

Science Journalism

Some tidbits from Chapter 11 of the textbook:

▪ Peer review

- Virtually all scientific studies go through this process
- Veteran scholars verify the legitimacy of the study
- Aim is to keep quality high, maintain credibility of field
- All your professors go through this regularly

▪ Causation and correlation

- Causation: A causes B
- Correlation: A has something in common with B
- [Correlation doesn't imply causation](#) – spurious correlation
- Too often news reporting can assume causality where none exists
- Social media has made this much, much worse

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Some tidbits from Chapter 11 of the textbook:

■ Numerator and denominator

- Math terminology applied to other areas
- Numerator: Number of instances of something
- Denominator: Reason behind those instances
- Reporting one without the other can be misleading
- Social media has made this much worse

■ Relative risk vs. absolute risk

- Relative: Chance that X will happen to tested group vs. control
- Absolute: Chance that X will happen to a whole population
- Percentages can distort what results really mean
- Journalists and the public can be misled
- Social media has made this much worse

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Some tidbits from Chapter 11 of the textbook:

▪ Use of population samples

- Medicine: Measure results of new treatments, procedures
- Experimental: Test behaviors, preferences, etc.
- Statistical: Surveys – probability sampling
- In all cases, larger sample size is better
- This can be ignored at times in news stories about studies

▪ ‘Dumbing down’ results for the public

- Simplifying & condensing – make results more understandable
- Use of more straightforward language, less jargon
- Inherent loss of full meaning of study results
- Is the term condescending or realistic?
- Do scientists want their work understood by the public?