

Full Length Research Paper

A resource recommendation for improving musical expression and narration in piano education: An examination of Loeschhorn op. 65 etudes

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This current study primarily focuses on the contribution of the etudes, which have a significant role in piano education, to musical expression and narration improvement. Starting from this point of view, Op. 65 etudes by Albert Loeschhorn which were released as studies for improving technical and musical expression and with the aim of being used in different stages of piano education were investigated. According to Loeschhorn, the term etude was not considered to be an exercise to overcome a specific technical difficulty. Instead, he constructed etudes that were intended for clearing technical problems and that gave particular importance to students' expressing the musical sentences by composers, which can be considered among the main factors in music and music education. In this research, the studies that were designed to increase awareness on these issues were analyzed. The etudes that were analyzed in this study were limited to the first Op. 65 book. Several pedagogues and researchers in the field along with parallel views with educators on the importance of musical expression and narration concluded that the etudes by Loeschhorn could be beneficial to resolve various problems by prioritizing musical expression and narration.

Key words: Music education, piano education, musical expression.

INTRODUCTION

Etudes, which are used as educational resources in instrument education, possess an essential place in music education. This certain type of resource considered for increasing competence with an instrument and resolving technical issues has been used by instrumentalists, music educators, pedagogues and composers in a wide range from basic exercises to concert parts with higher levels of difficulty. The French originated word etude means a thorough analysis, research or a pre-study on a certain topic. In its use in

music, etude refers to generally short but demanding musical compositions intended to be played by a solo instrument to improve a musician's technical skills. In time, etudes have become richer in terms of melody, harmony and rhythm. While etudes can focus on a single technical issue, they can also deal with several different technical problems (Bilir, 2016:1). Etudes are pieces of music which are generally short and noteworthy challenging and written to master technical skills and help to improve the performance (Akar, 2013:1).

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In Turkey and actually in the world, educators generally use the etudes in the literature to help students resolve technical difficulties they encounter and gain certain skills in all stages of professional music education and in private institutions such as private art centers or courses. Furthermore, besides technical skills, musical expression and narration are also among the skills that are aimed to be taught in instrument education processes. Therefore, certain pieces representing different periods in music history are used by the educator by classifying these pieces from the easiest to the most challenging and systematically introducing these to learners' repertoire.

In instrument education process, the etudes are written in different categories to overcome the technical difficulties, the learners may encounter and to allow them learn various skills. Among these categories, the etudes that are constructed for teaching and developing technical skills are considered as a completely different process. By analyzing, it is easier to perceive and internalize the etudes. Especially, examining and analyzing, and making beneficial conclusions from these undoubtedly contribute positively to the education processes (Kurtuldu, 2009:29). If a new piece is to be studied, it is significant and beneficial to start with summarizing the structural and stylistic features of the piece such as musical features, style and the period it belongs to. Analyzing the new piece and understanding its musical factors and complementarians in general terms enables the learners to get musical ideas and make basic deciphering (Ercan, 2008:73 quoting Kurtuldu, 2009:29).

Every single etude has an important role in resolving several technical difficulties that the student may encounter in pieces he adds to his repertoire (Cüceoğlu and Berki, 2007:228). Etudes are used widely especially in beginning level and in the first three years of instrument education in all areas. Some educators plan their training for students' musical skills development by providing a methodological etude book at the beginning of the education process. In piano literature, the term etude began to be defined as pieces requiring advanced technical knowledge rather than exercises for technical skill development by composers like Chopin, Liszt, Moszkovsky, Arensky, Rachmaninof and Scriabin in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In piano education process, the main course materials could be considered to be etudes and pieces existing in piano literature. When compared to other instruments, the piano has a lot more extensive literature. Several composers, pianists and pedagogues have produced numerous pieces of music for the piano. At this point, it is vital to create an appropriate repertoire for the students from this rich and extensive literature (Yılmaz, 2018:11). In order to play a piece on the piano, it is highly important to have strong technical skills and to use them appropriately. The more advanced these technical skills are, the better and easier it is to perform musical

expressions. All in all, it is of the essence to give the etudes written or developing technical skills the place (Kalkanoğlu, 2020:1).

