



June 4, 2015 – Grand Rapids, MI

## Dark-Chocolate Study: The Problem

The journalist and his colleagues who perpetrated the dark chocolate and weight loss study I talked about [Tuesday](#) were out to prove a point: typical journalists, even the ones who specialize in health, don't really understand the fundamentals of nutrition, weight loss, and fitness. They especially don't understand statistics and how they're misapplied even in legitimate studies. Nothing new there.

What I think they did show was that there are many news and information sources on the web that will publish anything provocative. Dark chocolate helping weight loss certainly fit that profile.

The author explained everything he did in his revelation of how he fooled millions (1). Maybe he fooled millions of readers, but I don't think he really fooled that many journalists. Many news and other websites get automatic feeds from other news websites. If he fooled a dozen, it would still get worldwide distribution because of the way news is automatically forwarded.



There were two problems that he did illustrate very well. First, there are companies who will forward health press releases to several thousand outlets for a fee. They don't evaluate what they're sending—pay the money and they'll send it out. The problem is that legitimate research facilities at universities use the same services to announce research findings. Second, they paid the journal to have the paper published. There was no peer-review process as in the most reputable journals—pay the fee and the paper is published.

Are you sitting there shaking your head wondering whether you should believe anything you read about health on the Internet? We're not even up to what I believe is the real problem with the way studies are done today. I'll finish this up on Saturday.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

**Reference:** <http://io9.com/i-fooled-millions-into-thinking-chocolate-helps-weight-1707251800>.

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