Effect of Progesterone Therapy In Traumatic Subarachinoid Haemorrhage On Clinical Outcome, Resistive Vascular Indices of Middle Cerebral Artery Transcranial Doppler And Thromboelastometry. A Promising Layout.

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Abstract

Rationale.

Recent evidence questions for a safe approach to resuscitate population with traumatic sub-arachinoid hemorrhage (tSAH). Progesterone neuro-protective actions are a matter of debate among literatures. This was the epitome of the current research. Primary outcome was to investigate progesterone actions on cerebral blood flow velocimetry using trans-cranial doppler and on visco-elastic properties of the coagulation and fibrinolytic system by rotational thrombo-elastometry (**ROTEM**) scanning. Secondary outcome were tracking mortality rate and length of ICU stay.

Methods.

The current research was a prospective, randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled mono-centric study. Three hundred thirty two (332) adult patients of both sexes aged 25–60 years, recruited with solo tSAH (no other intra-axial lesions) admitted to Minia university hospital, neuro-critical care floor one. Exclusion criteria included poly-trauma patients (accompanying bone fractures or surgical abdomen), Glasgow coma scale less than 8, red blood cell transfusion during the first 6 hours after admission, hematocrit value > 50%, history of deep venous thrombosis. **Two groups were designed, Control group and Progesterone (PR) group.** PR group received 100 mg (2ml) intramuscular seven days once daily from hospital admission, while **Control group** received intramuscular isotonic saline (2ml) daily for seven days as a placebo. Trans-cranial doppler was performed on admission, two days and seven days post-admission. **ROTEM** exploited on admission and seven days after admission.

Results

Progesterone ameliorated hyperfibrinolysis (prolong LYS 30 min.) of **ROTEM** scanning but no other impact on other parameters. Progesterone statistically dampened resistive vascular indices namely pulsatility index (P value =0.001, 0.003) and resistive index (P value=0.001,0.003) but no effect on mean flow velocity of bilateral middle cerebral artery scanning, Progesterone also shortened ICU stay.

Conclusions.

Progesterone can offer neuronal protection in patients with tSAH by impeding over-fibrinolytic activation .

Registration number. (NCT04426487) on clinical trial.gov.

Date of registration. Eight of June 2020.

Institutional review board. (625/4-2020).

Introduction

Background

Secondary brain insult after tSAH formal as cerebral ischemia and coagulopathy are considered preventable causes of mortality and poor neurological outcome. Both lesions can leave survivors with permanent infirmity as motor deficits and cognitive dysfunction [1]. The risk of both is primarily related to the severity of the initial hemorrhage [2]

Many drugs used to offer pharmacological neuroprotection but yet no solid evidence to rely on. Examples include but not limited to, aspirin (3), magnesium (4), erythropoietin (5) and progesterone can offer neuro-protective effects via pleiotropic pathways. Progesterone decreases cerebral edema, restores blood–brain barrier integrity, reduces the inflammatory response and prevents cellular necrosis and apoptosis.

TCD ultrasonography is an operator dependant tool [6] and cannot be a sole tool for assessment of tSAH [7]. In fact, half of patients with progression of TICH have been shown to exhibit normal routine coagulation tests. In contrast, ROTEM a point-of-care visco-elastic assay of whole blood, provides a dynamic scanning of coagulation and clot formation, reflecting the contribution of clotting factors, platelets, and red blood cells. (8)

Material And Methods

2.1. Ethical consideration.

On the basis of the declaration of Helsinki, This prospective randomized double-blinded single center study was approved by the local ethics committee of the faculty of medicine, Minia university hospital under institutional review board number (625-4/2020) dated on 21 of april 2020, and was registered on clinical trial (WWW.registry.nl, NCT04426487). Study started on 20 June 2020 till 30 of November 2020

2.2.Setting.

Minia university hospital. Trauma center. Neuro-trauma care unit. Floor one

2.3.Design.

