

A Researchers Responsibility

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Introduction

- Earthquake case in Italy
 - 2009: 300 people died in an earthquake in L'Aquila
 - Accusation: inaccurate, incomplete and contradictory information about the danger of the tremors felt ahead of the quake
 - Defense: "The best estimate at the time was that the low-level seismicity was not likely to herald a bigger quake, but there are no certainties"
 - Scientists sentenced to six years in prison for manslaughter

Ethical issues

- Are scientists allowed to make statements that aren't 100% sure?
 - Yes, clearly, otherwise nothing could be said.
 - What responsibility do we have when making these unsure statements?
- Is punishment permissible because of wrongful prediction of processes with a random component?

Responsibilities

- Trust --> responsibility
- The third task is stated in Swedish law
- Responsibilities of researchers when communicating with media?

Communicating with media: Example (DN)

- Correlation between artificial sweeteners and depressions.
- Correlation between coffee and happiness.
- “Coffee makes us happier.”



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a news article from DN.se. The article title is "Lättläsk kopplas till depression" (Artificially sweetened drinks linked to depression). The text discusses a study by researchers from the University of North Carolina, led by Honglei Chen, which found that people who consume four cups of coffee daily have a 10% lower risk of depression compared to those who consume artificial sweeteners. The article also mentions that the study did not investigate the underlying reasons for the correlation and that diet drinks are associated with other health issues like diabetes.

Lättläsk kopplas till depression
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Forskare kan ha hittat en koppling mellan vad vi dricker och hur vi mår. Enligt en amerikansk studie löper den som dricker lightdrycker större risk att drabbas av depression. Desto gladare är kaffedrickare.

Studien har tittat på dryckesvanor hos mer än 250 000 amerikaner och hittat en koppling mellan depression och konsumtion av artificiellt sötade drycker.

Den som dricker fyra glas lightläsk eller lågkalorijuice med sötningsmedel om dagen löper en tredjedels högre risk att drabbas av depression, skriver BBC.

Kaffe däremot gör oss gladare. Studiedeltagare som drack fyra koppar kaffe om dagen minskade risken att drabbas av depression med tio procent.

– Vår forskning tyder på att du kan på ett naturligt vis minska risken för att drabbas av depression genom att dricka mindre sötade lightdrycker eller genom att ersätta dem med osötat kaffe, säger huvudforskaren Honglei Chen vid Nationella hälsainstitutet i North Carolina.

Studien har inte tittat på vad som ligger bakom kopplingen, och det kan finnas andra förklaringar till varför deltagarna som dricker mycket lightläsk är mer deprimerade.

– Det kan vara så att de som dricker dietdrycker sedan tidigare är överviktiga eller lider av diabetes, vilket i sig kan orsaka depression, säger Gaynor Bussell vid Brittiska dietistförbundet till BBC.

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What should the researcher do?

- Stress the correlation (in a media-friendly language)?
- What did he actually say? Was it modified?

Links:

<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/lattlask-kopplas-till-depression>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-20943509>

Impact on Other Professions

Economists...

- Economic predictions Economic policy Impact on all areas of society.

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- Social impact ?

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- **IMP Report Austerity more damaging than originally thought.**

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