
Part 4.1: Critiquing Causal Claims

For each of the articles below, identify the causal claim, and work through the 9 questions covered in the previous section:

1. What is the explanatory variable?
2. What is the treatment?
3. What is the response variable?
4. Who was the experiment conducted on?
5. How were the participants put into groups?
6. Was there a control group?
7. Was a placebo used?
8. Was blinding used?
9. Are there any ethical considerations that need to be made?

In some cases you won't be able to answer all the questions. If an article doesn't answer these questions, does it affect your ability to judge the conclusions it draws?

Articles:

1. A promising drug to slow the progression of Alzheimer's was just unveiled
<https://www.vox.com/2018/7/25/17607376/dementia-alzheimers-drug-trial-biogen-eisai>
2. Blue light from phone screens accelerates blindness, study finds
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/09/blue-light-from-phone-screens-accelerates-blindness-study-finds>
3. Phones ring alarm bells
<https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/phones-ring-alarm-bells>
4. Late-night phone use is linked to poor sleep and moodiness
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5733765/Turn-phone-10pm-avoid-risk-mental-health-problems.html>

Alternative links (archive of each article)

1. <https://students.mathsnz.com/3.12/pdfs/Article5.pdf>
2. <https://students.mathsnz.com/3.12/pdfs/Article6.pdf>
3. <https://students.mathsnz.com/3.12/pdfs/Article7.pdf>
4. <https://students.mathsnz.com/3.12/pdfs/Article8.pdf>