**Case Study: Accuracy of information**

Abi’s case presents a complex ethical dilemma at the intersection of statistical integrity and professional responsibility. While he has not fabricated data, selectively analysing results to portray *Whizzz* cereal in a more favourable light despite evidence of potential harm constitutes a serious breach of research ethics. Selective reporting can mislead stakeholders and undermine the credibility of both the researcher and the research institution (Ioannidis, 2005).

Ethically, Abi is obliged to present both the positive and negative analyses. Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice (2018) emphasises the duty of statisticians to ensure their work is honest, transparent, and not misleading, regardless of sponsor interests. Omitting adverse findings intentionally or otherwise risks contributing to misinformation and could have significant public health implications, particularly if the cereal is marketed to vulnerable populations such as children.

Legally, Abi’s actions could fall under scrutiny from regulatory bodies. For instance In the UK, *Food Safety Act 1990 (no date)* requires accurate representation of nutritional content. Similarly, *Nutrition, Food Labeling, and Critical Foods | FDA (no date)* enforces strict labelling requirements to ensure consumer protection. Suppressing unfavourable data could therefore expose both Abi and the manufacturer to legal liability.

Professionally, Abi must consider the long-term consequences of compromised integrity. Should Abi suspects the manufacturer intends to publish only positive findings, a prudent course of action would be to document and disclose the full analysis through peer-reviewed publication or a public data repository. He may also seek guidance from an ethics committee if consumer safety is at risk.

Ultimately, while statistical tools can support multiple interpretations, responsible practice demands transparency, accountability, and a commitment to the public interest.

References

*Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice* (no date). Available at: https://www.amstat.org/your-career/ethical-guidelines-for-statistical-practice (Accessed: 13 June 2025).

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Ioannidis, J.P.A. (2005) ‘Why Most Published Research Findings Are False’, *PLOS Medicine*, 2(8), p. e124. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1371/JOURNAL.PMED.0020124.

*Nutrition, Food Labeling, and Critical Foods | FDA* (no date). Available at: https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-food-labeling-and-critical-foods (Accessed: 13 June 2025).