



# International Society for Clinical Biostatistics

# News

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Editor: David W. Warne

## Executive Committee 2007-08

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## Editorial

Outside, it's 40° cooler than it was at our successful seaside conference in Alexandroupolis in Greece. How nice it was to let others do all the hard work and not have to worry this year! Congratulations to the organisers for continuing ISCB's tradition of top class conferences. You'll find some articles about the meeting in the News and a final mention of ISCB27 from Lutz Edler.

I'm already looking forward to 2008's conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the one after that in Prague, Czech Republic. Updates about these from Philip Hougaard and Zdenek Valenta appear too.

John Whitehead has prepared a list of positions which will need to be filled for 2009-10, so do start to think if you'd like to serve on the ExCom.

As announced at the recent AGM, we are considering revising the Constitution: the proposed changes will be placed on the Society's website for consultation and review from January-February 2008.

A special word of thanks to our retiring Book Editor Harry Southworth who's done a great job over the last 5 years - we'll miss you, Harry. In his place, I'd like to introduce Sylvain Larroque, a colleague of mine in Geneva.

Thanks to the contributors to this News: Harbajan Chadha-Boreham, Emmanuel Lesaffre, the 13 book reviewers, the 4 NG representatives, SC chairs Rumana Omar and Jorgen Selstrup, and award organisers, Julia Singer and KyungMann Kim.

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 Membership: Emmanuel Lesaffre (B)  
 National Groups: Julia Singer (A)  
 Regulatory Affairs: Jørgen Selstrup (F)  
 Student Conf. Awards: KyungMann Kim (USA)

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## ISCB Membership

Welcome to the 244 of you who joined or rejoined ISCB by attending ISCB28 in Alexandroupolis! We hope you'll decide to renew your membership for 2008.

		end	end	Dec	Dec	Dec	Dec	Dec	Dec	Dec	Nov	Nov	Dec	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	May	Nov
*=host of	conference	89	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	07
	Total	261	596	715	698	725	702	685	729	818	797	837	825	756	758	620	808	448	800
	# Countries	23	32	32	31	33	34	37	37	41	40	45	41	40	38	39	40	33	41
1.	UK	50	90	176*	120	144	121	128	169*	135	151	153	141	190*	140	109	133	51	117
2.	USA	18	45	40	39	41	40	79*	66	76	77	89	78	75	57	51	67	39	62
3.	Poland [NatGrp]		11	11	24	24	30	21	19	26	34	37	41	41	43	40	49	53	54
4.	Greece		1	1	1				1	1	3	1	6	1	2	2	3	2*	50*
5.	Germany	30	67	75	84	71	78	72	70	186*	90	87	77	61	57	51	73	30	48
6.	Hungary [NatGrp]	1	21	17	18	19	25*	27	29	29	33	34	41	48	42	38*	50	43	44
7.	Netherlands	14*	30	38	33	36	29	31	39	35	33	38	39	33	87*	35	44	17	41
8.	France	30	52	62	50	73	67	52	52	49	53	37	93*	31	41	30	57	12	41
9.	Czech. Rep. [NatGrp]			1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	17	36	36
10.	Denmark	4	58*	38	31	30	32	26	35	38	39	36	46	41	37	37	40	25	34
11.	Belgium	13	22	27	30	30	32	35	29	25	33	36	33	23	27	24	23	12	32
12.	Romania [NatGrp]						2			4	1	1	1	19	21	30	28	30	30
13.	Switzerland	14	25	22	80*	33	29	24	25	23	18	23	26	22	23	23	55*	19	28
14.	Japan	2	6	7	5	7	4	10	13	20	12	11	10	10	10	17	17	8	27
15.	Italy	16	33	37	32	32	33	26	33	26	63*	29	25	15	25	15	23	6	24
16.	Canada	6	12	14	14	11	13	15	14	9	9	10	14	16	8	12	12	9	19
17.	Sweden	23	51	53	54	58	64	51	45	38	44	88*	50	36	34	24	23	12	19
18.	Austria	4	9	11	13	11	16	13	11	15	18	15	13	16	17	15	14	9	16
19.	Norway	13	18	25	22	12	18	10	10	11	10	16	16	12	14	12	13	8	12
20.	Australia	6	9	11	6	9	8	11	9	10	12	8	9	14	8	6	11	6	11
21.	Finland	2	7	7	9	9	9	7	5	10	9	18	11	7	11	10	6	4	8
22.	Spain	10	12	18	12	46*	23	14	16	12	11	11	8	7	15	5	9	2	8
23.	Slovenia		1	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	3	4	3	5
24.	Iran						1	1					1	1	4	1	3	1	5
25.	Turkey		1	1						1				1	2	2	3		4
26.	India		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3
27.	South Africa		1	4	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	1	3
28.	Slovakia												1			1	2	2	2
29.	Singapore							3	6	4	5	8	5	7	2	4	6	1	2
30.	Israel	1	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	10	13	10	7	8	3	4	1	2
31.	New Zealand		1		1		2	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	2
32.	Portugal	1	3	5	2	2	2	2	5	5	3	4	3	3	1	1	1		2
33.	Malaysia					2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	1	1
34.	Russia					1	3	3	3	2	2	1	4	3	2	1	1	1	1
35.	Luxembourg																	1	1
36.	Estonia											2		1		1	1		1
37.	Sri Lanka																1		1
38.	Cuba							2	2	2	2	2	2		2	1			1
39.	United Arab Emirates															1			1
40.	South Korea					3		1						1					1
41.	Chile																		1
42.	Thailand		1	1		1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2				3		
43.	Mexico						1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1		
44.	Saudi Arabia											1					1		
45.	Indonesia						1										1		
46.	Taiwan										1	1	1	1	1	1			
47.	Malawi												1	1	1				
48.	Ireland	1	2	3	4	3	4	4	2	3	2	3		1	1				
49.	Colombia							1	1		1			1					
50.	China		1	1	2	3	3	3	3		3	3	2						
51.	Croatia									1	1			1					
52.	Gambia												1						
53.	Lithuania											2							
54.	Argentina											1							
55.	Brazil					2						1							
56.	Kuwait	1										1							
57.	Sudan											1							
58.	Ukraine									1		1							
59.	Egypt											1							
60.	Pakistan								1	1	1								
61.	Philippines									1									
62.	Zimbabwe				1														
63.	Kenya		1	1															
64.	Oman	1																	

## ***ISCB President's End of Year Update***

From Emmanuel Lesaffre

Dear Friends,

Already one year passed since I started as ISCB President and it feels that time flies incredibly fast. Nevertheless, I am glad to have seen many successful Society activities lately: two great annual meetings in a row, the Society balance that is rapidly improving, many local ISCB initiatives, established links with other societies, etc. Indeed, although we were afraid that our Society will have great difficulties in keeping up its level of membership (as many other societies), I believe now that there are clearly signs of a

better outlook. Let us continue to support our Society and its activities next year and in the coming years. I also hope that I will see many of you attending our annual meeting in Copenhagen.

Let me close this short message by thanking all of you who have contributed to the successful ISCB events during this year. I hope that next year will be a great year for all of you and for our Society.

Enjoy the Christmas and New Year period with your family and friends as much as possible.

## ***ISCB29 Copenhagen 2008: Conference Awards for Scientists (CAS)***

From Julia Singer

Conference Awards for Scientists are available for biostatisticians from ISCB targeted countries (in particular countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as Third World countries) to attend and present a paper. Up to six such awards will be granted. An award consists of free accommodation, a short course and registration paid by ISCB. Scientists should submit the application form, the abstract of the poster/oral presentation and the complete poster or presentation slides, respectively, to Julia Singer at the address below. Abstracts not granted the award will be forwarded to the Scientific Program

Committee to participate in their review only on request.

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The closing date for application is Saturday 1 March 2008.

## ***ISCB29 Copenhagen 2008: Student Conference Awards (SCA)***

From KyungMann Kim

Student Conference Awards are available for registered postgraduate students to attend and present a paper at the 29th ISCB Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, during 17-21 August 2008. Three awards will be made. Selection will be made on the basis of a summary of the paper to be presented, which should illustrate the application of statistical methodology to clinical or epidemiological research. Results of particular studies are of interest only if the analysis has methodological implications or shows a novel and interesting application of biostatistics. Applications should be sent to:

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The closing date for application is Saturday 1 March 2008.

## Book Review by Gerhard Nehmiz (Germany)

Jean-Michel Marin and Christian P. Robert

Bayesian Core: A Practical Approach to Computational Bayesian Statistics

Springer (2007)  
978-0-387-38979-0

The book tries to cover a wide span. It is clearly addressed to an audience of students of mathematics or statistics (not of the natural sciences), who expect to use Bayesian methods for data analysis, and also to program MCMC algorithms.

The authors are careful to support the logic of the argumentation with typography: Secondary information is brought on a grey background, descriptions of algorithms with a different font. Exercises are mixed with the text and their results often provide essential steps for the further argumentation.

Topics are ordered according to difficulty. Analyses are performed with R throughout. Explicit descriptions of R programming disappear before the middle of the book. R programs to organise the example data and to perform most of the analyses are provided on <http://www.ceremade.dauphine.fr/~xian/BCS/>, they do however not contain many comments.

The topics are well-selected and include the following: Section 1 is titled "User's Manual" and not only explains the scope of the book and the typographical conventions, but also contains a short introduction to R programming. Section 2 describes, based on the normal model, the basic concepts such as likelihood, prior and posterior distribution, and loss function (which is however not followed up anymore in the book). Moreover, it introduces Monte Carlo methods and importance sampling. Section 3 is concerned with linear regression and variable selection and introduces hierarchical models and Gibbs

sampling. Section 4 extends the former to generalized linear models and the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm. Sections 3 and 4 are the strongest of the book and those where the unified representation has its greatest benefits. Sections 5, 6 and 7 describe capture-recapture experiments, mixture models, and dynamic models, respectively. Section 8 is a bit distinct from the rest and describes 2 aspects of image analysis, classification and Markov random fields.

The book is not free from misprints and a 2nd corrected printing is promised on [www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com) for 2008, and the website above shows also an accumulating collection of further errors. An addition would be the formula at the top of page 68 (one closing bracket too many), hindering the understanding of equation (3.10).

The idea of a unified book that covers concepts, algorithms and programs is new and interesting but the question remains whether the authors have tried too much at once, so that the book became more difficult than expected (and announced in section 1). I recommend as an alternative Robert/Casella 2004 together with Albert 2007.

### References:

- C. P. Robert and G. Casella. *Monte Carlo Statistical Methods (Second Edition)*, Springer (2004).  
J. Albert. *Bayesian Computation with R*, Springer (2007).

## Book Review by Patrick Musonda (UK)

Daniel Zelterman

Models for Discrete Data (Revised Edition)

Oxford (2006) 9-780198-567011

I found this book very interesting and it certainly lived up to its objectives as stated in the book's preface. It has made me to be comfortable with the language of logistic regression and log-linear models.

The book starts off gently as one would expect with issues and some examples of discrete data in Chapter 1. Then simple 2x2 tables are dealt with in Chapter 2 and when to use exact inference.

Throughout the book, I particularly liked the use of practical examples albeit most of them being health or medical related examples. But then I am a medical statistician, hence I enjoyed the

approach of how to deal with such data from a statistical methodological point of view.

