

Awakening interest in EBVM by means of teaching nonsense

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Introduction

Innovative methods for teaching EBVM are necessary to foster intrinsic motivation of students. To reach this aim we applied an approach called the "Vitapart" lecture. It dealt with a fake formulation ("Vitapart") containing vitamins and trace elements which we presented were able to prevent bovine endometritis in cows. In the first five minutes results of a fake trial are presented in a manipulative way.



Fake advertising:
Buy now!

VITAPART
Your weapon against
endometritis

- Fake findings (or „Eminence-based Veterinary Medicine“)

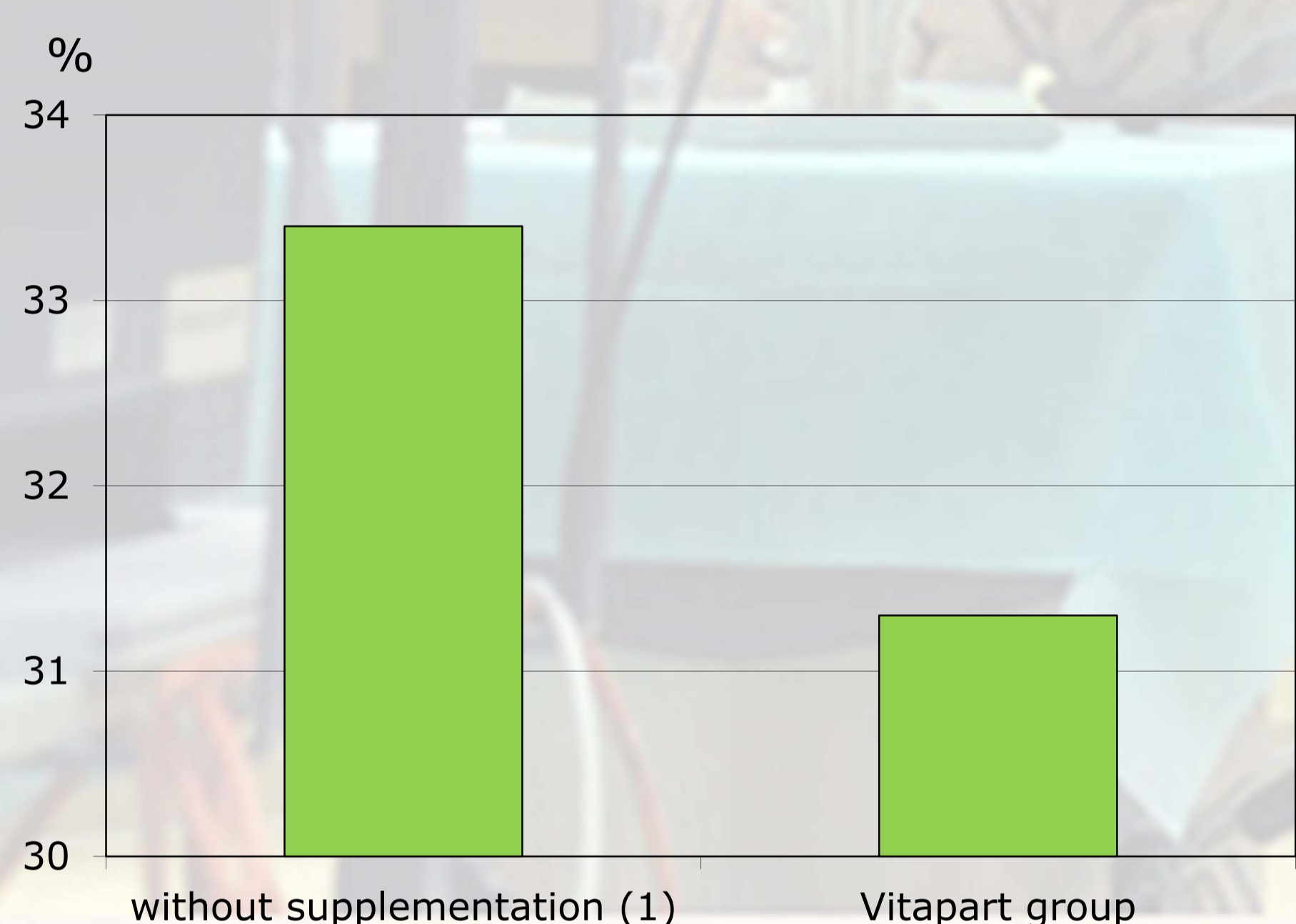


Fig. 1: Vitapart group has less endometritis

(1) Bilz et al. Prevalence of Endometritis in Dairy Cows in Ohio, J. Vet. Sci (1979)

