In this case study, students discussed ideal courses of action in a hypothetical case study where a researcher (Abi) considers manipulating data to produce more favourable scientific conclusions. A focal point throughout this discussion was that Abi's decisions should be influenced by three different perspectives: an academic perspective, a legal perspective, and a professional perspective. Ethics underpins each of these perspectives and is applied differently in each case as guidelines, regulations, and challenges differ depending on the context.

Students generally agreed that an academic perspective is the most important one to consider in this case, because of how nutrition research is used and how it can become biased as a result of corporate interests (Leece, 2022; Smirnov, 2022). Nutrition research plays a key role in shaping guidelines given by governments and dietary organisations; additionally, it influences how foods are labelled and marketed to consumers (Edgell, 2022; Padukka, 2022; Villar, 2022). Both of these factors directly impact public health, and as a result, the accuracy of scientific findings becomes a critical concern. There was agreement that manipulating research findings is unethical, hence Abi should not do it.

Although everyone agreed that Abi is not responsible for how his research is used, opinions were divided on whether Abi should present positive and negative findings, or only the positive ones. Some argued that both sets of findings should be disclosed as it can be seen as an academic obligation, while others noted that it might not be wise to do so (or that he is not responsible for it). I would agree with those suggesting to disclose positive and negative findings, however, it should only be done if the research methodology supports discovering both types of data, otherwise conclusions may become inaccurate (Swanlow, 2022a).

From a legal perspective, it was mentioned Abi could submit an anonymous tip if the manufacturer hides negative results, but would need to be careful with any other means as he could risk being sued for defamation if his findings are wrong (Swanlow, 2022a; Wimalendran 2022). Additionally, many also discussed how different countries have organisations which provide guidance on how to conduct fair research, and in the case of Canada, the UK and EU, there are laws governing how food research should be conducted- Abi is obligated to follow these where necessary (Padukka, 2022; Edgell, 2022; Smirnov, 2022; Swanlow, 2022b).

Professional perspectives weren't as widely discussed, however, one point was made on influence. It can be said that employers have more power over employees, which could be used to pressure employees into committing unethical acts (Swanlow, 2022a). However, the manufacturer does not appear to be using this power to influence Abi to manipulate his findings, so it might not be relevant to consider this perspective.

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