The link between 2x2 tables and logistic regression and log-linear models is then followed up very nicely in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. The really tough topics kick in chapter 5 and 6.

I am using this book in my teaching quite regularly especially with my post-graduate students. I think the book is suitable for masters or PhD students. This book does a nice job of blending the theory and applications. Researchers in medical schools or in pharmaceutical industry can certainly benefit from this book.

From Emmanuel Lesaffre

Dear Friends,

I met David for the first time at the First International Conference on Statistical Computing, Izmir in Turkey, a long time ago in 1987. We were both invited speakers. I was pretty proud of being an invited speaker at that time. I finished my PhD two years before. I also remember that there were some quite famous statisticians as invited speakers, but for one reason or another there was one, a relatively young statistician (at that time at least), who caught my attention: David Spiegelhalter. It was only later that I discovered why. But, I do remember now that already at that time he demonstrated to be a gifted speaker.

It is customary to explain in a few words why today's speaker deserves to be the President's Invited Speaker. However, in the case of David, this is quite a difficult task. Don't get me wrong, the problem is in "a few words". Indeed, David has shown in various areas of statistics and specifically in medical statistics to be of great influence to the statistical society. Let me – quote-unquote-briefly review a few of his achievements. But I start with a brief overview of his academic career.

David received his Bachelor's degree in 1974 at the University of Oxford and obtained his Master's degree in 1975 and his PhD in Mathematical Statistics in 1978, both from the University of London. He has also worked as a programmer, a research-assistant and of course as a professor at various universities all over the world. He was a visiting lecturer at the department of Statistics at the University of California in 1977-78, then went to Department of Mathematics at the University of Nottingham from 1978 to 1981 and moved to the Medical Research Council Biostatistics Unit at Cambridge, where he is now Honorary Professor of Biostatistics. From 1<sup>st</sup> October he will take up a 60% appointment as the "University of Cambridge Winton Professor of the Public Understanding of Risk". He is also Honorary Professor at the University of Hong-Kong.

I promised to give you an overview of David's achievements in statistics. I hope that you have time, because his scientific achievements are numerous and without any doubt, exceptional.

David's activities are not only in the development of new statistical theory but also in the application of his ideas into practice, a combination that we all aim to achieve. Let us now have a closer look at his specific accomplishments.

First of all, David's work in the development of the package BUGS and later WINBUGS together with Nicky Best, Andrew Thomas and David Lunn has had a tremendous impact on the acceptance and the popularity of Bayesian methods not only among statisticians but also in the medical and many other applied fields. The Website claims over 14000 downloads at this moment. It also gave the Bayesian statisticians, for long working in isolation, a respectable position in the applied statistical world. Of course, the developers could benefit from the developments in MCMC techniques pioneered by Metropolis, Hastings, Geman & Geman, etc. and popularised into our statistical world by Alan Gelfand and Adrian Smith in 1990. However, we all know that statistical theory with appropriate software is like going for shopping in Harrods with no money in your pocket. By the way, when I first heard about BUGS, I thought it must be a joke. Who would give his child such a name?

David's statistical research has been in a variety of statistical areas. As for every respected statistician, his first papers were on checking the normality assumption. But it is fair to say that Bayesian methodology has been his main core of business. In his early career he did research on model choice based on Bayes factors together with Adrian Smith. Later, in 2002, he came back to the area with the development of the Deviance Information Criterion (DIC) initiating a lively discussion among applied statisticians (you just need to watch the BUGS discussion list). But, David, may I ask you to be more prudent in the future when choosing new terminology ... your term DIC has caused me on several occasions, especially when teaching the material, some serious embarrassment.

Further, David's work on graphical models in his JRSSB paper together with Stephen Lauritzen in 1988 and David's subsequent developments in expert systems or computer-aided diagnosis systems gave a new impetus into an area that was previously, if I remember well, primarily an activity of medical informatics.

There are still two important remaining areas to mention where David has done influential work. First there is the application of Bayesian ideas in the clinical trial area. We all know that this area is quite tough when it comes to introducing new ideas. In his 1994 JRSSA paper, David, together with Larry Freedman and Makesh Parmar introduced the sceptical and enthusiastic prior, which I believe brings in some useful formalism in the specification of subjective priors to make Bayesian methods more acceptable in the (rather) conservative area of clinical trials. Secondly, David's most recent work deals with the incorporation of Bayesian ideas into health-care evaluations. There is no doubt that auditing health technology is an important and hot topic nowadays which needs to be done with great care and with appropriate statistical methodology. This topic will also be topic of David's talk today.

Besides these statistical developments David has numerous papers in medical journals, just to give you a flavour: David has in his current CV 9 papers in *The Lancet*, 12 papers in the *British Medical Journal*, 6 papers in the *Journal of Thoracic Vascular Surgery*, etc. In total, David published about 160 papers in internationally peer-reviewed journals, with statistical papers in *Biometrika*, *JRSSA-B-C*, *JASA*, *The Statistician*, 19 papers in *SIM*, etc. David has written or edited 6 books, wrote 69 chapters in books or proceedings and 5 manuals (admittedly all about WINBUGS). Really an admirable list of high quality contributions, but at the same depressing...

It is therefore not surprising that David received several prestigious awards, such as the RSS Guy Medal in Bronze (1985) and in Silver (1994), an ASA award for an Outstanding application paper (Lauritzen and Spiegelhalter, 1988). He received an honorary doctorate of the University of Aalborg, Denmark in 1994. He became a fellow of the Royal Society in 2005 and a career achievement award from the Society of Medical Decision Making, and an award called OBE, meaning Order of the British Empire.

David is a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society since 1976. He also served on the editorial boards of both statistical as well as medical journals, such as: *Biometrika*, *Statistics and Computing*, *Statistics in Medicine*, *Medical Decision Making* but also *Theoretical Surgery*... whatever this medical field may mean?

It is therefore not surprising that David is a member of the ISI Highly cited researchers.

David served at numerous medical and statistical committees, too many to go into details. David gave numerous courses at various places all over the world, both on Bayesian statistics, as well as on Artificial Intelligence and even on Statistics in Clinical Practice.

He is even consultant for a number of pharmaceutical companies, clearly between all that research one has to earn from time to time some money to continue with one's life.

In view of all of the achievements listed above it is clearly not the question why I have chosen David as President's Invited Speaker. The question one should pose is rather: Why has David not been chosen earlier as President's Invited Speaker?

So, I would conclude by saying that I feel pleased but also honoured that David has accepted my invitation and to give today the President's Invited Talk on:

*Monitoring the Performance of a Healthcare System*

Abstract:

Recent scandals in the UK have led to interest in setting up a surveillance system for health outcomes using routine data-sources. Many difficult issues arise: the quality and completeness of data, choice of indicators, specifying the statistical monitoring procedures, setting thresholds for sounding automatic 'alarms', and deciding what a human should do when an alarm goes off. From a technical perspective, it is natural to consider adapting traditional industrial control chart method such as CUSUMS, but these need to be risk-adjusted and take into account the extreme multiplicity problem, with possibly dozens of indicators being monitored on each of hundreds of organisations. I will talk about possible solutions to these problems, and discuss an experimental system being investigated by the Healthcare Commission, the regulator for the National Health Service in England and Wales.

Some references to David's work:

<http://www.mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk/BSUsite/Research/Section10.shtml>

<http://jtc.ctsnetjournals.org/cgi/content/extract/128/6/820>

<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9876.00101>

From Harbajan Chadha-Boreham

Thraki Palace Hotel, Alexandroupolis, Tuesday 31 July 2007. The meeting started at 12:00 (at the lunch break). The agenda of the meeting was:

1. President's report
2. Treasurer's report
3. Subcommittee reports & motions for continuation:
  - Subcommittee on Statistics in Regulatory Affairs,
  - Subcommittee on National Groups,
  - Subcommittee on Education,
  - Subcommittee on Communications,
  - Subcommittee on Student Conference Awards,
  - Subcommittee on Statistics in Dentistry,
  - Subcommittee on Conference Organising,
  - Subcommittee on ISCB Membership
4. Future ISCB meetings
5. Honorary Membership
6. Any other business

## 1. President's report

Emmanuel Lesaffre welcomed the participants to the AGM. He thanked Vana Sypsa, Giota Touloumi and the whole Local Organising Committee for making the Alexandroupolis meeting a success. He also thanked Mike Kenward, Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee and all its members for the interesting programme that they had put together.

Tony Lachenbruch has resigned as a member of the ISCB Executive Committee (ExCom) in order to abide by the constitution, since he is no longer able to attend the meetings during his two terms in Office. As the constitution has no rules about replacement of mid-term resignations, it was decided during the ExCom meeting in Alexandroupolis, that the runner up in the elections would be requested to fill in the vacant position. Vana Sypsa, last year's runner up in the elections has accepted to become a member of the ExCom.

Emmanuel mentioned that ISCB conference papers could be submitted for publication in the special issue of Statistics in Medicine. Members of the Scientific Programme Committee and Chairs of the Scientific Sessions could be asked by Mike Kenward to referee the SIM special issue.

*(Note: President's Report to the ExCom appeared in the June News)*

## 2. Treasurer's report

At the AGM Norbert Victor presented the 2006 accounts and Koos Zwinderman presented the 2007 accounts and budget. The reports below were also presented at the Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July. The Financial reports were accepted by the ExCom and approved unanimously at the AGM.

On 1 January 2007 the treasurership of the ISCB was handed over from Norbert Victor to Koos Zwinderman. The last financial report of Norbert Victor over the year 2006 is [see ISCB News 43], and as can be seen, the year was closed with a positive result of almost 18,000 Euro's. This surplus was mostly due to the big surplus of the Geneva congress; the financial report of the congress is also attached. The financial report of the Society has been audited and was fully approved by Ernst & Young (Appendix 1.2), Statsautoriseret Revisionsaktieselskab, Copenhagen. The finances and accounts of the Geneva congress were audited and approved by our member, Helen Saunders, as internal reviewer, according to § 10.07 of our Constitution (see ISCB News 43 and Appendix 2.2).

In his report Norbert Victor has pointed out six important considerations, as follows:

**Financial Situation:** At the end of 2006, the society's capital stood at € 92,981, compared with € 74,982 at the end of 2005. With this increase of about € 18,000 – mostly due to the big surplus of the Geneva conference – the loss of the year 2005 was not only compensated, but there is also a small increase compared to the society's capital at the end of 2004. Hence, the society is back on its way to stable finances with small increases of equity every year. With the surplus of the Geneva conference being greater than

expected, we have been able to overcome the difficult financial situation.

Regarding the Income positions, it should be noted that besides the surplus of the Geneva conference, the position "Membership Fees" has considerably increased compared with 2005 and is even higher than the figure of 2004. A considerable part of these fees has been collected with the registration fees in Geneva, and shows the strong dependency of the society's income from participation in our yearly congresses.

The expenditure positions "President's Invited Speaker" and "Workshops", which we did not have in 2005, are reasonable and below the yearly budget. This is an important activity of the society and we ought to view these expenses in a positive manner.

The expenditure positions "Officers & ExCom" and "Awards" are higher than in 2005, but smaller than in 2004 and below the yearly budget. The low amounts in 2005 resulted from the special handling of the Szeged accounts. Some expenses for awards and Officers were included in the position "Deficit of cash flow in connection with the conference 2005".

The positions "Permanent Office", "Newsletter" and "Other Items" have the same size as in the years before.

