

Initial Post

◀ Initial Post

Display replies in nested form

Settings ▾



Initial Post

by [Gavin Viljoen](#) - Thursday, 6 March 2025, 6:49 PM

Abi, a researcher or research consultant, has been assigned to evaluate the nutritional value of a new cereal. Based on his initial findings, he cannot confirm that the cereal is nutritious; in fact, his research suggests it may even be harmful.

Where did Abi obtain his information? Did he consult a nutritionist with domain-specific expertise? If so, he should submit his findings to the manufacturer, who will then decide whether to publicize the report. Given the negative results, the company is likely to respond with questions, giving Abi the opportunity to present his findings. At this stage, he should have sufficient evidence to prove his conclusions to the manufacturer and should not suggest alternative methods to change the outcome as this is unethical. Defying research ethics would undermine the credibility of Abi's work, making it difficult for others to trust his methods and findings (Bhandari, 2024). Maintaining ethical standards ensures the integrity of his research and reinforces confidence in his conclusions.

If the company chooses not to publish Abi's findings and instead seek another researcher to produce alternative results, it is Abi's ethical duty to report this to the relevant legal or regulatory authority. Doing so upholds research integrity, ensures consumer safety, and prevents potential misinformation, especially since this directly impacts public health.

References:

Bhandari, P. (2024) Ethical considerations in research: Types & examples, *Scribbr*. Available from: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/research-ethics/> [Accessed: 06 March 2025].

Permalink Reply



Re: Initial Post

by [Yuji Watanabe](#) - Saturday, 8 March 2025, 5:20 AM

Dear Gavin Viljoen

Thank you for your excellent thoughts. I agree with you on the following two points.

The first point is about utilizing expertise and maintaining neutrality. You mentioned the importance of working with nutritionists with expertise to increase the reliability of research. Submitting data that is convenient for the company may be profitable in the short term, but if a problem occurs, it will cause greater damage to both the company and its consumers. In addition, as you mentioned, it will affect Abi's future career, so ethical measures should be taken in the long term.

The second point is about the response when a company does not try to publish bad results and asks other researchers to provide different results. At first glance, it may seem negative for the company, but there are past cases in which a company's dishonest response has caused the manufacturer to lose social credibility in the long term (BBC News, 2015)¹. It is important to carry out reporting for both consumers and companies.



Chat to us!

References

BBC News. (2015) 'Volkswagen: The scandal explained', BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-34324772> (Accessed: 19 February 2025).

[Permalink](#)

[Show parent](#)

[Reply](#)



Re: Initial Post

by [Panagiotis Mourtas](#) - Saturday, 8 March 2025, 1:39 PM

Peer Response

Hello Gavin,

You articulated the ethical responsibilities of a researcher when evaluating a product very well, emphasizing the importance of maintaining research integrity and adhering to ethical standards in accordance with established principles (Bhandari, 2024).

What I particularly liked was your mention that Abi should consult a nutritionist with specialized knowledge in this field. The importance of peer review or collaboration with other experts in areas outside our own domain is equally significant and should be emphasized, as it is a critical step in validating our research findings, especially when these findings have significant implications for public health (ScienceDirect, 2025). Including this step further strengthens the credibility of our conclusions.

You also mention that the manufacturer will engage in a dialogue with Abi if the results are negative. While this is an ideal scenario, it is equally important to consider cases where manufacturers may attempt to suppress or dismiss unfavorable results. In such cases, Abi should be prepared to escalate the issue to regulatory authorities, as you mentioned, but he should also consider publishing the findings in reputable journals or platforms to ensure transparency and accountability (Malički, 2023).

Finally, regarding the role of informed consent and transparency in research, if the cereal was tested on humans, Abi must ensure that all ethical guidelines were followed, such as obtaining informed consent and ensuring the safety of participants (World Medical Association, 2013). This would further underscore the ethical rigor of his research.

The inclusion of all the above provides a more comprehensive view of the ethical landscape in research.

