

Scientific journal retracts article that claimed no evidence of climate crisis

Publisher Springer Nature says 2022 article ‘not supported by available evidence’ as editors launch investigation

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Springer Nature has retracted an article published in the European Physical Journal Plus that claimed there was no evidence of a climate crisis and no trend in rainfall extremes, floods, droughts and food productivity. Photograph: Yahya Arhab/EPA

One of the world’s biggest scientific publishers has retracted a journal article that claimed to have found no evidence of a climate crisis.

Springer Nature said it had retracted the article, by four Italian physicists, after an internal investigation found the conclusions were “not supported by available evidence or data provided by the authors”.

Climate sceptic groups widely publicised the article, which appeared in the European Physical Journal Plus in January 2022 – a journal not known for publishing climate change science.

Nine months later the article was reported uncritically in a page one story in the Australian newspaper and promoted in two segments on Sky News Australia – a channel that has been described as **a global hub for climate science misinformation**. The segments were viewed more than 500,000 times on YouTube.

Sky and the Australian find ‘no evidence’ of a climate emergency – they weren’t looking hard enough

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The article claimed to have analysed data to find no trend in rainfall extremes, floods, droughts and food productivity.

“In conclusion on the basis of observational data, the climate crisis that, according to many sources, we are experiencing today, is not evident yet,” the article said.

Several climate scientists **told the Guardian** and later the **news agency AFP** that the article had misrepresented some scientific articles, was “selective and biased” and had “cherry-picked” information.

After those concerns were raised, Springer Nature announced in October it was investigating the article.

In a statement Springer Nature said its editors had launched a “thorough investigation”, which included a post-publication review by subject matter experts.

The authors of the article also submitted an addendum to their original work during the course of the investigation, the statement said.

“After careful consideration and consultation with all parties involved, the editors and publishers concluded that they no longer had confidence in the results and conclusions of the article,” the journal said.

“The addendum was not considered suitable for publication and retraction was the most appropriate course of action in order to maintain the validity of the scientific record.”

A **retraction note appearing on the article** says concerns were raised “regarding the selection of the data, the analysis and the resulting conclusions of the article”.

The note says the article’s conclusions “were not supported by available evidence or data provided by the authors”.

“In light of these concerns and based on the outcome of the post publication review, the editors-in-chief no longer have confidence in the results and conclusions reported in this article,” the note adds.

The article is still available for download, but the manuscript now has the words “RETRACTED ARTICLE” stamped over each page. According to the journal’s website, the article was accessed 92,000 times.

The Guardian asked why the issues with the paper were not picked up before publication. Springer Nature said it could not discuss “the specific history or peer review process of a paper with anyone other than the authors”.

The publisher and editors were “committed to maintaining the highest possible levels of integrity in the content published in the journal, and we are taking steps to ensure that similar issues do not occur in the future”.

“For example, we are supporting our editors-in-chief in increasing oversight of editors and guest editors to ensure that our policies and best practice are adhered to,” a statement added.



Alarm at exodus of climate voices on Twitter after Musk takeover

Prof Steven Sherwood, a climate scientist at the University of New South Wales who was among those critical of the article, said it was important the journal had allowed the authors to defend their work.

“This shows the journal did not rush to judgment against the paper,” he said.

“I commend the journal, both for giving this initial benefit of the doubt to the authors and for having the resolve to retract the paper when the authors could not justify their claims.”

Two of the study’s four authors, retired nuclear physicist Renato Ricci and known climate science sceptic Franco Prodi, signed a declaration in early 2022 that there was “no climate emergency” and that “enriching the atmosphere with CO₂ is beneficial”.

The study’s lead author, nuclear physicist Prof Gianluca Alimonti, **argued in 2014 that there was no consensus** among climate scientists that global warming was caused by human activity. At least six separate studies have shown that between 90% and 100% of climate scientists agree warming is caused by humans.

The Guardian emailed Alimonti for comment but did not receive a reply. The Australian newspaper and Sky News Australia were also approached for comment.