Given this promising development, it must nevertheless be stated that the income from membership is not enough to balance the current expenditure of the Society. As mentioned last year, we need some surplus of our congresses to break even with our finances. Moreover, we need some increase of our equity every year until we have arrived at € 150,000 (see Appendix 4 in ISCB News 43). This will be a solid base for a society, whose main activity – the yearly congress – has a turnover of about this amount. Therefore, I recommend to maintain the economy measures decided in 2002, until we have reached our above-mentioned aim.

On the basis of his experience as treasurer Norbert Victor has formulated five recommendations, which are endorsed by Koos Zwinderman:

- *Accept only congresses with budgets providing a surplus of about € 10,000, or preferably slightly more.* A surplus about this size is necessary to break even the yearly balance because the regular income is not sufficient to cover our regular expenses. This is also the amount of costs connected with our activities related to the congress, namely "Awards", "President's Invited Speaker" and (re-imbursments for) "Officers and ExCom".
- *Use the budget as a control instrument of the congress accounts.* This could be done in close cooperation of the congress treasurer and the society's treasurer, e.g. by rules like this: If an expense position in the congress accounts is in danger to exceed the corresponding budget position by more than 10%, the society's treasurer has to be informed and to be asked for permission.
- *The economic measures decided by the ExCom in 2002 ought to be maintained until the aim of a capital of € 150,000 is reached.*
- *Try to increase the percentage of members who are strongly tied to the society.* For this, ISCB should think about advantages to be offered to these members besides the yearly congress. As such advantages probably cannot be paid by the regular income, a moderate increase of membership fees is advisable. Our membership fees are very low at the moment, and most members will be ready to pay a slightly higher fee, if they see a corresponding value.
- *Strive for a transformation of "National Group Membership" into "regular" membership.* This should be considered, when a rough equivalence between the national European economies has been reached.

2007:

The budget for 2007 is included in Appendix 5. A number of remarks on the financial situation of the Society in 2007 are as follows:

- The dependence of the society on having a financial surplus of the yearly congress is illustrated by the varying membership figures as are shown in Appendix 3 [see ISCB News 43]. The “regular membership” may be interpreted as the mid-year figures which vary around 450 to 500 members. The membership in 2007 is underestimated because it is based on the numbers who paid by March 2007.
- The 2007-congress is based on 250 paying participants, and the number of registered participants as yet is about 250. This suggests that the congress budget is realistic and we may expect a small surplus as required in the budget.
- The Hungarian National group has organized a very successful course on meta-analysis; net-costs for the society will be about 100-200 Euros, which is far below the budget.

In summary, the financial situation has recovered during Norbert Victor’s treasurership, but the equity is not yet at the desired level. Given also the small “core” membership it remains important that the yearly congress will have a surplus. At this point in time it is not necessary to increase the membership fee, although it may be required in the near future.

At the AGM Koos thanked Norbert for bringing the society back to good financial situation. Regarding the financial outcome of Alexandroupolis, the conference is expected to have the projected surplus of 17,000 Euros or slightly higher. Koos proposition to maintain the 2008 budget at the same level as this year was unanimously adopted by the AGM.

Appendix 1.2 Audit of Ernst & Young: Independent Auditors’ Report

To the members of ISCB

We have audited the Annual Report of ISCB for the financial year ended 31 December 2006, which comprises the income statement and balance sheet. The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the Constitution of ISCB.

The Executive Officers and Executive Committee’s Responsibility for the Annual Report

The Executive Officers and Executive Committee are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of this Annual Report in accordance with the Constitution of ISCB. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of an Annual Report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor’s Responsibility and Basis of Opinion

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on this Annual Report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Danish Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the Annual Report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the Annual Report. The procedures selected depend on the auditors’ judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the Annual Report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation and fair presentation of the Annual Report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the

circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal control.

An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Executive Officers and Executive Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the Annual Report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

The audit did not result in any qualification.

Opinion

In our opinion, the Annual Report gives a true and fair view of the Society’s financial position at 31 December 2006 and of the results of its operations and its cash flows for the financial year then ended in accordance with the Constitution of ISCB.

Elsinore,  
Ernst & Young  
Statsautoriseret Revisionsaktieselskab  
Marius Jensen  
State Authorised Public Accountant

Appendix 2.2. Audit of the Financial Statements on ISCB27, Geneva, August 2006, ISCB Internal Auditor’s Report

The 27th Conference of ISCB was held between 27 and 31 August 2006 at the Uni-Mail, Geneva, Switzerland. The running of the conference was contracted to Kuoni Travel Ltd.

The conference had a separate bank account, and all the incoming money and payments for different activities were handled through this account. The review of the financial statements did not reveal any discrepancies. The documentation of the incomes and the expenditures were found to be appropriate, and they were in accordance with the financial statements.

The audit included examined the existence of all documents confirming the expenses and their amounts, and these all appeared to be correct. During the audit the only things I did not have access to were the full credit card transactions carried out by Kuoni. I was supplied with a summary of combined transactions, which appeared to be correct.

My only other comment regarding the accounts was the way in which Kuoni had calculated their commission of 12%. For each transaction they had divided by 0.88, rather than multiplied by 1.12. However, all transactions had been dealt with in the same manner, and all were correct according to their method of calculation.

Geneva, 11 January 2007  
Helen Saunders, Merck-Serono

Appendix 5. Budget 2007

	Euro
<b>Income</b>	
Membership fees	20,000
Conference surplus	17,000
Advertising and Earned interest	5,000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>42,000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Permanent Office:	13,000
Officers & ExCom:	7,000
Awards (Students, Scientists):	8,000
President’s Invited Speaker:	2,000
Workshops / Courses:	2,000
Newsletter:	7,000
Other items (Audits):	3,000
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>42,000</b>
<b>Balance:</b>	<b>0</b>

**3. Subcommittee reports & motions for continuation:**

The eight ISCB Subcommittee (SC) Chairs had reported on their activities at the ExCom meeting. The written SC reports contain also the terms of reference and list of members. The SC Chairs presented their reports briefly at the AGM as follows:

- **3.1 Subcommittee on Statistics in Regulatory Affairs**

Jorgen Seldrup told the AGM that last year, the SIRA Subcommittee was attended by three people and the minutes were prepared and circulated by Harbajan Chadha-Boreham. The ISCB website has our comments on the Guideline "Reflection paper on the Methodological Issues in Confirmatory Clinical Trials with Flexible Design and Analysis Plan". No comments were received from the ISCB members for the other guidelines that had been announced to the ISCB members by SIRA. Some of the guidelines have non-statistical content and the SIRA members felt that we are not competent to comment on them. There will be some guidelines coming later in 2008-9 from the FDA in the context of the Critical Path Initiative (e.g. non-inferiority, adaptive designs and missing data). The SC met in Alexandroupolis and we discussed the issue of non-statistical guidelines. The feeling was that we as a Committee and the Society have neither the expertise nor the capability/capacity to become involved in other than 'statistical guidance'.

The motion for continuation of the Subcommittee was approved by the ISCB participants at the AGM.

- **3.2 Subcommittee on National Groups**

Julia Singer reported that a total of 9 applications (from 6 countries: Cuba, India, Poland, Romania, Sri Lanka and Turkey) for the *Conference Awards for Scientists* for the ISCB28 meeting were received. The National Groups Subcommittee voted to select the following 6 winning entries (in alphabetic order): Denis Enachescu (Romania), Martha Fors (Cuba), Rasika Jayatillake (Sri Lanka), Agnieszka Rossa (Poland), Nazneen Shariff (India), Corina Vernic (Romania). The awards were presented to the winners during the AGM.

The motion for continuation of the Subcommittee was approved by the ISCB participants at the AGM.

- **3.3 Subcommittee on Education**

Rumana Omar presented the amended Terms of Reference of the SC, as follows: To support and organise one or two day courses on contemporary methods in clinical biostatistics in locations represented by the Society; Maintain and provide access to: Guidelines on Organising ISCB Courses, List of Past ISCB Courses.

The Education SC in collaboration with the National Groups SC organised a course on Meta Analysis in Hungary.

Stephen Senn presented the course and it attracted thirty-six participants from Hungary, Romania, Kuwait, Check Republic and Austria. The feedback on the course was very good. The SC is open to proposal for future courses and they should be sent to: [r.omar@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:r.omar@ucl.ac.uk).

Work is in progress regarding:

- On line information on ISCB web page (Education section)
- List of past courses offered by ISCB
- Guideline on career of a Biostatistician (links to Statistical Society's in different countries, e.g. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, USA, UK)
- Links to reporting guidelines of Trials, Observational Studies, Systematic Reviews, and Diagnostic Studies, e.g. CONSORT

The motion for continuation of the Subcommittee was approved by the ISCB participants at the AGM.

- **3.4 Subcommittee on Communications**

David Warne reported that the SC has five members and only two people met last in Geneva (David Warne and Tony Lachenbruch, who represented the President). During the ExCom meeting in Alexandroupolis David's proposal to

dissolve the Communications SC was approved. The reason for dissolving the SC is that although the SC is running smoothly, the number of members has been going down and it is difficult to organise the SC meetings.

We moved ISCB's emailing lists from Yahoo groups to Google groups, because it is easier to add members to the groups with Google.

David will continue as Editor of the Newsletter and Bjarne Nielsen will continue with as Webmaster of the ISCB Homepage. Communications activities will be merged with those of the Membership SC and its Terms of Reference will be modified.

- **3.5 Subcommittee on Student Conference Awards**

KyungMann Kim reported that this year there were 11 Student Conference Award (SCA) applications, two students each from Australia, Belgium and the UK and one student each from Greece, Spain, Sweden, US and Turkey. The handling of the applications as electronic files went smoothly. The selection process was by email and three students were selected by the SCA subcommittee based on the submitted abstract and summary of the paper. Besides the SCA subcommittee members, Program Chair, Mike Kenward, and ISCB President, Emmanuel Lesaffre, participated in the review of the applications and the selection.

The announcement for submission appears in the Newsletter and the publicity will be widened by placing announcement on the ISCB webpage. We shall also contact other relevant societies in different countries.

The 3 winners were Li-Yin Lee (USA), Tom Palmer (UK) and Dimitris Rizopoulos (Belgium). The awards were presented during the AGM.

Marc Buyse proposed at the AGM to have more flexibility in the fixed number of three awards and increase them relative to the number of submissions. Emmanuel Lesaffre mentioned that the number has been fixed for financial reasons and the awards are for encouraging students but we also need to maintain consistency over the years; a ratio of 3 awards to eleven submissions is not bad. Stephen Senn pointed out that ISCB's financial situation has been weak since the big loss at a conference some years ago and we could seek sponsorship to increase the number of awards.

The motion for continuation of the Subcommittee was approved by the ISCB participants at the AGM.

- **3.6 Subcommittee on Statistics in Dentistry**

Emmanuel Lesaffre reported that the Statistics in Dentistry SC was set up five years ago and produced the split-mouth publication "A review of the reported methodological quality of split-mouth studies, E. Lesaffre, M. Garcia Zattera, C. Redmond, H. Huber and I. Needleman, Journal of Clinical Periodontology, 34: 756-761, 2007", which was reviewed by the ISCB members. Further, the SC organised a session in the ISCB meeting in Geneva concerning Split-Mouth studies. The conclusion is that the SC has been relatively successful and that awareness has been raised about the role of statistics in dentistry. The proposal to dissolve the SC was approved at the ExCom meeting in Alexandroupolis

- **3.7 Subcommittee on Conference Organising**

Harbajan Chadha-Boreham reported that the Conference Organising SC comprises ten enthusiastic members. The SC had its fifth meeting in Alexandroupolis together with the three future conference organisers. As Secretary to the ExCom, Harbajan has been involved in various activities related to organising conferences.

