# Abi Case Study Posts

## Initial Post

Abi’s results contradict the manufacturer’s health claims for “Whizzz,” placing him against the duty of honesty set out in the *ACM Code of Ethics* (Association for Computing Machinery, 2018) and the *Royal Statistical Society Code* (Royal Statistical Society, 2014). Running additional lawful correlations is not unethical in itself, but presenting only favourable ones is cherry-picking that misleads consumers which is behaviour prohibited by the EU Food Information Regulation (European Parliament and Council, 2011) and the UK *Food Safety Act* (Food Safety Act 1990). Integrity obliges Abi to disclose all material findings, positive and negative, with transparent methods and caveats so risk is communicated responsibly (Gigerenzer & Edwards, 2003). Although statisticians cannot control every downstream use, the foreseeability of selective publication creates a shared duty to prevent harm (Association for Computing Machinery, 2018). Abi’s options include: inserting a contract clause requiring full disclosure or a balanced summary, briefing regulators such as the Food Standards Agency, publishing the complete study in a peer-reviewed journal, and, if suppression persists, whistle-blowing under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). Transparency protects public health, shields Abi from liability for false advertising under the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation (European Parliament and Council, 2006), and sustains public trust; capitulating would erode that trust and damage reputations.Top of Form

**References**

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## Peer Response 1

**Response to Peer**  
You persuasively frame Abi’s dilemma as a form of “epistemic manipulation”; I agree that selective framing can mislead even when the underlying data are sound. Adding to your point about public-health stakes, the Royal Statistical Society emphasises that statisticians have an explicit duty to “prevent the misrepresentation of statistical evidence” (Royal Statistical Society [RSS], 2014). Hence, Abi’s ethical responsibility does not end with producing accurate numbers, he must proactively guard against foreseeable misuse, echoing the duty of reasonable foresight discussed by O’Neill (2016).

One practical safeguard Abi might pursue is a contractual clause requiring that any public release include the complete technical report or an agreed balanced summary, a recommendation also endorsed by the American Statistical Association (ASA, 2016). If the manufacturer refuses, whistle-blowing becomes defensible under the UK Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects disclosures “in the public interest.”

**References**

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O’Neill, C. (2016) Weapons of math destruction: how big data increases inequality and threatens democracy. New York: Crown.

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**Peer Response 2**

**Response to Peer**  
You persuasively connect Abi’s selective emphasis to research integrity rather than outright fraud. The updated UKRIO Code of Practice for Research reminds us that honesty and transparency are core duties, yet it also stresses accountability because researchers must anticipate how their work could be misapplied and “take steps to prevent misuse where reasonably possible” (UKRIO, 2023).

Your link to the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 is equally important since those regulations make it an offence to omit material information that might change a consumer’s decision (Legislation.gov.uk, 2008). Even if Abi reports every table accurately, permitting the manufacturer to remove disconfirming results could still count as an “actionable omission.”

Regarding your closing question about whether accountability ends once results are reported ethically, I would argue in favour of shared responsibility. Abi cannot monitor every press release, yet the principle of reasonable foresight (UKRIO, 2023) obliges him to adopt safeguards such as contractual clauses that require full publication, preregistering the analysis plan, or depositing the complete report in an open repository where regulators and scholars can review it. These steps distribute accountability across the chain of researcher, funder, and regulator and they lessen the ethical burden on any single actor. What additional systemic measures, for example a mandatory open‑data rule for industry‑funded nutrition studies, do you think could strengthen that shared model?

**References**

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**Summary Post**  
My initial view was that Abi must publish every defensible result, favourable and unfavourable, and protect against selective reporting through clear contracts, regulator engagement, and, if needed, whistleblowing. This position rests on the ACM and RSS ethical codes (Association for Computing Machinery, 2018; Royal Statistical Society, 2014) and the EU food information regulation that forbids misleading omissions (European Parliament and Council, 2011).

**What peers added**  
• Epistemic manipulation. A peer student introduced the idea of misleading framing, which shows that suppressing adverse correlations can be unethical even when the raw data are sound (Petrovskaya and Zendle, 2022).  
• Reasonable foresight. Nasser drew my attention to the UKRIO Code of Practice, which requires researchers to anticipate misuse and act to prevent it (UK Research Integrity Office, 2023). This shifted my thinking from optional prudence to formal duty.  
• Practical leverage. Bing Hung Liu questioned whether Abi can force the firm to publish a balanced report. This prompted me to stress early measures such as preregistration, repository deposit, and disclosure clauses agreed before any analysis starts.

**Summary position**  
Accountability should be shared. Abi should preregister his analysis, lodge the full dataset in an open repository, and insist on balanced disclosure. These steps meet the reasonable foresight test and align with consumer protection law on material omissions (Legislation.gov.uk, 2008). If the firm still suppresses harmful findings, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives Abi a lawful route to protect the public. Integrity therefore means active stewardship of evidence through every stage of its journey.

**References**

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Royal Statistical Society (RSS) (2014) *Code of Conduct*. Available at: Royal Statistical Society (RSS) (2014) *Code of Conduct*. Available at: https://rss.org.uk/about/policy-and-guidelines/code-of-conduct/#:~:text=The%20Society's%20Code%20of%20Conduct,expected%20of%20all%20practising%20statisticians.(Accessed: 14 July 2025).

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