References:

M., Malički et al. (2023) Transparency in conducting and reporting research: A survey of authors, reviewers, and editors across scholarly disciplines. Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10022793/> [Accessed 8 March 2025]

P., Bhandari (2024) Ethical considerations in research: Types & examples. Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/research-ethics/> [Accessed 8 March 2025]

ScienceDirect (2025) Ethics of Science. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/ethics-of-science> [Accessed 8 March 2025]

World Medical Association (2013) Declaration of Helsinki: Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. Available at: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1760318> [Accessed 8 March 2025]

[Permalink](#)

[Sh](#)

[Chat to us!](#)



Peer Response

by [Ben Zapka](#) - Monday, 17 March 2025, 10:22 AM

Hello Gavin,

Thank you for this contribution to the discussion. While you managed to explain the thought process that Abi will typically be faced with, your post would profit by involving more academic references which would deepen your evaluations. You rightfully mention that it is Abi's obligation not to switch research methods to support another finding. However, you should even go one step further and demand Abi to report all findings as well as the way they were derived publicly, e.g., in a peer-reviewed journal (Morrow et al., 2023; Kara, 2018).

You do a good job stressing that Abi should report if the company should decide to consult a different researcher to get a more positive evaluation. Here, academic references would again support your point. Another point that you could consider in more detail is whether Abi is responsible for the use others make of his research results. Here, complying with ethical research guidelines and best practices, Abi should be aware of how his research results could be used by others and the consequences this would have (National Research Ethics Committees, 2024; ALLEA, 2023). Ingesting these points into your post would further deepen your analysis.

Kind regards,

Ben

List of References:

Morrow, R. L., Mintzes, B., Gray, G., Law, M. R., Garrison, S. & Dormuth, C. R. (2023) 'Public reporting of clinical trial findings as an ethical responsibility to participants: a qualitative study', *BMJ Open* 13(3). Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10032397/>

Kara, H. (2018) *Research Ethics in the Real World*. Bristol: Bristol University Press. Available at: <https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/research-ethics-in-the-real-world>

National Research Ethics Committees (2024) Guidelines for Research Ethics in Science and Technology. Available at: <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/guidelines/science-and-technology/guidelines-for-research-ethics-in-science-and-technology/> (Accessed: 17 March 2025)

ALLEA (2023) The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity_horizon_en.pdf (Accessed 17 March 2025)

[Permalink](#)

[Show parent](#)

[Reply](#)



Peer Response

by [Oi Lam Siu](#) - Saturday, 22 March 2025, 10:26 AM

Hello Gavin,

You make a good point about the importance of consulting domain experts, such as nutritionists, when evaluating effects of a product. Calling on a specialist is vital to guarantee precise data collection and analysis (Bhandari, 2024). In addition, I

[Chat to us!](#)



recently discussed with another peer the benefits of having independent auditors review research before publication. This is an excellent strategy to improve fairness, as auditing can uncover errors or oversights and thus protect the integrity of research before it is made public (PwC, 2017).

You also highlight the possibility that the company might seek another researcher to deliver more favourable results, emphasizing the need to uphold ethical standards. If Abi suspects any unethical attempts to bury authentic findings, his duty is clear: he should notify the appropriate oversight bodies, given the direct consequences for public health. This aligns with the principle of serving the “Public Interest,” which involves promoting public wellbeing and maintaining honesty in professional work (BCS, 2022; Duquenoy, n.d.).

Furthermore, cereals are consumed by a wide range of people, which makes it even more important that any potential health risks are honestly communicated. By keeping communication open, adhering to professional guidelines, and raising concerns where necessary, Abi preserves both the credibility of his research and consumer trust.

Best regards,
Helen

Reference

BCS (2022). BCS Code of Conduct. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct> [Accessed 16 March 2025].

Bhandari, P. (2024) Ethical considerations in research: Types & examples, *Scribbr*. Available from: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/research-ethics/> [Accessed: 22 March 2025].

Duquenoy, P. (n.d.) Data Science-Professional Responsibility and Ethics. Available from: <https://www.bcs.org/media/5147/data-science-professional-responsibility-and-ethics.pdf> [Accessed 16 March 2025]

PwC (2017) Understanding a financial statement audit. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/im/en/services/Assurance/pwc-understanding-financial-statement-audit.pdf> [Accessed 22 March 2025]

Maximum rating: -

[Permalink](#)

[Show parent](#)

[Edit](#)

[Delete](#)

[Reply](#)

◀ Initial Post

You are logged in as Oi Lam Siu (Log out)

[Policies](#)

Powered by Moodle

[Site Accessibility Statement](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)



Chat to us!