



Statement for the attention of the editors-in-chief

For 2 years now, IHU Méditerranée Infection and its researchers have been the target of cyber harassment organized through the PUBPEER platform.

This cyber-harassment campaign aims to incite scientific journals to retract scientific articles from IHU Méditerranée Infection to harm its image.

Of the approximately 6,000 scientific articles published by IHU Méditerranée Infection, only one has been retracted during the past two years, an article in which the IHU was only cited as a partner.

On the other hand, IHU Méditerranée Infection has confirmed itself as a world reference center, hosting within it 9 *Highly Cited Researchers* in 2021 out of the 86 French people in the field of life sciences, which greatly contributes to the international fame of Aix-Marseille University through Shanghai ranking.

The IHU is also the center in France that has published the most on COVID-19 during the past two years (no less than 448 articles are currently referenced on PubMed).

Nevertheless, in order to put an end to this harassment characterized by at least 370 commented articles on PUBPEER, often anonymously, in the majority of cases about misinterpretations of ethical aspects of research and sometimes in defamatory terms, accusing for example the IHU to carry out a neo-colonialist science, **Foundation IHU Méditerranée Infection filed a complaint** against the leader of the PUBPEER platform, Mr. Boris BARBOUR, as well as one of the identified authors, Mrs. Elisabeth BIK.

This decision to file a complaint was voted on during the last Board of Directors of the Foundation in the presence, among others, of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, the President of the University as well as the General Director of University Hospital.

We call on each other to let justice take its course