

[Psychiatrist files ghostwriting complaint against Harvard doctor and four others](#)

**Mass General, Harvard University Psychiatrist files ghostwriting complaint against Harvard doctor and four others**

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By Liz Kowalczyk, Globe Staff

A University of Pennsylvania psychiatrist filed a complaint with the federal Office of Research Integrity accusing five psychiatrists, including Dr. Gary Sachs of Massachusetts General Hospital, of scientific misconduct.

Dr. Jay Amsterdam, a psychiatry professor at U.Penn., said that the five physicians allowed their names to be appended to a manuscript that was drafted by medical communications company Scientific Therapeutics Information, hired by SmithKline Beecham, now GlaxoSmithKline. The paper, he said in his July 8 letter to federal officials, misrepresented information from a research study on the antidepressant drug Paxil.

The manuscript was published in the American Journal of Psychiatry in 2001, and has been cited in hundreds of medical journal articles, textbooks, and practice guidelines. Amsterdam said the paper suggested that Paxil may be beneficial in the treatment of bipolar depression, without acknowledging the medical communication company's contribution or the extent of GSK's involvement.

E-mails that Amsterdam included with his complaint letter draw a picture of a political battle between Amsterdam and one of the paper's authors, Dr. Laszlo Gyulai, associate professor of psychiatry at U.Penn, but also suggest that Scientific Therapeutics was deeply involved in publication of the research.

Amsterdam, who enrolled patients for the study, accused Gyulai of "misappropriating" his data and publishing it without his knowledge.

The e-mails between Amsterdam and several colleagues at U.Penn. also say, for example, that the medical communications company decided who would be the first author of the paper and that many participants "never had a chance to review or even just see the manuscript before it went to press."

Many leading medical centers and medical schools, including Mass. General and Harvard, have policies prohibiting researchers from lending their names to papers that are "ghostwritten" by industry.

The doctors Amsterdam names are: Dr. Dwight Evans, chairman of the psychiatry department at the University of Pennsylvania; Sachs, a Harvard Medical School professor; Gyulai; Dr. Charles Nemeroff, chairman of the psychiatry department at the University of Miami; and Dr. Charles Bowden, chairman of the psychiatry department at the University of Texas.

U.Penn. said it will investigate the allegations.

Harvard Medical School spokeswoman Gina Vild declined to comment.

The Office of Research Integrity did not return calls from the Globe asking whether it will investigate the complaint.

Sachs said in an e-mailed statement that he was “perplexed” by the allegations. “These allegations are simply inconsistent with my experience and the finding of the study,” he wrote. “When the data became available, I went to Philadelphia to help Dr Gyulai draft the manuscript. We started with a blank page. We passed several iterations between us and then to the other authors.”

He added that the manuscript was peer-reviewed and published in a high quality journal, and that the primary finding was that “neither of the antidepressants added benefit beyond that of lithium alone. It is this finding that is so frequently cited in the scientific literature.”

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