The Conference Organising Guidelines continue to be very useful for future conference organisers and revisions are made regularly to improve the Guidelines. During the year we added a new section "Helpful Hints" by Koos Zwinderman. Planned revisions include topics related to sponsorship and management of taxes on conference expenses and income.

Norbert has retired from this committee in Alexandroupolis to be able to concentrate his future work in the committees on Membership and National Groups and his task as Vice-President. The motion for continuation of the Subcommittee was approved by the ISCB participants at the AGM.

• **3.8 Subcommittee on ISCB Membership**

Emmanuel Lesaffre reported that the Membership SC has eight members and it started two years ago with the aim of increasing ISCB membership. KyungMann Kim, who is the SC Secretary, has been actively publicising the ISCB in Asian countries with the results that we see an increase in the number of participants coming from the Far East to this ISCB conference. We are evaluating the feasibility of increasing student participants. KyungMann Kim will contact the past student award winners and encourage them to join the SC. In the ISCB 2008 meeting, special sessions of direct relevance to students will be included in the conference. It is the aim to continue with these special sessions in future meetings

The motion for continuation of the Subcommittee was approved by the ISCB participants at the AGM.

**4. Future ISCB meetings**

ISCB29 (2008) in Copenhagen (Denmark)

Helge Gydesen, who is the co-chair of the Copenhagen Local Organising Committee, mentioned that he is representing Bjarne Nielsen. He showed some very scenic pictures of Copenhagen and reported on the well-advanced Scientific and Social program of the conference, which has been announced in the leaflets. He said the travel to and within Copenhagen is easy. The conference venue is the School of Architecture, Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Helge Gydesen cordially invited the ISCB members to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> Conference in the beautiful city of Copenhagen. Information about the conference can be found on: [www.iscb2008.info](http://www.iscb2008.info).

ISCB30 (2009) in Prague (Czech Republic)

Zdenek Valenta showed some beautiful pictures of the historical city of Prague and said that the weather in the summer is fine to enjoy the visit. The conference venue will be the School of Economics. There is plenty of high quality accommodation across a wide range of prices, from hotels to dormitories. Prague is easily accessible as a major city with international travel links. A wide range of social programs is available. Zdenek cordially invited the ISCB members to attend the ISCB meeting in Prague.

Marc Buyse remarked that 2009 is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ISCB and we could celebrate it in a special way. He proposed to invite the founding members of ISCB, some of whom are in retirement. Emmanuel agreed with excellent idea and said that the Officers of ISCB ExCom will follow-up on this topic.

Emmanuel Lesaffre announced that we are always looking far ahead to future ISCB conference and any who is interested in organising a conference should contact him ([emmanuel.lesaffre@med.kuleuven.be](mailto:emmanuel.lesaffre@med.kuleuven.be)).

**5. Honorary Membership**

Emmanuel Lesaffre stated that the ISCB constitution (Article 4.01) allows for Honorary Membership but ISCB has never taken up this opportunity so far. There is a benefit of free annual membership for life, but this is not the real issue. The ISCB Officers wanted to show their gratitude to some members of

the ISCB for their very long and valuable service. Jorgen Seldrup and David Warne were proposed for Honorary Membership to the ExCom, who gave their approval. The accompanying text of the two proposals will appear in the Newsletter.

(a) For David Warne

David is a longstanding and very faithful ISCB member. He has been the editor of the Newsletter Editor since 1992-3 and served eight Presidents (Claude Chastang, Jorgen Seldrup, Marc Buyse, Karsten Schmidt, Simon Day, Grazia Valsecchi, John Whitehead, Emmanuel Lesaffre). This is a quite demanding task requiring a lot of secretarial but also communication skills. It has been repeatedly confirmed that The Newsletter constitutes an important link for the ISCB members. In his role as Chair of Communications he has also explored various other possibilities to improve the communications among ISCB members. For instance, he installed the ISCB emailing system thereby creating various dedicated email groups. He also contributed to the development of the ISCB Website. Further, he is the chair of the Subcommittee on Communications and is a member of the Subcommittee on Conference Organising. Finally, he organized recently one of the most, if not the most, successful ISCB meetings in Geneva. Not only the scientific and social programs were excellent, he also realized a substantial financial profit for the Society. For all of these reasons, the Officers recommend David to receive the status of honorary membership of our Society.

(b) Jorgen Seldrup

Jorgen Seldrup was the Newsletter Editor in 1985 & 1986 and in 1990 & 1991, Scientific Secretary from 1987 to 1990, Vice-President in 1991 & 1992, President in 1993 & 1994 and Past-President from 1994 to 1996. In total, he served the Society in the Executive Committee for a much longer period (1984 to 2000). Jorgen has been one of the most loyal ISCB members since The Society has been established in 1979. He has been member of various ISCB subcommittees but is especially known for chairing the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs for many years, where the main task is the preparation and submission of comments on the draft regulatory guidelines. Further, he has served in various nominations committees. He is on the Scientific Committee of the meeting in Alexandroupolis where he is also the organizer of an invited session on "vaccines". For all of these reasons The Officers recommend Jorgen to receive the status of honorary membership of our Society

The proposals were approved by the AGM.

**6. Any other business**

Emmanuel Lesaffre announced that the ISCB Constitution amendments are planned and they will appear in the Newsletter in due course.

A suggestion to increase the participation of ISCB members was made from the floor. Koos Zwinderman assured that the ExCom Officers, together with the Membership SC, are actively involved in this respect. The meeting closed at 13:30. About 76 ISCB members attended the AGM

*ISCB members are invited to contact Emmanuel Lesaffre if there are any questions during the year, which will be discussed at the ExCom teleconferences*

The book, contained in XIII + 271 pages, is organised into Preface, Part One headed 'Base' with 4 chapters, Part Two headed 'Applications' with 7 chapters, References with 165 positions, Authors (meaning cited authors) and an Index of graphic terms. In the following, I will go firstly in short over the eleven chapters, and next give my overall impressions about the entire book.

Chapter 1, Introduction, authored by A. Unwin. One finds here historical sketches on the developments of statistical data visualization: from illustrations of elementary statistical concepts by Galton and Student till recent 'large data' such as recording of credit card transactions (350 million a year) or AT&T's 70 billion long distances calls annually.

Chapter 2, Statistical Graphics, authored by M. Theus. This chapter is a survey of graphs used today: barcharts, spineplots, mosaic plots - for categorical data; (jittered) dotplots, boxplots, histograms, scatterplots, parallel coordinates and the grand tour - for continuous data; trellis displays, multiple barchart plots - for mixed scale data. Special attention is paid to maps with a colour shading (choroplethmaps), contour plots and tableplots. All the plots are illustrated using non-trivial examples.

Chapter 3, Scaling up Graphics, authored by M. Theus. The influence the size of a dataset has on standard statistical graphics is considered. Generally, large data cause overplotting of the graphs. Highlighting, zooming, alpha-blending and tonal highlighting may help here to obtain better information on (the density of) the data.

Chapter 4, Interacting with Graphics, authored by A. Unwin. Quoting the author: "The chapter examines how interaction can extend the power and potential of graphics to deal with large datasets." The interaction can be realized by 1) Querying. 2) Selection and linking. 3) Varying plot characteristics, e.g. by censored zooming. There is a richness of methods to do it. Of course, special software is needed.

Chapter 5, Multivariate Categorical Data - Mosaic Plots, authored by Heike Hofmann. She presents a variety of ways to draw mosaic plots. The mosaic plots are not much affected by large numbers of cases, however large numbers of categories may cause serious problems. An interactive framework is essential. However, techniques like recording and grouping of categories, querying mechanisms and displaying variations need specialist software.

Chapter 6, Rotating Plots, authored by Dianne Cook and L. Miller. The chapter describes problems arising when making tour plots for large data. This is illustrated by considering huge US geological surveys data recorded on satellite platforms. The aim is monitoring an index measuring the health and density of plant biomass in 159 EPA eco regions.

Chapter 7, Multivariate Continuous Data - Parallel Coordinates, by R. Mustafa and Ed Wegman. The idea of parallel coordinate plots, simple yet powerful, has been known for at least 20 years. The authors refer to a publication, where the combination of parallel coordinates taken together with saturation brushing has been demonstrated to be able to handle at least 250000 observations in 8 dimensions or more. Actions like reordering and rescaling of axes are necessary to obtain a meaningful and presentable visualization. The chapter introduces a generalized parallel coordinate geometry (concepts not sufficiently explained - to my point of view, especially since no further references are given for the topic) and a new family of smooth plots (look interesting).

Chapter 8, Networks, authored by G. Wills. Quoting the author: "The emphasis is on exploration and discovery ... will highlight techniques that allow people to interact with very large graphs to a) understand overall structure, b) reveal unusual features, c) compare subgraphs ... d) 'drill down' from a high level overview to sections of interest." The author has created a visualization tool serving that purpose and has redesigned it using the SPSS Visualization system. The methodology is applied to an overview of telephone calling

patterns, in particular: for indicating an international calling fraud in the year 1994.

Chapter 9, Trees, authored by S. Urbanek. Trees are used in many scientific fields for decision making, classification or prediction. The chapter explains how to grow trees for large data sets, and how to visualize large trees. Depth-shaded treemaps and depth-shaded spineplots of leaves, and forests of trees are considered. Because tree growing and pruning procedures have linear computational cost, they are feasible for large datasets. In fact, the growing algorithm can be easily parallelized. The main working example uses the IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) database consisting of 250000 cases, each case characterized by 13 attributes of mixed scale type. Example: the tree construction (with R, once the data were loaded into R) took 9 seconds.

Chapter 10, Transactions, authored by Barbara Gonzalez-Arevalo, F. Hernandez-Campos, S. Marron, and Ch. Park. The section deals with internet traffic measurement and modelling. The essence of the data is that they are very large and heavy-tailed. There are serious problems as to how to sample and visualize such data. The authors apply so called 'windowed biased sampling' and use for visualization so called 'mice and elephant' plots. They also perform some smoothing (kernel smooths) on sub-samples containing around 10000 cases, the samples exhibiting a wide number of bumps and spikes. After smoothing, the samples may still reveal a number of bumps and spikes. Their statistical significance is investigated using the SiZer approach (based on studying statistical Significance of ZERo crossings of smoothed estimates).

Chapter 11, Graphics of a Large Dataset, authored by A. Unwin and M. Theus. The chapter presents a broad multi-level elaboration of a dataset containing high-tech company information. The dataset served as a contest set at the InfoVis 2005 conference.