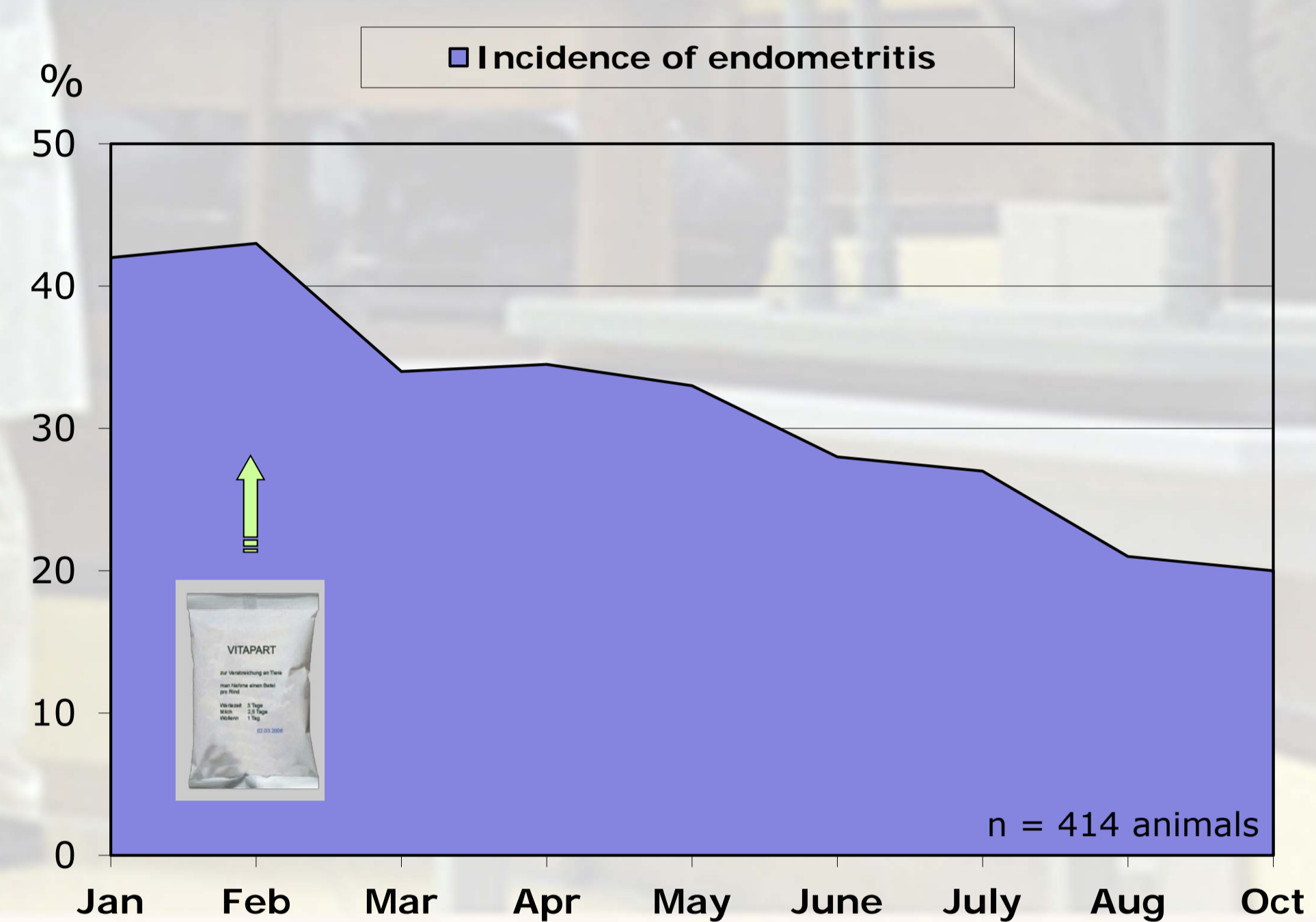


Fig. 2: Vitapart leads to better herd health

- How alert are students?

After the initial presentation, we invited the students to ask questions. Furthermore, we asked if anything unusual was noticed. In 3 out of 6 "Vitapart" lectures one student stated that he or she had observed irregularities concerning the scales used in Fig. 1. After confirming this irregularity, we asked for further observations. No other flaws were identified.

