

Nearly half of reviews that assess harm in biomedical research found to contain some type of spin

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An international team of researchers specializing in spin and reporting bias created a framework to provide guidance for authors, peer

reviewers, and editors to recognize and rectify "spin," or the misleading reporting, interpretation, and extrapolation of findings in primary and secondary biomedical research, such as systematic reviews.

The authors say it is important for reviewers to be clear about the limitations of the evidence that they have for harm and to not overstate confidence in their findings, as readers may draw the wrong conclusions or inferences. Spin was found to be fairly common, especially when reporting harm. The framework is [published](#) in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Researchers from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and team gathered instances of [spin](#) from a random sample of 100 systematic reviews of interventions to identify and address instances of spin. Of the 58 reviews that assessed harm and the 42 that did not, they found, respectively, that 28 (48%) and six (14%) had at least one of the 12 types of spin (grouped into seven categories) they had identified for harm.

Inappropriate extrapolation of the results and conclusions for harm to populations, interventions, outcomes, or settings not assessed in a review was the most common category of spin in 17 of 100 reviews.

The authors revised the examples to remove spin, considering the context, findings for harm, and methodological limitations of the original reviews. Their goal is to provide a [framework](#) for researchers and reviewers to avoid spin, enhancing the clarity and accuracy of harms reporting in systematic review publications.

More information: Riaz Qureshi et al, Development and Evaluation of a Framework for Identifying and Addressing Spin for Harms in Systematic Reviews of Interventions, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2024). [DOI: 10.7326/M24-0771](https://doi.org/10.7326/M24-0771)

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