Three hundred thirty two (332) adult patients of both sexes with solo traumatic tSAH. All candidates passed TRIAGE section before ICU admission, Abdominal ultrasound, Brain CT, Chest CT accomplished in all candidates. Traumatic subarachnoid hemorrhage was diagnosed after brain CT. Candidates with GCS from 9 to 12 were admitted to intermediate care unit with mechanical ventilation stand-by near every candidate, Patients with GCS from 12 to 15 were admitted to ward. Exclusion criteria included poly-trauma patients, GCS less than 8, massive SAH, red blood cell transfusion during the first 6 hours after admission, recombinant factor VIIa administered during resuscitation, history of clopidogrel or warfarin use within 10 days of injury, known coagulation disorder, pregnancy. Routine coagulation measures (prothrombin time, partial thromboplastin time) and arterial blood gas analysis were performed concurrently. Severe hypoperfusion was diagnosed by the presence of an arterial base deficit greater than 6mmol/L by arterial blood gas. In the current research, coagulopathy was diagnosed if 2 or more of the following was found (platelets number less than 100,000 per mm³, international normalized ratio < 1.3,

prolonged activated partial thromboplastin time > 36 seconds and serum fibrinogen < 150mg/dl any time throughout study period).

2.4.Legality.

An informed written consent was obtained from all participant next of kin.

2.5. Randomization, concealment and material.

Computerized randomization was performed using variable block sizes. Opaque sealed envelopes were used for allocation concealment. After a written informed consent, patients were randomized to receive either progesterone (100mg, intramuscular) or sterile saline for one week after admission. Boxes with patient numbers containing unlabeled coded vials were provided for all patients. Saline prepared for injection was in equi-volume with progesterone. Both injectate, progesterone and placebo are similar regarding color, duration of therapy and route of injection. Serum progesterone was checked twice, first immediately before initiating first dose and the second one was taken at one week after therapy. Double blind fashion disputed (neither the **principal investigator** nor **patient next to kin** was aware of patient allocation). Neither of them was aware who was taking progesterone nor who was taking placebo. Participants enrollment and their assignment to intervention tasked by two anesthetics assistant lecturers. The statistics physician was responsible for generating the random allocation sequence and assigned participants to interventions. Candidates were assigned in two equal groups, **Control** group received intramuscular saline (2ml- NaCL0.9%) as a placebo for seven days daily ,while progesterone group (**PR** group) received intramuscular progesterone (100mg/ 2 ml) for seven days daily from admission. Using methodology published in the manufacturer's insert for (ROTEM) 2008 machine, a citrated kaolin-activated device (**ROTEM Delta, Instrumental laboratory, Bedford, MA, USA**) was performed using 1 ml of whole blood. Sample was automated pipetting. This was performed two hours from admission and one week after admission due to high cost of scanning. A trans-cranial doppler (**Sonosite, energy, USA**) probe (2 Mega hertz) used to insonate the M1 (first 4 cm of the middle cerebral artery) portion of the middle cerebral artery by means of the trans-temporal approach then pulstality index, resistive index and mean flow velocity values were recorded. Reading taken 2 hours after admission (basal), two days and one week serially..

2.4. Study endpoint.

Primary endpoint was observing the effect of intramuscular progesterone on cerebral blood flow indices of middle cerebral artery and blood visco-elastic dynamics by thromboelastometry. Secondary endpoint was impact on mortality rate and length of ICU stay.

3.1. Statistical analysis

3.1.1.Sample Size Calculation:

Before the study runover, the number of patients required in each group was determined according to data obtained by a Pilot study performed on twenty consented candidates next to kin, ten in each group. In that study, Pilot study reported the mean one week post-traumatic PI level is 1.49 in **control** group , 0.99 in **PR** group (SD within each group was 0.1). A sample size of **166** patients in each group was determined to provide **99%** power at the level of **5%** significance using G Power 3.1 9.2 software.

Statistical analysis

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and statistically analyzed using SPSS program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software version 20.

-Descriptive statistics were done for Parametric quantitative data by **mean, standard deviation** and minimum & maximum of the range, while they were done for categorical data by number and percentage.

-Analyses were done for parametric quantitative data between two groups using **independent t test** between each two groups. Analyses within each group were done for parametric quantitative data using **paired sample t test**.

-The level of significance was taken at (P value < 0.05).

