

Ambiguity

'Ambiguity' refers to the presence of two or more possible meanings, interpretations, or outcomes within a statement, variable, concept, or result, where the intended meaning is unclear or context-dependent.

Types of ambiguity

- **Linguistic ambiguity** - when a term or phrase can be interpreted in different ways (e.g., "positive test" could mean good news or disease presence).
- **Conceptual ambiguity** - when a scientific or clinical concept lacks a clear or universally accepted definition (e.g., "frailty", "quality of life").
- **Methodological ambiguity** - when study design, inclusion criteria, or outcome measures are poorly defined, leading to confusion in interpretation.

Consequences in research

- Reduces reproducibility
- Undermines the clarity of conclusions
- Opens the door to **interpretative overconfidence** or **confirmation bias**

Clinical impact

- Can mislead diagnosis or treatment decisions
- May confuse patients or create uncertainty in communication

'In summary:' ambiguity introduces uncertainty and interpretative risk, making clarity and precision essential in scientific writing and clinical decision-making.

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