Weaken Challenge Explanation 17.2.13

First, translate.

> *So public health will get better faster if we stop waiting for new medical discoveries to pass peer review before they're published. Getting new medical information out there lets people improve their health and peer review is avoidably super slow.*

This stimulus is going hard at peer review, acting like it's nothing but an impediment to people improving their health. But what about all the shady medical "discoveries" that are actually bogus? Peer review could be the thing protecting us from them. If the public had access to a bunch of shady medical information that seemed legit, they might harm their own health more than they'd help it.

LOOPHOLE What if peer review protects the public from shady medical research?

Now we see it's a Weaken question, which is perfect. Our Loophole exposed the gap. We just need to find a powerful implementation of our Loophole in the correct answer.

A) *So peer review often prevents people from publishing poorly done research. This is basically our Loophole! It's pointing out that peer review has a purpose, and getting rid of it could have negative consequences. Releasing new medical information may allow people to improve their health, but that doesn't necessarily mean they will if they're working with bad data.* **A** *is powerful.*

B) *So people often make lifestyle changes in response to medical information in the press. This is cool, but it doesn't really give us a reason to doubt getting rid of peer review. If anything,* **B** *strengthens the conclusion because it says people are likely to use the new information. It doesn't hit the conclusion where it's vulnerable.* **B** *isn't weakening.*

C) *So some public health improvements aren't due to new medical discoveries.* **C** *doesn't really do much for whether eliminating peer review will impact public health. Yeah, there can be other ways public health can improve, but the stimulus didn't claim that eliminating peer review is the* ***only*** *way to make public health better.* **C** *isn't a powerful approach.*

D) *So some newspapers would publish these non-peer reviewed results. If anything,* **D** *strengthens the conclusion because it lets us know that the potentially unreliable results have some way of getting to the public. It's not a plus for peer review, so it doesn't weaken the conclusion.* **D** *isn't a powerful answer.*

E) *So most peer-reviewed journals would refuse to give up peer review. This is a tricky wrong answer, but notice the exact words of the conclusion.* **E** *is only talking about what would happen* ***if*** *we eliminated peer review, so it only pertains to the world in which the journals* ***do*** *give it up, however unlikely that is. This "if" in the conclusion neutralizes any power* **E** *would have.*

A is the correct answer. It's the only answer that points out a downside of eliminating peer review.

Weaken Challenge Explanation 18.4.23

First, translate.

> *So British doctors think that wearing tinted glasses causes depression and hypochondria. They found this correlation when they gave psych tests to people admitted for heart and stomach pain. Maybe these people tint the world with these glasses because their relationship to the world is so painful that they find visual stimulation irritating. So whenever people wear these glasses it's because they are depressed or hypochondriacs.*

This is a classic Bad Causal Reasoning stimulus. There's a correlation between two things, so the author jumps to saying one of them causes the other. But think about what they're saying for a sec; they're seriously purporting that the only reason people ever wear tinted glasses is because they're depressed or hypochondriacs. Like WHAT. There are a million other reasons people could wear tinted glasses. Let's head to our Omitted Options:

What if being a hipster makes you wear tinted glasses and be a depressed hypochondriac (New Factor Causing One or Both)? What if wearing tinted glasses makes you a depressed hypochondriac (Backwards Causation)? What if the people admitted to the hospital for digestive distress were actually sick, meaning they were neither depressed nor hypochondriacs (No Relationship)?

LOOPHOLE What if all the Omitted Options?

Now we see it's Weaken **EXCEPT**, so we're going to look for four answers that weaken and one answer that doesn't weaken. Any of our Omitted Options would weaken the conclusion, so we know what we're looking for. **EXCEPT** is easiest to do through process of elimination, so don't forget to use your **EXCEPT MARK**! Let's go check off some Omitted Options in the answer choices.

A) *So some people wear tinted glasses because an eye problem forces them to. Sounds like a New Factor Causing One or Both! If people aren't even choosing to wear the glasses, they definitely aren't choosing them because they're depressed hypochondriacs.* **A** *weakens the causal connection between being a depressed hypochondriac and wearing the glasses. Weaken check.*

B) *So even depressed hypochondriacs are sometimes really sick; therefore, doctors should still test them.* **B** *doesn't sound like it has much of a relationship to the causal claim about the tinted glasses, right? Like yeah, go ahead and test the hypochondriacs, but that doesn't make them any more or less likely to wear tinted glasses.* **B** *doesn't seem like a powerful approach.*

C) *So the confirming tests weren't done in places other than Britain that may have different light quality. People may wear tinted glasses because of the light quality. Light quality is a potential New Factor, so not testing other light conditions makes this broad of a conclusion way less likely. Maybe the correlation doesn't hold when the light is different.* **C** *is pointing out an Omitted Option. Weaken check.*

D) *So fashions surrounding tinted glasses vary across parts of the world. If fashions vary, the correlation may not hold under different fashion circumstances. Just like* **D**, *this is something the researchers should have controlled for if they wanted to conclude so broadly. Fashion could be another reason people are wearing tinted glasses. Weaken check.*

E) *So when patients were admitted for less ambiguous conditions, the correlation between depressed hypochondriacs and the glasses wasn't there. This is a great weaken choice. It's literally saying that the correlation doesn't always hold, making it more likely there's No Relationship or a New Factor at play. Weaken check.*

B is the correct answer. It is the only answer choice doesn't weaken the causal connection, making it perfect for Weaken **EXCEPT**.