Preface

Epi Info™ is a public domain data management and statistical analysis program written and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The program was first released in 1985 with subsequent versions evolving under joint sponsorship of CDC and the World Health Organization. In 1999, Harbage & Dean estimated that more than 100,000 copies of Epi Info had been distributed in over 117 countries. Epi Info's widespread use may be attributed to its low cost (it's free!), ease of use, user support community, simple and reliable data management facilities, compatibility with Microsoft operating systems, availability in 13 languages, suitability to epidemiologic and public health data analysis and reporting. Copies of Epi Info can be downloaded from www.cdc.gov/epiinfo/.

As useful as it is, Epi Info does not replace the traditional need to learn statistics. To acquire an understanding of statistics, users must first learn about measurement, sampling, study design, summary statistics, statistical graphs, statistical inference (estimation and hypothesis testing), and various specific statistical techniques. These concepts are best addressed through traditional learning approaches, such as those offered in introductory courses and texts (e.g., *An Introduction to Mathematical Statistics and Its Application* (Larson and Marx, 1981), *Fundamentals of Biostatistics* (Rosner, 1995), and *Biostatistical Analysis* (Zar, 1996)).

The risk in using Epi Info — a risk inherent in any computerized approach — is that the user will attempt to use the technology to *automate* the analytic process, when instead they should be using the technology to *augment* repetitive tasks they will need when solving problems. It should always be remembered that statistics is more than a compilation of computational techniques; it is a way of learning from data. Let Epi Info be your means to this end, and not the end itself. With this said, the goal of this Web-book is to help students and practitioners select, compute, and interpret biostatistical techniques applicable to a broad range of problems. The work is still in draft form, but I am confident that it will be useful to you, just the same.

The suggested citation for this work is: Gerstman B.B. (2000). *Data Analysis with Epi Info*. http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/gerstman/EpiInfo/.

Comments and helpful criticisms are welcome, of course. I can be reached via Email at B_Gerstman@compuserve.com.
Best wishes, and happy computing,
Bud Gerstman
March 2000

References

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