Collaborative Learning Discussion 2

Discussion Topic - Case Study: Accuracy of information
Initial Post

Data findings

It appears that Abi has concerns about the nutritional aspects of the new cereal and these concerns could be addressed in many ways. Firstly, if the research is taking place on a new cereal which is, or will be sold in the UK, then according to the chartered institute for IT code of conduct, section 1(a) states that "you shall have due regards for public health" (BCS, 2022). These concerns could also be legally checked by the Food Standards Agency by enforcing the Food Standards Act 1999, section 8: paragraph 1 & 2(a), which states that "the agency has the function of 'monitoring developing matters' relating to food safety and other interests of consumers in relation to food" (Food Standards Agency, 1999).

However, it is also worth noting that, although Abi's data may suggest the nutritional values of Whizzz indicate that it could be harmful, without more data about his discoveries, the opinion may have arised from studies containing participants who had non-compatible nutrigenetics. Nutrigenetics of an individual can also play a role in deciding if nutritional value will be more positive or negative (Khorraminezhad et al. 2020). Khorraminezhad et al. (2020) also States that "the response to the dietary intake depends on the genetic background of an individual".

Ethical concerns

Wagenmakers et al (2021) and Hicks et al (2015) suggest that the behavioral and social sciences have gained from the practice of transparency in statistical research. Therefore, with this observance made by both Wagenmakers et al (2021) and Hicks et al (2015), it could suggest that if Abi presents both the Negative analysis as well as the positive analysis, then it would be beneficial, a suggestion which is also supported by Forsberg et al (2018).

If we are discussing whether Abi is responsible for how others use his research results, Wagenmakers et al (2021) suggest that the sharing of data and code of the research enables other researchers to establish whether the original analysis is valid or not. From a privacy perspective, Abi may be responsible if confidential data such as intellectual property or personal data is leaked (Forsberg et al, 2018).

Summary

Although Abi has received a project from a manufacturer to review the nutritional value of a new cereal, Whizzz, Abi should not feel pressured to provide biased results that favor the manufacturer and Whizzz. Yes, it is highly likely that ethical and legal consideration may need to be applied in regards to privacy and confidentiality of Whizzz, but there's also a requirement for the food standard agency to help the consumer to stay safe. Abi should present both the positive and negative results to the manufacturer as the manufacturer may be looking for potential legal issues with their product. The next step could be to request that the food standards agency double check the data together with the manufacturer to mitigate any issues discovered.

References

BCS (2022) Code of Conduct for BCS Members. Available from:
https://www.bcs.org/media/2211/bcs-code-of-conduct.pdf [Accessed on 11th August 2023]

Food Standards Agency (1999) Food Standards Act 1999. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/28/section/8 [Accessed on 10th August 2023]

Forsberg, E.M., Anthun, F.O., Bailey, S., Birchley, G., Bout, H., Casonato, C., Fuster, G.G., Heinrichs, B., Horbach, S., Jacobsen, I.S. and Janssen, J., (2018) Working with research integrity—Guidance for research performing organisations: The Bonn PRINTEGER statement. Science and engineering ethics, 24, pp.1023-1034. Available from:
https://link-springer-com.uniessexlib.idm.oclc.org/article/10.1007/s11948-018-0034-4 [Accessed on 10th August 2023]

Hicks, D., Wouters, P., Waltman, L., De Rijcke, S. and Rafols, I., (2015) Bibliometrics: the Leiden Manifesto for research metrics. Nature, 520(7548), pp.429-431. Available from:
https://www-nature-com.uniessexlib.idm.oclc.org/articles/520429a [Accessed on 10th August 2023]

Khorraminezhad, L., Leclercq, M., Droit, A., Bilodeau, J.F. & Rudkowska, I., (2020) Statistical and machine-learning analyses in nutritional genomics studies. Nutrients, 12(10): 3140. Available from:
https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/12/10/3140 [Accessed on 10th August 2023]

Wagenmakers, E.J., Sarafoglou, A., Aarts, S., Albers, C., Algermissen, J., Bahník, Š., van Dongen, N., Hoekstra, R., Moreau, D., van Ravenzwaaij, D. and Sluga, A., (2021) Seven steps toward more transparency in statistical practice. Nature Human Behaviour, 5(11): 1473-1480. Available from:
https://www-nature-com.uniessexlib.idm.oclc.org/articles/s41562-021-01211-8 [Accessed on 10th August 2023]