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Assignment #3

When looking at various articles or advertisements I was particularly interested in one article that advertised the benefits of taking the weight loss pill, Xenadrine.

Xenadrine is a powerful weight loss drug that boasts quick results in a short amount of time. It claims that people will lose seven times more weight than dieting alone. Xenadrine’s main ingredients include frauenmantle, wild olive, cormino and horsemint. Also, one of the most well-known ingredients is ephedrine, which comes from the ephedra plant. This is supposed to increase one’s metabolism and suppress one’s appetite, therefore burning body fat.

When analyzing the advertisement one will notice a beautiful woman who claims to have lost 36 pounds in 18 weeks. Of course, this is accompanied by her before and after picture, depicting a woman with a noticeable weight loss. This tactic allows the audience to believe that they will instantly lose weight and be healthier and more beautiful than ever.

As one closely examines the fine print underneath the picture it states that there is “statistical significance for test subjects having lost 7.1 times more weight than subjects who were dieting alone.” Stating that the results were statistically significant means that the probability that this would have occurred by chance would be less than < .05, implies that Xenadrine was the factor that most likely caused the subjects to lose weight. Upon further investigation and examination of the Xenadrine homepage, one would notice that the statistics that are discussed within the advertisement are not backed up by any type of study or literature. It does not offer the customer the actual results that would confirm the statistical significance that is advertised within the article.

It also testifies that in two clinical trials the subjects lost seven times more weight than subjects who were dieting alone. This claim is misleading because it does not specify how the subjects were chosen to be part of the sample group. It does not even discuss their gender, age or any other characteristics of the participant in the clinical trial. It was does not mention if any of the subjects exercised during their trial period using Xenadrine. These factors could have profound effects on the results. In order to claim that that study resulted in statistical significance the subjects need to be subjected to the exact same intervention which in this case it does not specify. Unfortunately, when the sample group was further investigated on several other websites that claim the wonderful effects of Xenadrine, no information is available to the consumer about how the clinical group was chosen, characteristics of the sample group, or whether the participants were subjected to the exact same type of intervention. The lack of information available makes this type of a study seem even more misleading and dishonest.

The advertisement also includes a testimonial about a participant named “Nadia” that used Xenadrine with diet and exercise and was numerated for it. In this testimonial it does not get into the extent of dieting that Nadia was subjected too or her daily calorie intake, nor does it mention that amount of exercise that Nadia was exposed too in order to lose 36 pounds in eighteen weeks. This is also disingenuous because all the factors that could potentially cause Nadia to lose weight are clearly not considered or reviewed within the advertisement.

As a consumer, we need to be more aware of false or misleading claims that do not offer any type of solid statistical evidence. Although, they may claim within their article or advertisement statistics that are meant to lure in consumers to believe that the product is effective and worthwhile, consumers need to further examine and analyze these studies. In the case of Xenadrine, although the product appears to be effective when the consumer attempts to investigate the research behind the product, no statistical information is available.