

Collaborative Discussion 2 - Peer response 3 (Kieron)

Kieron provides a comprehensive analysis grounded in established statistical ethics literature, effectively connecting Abi's dilemma to the broader issues of p-hacking and selective reporting (Simmons et al., 2011). His reference to Huff's (1954) classic work demonstrates understanding that statistical manipulation is a longstanding concern, while his emphasis on professional codes from both the ASA and RSS establishes clear ethical obligations for comprehensive reporting. Shashank builds upon this foundation by suggesting proactive engagement with manufacturers to establish ethical boundaries and introduces the concept of open data sharing as a deterrent to misuse (Munafò et al., 2017). Valentina strengthens the analysis by incorporating bioethical principles, particularly beneficence, arguing that Abi's professional duty aligns with his ethical obligation to prevent public harm (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019). Her emphasis on FTC regulations regarding deceptive advertising adds important legal context beyond consumer protection frameworks.

The thread demonstrates strong convergence on fundamental principles, whilst revealing complementary perspectives on implementation strategies. Kieron's practical recommendations for comprehensive reporting with disclaimers align with established professional obligations, though the discussion could benefit from greater emphasis on regulatory notification requirements when public health risks are identified. Shashank's suggestion of early manufacturer engagement is valuable but may underestimate the power dynamics inherent in commercial research relationships. Valentina's integration of bioethical principles provides important theoretical grounding, though her focus on beneficence could be enhanced by considering the precautionary principle that governs regulatory decision-making in cases of uncertain harm. The thread effectively addresses the distinction between technical validity and ethical integrity, recognising that legitimate statistical analyses can still constitute professional misconduct when selectively presented. However, the discussion would benefit from greater consideration of whistleblower protection frameworks and mandatory reporting obligations that may supersede client confidentiality when public safety is at stake.

The synthesis of this discussion reveals that statistical professionals face multilayered obligations encompassing professional codes, bioethical principles, legal compliance, and public welfare considerations. Valentina's question about institutional obligations is particularly pertinent, suggesting that research organisations may need clearer policies for preventing the release of misleading findings. All colleagues converged on the principle that professional integrity cannot be subordinated to commercial interests, though the practical mechanisms for ensuring this remain complex and context-dependent in contemporary research environments.

References:

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