here, there is a page created in Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ShameOnYouNature>
Please leave your comment there instead, where this Nature's scandal can be better recorded in the history.

2012-08-03 12:18 PM

[Report this comment | #48375](#)

Zhuo Wang said: I suggest we start a Wiki list for 'Nature's Olympic controversy", where we can keep a permanent record of arguments from all sides.

I also suggest we start a petition at change.org to Nature requesting a thorough investigation of the case, and in case of clear wrong-doing on the part of Nature, a formal apology.

2012-08-03 12:27 PM

[Report this comment | #48376](#)

Zhuo Wang said: Make it Nature magazine. Nature is hardly a household name outside of the science community.

2012-08-03 12:28 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48377

Zhuo Wang said: Make it Nature Magazine. Since the journal is hardly a household name outside of the science community.

2012-08-03 12:33 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48378

K Li said: To Audrey Richard: To a scientist, here are the reasons why this article and Nature are unbelievable. First, such a fact-stirring, extremely misleading report (or gossip news would be a more appropriate name?) could appear in Nature. Dr. Richard, as a scientist, do you agree that the so-called facts listed in this article are wrong and biased after you read all of the comments? Is this acceptable to you Dr. Richard? An article like this should have appeared at gossip journals and we Chinese scientists won't bother to comment! Seeing such an article in Nature is unbelievable and a shame, because we respect (or used to respect) Nature more than any other scientific journals!!! Not even mention that publishing in Nature makes this article much more misleading and hurting! Second, Nature is selectively deleting comments. Your comments showed that you strongly against the second point based on your observation: the comments disappeared sequentially along time. As a Ph.D. researcher, I appreciate your point of view and totally respect your scientific spirit. So I decided to repeat your study myself. First, you are right about the sequential disappearing. As I wrote this comment, your comment (48009) is gone along with several following ones. However, here are some numbers I got when I followed down. 48024 is followed by 48026, 48065 is followed by 48068, 48070 then 48073 then 48075; 48076 then 48078 then 48080, 48083 followed by 48085 then 48088, 48100 followed by 48102. OK, I don't have time to check all of the comments but the numbers I got are clear enough to make me suspect. I don't like the way the communist China government uses to control people's voice. So I really hope that Nature didn't do this. Dr. Richard, could you please explain to me where the numbers in between went? Thanks!

2012-08-03 12:57 PM

[Report this comment](#) | #48379

Andy Wu said: If it was not motivated by bias or racism, why it was said "when we look at this young swimmer from China who breaks a world record, that's not proof of anything. It asks a question or two."

If your intention was to investigate the science behind a controversy arising from the current Olympic Games, why the discussion and details here are not scientific .

Shame on Nature

2012-08-03 12:58 PM

Report this comment | #48380

Xi Chen said: Based on the new standard of publication Nature revealed through this article, I strongly argue that Nature should publish my new finding "Extraordinary Achievement by Michael Phelps May Be Due to Arsenic in His DNA". Please find the abstract (or full text) here: <http://tiny.cc/h4.fiw>.

2012-08-03 12:58 PM

Report this comment | #48381

Edward Johnson said: I am shocked to read this article from Nature. Let me ask Nature a question or two. When does Nature become a rumor mill? How could a scientific journal spread rumor in the name of science? It is plainly shameful and very disappointing.

2012-08-03 01:02 AM

Report this comment | #48382

Xi Chen said: Sorry for the wrong link on #48380. Let's try the full link:
<http://xichenqbb.blogspot.com/2012/08/extraordinary-achievement-by-michael.html>

2012-08-03 01:04 AM

Report this comment | #48383

Andy Wu said: Nature and <http://www.natureasia.com/ch/> should be banned in China.

2012-08-03 01:06 AM

Report this comment | #48384

qshi Liu said: It is a shame for Nature to make any corrections to this article, without retract it, when there are so many evidences, showing that the author is fully biased towards Ye Shiwen.

Although this article does not need peer review as any scientific paper do, Nature still has the responsibility to retract this article, when it proves to be unreasonable. But unfortunately, Nature did NOT. As a scientist, probably I would not think "Nature" would be reliable, both articles in the news, AND any scientific papers it publishes.

2012-08-03 01:08 AM

Report this comment | #48385

zion wu said: Shame on you Nature.

2012-08-03 01:23 AM

Report this comment | #48387

Xi Chen said: To Andy Wu: (On post No. 48383) We should not lower our standard to that of Nature. Unlike Nature, we support freedom of speech.
To Ewen Callaway: Until you retract this article and officially apologize, you will never hear the end of it.

Believe me.

2012-08-03 01:47 AM

Report this comment | #48388

Qin Xu said: Calm down guys. You should be generous about the statement in article. You guys should understand that they can not win the Olympic game and therefore release their anger and hate over the Chinese players on the internet. What do you expect from the losers?

2012-08-03 01:55 AM

Report this comment | #48389

K Li said: This article has been followed and commented so long and so much. Simply with the fact that the major "facts" that this article used to question Ye are wrong and misleading, any serious, respectful journal would retract it, but not Nature?!!! Are you kidding me?

2012-08-03 01:56 AM

Report this comment | #48390

Xianchun Tang said: I cannot believe that NATURE DELETE comments here??????????
I WILL NEVER ORDER NATURE ANYMORE, ALTHOUGH IT IS CHEAP.

2012-08-03 02:02 AM

Report this comment | #48391

Jon Song said: Since Nature website cannot display all the commented submitted by its readers, the following blog has been created to collect as many raw txt as possible so that new readers of this report can follow how the controversy around this report has been evolving. <http://nature-flawed-report.blogspot.com/?view=magazine>

You need to be registered with *Nature* and agree to our Community Guidelines to leave a comment. Please log in or register as a new user. You will be re-directed back to this page.

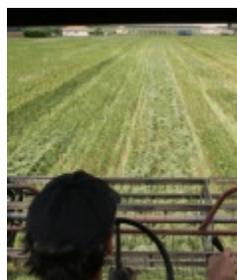
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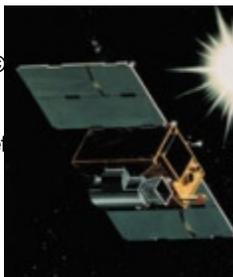
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premises
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Reserved.

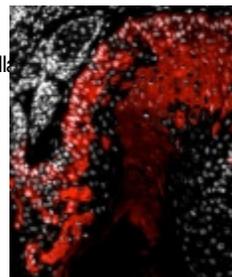
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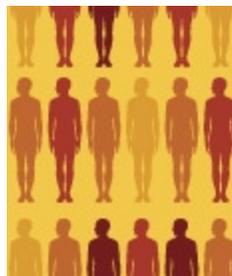
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