In instrument education, the educators generally focus on developing technical skills and resolving technical problems. Etudes can be considered to be as back-ups especially for students in the beginner level. In piano education, etudes are used for developing a lot of techniques such as left/right hand finger development, scale technique, playing double voices, trill vocalization, rapidity, development of octave and moving to different positions on the keyboard. There are studies in the literature to enable the learners to describe, express or be aware of the musical phrases by a composer. However, eliminating the challenges mentioned above and teaching skills are the primary goals of the educators.

While the etudes are being studied, it is important to pay attention to musicality as well. Including etude studies correctly in the curriculum will help the students to analyze, decipher and perform difficult pieces. At the same time, studying etudes is crucial as it improves the deciphering ability, analysis ability, piano technique and musicality (Yılmaz, 2018:15).

It is essential to have a balance between structuring and interpretation in teaching, as well as in practice. Emphasizing solely on the interpretation elements might lead to neglecting technical skills. On the other hand, paying special attention to technical skills might also damage the imagination and the ability of making spontaneous music. The balance between these two factors should show variation at different stages in students' development. In the early years of education, the teacher should consider creating instrumental knowledge as his main task. However, he should not ignore musical development; the configuration factor should be at the forefront. There is no age limit for the development of a musician but the early youth is the period in which the technique develops the fastest. At a later stage, when the technique is firmly established on solid foundations, the balance can be shifted towards the interpretation (Galamian, 1962:106-6 quoting Doğanay, 2011:10).

While giving more importance to technical studies than it deserves may prevent musicality, a teaching style that ignores the technical skills and emphasizes musicality may also leave technical skills development in the background (Doğanay, 2011:10).

In the first half of the Romantic Period, composers such as Clementi, Cramer, Hummel and Czerny presented their technical and musical approaches pedagogically and formed the foundations of piano technique. The approach of these composers, which is a continuation of the 18th century understanding of piano technique, was inadequate in practice and was not able to go beyond asserting what should be for an effective musical performance. Therefore, this mechanical technical

approach reached its peak with the work of these composers and in the end, there was not much left to do. From this point on, the development of the piano technique was undertaken by younger composers of the period such as Chopin, Liszt and Thalberg, and their liberal and distinctive approach reshaped the piano technique (Yahşi, 2017:7).

Prior to Chopin, the concept of etude, which only aimed at technical development and did not go beyond being an exercise, was completely changed with the etudes he wrote, and became artistic works with deep musical expression. However, Chopin has realized the musical technical understanding which composers like Clementi and Czerny put forward as an approach that should be in the piano techniques and with the etudes he wrote, he demonstrated the first examples of an approach that would continue after him (Yahşi, 2017, s.8).

Generally, the approach on etude in performing arts state that a style focusing on continuous technical exercises might cause the students' musical expression and expression skills not to develop. As mentioned previously, based on this point, distinctive composers in the literature have created works by combining work with deeper musical expression and the concept of etude, instead of writing pieces only for technical skills development and daily exercise.

Learning to play the piano is a multifaceted and complex process which mainly involves the development of mental, psychomotor and affective skills. The main objective of piano education is to provide the musical development of the students with a solid technique. The technical skill is a means of reaching musical expression power and the main aim is to develop musicality. However, in order to reach the desired and expected level in musical sensitivity, the student must overcome some technical problems (Ertem, 2011:646). In piano education, it is important to gain and develop musical expression skills as well as correct technical skills (Çimen et al., 2013:1 quoting Yılmaz, 2018:10).

German composer, pianist and pedagogue Albert A. Loeschhorn (1819-1905) was a composer as well as a piano educator and pedagogue. A. Loeschhorn is generally known for his etudes and exercises for the piano. Albert A. Loeschhorn gave priority to musical expression in his piano studies. He included phrase works for musical technique and expression to the explanation section at the beginning of his book. For A. Loeschhorn, the priority in his etudes in general is to provide the awareness of expression, narration, musical phrases and period; and to combine and overcome the technical difficulties that are considered in the concept of the etudes with musical expression.

