Show Me The Evidence: Challenges in Evidence-based reporting

By Julia Belluz, Vox
Nov. 9, 2019
Click Links to Get Dr. Group's Detox Formulas & Natural Health Info
Kill or cure?
Help to make sense of the Daily Mail’s ongoing effort to classify every inanimate object into those that cause cancer and those that prevent it.

If any of these results seems incorrect, please report it using the link next to the article.

**magnets prevent cancer #**
- Tiny magnets that could help win the war on cancer

**mammograms both cause and prevent cancer #**
- Mammograms ‘can increase breast cancer risk’
- Breast scans ‘may be a risk to some women’
- Is your x-ray safe?
- Breast checks ‘do no good’
- Women over 70 urged to get screened for breast cancer
- Screening halves deaths from breast cancer
- Breast cancer screening: the facts
- A ‘breakthrough’ breast cancer scan

**marriage prevents cancer #**
- From cancer to heart disease, the amazing, life-saving benefits of marriage
- Women in tumultuous marriages have smaller breast tumours, report finds
Fighting the health bunk:

- What we’ve learned about evidence-informed health comms
- The challenges and pitfalls
- How you can get involved
A comprehensive guide to the messy, frustrating science of cellphones and cancer

By Julia Belluz | November 2, 2018
What we know:
Low back pain is the second most common cause of disability in the US, but the most popular treatments out there — spine surgery, opioid painkillers, steroid injections — are unhelpful for most people, or even downright harmful. Increasingly sup-port programs and alternative therapies, such as massage and yoga, that can help people alleviate their sore backs.

What we don’t know:
How to identify the cause of persistent back pain in most cases, and how to “cure” it. It’s also not clear which of the available alternative therapies and exercises work better than others.

What it means for you:
If you have chronic back trouble, get your doctor to rule out serious causes. Then stay active, and work with a healthcare professional to check out alternative treatment approaches — a strength training or aerobic exercise program, massage, Pilates, psychotherapy, chiropractics, tai chi, etc. These alternatives can help you manage your symptoms, though generally with modest effects.

What this means for policy:
Back problems cost America an estimated $90 billion a year. Yet there’s a big disconnect between what the evidence suggests helps people (i.e., exercise programs, massage) and what’s covered by health insurance providers (i.e., surgery, opioids). We need insurance plans that reimburse patients and providers for a broader range of back pain treatments, following a highly successful model in the state of Oregon.
Communicate research methods

We focused our search strategy on cancers of the head and neck because these parts of the body are thought to get the most exposure to radio frequency radiation during cellphone use.

We limited our search to studies that were conducted in humans, and whose outcome was one of actual head or neck cancers (rather than things thought to be linked to cancer).

Specifically, we looked for studies that measured rates of acoustic neuromas, gliomas, meningiomas, and thyroid cancers. We also narrowed our search to studies that looked at the effect of radio-frequency radiation originating from an actual cellphone, rather than experimental equipment. We did this because we wanted evidence that could apply to real life, not specific laboratory settings or hypothetical outcomes.

Searching PubMed for studies published in the past 10 years, we found 102 studies that ultimately resulted in 12 relevant systematic reviews. To limit bias in our assessment of the literature, we used a validated critical appraisal tool called AMSTAR to determine the quality of each review. Eight of the reviews were critically low quality, two were low quality, and two were moderate quality.
Why diets fail, explained
Show Me The Evidence approach:

- Studies in Context
- Prioritize higher quality evidence
- Communicate uncertainty
- Instead of debunking, how you know
- Transparent about methods
- Accurate, thorough, clear!!!
The Challenges
The oxygen problem

Media reporting FAKE NEWS again. So unfair! Not nice!
We’re investigating how insurance gaps endanger mothers. This is why.

By Julia Belluz and Nina Martin | Apr 25, 2019, 5:00am EDT
Navigating COI
We analyzed 100 health studies funded or supported by Mars

Source: Vox analysis

Javier Zarracina/Vox
Navigating controversy

The keto moment

The extreme diet phenomenon may offer clues on how nutrition can treat disease.

By Julia Belluz | @juliaoftoronto | julia.belluz@voxmedia.com | Jul 25, 2019, 6:59am EDT
Finding the story in the science
How you can help?

- Collaborations
- New tools for helping journos evaluate science
- Join the conversation! Twitter, op-eds, blogs
- Start conversations with reporters/editors you trust
- When you spot bunk, hold bunk peddlers to account — including journalists
For sources, my colleagues suggest:

- “One thing I would like more scientists to do is be available to talk about the foundations of their fields rather than new findings.”
- “I don’t just want to know the findings, I want to know why you’re interested in asking the question in the first place.”
- “I always appreciate it when a scientist directs me to talk to other people, and those other people aren’t just white men.”
Keep in touch!

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