

Cancer Risks From Our Food

Curious Cat Science and Engineering Blog

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)



[1]

Randall Munroe illustrates [RA Fisher's](#) [2] point that you must think to draw reasonable conclusions from data. Click the image to see the full xkcd comic.

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[Pretty much everything you eat is associated with cancer. Don't worry about it.](#)

[3] by Sarah Kliff

The changes in cancer risk were all over the map: 39 percent found an increased risk, 33 percent found a decreased risk and 23 percent showed no clear evidence either way.

...

The vast majority of those studies, Schoenfeld and Ioannidis found, showed really weak associations between the ingredient at hand and cancer risk. A full 80 percent of the studies had shown statistical relationships that were "weak or nominally significant," as measured by the study's P-values. Seventy-five percent of the studies purporting to show a higher cancer risk fell into this category, as did 76 percent of those showing a lower cancer risk.

Sadly the evidence is often not very compelling but creates uncertainty in the public. Poorly communicated results and scientific illiteracy (both from publishers and the public) leads to more confusion than is necessary. Even with well done studies, good communication and a scientifically literate population nutrition and human health conclusion are more often questionable than they are clear.

Source URL (retrieved on 03/04/2015 - 1:47pm):

http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2012/12/cancer-risks-our-food?qt-most_popular=0

Links:

[1] <http://xkcd.com/882/>

[2] <http://management.curiouscat.net/authors/226-RA-Fisher>

[3] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/11/30/pretty-much-everything-you-eat-is-associated-with-cancer-dont-worry-about-it/>