Results

1-Transcranial Doppler indices:

A●Pulsatility index (PI):

Table (1): PI among studied groups (data expressed as mean±SD) :

There was a statistical significant difference between studied groups at two days and seven days post-admission with (**p value =0.001 in both readings**) for the Rt side and (**0.003 and , 0.004**) for the Lt side. There was also a significant difference between the PI values inside (**PR**) group at two days and seven days compared with basal value on both sides.

Table (1): PI among studied groups(Data expressed as mean±SD) :

		progesterone group N=166	Control group N=166	P-value
		Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean $\pm$ SD	
RT	Basal	1.17 $\pm$ 0.56	1.36 $\pm$ 0.64	0.121
	Two days	0.77 $\pm$ 0.46 [#]	1.41 $\pm$ 0.67	<0.001*
	seven days	0.72 $\pm$ 0.49 [#]	1.39 $\pm$ 0.67	<0.001*
LT	Basal	1.18 $\pm$ 0.6	1.23 $\pm$ 0.67	0.147
	Two days	0.83 $\pm$ 0.56 [#]	1.23 $\pm$ 0.74	0.003*
	seven days	0.79 $\pm$ 0.47 [#]	1.12 $\pm$ 0.63	0.004*

Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test

**: significant difference between two studied groups at <0.05 (inter-group Analysis of dependent quantitative data by paired sample t-test*

Wilcoxon signed-rank test for the intragroup data (each time point vs. baseline)

#: significant difference from basal value at level of <0.01 (intra-group).

B● Table (2): Mean flow velocity(MFV) among studied among studied groups (data expressed as mean $\pm$ SD).

There was no significant difference in between or within studied groups by comparing the MFV.

Table (2): MFV among studied groups

		progesterone group N=166	Control group N=166	P-value
		Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean $\pm$ SD	
RT	Basal	65.5 $\pm$ 17.8	61.9 $\pm$ 25.3	0.411
	Two days	64.7 $\pm$ 20.8	61.6 $\pm$ 23.5	0.476
	Seven days	65.8 $\pm$ 18.7	62.7 $\pm$ 20.1	0.430
LT	Basal	61.8 $\pm$ 19.9	65.7 $\pm$ 20.2	0.326
	Two days	66.3 $\pm$ 21.4	62.8 $\pm$ 19.5	0.395
	Seven days	64.4 $\pm$ 22.2	61.4 $\pm$ 20.5	0.482

Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test

Significant difference between two groups at p value <0.05

Analysis of dependent quantitative data by paired sample t-test, insignificant difference from basal value in each group.

Table (3) resistive index among studied groups (data expressed as mean±SD):

There was a significant difference between studied groups at two days and seven days post- admission with (**p value <0.001** ,) for the Rt and left side side. There was also a significant difference between the RI values inside (**PR**) group at two days and seven days compared with basal value on both sides.

Table (3): RI among studied groups ((Data expressed as mean±SD):

		progesterone group N=166	Control group N=166	P-value
		Mean ±SD	Mean ±SD	
RT	Basal	0.69±0.30	0.79±0.34	0.127
	Two days	0.56±0.26 [#]	0.81±0.33	<0.001*
	Seven days	0.51±0.19 [#]	0.74±0.30	<0.001*
LT	Basal	0.76±0.23	0.67±0.23	0.057
	Two days	0.50±0.21 [#]	0.69±0.27	<0.001*
	Seven days	0.49±0.24 [#]	0.68±0.35	0.003*

Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test

**: significant difference between two studied groups at <0.05*

#: significant difference from basal value at level of <0.01 (intra-group) .

Wilcoxon signed-rank test for the intragroup data (each time point vs. baseline).

2- ICU data.

Table 4 showing sequele post-admission regarding improvement of GCS, development of cerebro-vascular stroke and development of coagulopathy.

One hundred forty four candidates in **PR** group exhibit improvement in GCS opposite to one hundred four in **Control** group with significant statistical difference (**P value= 0.0001**). New cerebro-vascular

insufficiency is diagnosed in nine cases in **PR** group and thirty six case in **control** group. Coagulopathy was diagnosed in 22 population in **PR** group and in 62 in **control**group.

