

Homework 9

GEA 101 Critical Thinking

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Your Name: _____

Student ID#: _____

This assignment is fairly straightforward. I want you to summarize a meta-analysis. That may sound a little bit difficult, but it is not: meta-analyses, like other scientific articles, are published with “Abstracts,” which are summaries of the article.

So I want you to find a meta-analysis (the best way to do this is type into google scholar “meta analysis” + the subject that you want to know about. For example, I typed in “meta analysis chocolate” and I found this:

<http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/88/1/38.short>

It’s a meta-analysis of the effects of flavonoids in chocolate and other substances on the risk of heart attacks. Here’s how I might summarize it:

“This study was a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials that looked at the effects of flavonoid-rich foods like chocolate, soy, and tea on the risks of heart attacks. It analyzed 133 studies, and found that chocolate, soy, and tea all reduced blood pressure and cholesterol, but no study actually measured the variable of interest, heart attack rates. The authors concluded that future studies should be longer, so they can actually measure heart attack rates.”

Good things to search for are popular foods (chocolate, wine, eggs), popular medical treatments (acupuncture, knee surgery), popular crimes (sex offender, robbery), popular medical conditions (heart attack, diabetes), that sort of thing.

Detailed Instructions:

1. Find a meta-analysis. Copy down the URL. Do not find a news story about a meta-analysis. Find a real meta-analysis (a news story might help you find one).

2. Read the abstract. You may have to look up some words to understand it (“epidemiological,” for example). If there was a news story published about the meta-analysis, that might help you understand it better.

3. Write a short summary of the abstract: say what the research was about (“flavonoids and heart attacks”), what the authors did (“analyzed 133 papers”) what the main findings were (“flavonoids reduce blood pressure & cholesterol, but there’s no direct evidence they reduce heart attacks”) and what conclusions the authors came to (“more long-term research is needed”).

4. Importantly, **use your own words**. Do not copy and paste the “results” or “conclusion” sections. Tell me, in your own words, what the authors studied and what their conclusions were.