

Summary of LOWI opinion 2015-04

This opinion concerns a case in which the Petitioner complained to the Board about a study that the Petitioner regards as reaching an erroneous final conclusion, and that does not include a number of bibliographical entries which the Petitioner deems relevant. The Petitioner also stated that the Interested Parties have refused to discuss these matters with the Petitioner.

It is clear from the complaint submitted to the Board and the request submitted to the LOWI that the Petitioner does not concur with the final conclusion of the study. The Petitioner disagrees with the Interested Parties about the precise scope of the study, the precise meaning of the final conclusion, and the question of which literature is relevant. This means that the case is not about research integrity but rather concerns a difference of opinion between researchers. The Institution's complaint procedure and the LOWI's request procedure are not, however, meant as forums for conducting a scientific dispute. The Board has therefore correctly found the complaint inadmissible. In addition, the LOWI has ruled that the Interested Parties were not, after their initial response, obliged to continue responding to the repeated criticisms of a third party working outside their own discipline. The LOWI does not deem it unreasonable for them to have decided to cease responding based on such considerations as the relevance of the criticism and the amount of time involved in responding. Such a decision should, however, have been communicated clearly so that the relevant party is not left in the dark.

On 31 March 2015, the Board issued its final decision in line with the LOWI's opinion.