

Preface

The small book “SPSS for Starters” issued in 2010 presented 20 chapters of cookbook like step by step data-analyses of clinical research, and was written to help clinical investigators and medical students analyze their data without the help of a statistician. The book served its purpose well enough, since 13,000 electronic reprints were being ordered within 9 months of edition.

The above book reviewed, e.g., methods for

1. continuous data, like t-tests, non-parametric tests, analysis of variance,
2. binary data, like crosstabs, McNemar tests, odds ratio tests,
3. regression data,
4. trend testing,
5. clustered data,
6. diagnostic test validation.

The current book is a logical continuation and adds further methods fundamental to clinical data analysis.

It contains, e.g., methods for

1. multistage analyses,
2. multivariate analyses,
3. missing data,
4. imperfect and distribution free data,
5. comparing validities of different diagnostic tests,
6. more complex regression models.

Although a wealth of computationally intensive statistical methods is currently available, the authors have taken special care to stick to relatively simple methods, because they often provide the best power and fewest type I errors, and are adequate to answer most clinical research questions.

It is time for clinicians not to get nervous anymore with statistics, and not to leave their data anymore to statisticians running them through SAS or SPSS to see if significances can be found. This is called data dredging. Statistics can do more for you than produce a host of irrelevant p-values. It is a discipline at the interface

of biology and maths: maths is used to answer sound biological hypotheses. We do hope that “SPSS for Starters 1 and 2” will benefit this process.

Two other issues from the same authors entitled “Statistical Analysis of Clinical Data on a Pocket Calculator 1 and 2” are rather complementary to the above books, and provide a more basic approach and better understanding of the arithmetic.

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