

Collaborative Discussion 2 – Research Methods and Professional Practice – Peer Response, Ying Chan – Michael Geiger

Thank you Ying for your interesting post about the case study. Good recommendations for important agencies and contact points for scientific and ethical research guidelines were given. The requirement to avoid inappropriate research methods as well as processing and presentation of results led me to investigate which recommendations should be followed in this specific case study, but also in general. A list of central guiding principles can be found in Rowe et al. (2009). The principles can be summarised under the following points:

1. Sponsored research should be factual, transparent and designed objectively.
2. The principles of scientific research should be followed, which include an appropriate formulation of hypotheses and are guided by this in the context of the evaluation, rather than being guided by a predetermined outcome.
3. Researchers should have control over study design as well as the research itself.
4. Research project-based compensation should not be offered or accepted.
5. Written agreements permitting publication of results should exist.
6. A full record of all financial interests should be maintained and disclosed.
7. Participation in undisclosed agreements for paid authorship of ghosted publications should be avoided.
8. Appropriate auditors and investigators should be guaranteed access to all data.
9. Scientists in contract research institutions should provide clear information about their affiliation and only publish under the aegis of the institution.

From these guiding principles, it can be seen that transparency is the foundation of all ethical scientific research. This transparency relates to the practice of scientific work, but also to dealing with the interest groups involved.

References:

Rowe, S., Alexander, N., Clydesdale, F., Applebaum, R., Atkinson, S., Black, R., Dwyer, J., Hentges, E., Higley, N., Lefevre, M., Lupton, J., Miller, S., Tancredi, D., Weaver, C., Woteki, C. & Wedral, E. (2009) Funding food science and nutrition research: financial conflicts and scientific integrity. *Nutrition Reviews* 67(5): 264-272.

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