Table 4
showing sequele post-admission regarding improvement of GCS, new insult on brain imging, development of vasospasm development of coagulopathy

Variable	PR group (166)	Control group (166)	P value
Improvement in GCS.	144 (86.7%)	104 (62.6%)	0.0001*
Cerebral infarction.	29 (17.4%).	36 (21.8%)	0.25
Cogulopathic cases(n)	22 (12.3%)	62 (37.4%)	0.002*
<i>Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test.</i>			
<i>*: significant difference between two studied groups at < 0.05</i>			

Table 5 showing the new intra-axial injury by ROTEM (Control group).

No statistical significant difference between ROTEM readings at admission and one week after .

Table 5
showing the odds of new intra-axial injury by ROTEM (Control group).

Variable (ROTEM on admission)	OR (CI 95%)	P Value
R	1.05 (0.79–1.49)	0.123
K	1.20 (0.52–1.95)	0.245
Alpha angle	0.94 (0.9–1.1)	0.18
Maximum amplitude	0.91 (0.88–0.95)	0.18
LY30	0.82(0.77–1.4)	0.09
2- change in ROTEM (1 week)		
R	1.21 (1.03–1.33)	0.73
K	1.71 (1.42–1.91)	0.632
Alpha angle	0.91 (0.82–1.2)	0.22
Maximun amplitude	0.93 (0.81–1.50)	0.41
LY 30	0.89 (0.79–1.52)	0.312
R time (reflecting clotting factor activity and initial fibrin formation), K (reflecting the interaction of clotting factors, fibrin, and platelets), α -angle (reflecting the rate of fibrin cross-linking and fibrinogen function), maximum amplitude (the widest amplitude of the TEG tracing, reflecting overall clot strength and platelet function), and LY30 (the percent of clot lysis at 30 min after start of the assay, reflecting fibrinolysis). CI = confidence interval.		
<i>Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test.</i>		
<i>*: significant difference between two studied groups at < 0.05</i>		

Table (6) Odds for new intra-axial injury in progesterone group.

Statistical significant difference between fibrinogen lysis after 30 minutes (LYS30) after progesterone treatment and with basal value. No statistical significant difference between the rest of ROTEM readings at admission and one week after .

Table (6) Odds for new intra-axial injury in progesterone group.

Variable	OR (CI 95%)	P Value
<u>1-ROTEM on admission.</u>		
R	1.01 (0.73-1.44)	0.12
K	1.28 (0.56-1.90)	0.32
Alpha angle	0.98 (0.92-1.31)	0.32
Maximum amplitude	0.91 (0.84-1.25)	0.51
LY30	0.89 (0.79-0.94)	0.09
<u>2- change in ROTEM(1 week)_</u>		
R	1.21(1.18-1.34)	0.22
K	1.71(1.56-1.91)	0.19
Alpha angle	0.98 (0.90-1.44)	0.12
Maximun amplitude	0.99 (0.89-1.5)	0.133
LY 30	1.21 (0.81-1.42)	0.002*

Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test

**: significant difference between two studied groups at <0.05 (inter-group Analysis of dependent quantitative data by paired sample t-test*

R time (reflecting clotting factor activity and initial fibrin formation), K (reflecting the interaction of clotting factors, fibrin, and platelets), α -angle (reflecting the rate of fibrin cross-linking and fibrinogen function), maximum amplitude (the widest amplitude of the TEG tracing, reflecting overall clot strength and platelet function), and LY30 (the percent of clot lysis at 30 min after start of the assay, reflecting fibrinolysis).

Table 7 representing demographic data, duration of ICU stay and mortality rate among studied groups (mean $\pm$ SD).

Statistical Significant difference were obtained in comparison between two groups regarding length of ICU stay and mortality rate. Popultion treated with progesterone consumed much less time in ICU (**12 $\pm$ 1.8 days**) in comparison with those in control group (**18 $\pm$ 2.1 days**) with (**p value=0.004**). Mortality rate is clearly noticeable in control group (**22 candidates**) rather than progesterone group (**6 candidates**). No significant difference among two groups regarding age groups and sex.

Table 7
representing duration of ICU stay and mortality among studied group (mean $\pm$ SD).

