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This article has been retracted: please see Elsevier Policy on Article Withdrawal (http://www.elsevier.com/locate/withdrawalpolicy). This article has been retracted at the request of the Editor-in-Chief. The authors have plagiarized part of a paper that had already appeared in Hum. Reprod. Update, Volume 19 (2013) 105–123 http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/humupd/dms051. One of the conditions of submission of a paper for publication is that authors declare explicitly that their work is original and has not appeared in a publication elsewhere. Re-use of any data should be appropriately cited. As such this article represents a severe abuse of the scientific publishing system. The scientific community takes a very strong view on this matter and apologies are offered to readers of the journal that this was not detected during the submission process.