According to Fenmen (1997, p.21), expressing a piece of music means stating the character, spirit and the meaning of that work and making the audience understand it. The musician must first understand and reveal musical phrases in order to make others feel it.

According to Margulis (2011, p.51) the appropriate finger number is written after finding the correct articulation of a musical phrase. Correct articulation and phrasing can be said to bring the correct finger number.

Musical works also consist of sentences like literary texts, periods formed by integrating musical phrases. By expanding these periods and creating the sections, musical phrases shape the work. Along with the Romantic period with Sonata, Rondo, Fugue and Variation forms, the composer also produced different types of works using the general structures of these forms.

The expression of a music sentence is called a phrase. In order to express a sentence, it is necessary to see the structure of it and determine its parts. After the parts of the sentence, i.e., the periods, are revealed, the highest point is marked and an exit is prepared towards that high point. This is done to know the parts of the sentence and to clearly see where a comma, semicolon or a period would come because a linguistic sentence is similar to a musical sentence: both contain important parts, stops, important words or sounds (Fenmen, 1997:23). According to Pamir (1983), the ups and downs of the small motifs that make up the sentence should be known, which timbre color and type of articulation they require, and their breathing should be formed. The beginning of the sentences, their expansion, their exhalation at their climax should be heard and sung with the ear, and the lines of these sentences should be considered exactly like a picture. First of all, it is important to know what is being played. The quality of "how" reveals the subject and all the details of the work (Pamir, 1983:178). As can be seen, important pianists in the field also underlined the importance of this subject.

A musical work has a periodic style and playing style depending on the instrument, with a characteristic form and the content of the form consists of motifs with parts, sentences or periods which are the smallest musical expressive tools that reflect the perspectives of the composers. Musical expression and performance of the perspective of the composer are among the goals expected from the students in professional education and in all process in this education such as concerts or exams. To summarize, these processes are in general correct performance, musical phrasing and representation of the melodic line, awareness of sentence links, harmony and sensation (cadences and chord transitions), style and style representation. Loeschhorn Op 65 piano etudes consists of 48 pieces. The composer listed these 48 pieces in three groups of 16 (first, second and thirds books) from the easiest level to the difficult. When A. Loeschhorn's etude writing method is examined, it can be seen that piano techniques such as scale, arpeggio, trill, octave was planned and used to contribute to the musical interpretation and expression skills of the students systematically from beginner to intermediate level. The teacher can choose the appropriate etude from this

collection within the framework of the technical and musical of the student. For this reason, the composer has a very important place in the piano education literature.

Problem

The problem of this study is that the technical and narrative features of the etudes to improve musical expression and narration for beginner level piano education by Loeschhorn are not widely known.

Objective

This study aims to analyze the etudes written for piano education by Loeschhorn and the way they contribute to the improvement of musical expression and narration in technical exercise context by the composer in beginner level piano education.

Significance of the study

This study is of great importance in terms of introducing an alternative educational resource and a composer at the same time. In addition, this study can be considered to be leading for educational music composers who aims to demonstrate both musical expression and technical skills improvement. It is also significant as it is an analysis of an alternative resource that can be used in secondary instrument education for students in professional music education institutions.

Limitations

This study is limited to sixteen etudes in beginning level from A.Loeschhorn's first book of Op.65.

METHODS

This study was designed as a qualitative research. It is a descriptive study based on field research in instrument education. Descriptive studies describe a certain situation thoroughly and carefully. This method is widely used in educational research (Büyükoztürk et al., 2016).

Universe and sample

The universe of the study consisted of Loeschhorn Op,65 piano etudes. The sixteen etudes in the first book of Op.65 were chosen as the sample of the study.