Variable	PR group (166)	Control group(166)	P value
ICU stay (days)	12 $\pm$ 1.8	18 $\pm$ 2.1	0.004*
Mortality	6(3.6%)	22(12.2%)	0.002*
0.2	44(39–59)	41(38–57)	Age(ys)
0.39	M(96-57.8%) F(70-42.2%)	M(102 – 61.4%) F(64-38.6%)	sex
<i>Analysis of quantitative data by independent sample t-test</i>			
<i>*: significant difference between two studied groups at < 0.05 (inter-group Analysis of dependent quantitative data by paired sample t-test .</i>			
<i>M = male. F = Female.</i>			

Discussion

Vascular impedance and coagulopathy are the point of concern being attributed to new brain insult. Hemostasis includes both normal serum level and functional inter-balance between co-agulation and fibrinolytic system., Coagulopathy after TBI has been shown to include abnormalities of both coagulation and fibrinolysis. Coagulopathic derangement after tSAH is linked to consumption, dilution of coagulation factors, thromb-athenia and increase in fibrinolysis. the fibrinolytic product D-dimer and fibrinogen degradation products are first detected within minutes of injury (9). This rapid response raises the ego of the mechanism that brain injury can trigger early hyperfibrinolytic state. Under non traumatic state, Tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) proteolytically activates plasminogen to plasmin, which cleaves and dissolves fibrin polymers. This fibrinolytic process is dynamically slow and local during normal hemostasis because tPA has limited access to fibrin polymers trapped in a platelet clot (10). Nested randomized studies pointed to the use of antifibrinolytic treatment in significant traumatic intracranial hemorrhage with improved outcomes, if administered soon after injury. Another route for coagulopathy derangement is deliberate hypothermia which is in use to decrease cerebral metabolism- can aggravate coagulopathy. Thromboplastin that enters the circulation released from astrocytes is incriminated in activation of extrinsic coagulation pathway to produce a fibrin clot, leading to disseminated intravascular coagulopathy and hyperfibrinolysis (11).

Dose choice was based upon a previous randomized controlled trial that used progesterone in traumatic brain injury in a dose 100mg intramuscular for 5 days (Hassan et al., 2017).(12)

In the current research, coagulopathy was diagnosed if 2 or more of the following was found (platelets number less than 100,000 per mm³, international normalized ratio < 1.3, prolonged activated partial thromboplastin time > 36 seconds and serum fibrinogen < 150mg/dl any time throughout study period).

Hypoperfusion was defined as arterial base deficit > 6 mmol/L. (13) All candidates in the current study who experienced coagulopathy showed criteria for hypoperfusion. Our results ran hand by hand with Thomas et al., 2010 (13) who conducted a retrospective analysis of a prospectively collected cohort study recruited 132 patients from June 2005 to December 2007 about the incidence of tissue hypoperfusion in victims of severe traumatic brain injury and to determine the associations and links between hypoperfusion and TBI coagulopathy. They used the same diagnostic protocol in confirming post-TBIs coagulopathy and hypoperfusion as we did. They concluded that hypoperfusion is an independent risk factor for the development of early coagulopathy in patients with isolated TBI.

Zhao et al 2019 (14), in a wide spectrum meta-analysis consisting of eight randomized clinical trial hosting 2251 patients searching for both safety and efficacy of injected progesterone on TIBs population. The regimen included 1 mg/kg intramuscular progesterone every 12 hours for five days. Their results are compliant with us regarding candidates with progesterone group had less ICU time, better neurologic outcomes (RR = 1.51; $P = 0.007$) than those who received placebo. Progesterone offered neuroprotection till 3 months after impact.

Another experimental study conducted by **Jacob et al., 2008 (15)** focused on effect of progesterone on blood coagulability declared that progesterone prevented TBI induced fibrinolysis and hypocoagulability. Adult male Sprague –Dawley rats were given bilateral contusions of the medial frontal cortex followed by treatments with PROG (16 mg/kg), or vehicle (22.5% hydroxypropyl- β -cyclodextrin). Progesterone generally maintained procoagulant (thrombin, fibrinogen, and coagulation factor XIII). In addition, PROG significantly increased the ratio of tPA bound to neuroserpin, a serine protease inhibitor that can reduce the activity of tPA.

