1 **Title:** Comment: Spinning prions, doppels and shadoos.

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5 **NCBI SciENcv:** <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/myncbi/mpremzl/cv/130205/>

6 **Open Science Framework:** <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/AX3TS>

7

8 **Abstract**

9

10 The present comment reported evidence that Watts and colleagues intentionally misappropriated initial
11 description of Shadow of prion protein gene in their 2007 article's press release entitled "New prion
12 protein discovered by Canadian scientists may offer insight into mad cow disease" that was published on
13 AAAS EurekAlert! news service ([https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-08/uoa-](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-08/uoa-npp081507.php)
14 [npp081507.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-08/uoa-npp081507.php)).

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16 **Keywords:** doppel, prion, research misconduct, shadoo, Shadow of prion protein gene

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18 **Comment**

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20 I would like to inform scientific public about one breach of scientific integrity that included
21 misappropriation of initial description of Shadow of prion protein gene (*SPRN*) by Watts and colleagues
22 (Watts et al. 2007). Specifically, I would like to report evidence that Watts and colleagues intentionally
23 misappropriated initial description of *SPRN* gene encoding shadoo (Sho) in their 2007 article's press
24 release entitled "New prion protein discovered by Canadian scientists may offer insight into mad cow
25 disease" that was published on AAAS EurekAlert! news service
26 (https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-08/uoa-npp081507.php). The initial description of *SPRN*

27 gene and Sho protein included research published in 1 dissertation (Premzl 2005) and 3 original research
28 articles (Premzl et al. 2003, 2004; Premzl and Gamulin 2007). None of these peer reviewed publications
29 was attributed appropriately by Watts and colleagues in their 2007 article's press release. Such deliberate
30 misappropriation of another persons' results conformed to U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy
31 definitions of research misconduct (Office of Science and Technology Policy 2000; National Academies
32 of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). More specifically, the research misconduct was defined
33 as "fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism ¹ in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in
34 reporting research results", and plagiarism was defined as "appropriation of another person's ideas,
35 processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit". For example, in medical research, such
36 so-called "spins" in public domain were known to occur frequently in press releases (Woloshin et al.
37 2009; Boutron et al. 2010; Yavchitz et al. 2012). Among others, these willfully distorted
38 misinterpretations of research results could influence and bias funding agencies' decisions on allocation
39 of research finances and resources (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017).
40 Therefore, the present comment would proposed that Watts and colleagues 2007 article's press release
41 published on AAAS EurekAlert! news service entitled "New prion protein discovered by Canadian
42 scientists may offer insight into mad cow disease" was retracted
43 (https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-08/uoa-npp081507.php).

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45 **Authorship note**

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47 The present comment included author's personal opinion.

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1 "plagiarism, n." Oxford English Dictionary Third Edition (2006) OED Online. Oxford University Press
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(1) The action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft.

(2) A particular idea, piece of writing, design, etc., which has been plagiarized; an act or product of plagiarism.

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