Data collection and analysis

Qualitative data collection can be classified into two main groups. These are basic data collection methods and supportive data

collection methods. Among basic data collection methods are participant observation, natural observation, documents and interviews (Özdemir, 2010:327). The research uses documents such as diaries, letters, field notes to search about the topic and analyze (Hodder, 2002 quoting Özdemir, 2010:327). On the other hand, content analysis is a method to determine to what extent certain terms, events or assessments are mentioned in a specific document (Arslanoğlu, 2016). In this study, content and document analyses were employed. The sixteen etudes in the first book of Opus 65 by Loeschhorn, which was published by Schirmer Edition, were analyzed via content and document analyses within this research and how technical skill development issues and musical expression elements were integrated in the etudes was interpreted in the study.

FINDINGS

When the etude given in Figure 1 was analyzed, a study that supports musical expression and narration for a beginner level piano student can be seen. The melodic movement in the right hand is supported with the accompaniment figure in the left hand. The main area of development expected in this etude is to focus on playing a musical phrase with the right hand. Another important issue to focus on in this part is that the composer did not write any musical dynamic terms in the first eight etudes. The main objective of this etude for learners is to concentrate on sentences and narration.

As seen above, in Figure 2, Etude No.2 is in the form of a song. By demonstrating the ties between musical phrases and melody split points, the player is supposed to focus on playing sentences in the right-hand part. In Etude No.3, musical phrase links are added to the accompaniment figure for the left hand. In this way, it is desired for the left hand to rest at some points along with the right hand. The priority is again on the melodic expression and narration in the right hand. These two etudes are more advanced when compared to the Etude No.1.

Etude No.4 given in Figure 3 has counterpoint style as well. In the second period following the first eight measures, a pattern was produced by separating the figures and chord sound that contain harmony chords in the left hand in general and it was supposed to rest at the end. Musical phrasing and expression in both hands are again given particular importance here. Using the patterns at the end of antecedent and consequent phrases in the right hand is instructive for musical expression and narration.

As seen in Figure 4, Etude No.5 is constructed as a finger exercise for the right hand. The aim in this exercise is to play the musical phrases softly not in a fast beat, but rather slowly and to have equal phrase integrity from the beginning to the end of the etude. The accompaniment figure in the left hand is also connected in all dimensions, imitating the right-hand figure at the end of some phrases and prepares the player to the next phrase. This etude is important in terms of achieving the development of phrase integrity and expression.

Studies for Piano.

by

A. LOESCHHORN.

Part I. For Beginners. Op. 65. Book I.

Nº 1. Moderato.

Piano.

The musical score for Etude No. 1 is presented in four systems. Each system contains two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The score includes various fingering numbers (1-5) above and below notes to guide the student. The piece ends with a double bar line in the final measure of the fourth system.

Figure 1. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.1 (Loeschorn, 1950)

As seen in Figure 5, Etude No.6, the accompaniment figure is given to the right hand at beginning and a restricted melodic movement repeating in the left hand is used. In this way, it is aimed to preserve the integrity of the nuance in the phrase and to play all the notes in the phrase softly and with equal loudness. In the second part of the etude, the motifs used in the first part are imitated and repeated in the right hand and by going to different places on the keyboard, it is aimed to gain control of the instrument by preserving the loudness and integrity.

As seen in Figure 6, Etude No.7, A. Loeschhorn thought of the melodic movement in the left-hand part and wrote with the right and accompaniment figure. In this way, he thought of this etude to play the theme, which is very common in the literature, by changing its

place to the left hand and to develop the awareness of this style.

As can be seen in Figure 7, Etude No. 8 includes the melodic movement in the right hand and the scale study. The composer mainly provided harmonic support to the melodic movement in the left-hand part. As seen in the 11th and 13th measures above, he wrote figures that enable the left hand to work and provide phrasing awareness.

As seen in Figure 8, from Etude No. 9 on, the composer started to add nuances to his works. The first eight etudes in the book, which has 16 etudes in total, can be given to the students by spreading over a year after the beginning of piano education. Etude No.9 and No.16 can be considered as a support in the second year

Nº 2. Moderato.

Nº 3. Allegretto.

Figure 2. A. Loeschorn Op 65. 1st book etudes No. 2 & no.3 (Loeschorn, 1950).

