

The Need for Responsible (Honest) Studies

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Studies on existential risks of AI, climate change, aging populations, and global human rights is on the minds of many. How responsible, and honest, are the studies on these and other topics? It All of humanity will face some of the projected risks of AI, security, climate fluctuations, human rights, among a bevy of other issues. To apprehend potential risks, we need to apply sensible safeguards about how evidence is gathered, especially on scientific reporting.

It seems plausible that scientific research can be chided if it could disrupt our sacred beliefs. Centuries after Galileo's tenure with public outrage due to his responsible reporting, the opposite occurred with the historic and diabolic 1692 Salem Massachusetts witch trials that caused mass hysteria when a group of young girls claimed to be possessed and accused local women of witchcraft. A wave of fear spread throughout the village and people were accused of fraternizing with the devil. It was not proved that those accused were in league with or cohorts of the devil.

On a less somber note, but a more recent event caused an unexplainable mass physiological outbreak, due to questionable scientific reporting of nausea and seizures of 12,000 Japanese children. The culprit was a cartoon episode of Pokémon. Some believed the reaction was caused by the bright flashing lights of the animation. However, the *Southern Medical Journal* published a study refuted this claim.

Consider the highly publicized study on autism, claiming that Mumps, Measles, and Rubella (MMR) vaccinations could cause autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in children. When the study's paper was published in the British medical journal *The Lancet* in 1998, it received considerable media attention. After a firestorm of controversy and public alarm, *The Lancet* revoked this study.

The point being: disruptive ideas often result from technological innovations that afford new opportunities to uncover the unknown or disprove beliefs, which can result in harsh social or political reactions. There is a need for responsible (and honest) studies that can guide us in making choices about our personal and social choices

This perspective helps us understand the telos of this era and why we need an educated society of engaged learning to better understand the industry standards, the research performed, its democratization, the need for reliable science (and technology) reporting, and the subsequent impacts to humanity.