- Clarification leads to EBVM

Finally, we revealed that "Vitapart" is a fake and discussed the faults or the potential faults presented. In a recently conducted online survey (via cell phones) 17 of 18 students confirmed that cheating awaked their interest for EBVM. In addition, every responding student stated that the cheating did awake interest for EBVM. All students stated that it is allowed to use this unconventional approach.

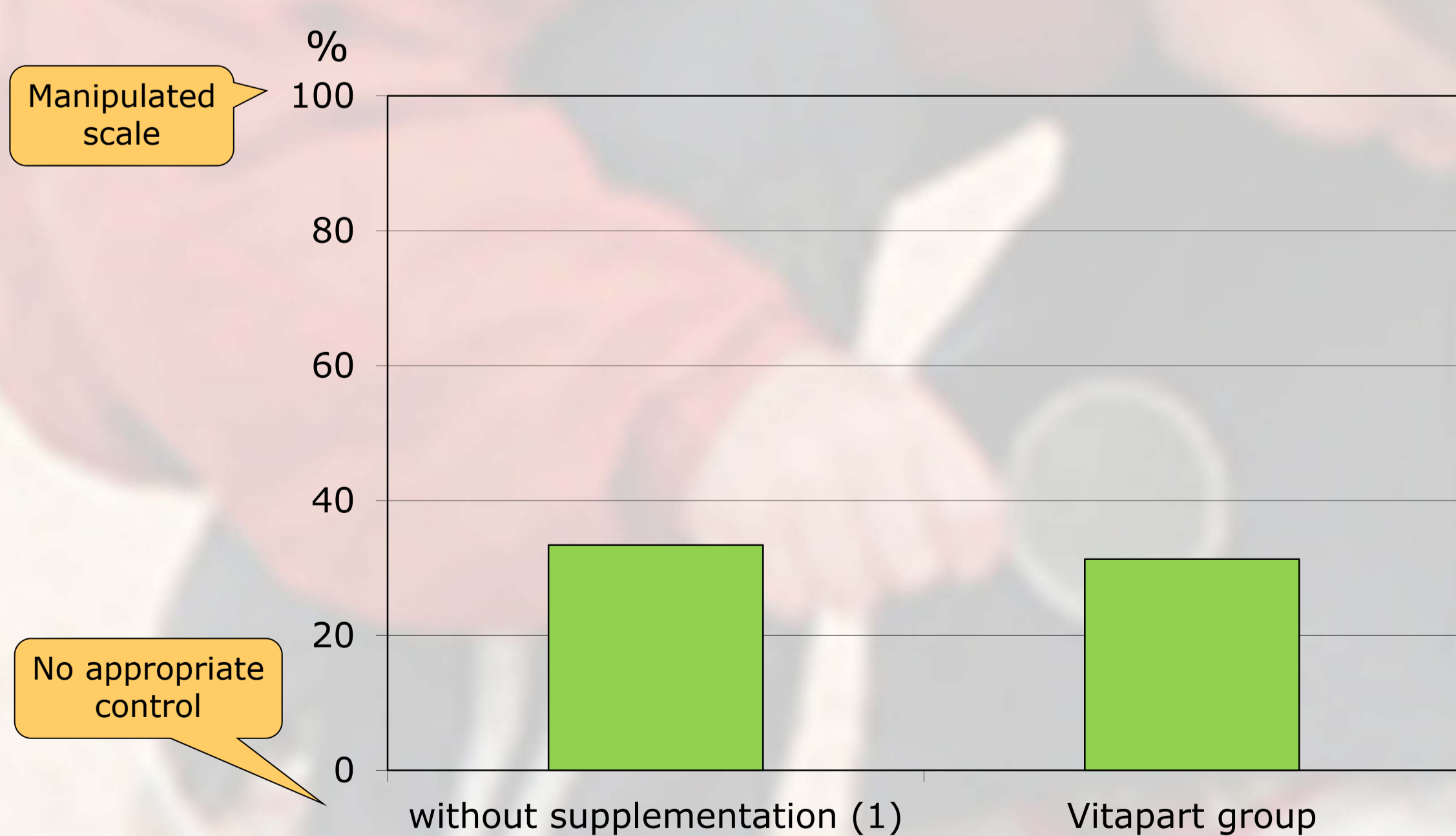


Fig. 3: Same data on a 100% scale

(1) Bilz et al. Prevalence of Endometritis in Dairy Cows in Ohio, J. Vet. Sci (1979)

