

LETTERS

BOLDT: THE GREAT PRETENDER

Coauthors must take some responsibilityWei Huang *intensivist*

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The article on the German anaesthetist Joachim Boldt, whose faked works greatly influenced the field of anaesthesiology and critical care medicine, suggests that Boldt was motivated by a greedy desire for self aggrandisement.¹ But what of his many coauthors, including international partners and drug producers? Did these collaborators never detect any faults in their investigations—including regular investigational documents, original experiment data, and statistical data—before the event was exposed to the world?

The whole thing seems like a monodrama, with Captain Boldt playing it alone and taking full responsibility so far. Before and after the event, his cooperators—in famous journals or at international conferences—kept silent, not mentioning their contribution or confessing their mistakes. Should we ask them about their motives, when they repeatedly took part in Boldt's studies without finding any errors over so long a time?

Hydroxyethyl starch has long been used in fluid resuscitation, even though we now know that it may cause organ injury. Its popularity was mainly due to the worldwide promotional strategy and “star effects” established by these famous experts.

It is therefore reasonable to question Boldt's academic and business partners, as well as regulators and publishers, about the real lesson and to ask them to reconsider their responsibility.

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1 Wise J. Boldt: the great pretender. *BMJ* 2013;346:f1738. (19 March.)

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