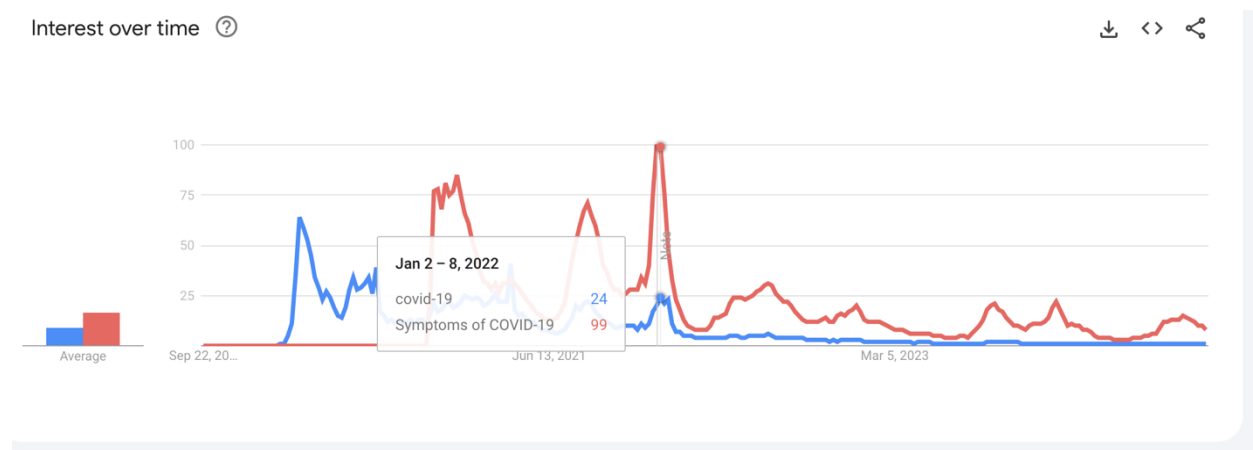
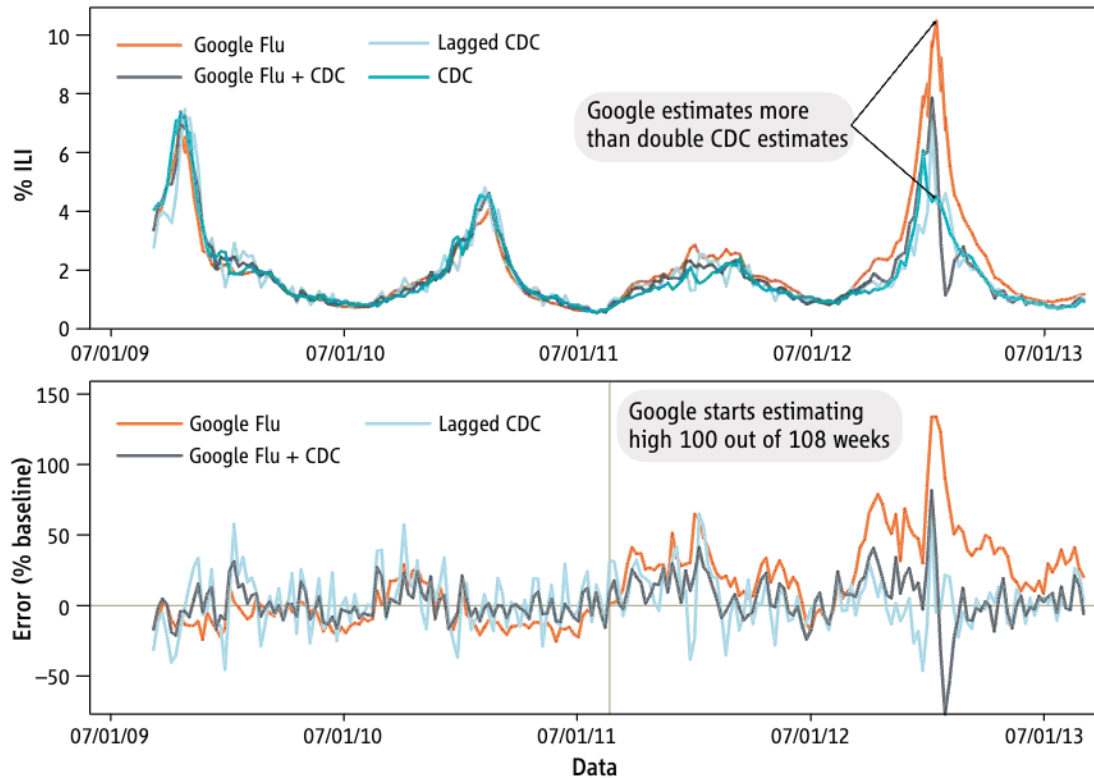


In February 2013, Google Flu Trends (GFT) made headlines because of a Nature report that stated that GFT was predicting more doctor visits for influenza-like illnesses (ILI) than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The most common explanation, the article gave, for the reason for GFT predicting more doctor visits was media-stoked panic last flu season. This can be seen from recent news from the Covid-19 pandemic and we can see from google trends that *Symptoms of Covid 19* shot up between January 2-8, 2022 and on January 2, CNN had begun posting about the *highly contagious* omicron variant and panic rose even more when at the end of January, the World Health Organization (WHO), posted that the cumulative cases reached over 364M. Therefore, just like GFT and Covid-19 trends are similar because the media heightened panic on symptoms, which could be dangerous if researchers start relying on Google Trends as predicting doctor visits.



Scientist and Researchers must be careful when relying on one singular source for predictions. “The Parable of Google Flu: Traps in Big Data Analysis” stated that scientist and research must continue to do replications using the data sources across time to observe patterns and not trends. Since watching only trends only showed the pitfalls that can happen in Big Data, researchers can have low understanding on real-time changes with only trends as a data source. Not only was GFT a pitfall in Big Data, but it was also overfitting. The graph below is from the Science article “The Parable of Google Flu: Traps in Big Data Analysis” and it shows the overestimation of GFT in 2012-2013 and overshooting the actual level by 50% from the year before, predicting a high flu prevalence 100-108 weeks. It incorporates a “lagged CDC” that combines “Google Flu + CDC” estimation. This just shows a too complex data, there is a lot of random fluctuations, this data might be proven as coincidental and almost manipulative. It is well known researchers can manipulate data to show generate what they want.



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