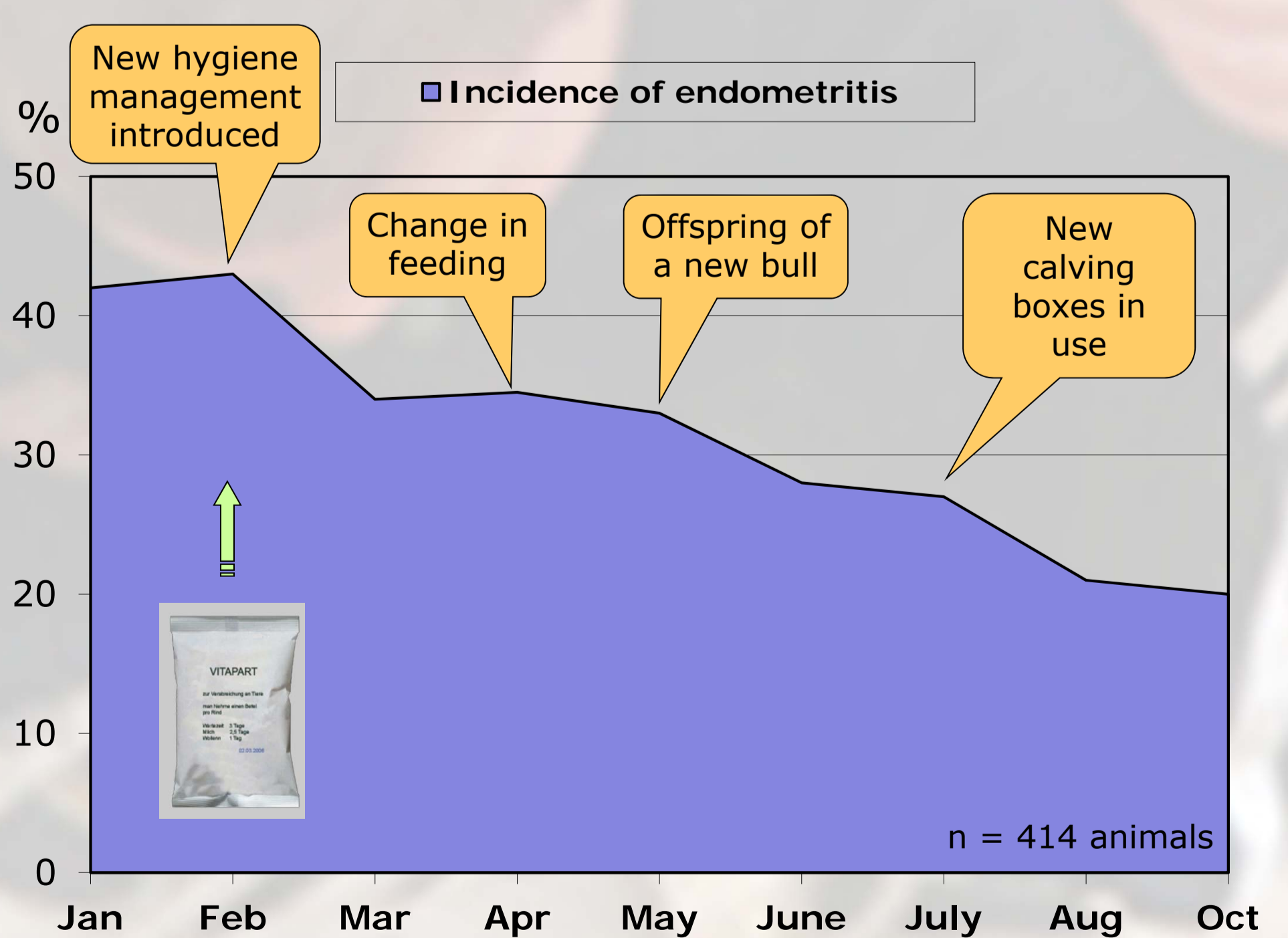


Fig. 4: The possible perils of uncontrolled trials

Conclusions

Our findings imply that the Vitapart approach awaked students. Apparently, they became more receptive for the introduction of EBVM including evidence levels, study methods to minimize bias, critical reading and how to integrate EBVM into practice.