This ends the examination of subsequent sections of the book. Some general comments follow. All the texts are written in a clear manner. The aim was rather to show for real data some problems, to formulate them interactively, and to highlight them by making proper visualizations. Operating with colour shades, interactive linking and brushing, alternating transparency and opacity appeared in many problems as essential tools to achieve a clear and meaningful visualization. The majority of the problems elaborated and depicted in the book needed some specialized software. The software is described in more detail at the book's webpage located at <http://www.rosuda.org/GOLD>, which is intended to contain information on the book, such as information about the authors (there is information only on the 3 main authors), the table of contents, reviews, figures from the book with their code-settings (not yet there, noticed 19 August 07), up to date links to the software mentioned (are there!), the most important datasets used in the book (are there!), and errata. I enjoyed reading the book and inspecting the graphs. I think that to put together in 270 pages so many methods, explanations and graphs is quite an achievement. All the presented techniques may be also applied to medical data and medical problems. Most of the illustrations in the book are colour plates of high quality. The authors do not advertise any specific software, although a dozen specific (both commercial and free) software products are mentioned. As the authors write, the figures appearing in the book were obtained using various software. Each chapter starts with a specific, contextual sentence, being a kind of a mantra for the chapter. Let me quote two such mantras. Mantra for Chapter 11: "We talk too much, we should speak less and draw more" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, to Johannes Daniel Falk, 14 June 1809, originally written in German). Mantra for Chapter 10: " 'Cause there's a million ways to go, you know that there are" (Cat Stevens, If you want to sing out, sing out). Indeed, there are a million ways to visualize your data, you know that there are!

From Lutz Edler

Shortly after the conference, the work on the Special Issue started. At this time, we still had in the ears the sound of Michael Schemper's advice who had been consulted for his experiences of the Szeged ISCB meeting, 2006: "Start early". So the scheduled deadline for the submission was set for end of October 2006 - and then extended to mid November. By the end of November, 45 manuscripts had arrived from all over the world, the majority from Europe. Over the coming weeks until January, the papers were sent out to reviewers who fitted by their scientific profile to the subject of the individual papers. When there was no obvious expert within ISCB or among attendees of ISCB27, Scopus, CIS and pubmed was used to find the right person. The plan was to send each paper to three reviewers in order to achieve a decision. That took quite a while and some of the authors already got nervous about their paper by Christmas. So we learned to understand Michael's words better: "Start early" in finding referees! Later on, we learned some more words: "Start early" in finding referees who work in a timely manner. One third of those asked had denied, had excuses or claimed so, or were just hard to catch. At the end there were exactly 100 referees who cared for the 45 papers, including the editor, who wrote quite a number of them by himself to achieve the magic number of at least three reviews per paper. There were a number of ISCB

members and attendees who also wrote more than one. Give them all a great hand! All this work depends so much on those colleagues who work for free for all of us. At the end, sometime in summer 2007, each paper had at least three reviews and some of them had more. When some of the reviewers did not respond, we asked others and so on - and suddenly all responded! The maximum was actually EIGHT. Imagine how these agreed! We apologise to have given some authors a really hard time. However, they bravely worked through all the remarks and, we hope you agree, a set of high quality papers resulted from this exercise (or nightmare). Of course there were papers which had to be rejected because of lower quality. However, there were also papers of decent and rather good quality which did not make it because deficits were recognised in the review process and the authors did not want to change or could not respond in time. Actually, no paper was published as submitted. Some were revised two times and finally, with the help of the 100 referees, we managed to fine tune and polish the submissions such that the following 19 papers will be published in a special ISCB conference issue of Statistics in Medicine, to appear in late December 2007. Many thanks to all the authors and referees!

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| <p>1. A competing risks analysis of bloodstream infection after stem-cell transplantation using subdistribution and cause-specific hazards and cause-specific hazards<br/><i>Jan Beyersmann, Markus Dettenkofer, Hartmut Bertz, Martin Schumacher</i></p> <p>2. Sample size calculations in presence of competing risks<br/><i>Aurelien Latouche, Raphaël Porcher</i></p> <p>3. A semi-Markov model for multistate and interval-censored data with multiple terminal events. Application in renal transplantation.<br/><i>Yohann Foucher, Magali Giral, Jean-Paul Soullou, Jean-Pierre Daures</i></p> <p>4. Non-parametric estimation and model checking procedures for marginal gap time distributions for recurrent events<br/><i>Kajsa Kvist, Mette Gerster, Per Kragh Andersen, Lars Vedel Kessing</i></p> <p>5. Assessing surrogacy from the joint modeling of multivariate longitudinal data and survival. Application to clinical trial data on Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia<br/><i>Emmanuelle Deslandes, Sylvie Chevret</i></p> <p>6. Repeated confidence intervals for adaptive group sequential trials<br/><i>Cyrus R. Mehta, Peter Bauer, Martin Posch, Werner Brannath</i></p> <p>7. Semi-parametric modelling of the distribution of the baseline risk in meta-analysis<br/><i>Wendimagegn Ghidey, Emmanuel Lesaffre, Theo Stijnen</i></p> | <p>8. The analysis of continuous outcomes in multi-centre trials with small centre sizes<br/><i>Ruth Pickering, Mark Weatherall</i></p> <p>9. Baseline and treatment effect heterogeneity for survival times between centers using a random effects accelerated failure time model with flexible error distribution<br/><i>Arnošt Komárek, Emmanuel Lesaffre, Catherine Legrand</i></p> <p>10. Robustness of a parametric model for informatively censored bivariate longitudinal data under misspecification of its distributional assumptions: a simulation study<br/><i>Nikos Pantazis, Giota Touloumi</i></p> <p>11. Flexible parametric models for relative survival, with application in coronary heart disease<br/><i>Christopher P. Nelson, Paul C. Lambert, Iain B. Squire, David R. Jones</i></p> <p>12. Practical experiences on the necessity of external validation<br/><i>Inke R. König, James D. Malley, Christian Weimar, Hans-Christian Diener, Andreas Ziegler</i></p> <p>13. Selection of important variables and determination of functional forms in multivariable model-building<br/><i>Willi Sauerbrei, Patrick Royston, Harald Binder</i></p> <p>14. Stratification for the propensity score compared with linear regression techniques to assess the effect of treatment or exposure</p> | <p><i>Stephen Senn, Erika Graf, Angelika Caputo</i></p> <p>15. Data reduction for prediction: a case study on robust coding of age and family history for the risk of having a genetic mutation<br/><i>Ewout W. Steyerberg, Judith Balmana, David H. Stockwell, Sapna Syngal</i></p> <p>16. Cost-effectiveness analysis in colorectal cancer using a semi-Markov model<br/><i>Christel Castelli, Christophe Combescure, Yohann Foucher, Jean-Pierre Daures</i></p> <p>17. Statistical analysis of donation-transfusion data with complex correlation<br/><i>Marie Reilly, Robert Szulkin</i></p> <p>18. Estimating adjusted NNT measures in logistic regression analysis<br/><i>Ralf Bender, Oliver Kuss, Mandy Hildebrandt, Ulrich Gehrmann</i></p> <p>19. Relative quantification based on logistic models for individual polymerase chain reactions<br/><i>Inna Chervoneva, Yanyan Li, Boris Iglewicz, Scott Waldman, Terry Hyslop</i></p> |
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<p>Andersen, Per Kragh Bender, Ralf Benner, Axel Beyersmann, Jan Biganzoli, Elia Bosch, Ronald Braun, Thomas Burkholder, Iris Campbell, Michael J. Carstensen, Bendix Cavuto, Silvio Chen, Eric B. Chi, Yueh-Yun Chow, Shein-Chung Coffey, Christopher S. Cook, Roger M. D'Agostino, Ralph B. Jr Drake, Christiana Edler, Lutz Faldum, Andreas Fiocco, Marta Fraser, Christophe Freidlin, Boris Friede, Tim Gardiner, Joseph</p>	<p>Garrett-Mayer, Elizabeth Gerds, Thomas Alexander Gerke, Oke Giorgi, Rock Hakulinen, Timo Harrell, Frank E. Jr Heinze, Georg Hill, Jennifer Hilton, Joan F. Hougaard, Philip Hothorn, Torsten Houwing-Duistermaat, Jeanine Hu, Feifang Jackson, Christopher Judkins, David Jung, Sin-Ho Kieser, Meinhard König, Inke R. Kvist, Kajsa Tine Kristiansen, Gabi Lachenbruch, Peter A Lalam, Nadia Lesaffre, Emmanuel Li, Hongzhe Love, Thomas E.</p>	<p>Mau, Jochen Marden, John I. Moye, Lemuel A Mittlböck, Martina Moecks, Joachim Pantazis, Nikos Pehlivanoglu, Petros Pohar Perme, Maja Posch, Martin Postma, Marten Pritsch, Maria Proschan, Michael Putter, Hein Neuhaus, John Rahnenführer, Jörg Rittgen, Werner Röhmel, Joachim Rosenkranz, Gerd Schaubel, Douglas E. Scheike, Thomas Schemper, Michael Schumacher, Martin Senn, Stephen Shih, Weichung Joe Song, Xiao</p>	<p>Steyerberg, Ewout W. Stijnen, Theo Sun, Jianguo Szabo, Aniko Tang, Lingqi Tenenhaus, Michael Thiebaut, Rodolphe Thompson, John R. Todd, Susan Tsoodikov, Alexander Vach, Werner van Breukelen, Gerard van Houwelingen, Hans C. Verweij, Pierre J. M. Wang, Molin Wassmer, Gernot Werft, Wiebke Whitehead, Anne Whitehead, John Whittemore, Alice S. Wienke, Andreas Wunder, Christina Zhao, Qiang Zou, Hui Ziegler, Andreas</p>
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Many books are nowadays available on regression and analysis of variance. The present book is not an introductory book on these two topics, but it emphasizes the practice of regression and analysis of variance with the freely available open-source software R. As Faraway has already noted in the preface of his book, the reader should be familiar with essentials of statistical inference like estimation, hypothesis testing, and confidence intervals as well as with some basic knowledge on data analysis and matrix calculus before starting working with the book.

The emphasis of the book is on data analysis and there are an abundance of examples that illustrate both the use of regression and analysis of variance techniques and the conclusions one can draw from results. The R package 'faraway' contains all the data sets used in the examples. In the book, Faraway explicitly gives the relevant R programming code and presents a lot of output and graphics, so that not just reading the book but working simultaneously with R may be the best option using this book. Each chapter concludes with several exercises challenging the reader to carry out the data analysis in R on his or her own.

The book consists of 16 chapters, some of them very short, and two appendices, where some essential information about R is given. After the introductory chapter, least squares estimation in the linear model is discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 is devoted to standard hypothesis testing and confidence intervals in the linear model. At the end of this chapter the author discusses and illustrates some practical difficulties with the underlying assumptions in the linear model which may occur, for instance, from non-random samples, the choice and range of predictors, and model misspecification.

In Chapter 4, Faraway presents graphical and/or numerical regression diagnostic techniques for checking assumptions on the error term and the structural part of the model as well as for finding unusual observations.

Chapter 5 is called "problems with the predictors". In this chapter the author briefly illustrates the analysis in the case of measurement errors in the predictor variables, the analysis when changing the scale of the variables, and finally the problem of collinearity. For the last topic, Faraway mentions the notion of ridge regression but does not provide further information, although ridge regression is later discussed in Chapter 9.

In Chapter 6, extensions of the linear model are discussed when the standard assumption about the error term - independent and identically distributed from case to case - is violated. Beside generalized or weighted least squares estimation, the author also discusses robust regression techniques and demonstrates least absolute deviation regression, Huber's regression method as well as least trimmed squares can be used in R.

Chapter 7 is devoted to transformations of response and predictor variables to improve model fit and to correct violations of model assumptions. Variable selection is the topic of Chapter 8. The application of various testing-based and criterion-based procedures is demonstrated.

