Initial Post

by Sahr Solar Sumana - Wednesday, 19 June 2024, 12:34 AM

Ethical issues arise when there is cleansing and discarding of data and when there is a failure to report pertinent findings (Berenson et al., 2019). If Abi changes the data within their findings, then it would be deemed unethical. As a researcher Abi must present both positive and negative findings as well as present relevant findings too. Considering and following through with the aforementioned actions represents a lack of research integrity as Abi would making these decisions to obtain a financial incentive, or to increase her profile at the expense of members in her area of research or even the populations that could be affected by her research in the long term (Drolet et al., 2022).

Despite Abi not being entirely responsible for how their research is used they could notify the health research authority (HRA) as they oversee ethical, governance and legal aspects of research in England (www.nihr.ac.uk, n.d.). Abi also holds responsibility for ensuring that her research is transparent and conducted with integrity and honesty (Dawson, 2015). Abi needs to understand that the cereal manufacturer only using the positive results can have a negative effect and it would be negligent of Abi to allow the manufacturer to mislead the consumer based on the findings from their research.

Reference List:

Berenson, M.L., Levine, D.M., Szabat, K.A. and Stephan, D.F. (2019). *Basic Business Statistics : Concepts and Applications*. Harlow, England Pearson.

Dawson, C.W. (2015). *Projects in computing and information systems : a student's guide*. 3rd ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Drolet, M.-J., Rose-Derouin, E., Leblanc, J.-C., Ruest, M. and Williams-Jones, B. (2022). Ethical Issues in Research: Perceptions of Researchers, Research Ethics Board Members and Research Ethics Experts. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 21(2), pp.269–292.

www.nihr.ac.uk. (n.d.). *Regulatory approvals and governance | NIHR*. [online] Available at: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/i-need-help-designing-my-research/regulatory-approvals-and-governance.htm#:~:text=The%20HRA%20oversees%20ethical%2C%20governance.

Peer Response

by Sahr Solar Sumana - Monday, 1 July 2024, 9:32 PM

Hi Alex, thank you for your initial post on this case study. You have systematically highlighted the responsibilities and consequences that Abi would be liable for if they were to breach ethical standards with their research. It may be a good idea to look into the conflicts of interest that Abi may be experiencing when conducting the research such as the research being done on behalf of the cereal company. Drolet et al. (2022) stated that while it is not possible to eliminate all conflicts of interest, it is important to manage them properly and to avoid temptations to behave unethically. Although we don't have an intricate level of context within this case study how do you think that conflicts of interest can be reduced for Abi while conducting the research?

Legal, reputational and even fiscal consequences have been touched upon in the initial post. Ultimately you understand that as a researcher, Abi has the ethical obligation to make sure that the use of their results and the analysis of the results are presented by the cereal company in an accurate and unbiased manner that upholds the integrity of the research and protects the well-being of the public.

Reference List:

Drolet, M.-J., Rose-Derouin, E., Leblanc, J.-C., Ruest, M. and Williams-Jones, B. (2022). Ethical Issues in Research: Perceptions of Researchers, Research Ethics Board Members and Research Ethics Experts. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 21(2), pp.269–292.

Peer Response

by Sahr Solar Sumana - Monday, 1 July 2024, 11:38 PM

Hi Maria, your post details the ethical implications and risks that could be the result of data misrepresentation. Your post also states where ethical considerations arise which is when the researcher is deciding which results to include in a report (Berenson et al., 2019), it was a good idea to include the types of consequences that Abi could suffer as a result of manipulating results which can include fiscal and criminal retribution.

The key comparison to the Andrew Wakefield case is an ideal real-world example on the long-term damage that can be caused by fraudulent research. It was found that Wakefield had a conflict of interest when conducting this research as he had involvement with a lawsuit against the manufacturers of the MMR vaccine in which he wanted financial gain (Godlee, Smith and Marcovitch, 2011). With this knowledge do you think there is a control that could be put in place that could eliminate conflict of interest within researchers or do you think that this is a confounding variable?

Lastly, I like how your initial post goes into systematic methods in which Abi can avoid misrepresentation of the results produced from their research. With methods such as indicating sample sizes, confidence levels, interval limits, sampling errors, and interpretations, Abi can ensure transparency (Berenson et al., 2019). This shows that Abi's responsibility reaches beyond just presenting data to the company, they must ensure that their findings are used ethically.

Reference List:

Berenson, M.L., Levine, D.M., Szabat, K.A. and Stephan, D.F. (2019). *Basic Business Statistics : Concepts and Applications*. Harlow, England Pearson.

