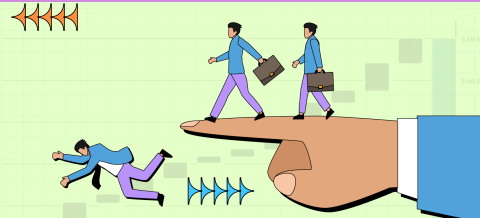


Misleading Statistics in the Media: Examples and How to Spot Them



Part 4: Can you spot the problems with these headlines?

How is science made more attractive in the news? In medicine notably, there is often a disconnect between news headlines and the scientific research they cover. That's because a headline is designed to catch attention: it is most effective when it makes a big claim.

1. Would you be manipulated by the following headlines? Or can you identify a potential distortion of information? What makes these headlines misleading?

	<p>A study finds that the participants taking a vitamin called Healthium had a higher level of healthy cholesterol than those taking a placebo. Their levels became similar to those of people with naturally high levels of this kind of cholesterol. Previous research has shown that people with naturally high levels of healthy cholesterol have lower rates of heart disease.</p>	<p>Answer:</p>
	<p>This hypothetical study recruits 10 students. Half begin consuming a daily dose of chocolate, while half abstain. As classmates, they all follow the same schedule. By the end of the study, the chocolate eaters are less stressed than their chocolate-free counterparts.</p>	<p>Answer:</p>
	<p>Researchers recruit a group of people who had always skipped breakfast and ask them to start eating breakfast every day. The participants include men and women of a range of ages and backgrounds. Over a year-long period, participants lose an average of five pounds.</p>	<p>Answer:</p>

2. Comment upon the following statement.
Pirates are responsible for global warming.

