

# Read the scientific study behind the news story

## Background Information



This assignment will compare scientific studies in academic journals and the newspaper articles that report the findings. You will learn to distinguish between these two types of articles.

### **Secondary Sources:**

**Newspaper articles** and other popular press often summarize scientific studies to make them accessible to the public. They are called secondary sources.

*Features of secondary sources:*

- Interpret the findings of a scientific study
- Often contain opinion, commentary and other points of view
- Use simple vocabulary
- Usually indicate the source of the information (the original study), but do not necessarily provide the complete citation for the original research article.
- Often quote the researcher who wrote the original study.

### **Primary Sources**

**A scientific study** usually appears first in a scientific journal. This is called a primary source.

*Features of primary sources:*

- Scientists communicate the results of their scientific discoveries, experiments and clinical trials of new treatments.
- Published in peer reviewed journals
- The author's credentials and institutional affiliation are provided
- Contain detailed information of the research methods
- The standard format for a scientific study includes Background, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion and References.
  - This is often summarized in the first paragraph of the article, called an abstract (summary).