Threats to Validity

Threats to Validity can undermine a conclusion, even if the analysis was done correctly.

Some examples of threats are:

- **Selection bias** - identifying the favorite food of the rabbits won't tell us anything reliable about what all the animals eat.
- **Study bias** - If someone is supposed to assess how much cat food is eaten each day on average, but they only measure how much cat food is put in the bowls (instead of how much is actually consumed), they'll end up with an over-estimate.
- **Poor choice of summary** - Suppose a different shelter that had 10 animals recorded adoption times (in weeks) as 1, 1, 1, 7, 7, 8, 8, 9, 9, 10. Using the mode (1) to report what's typical would make it seem like the animals were adopted much quicker than they really were, since 7 out of 10 animals took at least 7 weeks to be adopted.
- **Confounding variables** - Shelter workers might steer people towards newer animals, because they've become attached to the animals that have been there for a while, making it appear that "staying in the shelter longer" means "less likely to be adopted".