Cerebral vasospasm – is a quite common complication that occurs in up to two thirds of patients. Cerebral vasospasm can occur as early as first 24 hours of TBI event but more frequently begins 48 hours after trauma, reaching a peak after 7 days. New brain insult was defined as persistent newly presented motor or sensory deficit or acute decrease of GCS of 2 points or new CT finding

Vascular derangement after TBI - explained by – but not niched to - oxy- hemoglobin and the potent vasoconstrictor- endothelin- in particular, are incriminated to play a key role. The prominent action is attributed to nitric oxide scavenging, direct vasoconstriction, and induction of cytotoxic free oxygen radicals. Activation of protein kinase C, another proposed item, interacts with myosin light chain kinase, nitric oxide, intracellular Ca^{2+} , protein tyrosine kinase, mediating cerebral vasoconstrictions. Since vasospasm is an angiographic phenomena, all population were prone to CT angiography provided that serum creatinine is less than 1mg/dl .

Progesterone failed to guard against cerebral vasospasm. This may be explained by that prominent interaction of ptn C and myosin light chain interaction that lead to increased cerebro-vascular resistant.

Our results are compatible with Hassan et al., 2017 regarding progesterone induced shortened neuro-critical ICU stay. They conducted prospective, randomized trial hosting 100 patients with severe TBI. The

selected patients were categorized at random into two equal groups – the control group and the progesterone group. In the control group, patients were given conventional therapy. The progesterone group was given 1 mg/kg progesterone by intramuscular injection within 8 h of admission and then every 12 hours for 5 consecutive days in addition to the conventional therapy. The neurological outcome after 30 days was evaluated using the Glasgow Outcome Scale score as well as duration of ICU stay. Length of ICU stay had a mean value of 10.88 ± 7.98 days in the progesterone group versus 19.96 ± 10.36 days in the control group ($P < 0.001$).

On the other hand, Our results are in contrary with **sumit et al.,2017 (16)** who conducted a randomized placebo controlled trial, the primary objective of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of progesterone with or without prophylactic hypothermia in acute TBIs patients.

It was a prospective, statistician blinded, randomized, and placebo-controlled phase II trial of progesterone with or without hypothermia (factorial design). All adult patients (18–65 years) with acute TBIs (Glasgow coma score of 4–8) and presenting to trauma center within 8 h after injury were included in the trial. The enrollment duration was from January 2012 to October 2014. The primary endpoint was dichotomized Glasgow outcome score (GOS) [poor recovery = GOS 1–3; good recovery = GOS 4–5] and mortality rate at 6 and 12 months follow-up after recruitment. A total of 107 patients were randomized into four groups (placebo [$n = 27$], progesterone [$n = 26$], hypothermia alone [$n = 27$], and progesterone + hypothermia [$n = 27$])/ The mortality rates were similar in all the groups at 6 and 12 months ($P = 0.78$ and 0.52 respectively). **This discrepancy** can be explained by disparity in patient categorization and bias in dose design .

Despite the multifactorial benefits of progesterone obtained in the experimental models of TBI and the promising results of two Phase II clinical trials [17,18], two Phase III clinical trials failed to show benefits of progesterone [19,20]. Among the concerns that have been raised and cited: diversity of the enrolled patients concerning sex, age, and severity of TBI; the multiple doses of progesterone used; the lack of stratification of patients; the subjective outcome measures.

Conclusion

Progesterone can resist hyper-fibrinolysis after tSAH and impede development on coagulopathy. Mortality and length of ICU stay was also significantly decreased.

Limitations

1. Time elapsed from injury till referral to our tertiary center was variable due to transportation issues.
2. Exclusion of ploy-trauma patients.
3. Exclusion pf many patients received out of hospital crystalloid fluids.
4. Relative low number of ROTEM readings due to cost issues.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate.

Institutional review approval waived on number (625-4-2020).

Availability of data and materials

ALL data supporting results in the current research sent with submission for clarity.

Competing interests

No competing interest

Funding

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Authors' information

All authors whose names appear on the submission

- 1) Made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; or the creation of new software used in the work;
- 2) Drafted the work or revised it critically for important intellectual content;
- 3) Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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