

**Coronavirus disease 2019 among pregnant Chinese women: case series data on
the safety of vaginal birth and breastfeeding - letter to the editor**

Jianghui Cai¹, Mi Tang², Gen Li^{1*},

1. Department of Pharmacy, Chengdu Women's and Children's Central Hospital,
School of Medicine, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China,
Chengdu, 610041, China;

2. Office of Good Clinical Practice, Chengdu Women's and Children's Central
Hospital, School of Medicine, University of Electronic Science and Technology of
China, Chengdu, 610041, China;

*Correspondence to: Gen Li, Department of Pharmacy, Chengdu Women's and
Children's Central Hospital, School of Medicine, University of Electronic Science
and Technology of China, No.1314 Riyue Avenue, Qingyang District, Chengdu city
610041, China, E-mail address: ligencd@126.com.

Dear Editor:

We read with great interest the research article by Wu and colleagues (Volume 127, Issue 9).¹ The authors assessed viral presence in different biosamples from neonates and women at various pregnancy stages with COVID-19 infection. We want to thank and congratulate the authors of this study on the critical emerging evidence they provide. However, we are concerned about a certain aspect of this study.

There was a mini commentary on Wu et al.² Although the commentary highly praised the explicit clarification made by the authors that one of the infants included has been previously reported. Still, no other cases have been reported in any other manuscripts. However, we believe that there may be more than one duplicate reporting of cases of COVID-19 in this article. There are several reasons for our skepticism:

First, we found another article entitled “Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2(SARS-CoV-2) infection during late pregnancy: a report of 18 patients from Wuhan, China” was reported by doctors at the same hospital.³ As we thoroughly examined the details of these two studies, we are very surprised to found that the periods of recruitment were overlapped. At least one pregnant woman or neonates had identical characteristics (e.g., maternal age, gestational age at delivery, complications, delivery mode, indications for cesarean section, clinical symptoms, birth weight).

Second, it is worth noting that the corresponding author of the two articles is the same person.

Third, we note the two articles were supported by the same foundation (National Key Research and Development Program of China, Grant Numbers:

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Several concerns about duplicate reporting of cases of COVID-19 have been described.⁴ Furthermore, reporting duplicates in different articles creates an inaccurate scientific record and may affect understanding the disease and its epidemiology. Thus, it is imperative for authors to identify if any patients in any submitted manuscript have been reported in any previous submissions or publications.

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Conflict of Interest

We declare no competing interests.

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