Godlee, F., Smith, J. and Marcovitch, H. (2011). Wakefield's article linking MMR vaccine and autism was fraudulent. *BMJ*, [online] 342(jan05 1), pp.c7452–c7452. doi:https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.c7452.

Peer Response

by Sahr Solar Sumana - Tuesday, 2 July 2024, 12:57 AM

Hi Michael, thank you for your initial post on research ethics.

You first outline the importance of research ethics by referring to Dawson (2015) who stated that integrity and honesty are paramount. I agree that this is a good foundation to build your research around as a researcher, how do you think that this could be applied to Abi within the case study?

Berenson et al. (2019) mentioned that keeping in line ethically when conducting research involves ensuring that the testing process is not manipulated and all pertinent results are reported, this is something Abi should definitely enforce when presenting their findings to the cereal company they are conducting research on behalf of. If Abi were to skew her findings in favour of what the cereal company desires, then her actions could be labelled as food fraud which can create unexpected food safety risks that threaten public health, and by raising public concern over confidence in food quality (Gussow and Mariët, 2022).

I think it would be a good idea to look at some cases where biased unethical research has been conducted and how it has had long term effects on society. Ingold's (2024) initial post looked into the popular case of Dr Wakefield's unethical report which led to a vast reduction of vaccination rates in the UK which reached a low on 80% in 2003 (Godlee, Smith and Marcovitch, 2011). It would be helpful to see how these after effects could somehow be applied to the case study assigned.

Reference List:

Berenson, M.L., Levine, D.M., Szabat, K.A. and Stephan, D.F. (2019). *Basic Business Statistics : Concepts and Applications*. Harlow, England Pearson.

Dawson, C.W. (2015). *Projects in computing and information systems : a student's guide*. 3rd ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Godlee, F., Smith, J. and Marcovitch, H. (2011). Wakefield's article linking MMR vaccine and autism was fraudulent. *BMJ*, [online] 342(jan05 1), pp.c7452–c7452. doi:https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.c7452.

Gussow, K.E. and Mariët, A. (2022). The scope of food fraud revisited. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 78(5), pp.621–642. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-022-10055-w.

Ingold, M. (2024). *Initial Post*. [online] Collaborative Learning Discussion 2. Available at: https://www.my-course.co.uk/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=236039 [Accessed 2 Jul. 2024].

Summary Post

by Sahr Solar Sumana - Wednesday, 17 July 2024, 12:50 AM

My initial post outlined the ethical issues tied to the 'Accuracy of Information' case study. My post touched on the professionalism that a researcher must practice, as well as the conflicts of interest that they may experience and the legal and research-based regulations that not only provide guidelines that a researcher must follow but also inform the researcher of consequences if these guidelines are not followed. After reviewing my initial post against other posts made by peers on this course it would've been beneficial if I had referred to ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The Code is designed to guide the ethical conduct of all computing professionals and anyone who uses computing technology in an impactful way. Additionally, the Code serves as a basis for remediation when violations occur (ACM, 2018).

Based on the response received by Mutebe (2024) Abi's actions could significantly influence the ethical landscape of research and its consequences. The example of Liu et al. (2014) was provided as an example, where paper was retracted due to flawed representations. This encouraged me to look into other cases where this has happened, where I came across a well-known study that linked the MMR vaccine to autism which turned out to be fraudulent (Godlee, Smith and Marcovitch, 2011). Based on this case study and the discussion amongst peers I understand that ethical guidelines must be followed stringently as a researcher in order to avoid reputational, regulatory and fiscal consequences.

<u>Reference List:</u>

ACM (2018). *ACM Ethics*. [online] ACM Ethics. Available at: https://ethics.acm.org/.

Godlee, F., Smith, J. and Marcovitch, H. (2011). Wakefield's article linking MMR vaccine and autism was fraudulent. *BMJ*, [online] 342(jan05 1), pp.c7452–c7452. doi:https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.c7452.

Liu, C.-F., Liu, Q.-H., Liu, E.-L., Zhai, X.-W., Zhang, L., Luo, T.-E., Zhang, W.-F., Feng, Q.-L., Cui, X.-L., Zhao, Z.-Q., Cao, J.-M. and Wu, B.-W. (2014). Activation of IK1 Channel by Zacopride Attenuates Left Ventricular Remodeling in Rats With Myocardial Infarction. *Journal of Cardiovascular Pharmacology*, 64(4), pp.345–356. doi:https://doi.org/10.1097/fjc.0000000000000127.

Mutebe, A. (2024). *Initial Post*. [online] Collaborative Learning Discussion 2. Available at: https://www.my-course.co.uk/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=237053 [Accessed 17 Jul. 2024].