

# Preface

Meta-analysis plays a key role in evidence synthesis in many research disciplines, not least the social sciences, medicine and economics. The aim of this book is to equip those involved in such work (who are often not trained statisticians) to use R for meta-analysis, and thus promote both the use of R and the latest statistical methods in this area.

The attractions of R in this context (besides its free availability from <http://www.r-project.org/>) are its fast yet powerful and flexible graphics and its well-established algorithmic base.

The book assumes no prior knowledge of R, and takes readers through every step of the way from installing R, loading data from other packages, performing and interpreting the analyses. Parts **I** and **II** cover the essentials, while Part **III** considers more advanced topics, which remain the subject of active research.

Throughout, the ideas are illustrated with examples, and all the codes necessary to repeat these examples (including creating all the plots in the book) are either in the text itself or the web-appendix <http://meta-analysis-with-r.org/>. In selecting the code to include in the main text, we have assumed readers are relatively new to R. More experienced users can easily skip over familiar material.

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