Summary Post

by Kwok Wai Yau - Friday, 13 October 2023, 3:13 PM

Number of replies: 0

Abi, a researcher and statistical programmer, faces an ethical dilemma concerning a cereal project. The data suggests that the cereal, Whizzz, may not be as nutritious as claimed, potentially even harmful. Abi is contemplating whether it's ethical to present the data in a way that supports different conclusions.

The consensus among the responses is that manipulating or altering the data is unequivocally unethical, as it compromises the research's integrity and could lead to severe professional and legal consequences. Selective reporting, wherein only favorable analyses are presented, is also considered unethical, as it distorts the truth and misleads stakeholders. Abi has an ethical obligation to present both positive and negative analyses. This ensures transparency and enables the manufacturer to make an informed decision based on the complete dataset. Additionally, Abi bears responsibility for how others might use his program's results.

Various courses of action are suggested. Abi should discuss his concerns transparently with the manufacturer, document his analyses, methodologies, and results for record-keeping and protection, and seek guidance from colleagues, mentors, or an ethics committee within his institute. In case of potential legal implications, seeking advice from legal counsel is advisable. It is emphasized that Abi should also communicate with his management and compliance officer, ensuring they understand the situation and the associated risks. This is not solely Abi's issue to resolve but also concerns the

organization he works for. References to the ACM Code of Ethics (2023) and Professional Conduct and the BCS Code of Conduct (2022) underpin the ethical considerations discussed.

In conclusion, the consensus is that Abi's best course of action is to conduct unbiased analyses, thoroughly document his findings, and communicate transparently with the manufacturer. Upholding ethical standards is crucial to maintain the integrity of the research process and safeguard Abi's professional standing.

Reference:

Association for Computing Machinery (N.D.). ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Available at: **https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics** [Accessed 11 October 2023]

British Computer Society (2022). BCS Code of Conduct. Available at: **https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct/** [Accessed 11 October 2023]