

## Initial Post

Abi's situation raises important ethical questions about how data is analysed and shared.

Altering data values after they have been collected is considered unethical because it undermines the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research (Gillon, 1994). It also goes against professional codes of conduct that require honesty, integrity, and respect for the public good (ACM, 2018; BCS, 2022). However, even when the data is technically correct, choosing to present only certain results while leaving out others can also be misleading. This is especially concerning when the findings may influence people's health or safety (Ioannidis, 2005).

Abi has a professional responsibility to report all relevant results clearly and fairly. According to established ethical standards in computing and research, professionals should avoid causing harm and should act in the interest of the wider public (ACM, 2018; Floridi et al., 2018). If he chooses to present only the results that support the manufacturer's claims and ignores evidence that suggests the cereal might be harmful, he could be contributing to false advertising or even endangering public health (European Commission, 2005).

There are also legal risks involved, not just in the UK but internationally. In the UK, the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 state that businesses must not mislead consumers by omitting key information (UK Government, 2008). Similarly, the European Union's Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (European Commission, 2005) prohibits misleading actions and omissions that could distort consumer decisions. If Abi's report is later used to promote the product in a way that misleads consumers by focusing only on the positive results and ignoring the harmful ones, he may still share some responsibility for the outcome, even if this was not his intention. Understanding these legal frameworks is

essential when deciding how to present research that may influence public behaviour or safety (Floridi et al., 2018).

Abi is therefore not only allowed but obligated to present both the positive and negative results of his analysis. This ensures the manufacturer receives a full picture of the findings (Wagenmakers et al., 2012). If Abi suspects that only the favourable results will be published, he still has other courses of action. He could write a full report and make it available through a public platform, or seek advice from an ethics board or a professional organisation. Taking these steps helps him act in line with ethical and legal responsibilities, even if he cannot fully control how the information is used (Bouter, 2015).

Abi may not have full control over how his results are used by others, but he remains fully accountable for the way he conducts and presents his own work. Acting with integrity means anticipating the possible consequences of his analysis and ensuring that his methods and reporting are as transparent as possible. Research has shown that selective reporting, or the failure to include all relevant findings, can lead to publication bias. This can distort the scientific record and result in poor decisions in areas such as public health and consumer behaviour (Ioannidis, 2005). It is therefore essential that Abi presents a balanced account of his findings.

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