In Chapter 9, Faraway presents shrinkage methods. He illustrates the use of principal component regression, partial least squares and ridge regression. This chapter finishes the discussion and illustration of various regression techniques.

In Chapter 10, the author briefly discusses general aspects of statistical strategy and model uncertainty, while in Chapter 11, a complete data analysis is presented using an example from insurance redlining. In the following chapter, the use of some imputation methods is demonstrated in a missing data situation.

In the last four chapters, statistical methods are described where the predictor variables, or at least some of them, are qualitative in nature. Faraway starts with analysis of covariance in Chapter 13 and all the basic analysis of variance techniques are discussed in this chapter. The one-way analysis of variance with fixed effects is illustrated in Chapter 14. Two-way analysis of variance and larger factorial experiments are the topics in Chapter 15. In Chapter 16, block designs are discussed. Faraway presents examples of a randomized block design, a Latin square, and a balanced incomplete block design.

The book has around 200 pages including a lot of programming code, output and graphics. The presented theory is restricted to the essentials. Of course, the intention of the book is illustrating data analysis, but at least some references to the theoretical background would have been helpful. Summarizing, the book can be recommended for those readers who want to carry out data analysis in R and already have a good knowledge about statistical inference in the linear model.

## Elections for the Executive Committee 2009-10: Early Warning!

From John Whitehead, Chair of the Nominations Committee

In accordance with the Constitution, we ask for nominations for positions on the Executive Committee for 2009-10. At the end of 2008, the situation is:

Emmanuel Lesaffre	Will end his term as President and becomes Past President for one year, 2009.
Norbert Victor	Will become President for two years, 2009-10, and Past-President for 2011.
Harbajan Chadha-Boreham	Will end her 2 <sup>nd</sup> term as Secretary and is not eligible for re-election as Secretary or Treasurer but could be elected as Vice President.
Koos Zwinderman	Ends his 1 <sup>st</sup> term as Treasurer and is eligible for re-election as Treasurer, Secretary or Vice President.
Rumana Omar, Catherine Quantin, Jeno Reiczigel, Marie Reilly, Martin Schumacher & Vana Sypsa	End their 2 <sup>nd</sup> terms as Ordinary members and are not eligible for re-election as Ordinary members, but are eligible for re-election as Treasurer, Secretary or Vice President.
Adriano Decarli, KyungMann Kim	End their 1 <sup>st</sup> terms as Ordinary members and are eligible for re-election as Ordinary members, or as Treasurer, Secretary or Vice President.
David W Warne	Wishes to continue as News Editor.
Bjarne Nielsen	Wishes to continue as Webmaster.

For the end of term it is meant the end of the calendar year (2008).

Nominations for

- Vice President,
- Secretary,
- Treasurer and
- 8 ordinary members

are therefore sought.

To make a nomination, please download the form from the web

[\[http://www.iscb.info/iscbdocs/Template\\_Nomination\\_2008.doc\]](http://www.iscb.info/iscbddocs/Template_Nomination_2008.doc) and send it to the

Chair of the ISCB Nominations Committee, John Whitehead, ([j.whitehead@Lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.whitehead@Lancaster.ac.uk)).

Each nomination will require the signatures of the Proposer, a Seconder and of the Nominee confirming a willingness to serve. Completed and signed nomination forms must be received no later than 31 August 2008. (Faxed or scanned forms are acceptable.)

If there are more nominees than vacant positions, an electronic ballot will be held.

Please note the following clauses from the Constitution:

“(6.02) The Committee shall consist of the four Officers and at least five but not more than eight other members (“Ordinary members”), plus the Past President, who shall serve only for the calendar year immediately following the Presidency, and co-opted members.”

“(6.03) The Ordinary members, who shall be Members for at least the calendar year prior to nomination, must be elected by ballot; their full term of office shall be two calendar years and they shall be eligible for re-election for one further full term up to a maximum of four consecutive calendar years.”

## Books for Review by Harry Southworth

Books for review:			
Author(s)	Title	Publisher (year) ISBN	Reviewer
1. A. C. Davison	Statistical Models	Cambridge (2003) 780521773393	
2. David A. Freedman	Statistical Models, Theory and Practice	Cambridge (2005) 780521671057	
3. Brian D. Ripley	Stochastic Simulation	Wiley, 1987 (2006) 0-470-00960-8	
4. A. C. Atkinson, A. N. Donev and R. D. Tobias.	Optimum Experimental Designs, with SAS	Oxford (2007) 978 0 19 929660 6	
5. Christopher M. Bishop.	Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning	Springer (2006) 0 387 31073 8	
6. Bill Thompson.	The Nature of Statistical Evidence	Springer (2007) 978 0 387 40050 1	
7. Eric Stallard, Kenneth G. Manton and Joel E. Cohen.	Forecasting Product Liability Claims	Springer (2002) 0387949879	
8. William M. Bolstad.	Introduction to Bayesian Statistics (Second Edition)	Wiley (2007) 978 0 470 14115 1	
9. J. Rick Turner.	New Drug Development: Design, Methodology, and Analysis	Wiley (2007) 978 0 470 07373 5	
Books reviews in this issue:			
Author(s)	Title	Publisher (year) ISBN	Reviewer
1. Jean-Michel Marin and Christian P. Robert	Bayesian Core: A Practical Approach to Computational Bayesian Statistics	Springer (2007) 978-0-387-38979-0	Gerhard Nehmiz, Germany
2. Antony Unwin, Martin Theus and Heike Hofmann	Graphics of Large Datasets – Visualizing a Million	Springer (2006) 978-0-387-32906-2	Anna Bartkowiak, Poland
3. Julian J. Faraway	Linear Models with R	Chapman & Hall/CRC, (2005) 1-58488-425-8	Guido Knapp, Germany
4. Forrest W. Young, Pedro M. Valero-Mora and Michael Friendly	Visual Statistics	Wiley (2006) 0-471-68160-1	Julia Singer, Austria
5. Michael A. Proschan, Gordon K. K. Lan and Janet Turk Wittes	Statistical Monitoring of Clinical Trials	Springer (2006) 978-0-387-30059-7	Friederike Barthel, UK
6. G. A. Young and R. L. Smith	Essentials of Statistical Inference	Cambridge (2005) 780521839716	Tiberiu Postelnicu, Romania
7. Janet Peacock and Sally Kerry	Presenting Medical Statistics from Proposal to Publication	Oxford (2006) 0-19-859966-8	Andy Vail, UK
8. Lemuel A. Moye	Statistical Monitoring of Clinical Trials – Fundamentals for Investigators	Springer (2006) 0-387027781-1	Oke Gerke, Denmark
9. David L. DeMets, Curt D. Furberg and Lawrence M. Friedman (Editors)	Data Monitoring in Clinical Trials	Springer (2006) 9-780387-203300	Barbara Hawkins, USA
10. Daniel Zelterman	Discrete Distributions: Applications in the Health Sciences	Wiley (2004) 0-470-86888-0	Jeno Reiczigel, Hungary
11. Rasmus Nielsen (Ed.)	Statistical Methods in Molecular Evolution	Springer (2005) 0-387-22333-9	Hamid Pezeshk, Iran
12. Daniel Zelterman	Models for Discrete Data (Revised Edition)	Oxford (2006) 9-780198-567011	Patrick Musonda, UK
13. Robert Gentleman, Vincent J. Carey, Wolfgang Huber, Rafael A. Irizarry and Sandrine Dudoit (Eds.)	Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Solutions Using R and Bioconductor	Springer (2005) 0-387-25146-4	Victor Moreno, Spain
Books reviews to appear in the next issue due to lack of space:			
Author(s)	Title	Publisher (year) ISBN	Reviewer
1. Feifang Hu and William F. Rosenberger	The Theory of Response-Adaptive Randomization in Clinical Trials	Wiley (2006) 0-471-65396-9	Andreas Ziegler, Germany
1. Murray Aitkin, Brian Francis and John Hinde	Statistical Modelling in GLIM 4	Oxford (2005) 0-19-852413-7	Herwig Friedl, Austria

Important note to potential reviewers:

We regularly receive books from publishers for review in the Newsletter. We are most grateful for these “donations”, the reviews of which we regard as a service to you, our members. **Regretfully, some individuals, despite repeated reminders, neither return a review, nor the book to ISCB... When requesting a book, please remember that you're making a commitment to the Society to do a little work in return for keeping the book.**

Please do a little work in return for keeping the book and your name will be published in the News!

For the format and length, please see recent issues of ISCB News. You can send the review in a variety of formats but plain text email, html, RTF or Word are preferred. The reviews may be edited for clarity (English grammar and spelling, punctuation etc.).

**Books for Review (continued)**

Books recently sent for review:

Author(s)	Title	Publisher (year) ISBN	Reviewer
1. D. C. Hoaglin, F. Mosteller and J. W. Tukey	Exploring Data Tables, Trends, and Shapes	Wiley (2006, 1985) 0-470-04005-x	Barbara S. Hawkins, USA
2. Jayanta K. Ghosh, Mohan Delampady and Tapas Samanta	An Introduction to Bayesian Analysis: Theory and Methods	Springer (2006) 978-0-387-40084-6	Marek Brabec, Czech Republic
3. Andreas Ziegler and Inke R. Konig	A Statistical Approach to Genetic Epidemiology	Wiley (2006) 3-527-31252-8	Victor Moreno, Spain

Books sent for review quite a long time ago

Author(s)	Title	Publisher (year)	Reviewer
2. Naomi B. Robbins	Creating More Effective Graphs	Wiley (2005) 0-471-27402-X	Gaj Vidmar, Slovenia
3. R. A. Maronna, R. D. Martin and V. J. Yohai	Robust Statistics: Theory and Methods	Wiley (2006) 0-470-01092-4	S. N. Dwivedi, India
4. Tomasz Burzykowski, Geert Molenberghs and Marc Buyse (Editors)	The Evaluation of Surrogate Endpoints	Springer (2005) 0-387-20277-3	Tim Friede, UK
5. H. Brown and R. Prescott	Applied Mixed Models in Medicine (Second Edition)	Wiley (2006) 0-470-02356-2	Marie Reilly, Sweden
6. Frank R. Hampel, Elvezio M. Ronchetti, Peter J. Rousseeuw and Werner A. Stahel	Robust Statistics: The Approach Based on Influence Functions	Wiley (2005) 0-471-73577-9	Lars Krogsgaard Thomsen, Denmark
7. J. Edward Jackson	A User's Guide to Principle Components	Wiley (2003) 0-471-47134-8	Nicole Close, USA
8. J M Bernardo et al (eds.)	Bayesian Statistics 7	Oxford University Press (2003) 0-19-852615-6	Stefan Tigan, Romania
9. Jean Dickinson Gibbons and Subhabrata Chakraborti	Nonparametric Statistical Inference (Fourth Edition)	Chapman & Hall/CRC, (2003) 0-8247-4052-1	Elisabeth Svensson, Sweden
10. John Aitchison, Jim W. Kay and Ian J. Lauder	Statistical Concepts and Applications in Clinical Medicine	Chapman & Hall/CRC (2005) 1-58488-208-5	Denis Enachescu, Romania
11. John Verzani	Using R for Introductory Statistics	Chapman & Hall/CRC (2005) 1-58488-450-9	Justin Clayton, USA
12. Shein-Chung Chow, Jun Shao and Hansheng Wang	Sample Size Calculations in Clinical Research	CRC (2003) 0-8247-0970-5	Jorgen Selstrup, France
13. Marc Aerts, Helena Geys, Geert Molenberghs and Louise M. Ryan	Topics in Modelling of Clustered Data	Chapman & Hall/CRC (2002) 1-58488-185-2	S.H. Heisterkamp, Netherlands