Nº 4. Allegretto.

Figure 3. A. Loeschorn Op 65. 1st Book Etude no.4 (Loeschorn, 1950).

Nº 5. Andantino.

The image shows the musical score for Etude No. 5, Andantino, by A. Loeschhorn. It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. Each system has a treble and bass clef staff. The first system contains four measures, and the second system contains four measures. The music features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and a more melodic line in the treble. Fingering numbers (1-5) are placed above and below notes to indicate fingerings. The piece is in 3/4 time and ends with a fermata on the final note.

Figure 4. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.5 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 6. Allegro moderato.

The image shows the musical score for Etude No. 6, Allegro moderato, by A. Loeschhorn. It consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. Each system has a treble and bass clef staff. The first system contains four measures, the second and third systems contain four measures each, and the fourth system contains four measures. The music features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and a more melodic line in the treble. Fingering numbers (1-5) are placed above and below notes to indicate fingerings. The piece is in 3/4 time and ends with a fermata on the final note.

Figure 5. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.6 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 7. Allegro.

Figure 6. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.7 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 8. Allegretto.

Figure 7. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.8 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 9. Andante con moto.

Figure 8. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.9 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

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Nº 10. Allegro.

Figure 9. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.10 (Loeschorn, 1950).

Nº 11. Allegretto.

Figure 10. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.11 (Loeschorn, 1950).

of piano education for the repertoire of a student who had completed his first year. Etude No.9 was written in a style with right hand melodic intensity and embellishments. The accompaniment figures that support the melody in the left hand are frequently used in the second parts of the classical period sonata sections.

As seen in Figure 9, Etude No.10 consists of melodic expression in the right hand and accompaniment figure in the left hand with the styles of classical and romantic periods. Contrast is used in each of the four-measure antecedent and consequent phrases. Contrast is

preferred for loudness expression and strong (forte) and light (piano) nuance are used.

As can be seen in Figure 10, the most striking elements in Etude No.11 are the motifs consisting of quatrains and eighth notes connected by an extension tie. At the end of the period, the composer aimed to improve the gamut technique and crescendo skills with the scales he used at the end of the period.

As seen in Figure 11, in Etude No. 12 the melodic movement supported by chord figures in the left hand is in the foreground. There are crescendo and diminuendo

Nº 12. Allegro.

Figure 11. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.12 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 13. Allegro moderato.

Figure 12. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.13 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 14. Tempo di Valse.

Figure 13. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.14 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

playing marks existing with rising and descending sequences in the etude. The composer aimed to ensure the dominance of the nuance over the lifting and descending movement.

As seen in Figure 12, Etude No.13 consists of Alberti bass accompaniment figure with support made on the melodic line on the right hand. It is aimed to Show broad phrases and nuance signs written for the right hand with dynamic accompaniment to the left hand.

As seen in Figure 13, Etude No. 14 was written with

three-quarter rhythm accompaniment for the melodic movement in the right hand. The right-hand melody accompanied by this way aims to introduce this rhythm to the students and to gain musical expression experience on the rhythm.

As seen in Figure 14, in Etude No.14, the general purpose is to be able to play the nuances on the melodic lines shown with phrase ties along with fast and lively performance.

It can be seen in Figure 15 that the important point that

Nº 15. Allegro vivace.

Figure 14. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.15 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

Nº 16. Allegro.

Figure 15. A. Loeschhorn Op 65. 1st book etude no.16 (Loeschhorn, 1950).

draws attention in Etude No.16 is the two-party accompaniment pattern seen in the 3rd and 5th measurements in the left-hand accompaniment. By dividing the left hand into two, it further developed the musical narration. The playing style here is based on showing the expression inside the part shown in left hand with an eighth note upwards, along with melodic narration in the right hand. This structure, which is also included in a lot of medium and advance level works and piano accompaniment, has a very important place in piano performance. The introduction of this technique to the students has been considered at this level with technical compliance. Although this acquisition is an important piano technique, it is an important form of musical expression and something that students encounter in many baroque, classical and romantic period pieces.

