Collaborative Discussion 2: Summary Post

First, Abi should review his research design to identify and account for bias in his results, and to ensure that his study sample size is adequate for his calculations (Cook & Hatala, 2015; Maggetti et al., 2013). Once Abi confirmed his results were defensible, he should objectively present his findings to preserve the integrity of his research and the scientific community as a whole (Saunders et al., 2019; Storeng et al., 2019).

Causation and *correlation* are distinct, as correlation only observes the coincidence of data (Irving et al., 2022). If Abi's research demonstrates that the cereal fails to *cause* nutrition, or may *cause* harm, Abi's findings should abide by globally accepted ethics standards (DuVal, 2004; Resnick, 2020; Saunders et al., 2019; Vanclay et al., 2013). Highlighting specific correlations to support a favourable narrative at the expense of public good is unethical, particularly in the medical field (Altman, 1980; AMA, n.d.).

Conversely, showing several correlations that appear to conflict is ethical, as it may indicate the need for follow-on research (Maggetti et al., 2013). Presenting more than one potential conclusion may allow the audience to independently assess research findings. Abi is not directly responsible for uses of his research beyond his study, nor can he control how the manufacturer may manipulate his data; however, he may be morally compelled to act by informing regulatory bodies, ethical committees, or the public if welfare is at risk (DuVal, 2004; Resnick, 2020; Storeng et al., 2019; Zinberg, 1996).

Many of these issues can be prevented by effective research contracts or clinical study agreements that govern how findings should be gathered, analysed, reported, and disseminated (DuVal, 2004). A poorly written research contract can subject research institutions and individuals to egregious lawsuits, leading to financial and reputational ruin regardless of the merits of the lawsuit (Zinberg, 1996).

Furthermore, researchers should identify support networks designed to preserve research integrity and understand how institutions and organizations can protect researchers and their findings (Storeng et al., 2019). Seeking assistance when assessing ethical, moral, and legal consequences can relieve pressure on researchers to make unethical decisions (Storeng et al., 2019; Zinberg, 1996).

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