**Book publishers' webpages:**

Hodder Arnold	<a href="http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Category/8717/Statistics.htm">http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Category/8717/Statistics.htm</a>
Blackwell	<a href="http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/subjects/PB/">http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/subjects/PB/</a>
Cambridge University Press	<a href="http://www.cambridge.org/uk/browse/default.asp?subjectid=1007745">http://www.cambridge.org/uk/browse/default.asp?subjectid=1007745</a>
Chapman & Hall, CRC	<a href="http://www.crcpress.com/shopping_cart/categories/categories_products.asp?parent_id=104">http://www.crcpress.com/shopping_cart/categories/categories_products.asp?parent_id=104</a>
Marcel Dekker (Taylor and Francis)	<a href="http://www.dekker.com/sdek/browse-thing=content-by=treesubject~stem=0~append=713326283~selected=713326283">http://www.dekker.com/sdek/browse-thing=content-by=treesubject~stem=0~append=713326283~selected=713326283</a>
Oxford University Press	<a href="http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/science/maths/">http://www.oup.co.uk/academic/science/maths/</a>
Springer	<a href="http://www.springer.com/east/home/statistics?SGWID=5-10128-0-0-0">http://www.springer.com/east/home/statistics?SGWID=5-10128-0-0-0</a>
John Wiley & Sons	<a href="http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-300665.html">http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-300665.html</a>

## Book Review by Julia Singer (Austria)

Forrest W. Young, Pedro M. Valero-Mora and Michael Friendly

Visual Statistics

Wiley (2006) 0-471-68160-1

According to the authors, the last quarter of the twentieth century was the maturation period of statistical graphics. The theoretical frameworks for statistical graphics were developed, while graphical hardware and software tools were created, enabling dynamic interaction with the user. The parallel development of the theory and its applications resulted in a powerful synergism which finally gave birth to complex systems, like complete virtual reality environments for data analysis.

This book does not require a strong statistical background, but it requires persistence if one wants to develop his own graphical tools based on the principles laid down here. (One of the reviewers compared this task to learning piano: a lot of exercises are needed by the practitioners, sometimes they seem to be frustrating or boring, but at the end it should be gratifying.) The book is exciting reading for those who are not satisfied with only computing statistics but want to feel it at the same time, to listen to the "soft voices of data", for those who enjoy comics, like to play and want to have a deeper insight, an intimate relationship with their data. And which are the conditions to obtain a valid dynamic interactive statistical graphic? As the authors say, one must always be aware of the "Four Respects":

**Respect people.** [...] Such a system must insure that the dynamic and interactive aspects are within the perceptual and cognitive capabilities of the ordinary user.

**Respect data.** A dynamic interactive statistical graphic must respect the nature of the data.

**Respect mathematics.** A dynamic interactive statistical graphic must respect the mathematics of the statistical situation. [...] Generally, this means

translating the algebra of mathematical statistics into the geometry of statistical visualization.

**Respect computers.** A dynamic interactive statistical graphic must also respect the computer's capabilities." And the authors respect readers as well, as it turns out from their work. The book reads well, it has an interesting historical introduction, many examples (and figures, of course). However, we don't get a "User Guide" on how to create graphs with different graphical software - that is not the authors' intention. I didn't find anything about graphs specific to meta-analysis (Galbraith plots, forest plots, funnel plots etc.) and I couldn't find out the reason of their absence.

When one has an easy graphical tool the temptation of creating too many figures is strong. How to prevent getting lost in this sea of plots? The authors have an original solution, the spreadplots. They are plots which not only interact with the user, but also with each other. They all provide different views of the same statistical object, and changes made to one of them affect all the plots simultaneously.

The book ends with a very practical chapter on missing values and tools to visualize them.

Finally, let's make a quiz from the plenty of new terms (you can learn more if you read the book):

- What is a wiggle-worm plot? A QQplot (distribution comparison plot) generalized to more dimensions.
- What is a spinplot? A three-dimensional, three-variable scatterplot which can be rotated.
- What is an orbitplot? A spinplot that can spin in more than three dimensions simultaneously.

## Book Review by Friederike Barthel (UK)

Michael A. Proschan, Gordon K. K. Lan and Janet Turk Wittes

Statistical Monitoring of Clinical Trials

Springer (2006)  
978-0-387-30059-7

The past few decades have seen an explosion in the literature surrounding interim analyses and different approaches to trial monitoring. This leaves trialists with the increasingly challenging task of comparing a vast array of methods to decide which one is best for their particular trial. In this book, the authors demonstrate that most of the methods can be formulated in a unifying framework – Brownian motion. In doing so, they provide a clear overview of interim monitoring methods available, highlighting pitfalls along the way.

Due to the authors' substantial experience in this field, they are able to provide a great deal of insight into the practical implications of these types of designs. The book itself starts off by introducing three trials: the Cardiac Arrhythmia Suppression Trial (CAST), the Multicenter Unsustained Tachycardia Trial (MUSTT) and the estrogen / progesterone replacement therapy trial (PERT). These are a good introduction for readers new to the subject.

In Chapter 2, the general framework – Brownian motion - is described. The following chapters build on this unifying framework and include detailed discussions on conditional and predictive power, spending functions, group sequential trials, Bayesian monitoring and adaptive sample size methods. All methods described are easy to follow and mathematical appendices are provided whenever required. Furthermore, the authors have provided annotated excerpts from R programs at several points throughout the book as well as Appendix II on group-sequential software.

Apart from the mathematical underpinnings of the methods themselves, the authors also discuss these trial designs in practice. Chapters on practical survival monitoring and monitoring for safety provide guidelines and considerations. The different issues between monitoring for efficacy and safety are discussed.

In conclusion, this text provides a good guideline on the different uses and designs of trial monitoring for the novice and experienced user alike.

## **ISCB29: Copenhagen, Denmark: Invitation**

From Philip Hougaard, SPC Chair

At this time of the year, when the days get shorter (in the northern hemisphere) and Christmas is approaching, it is also time to plan for the conferences in the year to come. ISCB invites you to participate in the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, which will take place from 17-21 August, in Copenhagen, Denmark. With this newsletter, there is a leaflet with further details, but you can also look at the homepage [www.iscb2008.info](http://www.iscb2008.info), where you can register online and submit an abstract.

The scientific programme is set up to be interesting both for people from universities, public institutions and the pharmaceutical industry, and covers biostatistics, epidemiology and related topics. Our president, Emmanuel Lesaffre, has invited Niels Keiding to give the keynote presentation "Sampling patterns in event history analysis with applications to epidemiology".

The SPC has added pre-conference courses as well as invited sessions and expects you to complete the programme with contributed papers. To give some details, we have:

- 5 invited sessions, covering aspects of data monitoring during trials, adaptive trials, causal models, non-randomized trials, genetics, and biomarkers.
- 1 special invited session, presenting non-technical aspects of how and where we work.
- a large number of contributed sessions, both oral and poster sessions. The precise number and content will be up to you.
- 4 pre-conference courses, covering adaptive designs, discrete longitudinal data, Bayesian methods and non-inferiority trials.
- 2 mini-symposia.

In particular, for the mini-symposia, the tradition has been to select a single topic, treated in detail on the last day. This year, we have tried a new layout for this, by having two

parallel mini-symposia and by choosing topics of a more general nature. Therefore, we believe that most of you should find at least one of these mini-symposia attractive. Still, you will have a plenary feeling in these symposia, because they actually take place at two different venues. One mini-symposium is on survival data covering recurrent events, first hitting times and register-based studies. The topic of register-based studies is inspired by the many Scandinavian registers available for research purposes. The other mini-symposium is on the design of phase I and II studies, a topic, which on the one hand is important, but on the other hand is less well treated in the literature compared to the design of phase III studies.

As in previous years, there will be conference awards for postgraduate students (contact KyungMann Kim) and scientists (contact Julia Singer). The latter is to enable scientists from the so-called ISCB target countries to participate.

The conference logo is a bridge. This symbolizes not only that the conference serves as a bridge connecting biostatisticians from around the world, but also the newly built bridge between Denmark and Sweden. This bridge means that Copenhagen and Southern Sweden is beginning to function as one area, called Medicin Valley to emphasize its large concentration of pharmaceutical and biotech companies, many of which employ biostatisticians. Furthermore, over the last few years many Swedish biostatisticians have started to commute over the bridge to work in Copenhagen.

Getting to the conference is possible in many ways; you can go underground (in the metro), on the ground (by bus) or across the water (by the water bus).

Besides, we have arranged for an exciting social programme. There will be a welcoming reception at the town hall, excursions during Tuesday afternoon, and a conference dinner, which will take place in the famous Tivoli gardens.

We look forward to seeing you in Copenhagen and hope that you will enjoy your stay.



## ***ISCB28 Alexandroupolis 2007: Review***

From Giota Touloumi (LOC Chair) and Mike Kenward (SPC chair)

Thank you for attending ISCB28 in Greece and for helping to make the conference such a success. We very much hope that you enjoyed the scientific and social programme, as well as the location. As in previous years, there will be a special issue of Statistics in Medicine devoted to papers from the ISCB28 meeting, and we expect this to appear in 2008. Fifty-five papers have been submitted and these are now going out for review. We do hope that, if asked to help in the refereeing process, you are willing to make this important contribution to the special issue. Finally, we hope to see you all again next year in Copenhagen.

From David W Warne

If you regularly attend ISCB conferences, you're sure to see many interesting places, and for me this was my first trip to Greece, one of the most historically important countries in Europe. So it was good that we had a chance to visit some of the local sites during and after the conference. They weren't the ones at the top of the tourists' to do list, as our guide reminded us, but nevertheless they were worth the long journey and the exceptionally high temperatures. Some conference delegates had arrived by car a few days earlier and had witnessed temperatures of almost 43° - for me it was "only" 37° on arrival. Anyway, we survived the fires which weren't so far away, and enjoyed a top class conference in a relaxing location.

