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An additional investigation of research material

Five weeks ago, we urgently requested a complimentary investigation of the Gothenburg study about DAMP/ADHD in order to prove for independent investigators that the persons who participated in the year-22 follow-up study were all included in the year-7 investigation, and that they all came from the same diagnostic group, and that no exchanges of persons between the groups were performed and that the drop-out rate at year 22 was in accordance with what was reported in a scientific article (Rasmussen & Gillberg 2000, JAACAP).

The Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Sahlgrenska Academy—Professor Ove Lundgren—has on March 7, 2003, without us having asked for it (which we did earlier, in January 2003), but with our approval, investigated the relevant material and found everything to be in order. He has thus looked through all the research study subjects case notes at 7 years of age and at 22 years of age, without picking up any information about the individuals other than name, date of birth, and diagnostic group. Lundgren has reported his findings to the head of the Sahlgrenska Academy, Göran Bondjers, who has now come to the conclusion that the investigation was properly done and sufficient.

The relevant material contains information of a very sensitive nature and the participants have been promised that this information would not be given to any outsiders. We therefore, in the beginning, were hesitant about whether an external investigation was ethically justifiable. In regard to the very serious accusations about scientific fraud, which was directed at this study, and given how these suspicions have spread, we considered, after an initial hesitation, that some kind of investigation was inevitable, in spite of the fact that any such investigation must involve some kind of violation of the integrity of the participants. Professor Ove Lundgren, however, is a doctor and a researcher and in his position as chairman at the Ethics Committee he is a very trusted member of the faculty. Furthermore, Lundgren has never been connected with our research group and therefore he must be regarded as completely impartial. That Lundgren was given the possibility to do a limited investigation of the documentation, which involved that only a minimum of sensitive information was revealed to him, but also meant that the accusations about scientific fraud as they were presented, now definitely could be dismissed, we regarded this as an ethically appropriate and reasonable decision to undertake in an awkward situation.

As the material now has been investigated by a trustworthy and in the scientific community respected person, without any connection to our research group, we find that an additional investigation no longer is relevant and thus no longer defensible neither by ethical standards nor by law. This view is shared by the head of the Sahlgrenska Academy, Göran Bondjers, who after Lundgren's investigation definitely dismissed the accusations about fraud.

From these facts we hereby retract our earlier request for an additional investigation as described in the first paragraph.

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