DISCUSSION

Musical expression and the awareness of musical

phrases, which several researchers, educators, pedagogues and educators who contribute to the literatures generally focus on, are among the important skills that the students are expected to gain in musical education and therefore in instrument education. Written for this purpose, the sixteen etudes in the first book of A Loeschhorn Op. 65 Studies for Technical and Musical Development provide support for educators and students for this objective.

The etudes written by Loeschhorn in this book are important in terms of being a resource that be used in accordance with the repertoire and as technical exercises for students who learn the piano as the secondary instrument in their own branches in institutions providing vocational art education as well as for students who start piano education at the beginning level in these institutions.

Ekinci (2004), in his study on 324 candidate music teachers studying at education faculties concluded that 51.3% of the candidates who participated in the questionnaire exceeded their level in piano education

thanks to the technical practice method they used. The fact that the etudes examined in the book as an alternative study resource starting from the beginner level, from easy to difficult pieces, is important in terms of being able to eliminate the deficiency pointed out by Ekinci.

Loeschhorn's second and third books of Op. 65 and his Op.66 piano etudes should also be examined and analyzed. Based on these studies written by A. Loeschhorn for musical expression and narration, etudes that support development in this direction can be written for the instrument training repertoire. In addition to the exercises essential to overcome the technical difficulties encountered, these etudes, which predominantly emphasize the awareness of melody and musical phrases, are useful for education and for the musical development of the student.

Kalkanoğlu (2020) stated that in the conclusion part of Czerny's Op. 718 etudes written for the left hand, he observed that the melody in the right hand has fewer musical expressions among the other etudes written by the composer.

However, he stated that the chord technique, which has an important function in the left hand, is not included in the work in the etudes written for the left hand. The sixteen etudes of Loeschhorn examined in this research entirely focused on the development of expression and phrase awareness; and etudes numbered 8,12 and 15 support musical expression by putting emphasis on chord accompaniment in the left hand. These studies are also significant in terms of resolving the technical problems observed by Kalkanoğlu (2020).

The first book of Loeschhorn Op.65 is not a methodological piano training approach. The etudes in this book are exercises that support both musical and technical development and they can be used by the instructors throughout the training process. Instructor can use these etudes by observing their students' progress. In addition to this, it can be said that the instructor may have their students to play the etudes in this book by increasing awareness of musical phrases and expression to allow them gain a wide repertoire. Performance, which has a very important place for the art of music, and musical expression, which has a supportive place for its development, have been presented by Loeschhorn with exercises that enable to overcome the technical difficulties encountered by giving priority to a different difficulty in each etude.

Compared to composers such as Czerny, Cramer, Duvernoy and Bertini, who composed for the beginner and intermediate level piano education literature, Loeschhorn based its etude composition strategy primarily on musical expression. In addition to solving a technical challenge of a study, it also aims to develop the narrative capability, which is the true purpose of music, by focusing on the musical expression of the student. This goal is the composer's main goal in all his pedagogical works. In

Turkey, except for students playing the piano as the main instrument in professional music training schools, all students receive training for one or two years of undergraduate study of the piano. For example, a teacher candidate who plays the violin takes piano training for a year. A singer studying in the opera department takes piano training for two years. During these processes, it is not easy for students to study works from the literature, apart from the exam repertoires given to them. Due to the importance given to technical development and the concern of passing an exam, the necessary importance is not given to musical expression and narration. The pieces written by Loeschhorn for musical development provide great support to the educators working in the field in terms of solving this problem. In addition, these studies are very important resource for amateur piano instructors in music education.

Recommendations

In instrument education, it is essential to work with students on exercises for musical expression and musical phrase performance as well as specific etudes aimed at eliminating certain technical difficulties in beginner and intermediate level studies. In this study, based on the piano special, the same suggestion is given for all the instruments. Therefore, it is vital for educational music composers who compose for educational repertoire and musicians who receive composition education to work towards this development. Furthermore, the dissemination of the works of composers who write etudes for this aim in the literature is important for the development of the repertoire in educational institutions that provide vocational music education.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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