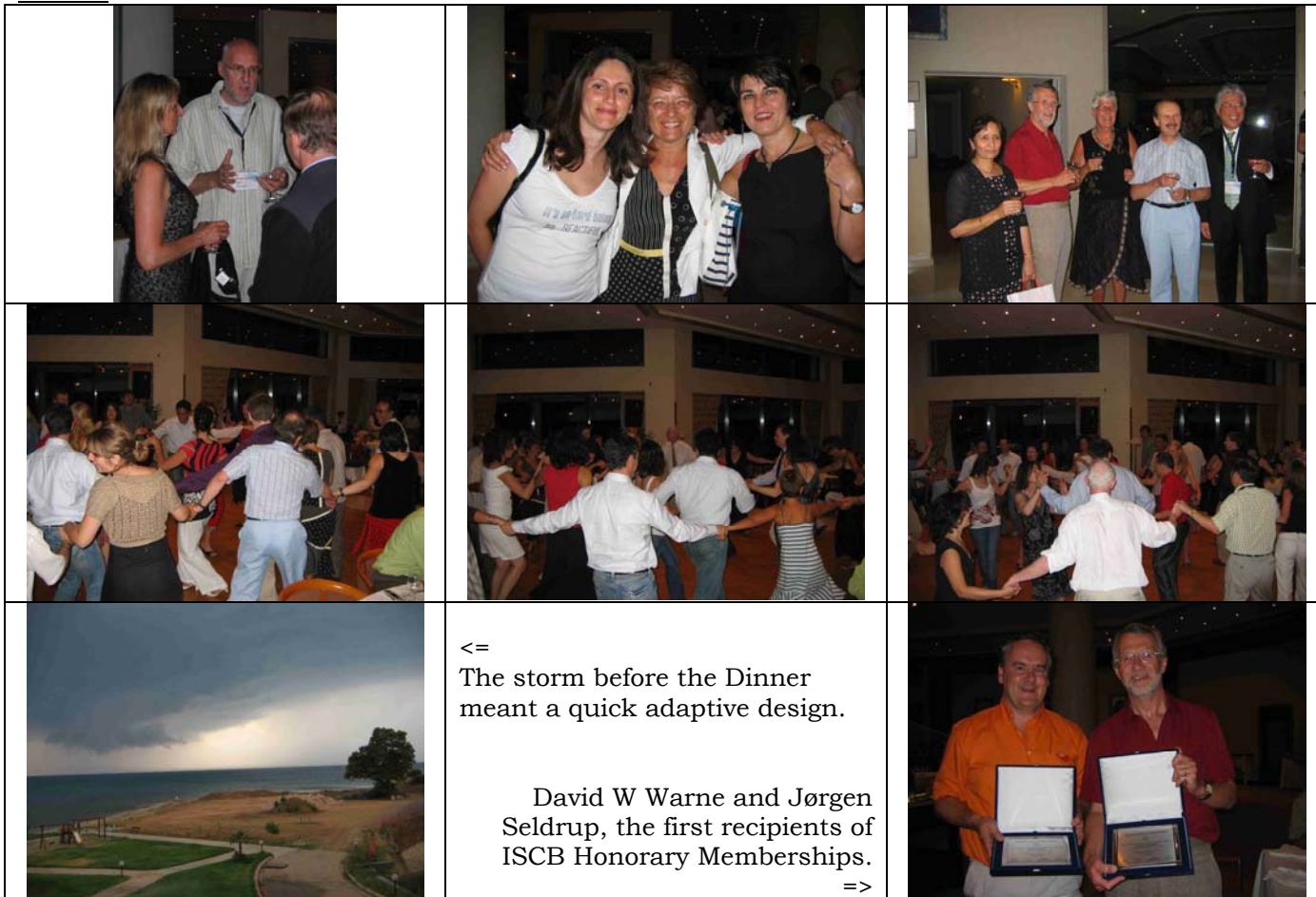
### **Conference Site, Poster and Reception**



### **Ancient Mesembria and Maroneia**



**Dinner**



<=  
The storm before the Dinner  
meant a quick adaptive design.

David W Warne and Jørgen  
Seldrup, the first recipients of  
ISCB Honorary Memberships.

=>

**Alexandroupolis and Samothraki Island**



## **ISCB30: Prague, Czech Republic: Update**

From Zdenek Valenta

In close cooperation with the conference organising agency, Guarant International, the Czech National Group of the ISCB identified a more suitable location for the 2009 event, the new premises of the University of Economics in Prague. The UE is conveniently located close to the historic city centre with easy access to any Prague destination using public transportation, options including tram, bus and metro lines.

The details related to the preparations of the proposed 2009 event in Prague were presented at this year's 28th annual

ISCB conference in Alexandroupolis, Greece, where the Group obtained final approval of the Society to organise the Conference during the last week of August (23-27) 2009.

Latest developments: The Local Organising Committee of the ISCB30 is happy to announce that Geert Molenberghs, director of the Centre for Statistics at Hasselt University in Belgium, accepted our warm invitation and was appointed a chair of the Scientific Programme Committee for the Prague 2009 event.



## **National Group Report: Czech Republic**

From Zdenek Valenta

On 11 September 2006, the endeavour of a relatively small group of Czech biostatisticians was crowned with final success as all legal hurdles were ultimately overcome and the Group was officially established and legally recognised as a non-profit organisation in the Czech Republic. To date, the Group boasts a membership of 41 people, composed mostly of Czech statisticians professionally involved in scientific research in the areas of biomedicine and natural sciences.

This year has seen two lectures organised by the Czech NG. In April 2007, Michal Kulich from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, presented his invited talk entitled "*Project ACCEPT, a randomised study of HIV prevention in developing countries: Design, implementation and statistical implications*". Project ACCEPT is comparing two interventions designed to counter a growing HIV incidence, primarily in African countries. The countries involved in this project include Thailand, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and South Africa, where the project is run at two separate locations. The talk was recorded on video and made available together with the slides of the talk itself to all the members of the Group over the Internet.

On 29 October 2007, members of the NG welcomed Stanislav Katina from the Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia and University of Vienna, Austria. He presented his talk entitled

*"Geometrical aspects of statistical shape analysis and their interpretations with applications in biology"*, which featured novel statistical technologies related to analysis of shape. His talk was also video-recorded and all the materials including the talk slides were made available to NG members for further reference.

Our other main activities were primarily related to the bid of our Group to organise the Society's 30<sup>th</sup> annual conference in 2009 in Prague, Czech Republic. The Group was closely cooperating with the proposed conference organising agency, Guarant International, and identified a more suitable location for the event from the financial perspective, the new premises of the University of Economics in Prague. All the details related to the preparations of the proposed 2009 event in Prague were presented at this year's 28<sup>th</sup> annual ISCB conference in Alexandroupolis, Greece, where the Group obtained final approval of the Society to organise the conference in 2009. The Conference will take place from 23-27 August 2009. Latest developments: Local Organising Committee of the ISCB30 is happy to announce that Geert Molenberghs, director of the Centre for Statistics at Hasselt University in Belgium, was kind enough to receive our warm invitation and was appointed a chair of the Scientific Programme Committee for the Prague 2009 event.

## ***National Group Report: Poland***

From Ewa Kawalec

The Polish National Group of ISCB now consists of 54 members (49 in 2006). In 2007 two members of our Group participated in the ISCB Meeting in Alexandroupolis, one of whom was supported by the Society. Since our members come from over ten, wide-spread cities of Poland, we are able to gather only twice a year (in June and December). On average, 30% are present at the meetings. During the meetings in Cracow on 15 December 2006 and 15 June 2007, the mini-symposium took place. Recent applications in different areas were presented by our members and were followed by a very interesting and emotional discussion:

- Maciej Gorkiewicz: 'How to teach: histograms, confidence intervals and Student's t, with demonstration of software',
- Witold Kupsc: 'Translation of biostatistical terms into Polish',
- Bogdan Jasinski: 'Predictive power of the traits: 'Cardiological care' and 'nutrition' for CHD mortality in Poland in the years 1998-2004'.

- Ilona Kowalik: 'Implication of multivariable analysis on the strategy used for non-invasive detection of coronary artery disease',
- Agnieszka Dorynska: 'Association between incidence of diseases related to hypertension in pregnant women and socioeconomic status, level of health expenses and accessibility to health care system. Ecological study'.

During the General Meeting of the Polish National Group of ISCB which took place in Cracow in June 2007, Ewa Kawalec was re-elected as representative, and Piotr Jurkowski and Walerian Piotrowski were elected as deputy representatives.

The next scientific meeting is scheduled for December 2007. Besides six lectures, which will be given by our members on different topics, the new homepage of our Group will be presented (in Polish).

## ***National Group Report: Hungary***

From Jenő Reiczigel

The Hungarian National group has 45 members, which is a slight decline compared to last year (hopefully just random fluctuation).

This year, our most important project was the organisation of an ISCB-supported course. The lecturer was Stephen Senn and the topic was meta-analysis. The two-day course took place in Budapest in May with 32 participants. Eight people came from abroad, from Romania, the Czech Republic, Kuwait and Austria (these latter participants didn't partake in the reduced fee, of course). According to the evaluation questionnaires filled in by the participants, the course was a great success. Thanks to Stephen for giving such a wonderful course and thanks to ISCB for the support!

Beyond this, in January the National Group organised a one-day R course focusing on linear and nonlinear mixed models, and our members gave several short lectures about their favourite topics at the monthly meetings. It is also a tradition

that members attending the annual ISCB conference report about the most interesting presentations of the conference. This year, two of us took part in the conference in Alexandroupolis.

We have launched again a working group on Hungarian translation and explanation of new statistical terms, e.g. names of new methods. Some years ago we had a similar project, which resulted in a Hungarian dictionary (with English-Hungarian translations and explanations) of statistical terms.

Our recently renewed home page ([www.biostat.hu](http://www.biostat.hu)) introduces the Society to the Hungarian colleagues, and contains some scientific stuff related to our regular meetings (e.g. papers by our members).

Our general meeting is scheduled for 23 November 2007. Elections are going to take place in 2008.

## ***Meeting Announcement***



## **UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO**

16-18 April 2008 – Milan, Italy  
Methodological Issues in Oral Health Research:  
Clinical Trials and Evidence Based Dentistry

As in the previous two successful meetings (Leuven, 2004 & Ghent, 2006 both in Belgium) the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Meeting aims to bring together oral health researchers and statisticians interested in the analysis of dental data. The ultimate goal is to stimulate collaboration between the two groups eventually leading to the improvement of the methodological quality of oral health papers and the stimulation of new statistical research useful for the analysis of dental data.

The topic of this year is Clinical Trials and Evidence Based Dentistry and the aim is to give an overview of methods to improve the design & analysis of clinical trials in dentistry and to relate this to Evidence Based Dentistry. A state of the art will be given on: design issues in oral health studies and on methods that assess, improve and take the quality of oral health studies into account both from a dental as well as a statistical perspective. The invited speakers are: John Stamm (North Carolina, US), Stuart Gansky (San Francisco, US), Tim De Rouen (Seattle, US), Ian Needleman (London, UK) and Vibeke

Baelem (Aarhus, Denmark). They will give a presentation suitable and attractive for oral health researchers as well as for statisticians. There will be ample time for oral health researchers and statisticians to confront their views and to meet informally.

Participants are invited to present their work either as an oral presentation or as a poster. Abstracts should be submitted via e-mail before 15 January 2008 to [dental.meeting@unimi.it](mailto:dental.meeting@unimi.it) following the guidelines available on the Website: [www.orkata.it](http://www.orkata.it) The organisers will notify acceptance or rejection of papers before 29 February 2008.

The venue of meeting will be the University of Milan Historical Building, located in the centre of Milan, within walking distance from hotels and restaurants. Hotel accommodation can be found at: [www.orkata.it](http://www.orkata.it)

Registration to the meeting will be possible via web and details on the process can be found at [www.orkata.it](http://www.orkata.it)

## National Group Report: Romania

From Cornelia Enachescu

Last year the Romanian National Group of the ISCB, RNG, had about 30 members from the universities of Bucharest, Sibiu, Timisoara, Cluj and Iasi.

In April 2007, the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Romanian Society for Probabilities and Mathematical Statistics, SPSR, took place in Bucharest. Biostatistics was one of the sections of this conference. Twelve members of our group attended this meeting and gave oral presentations.

Three members participated in the ISCB Annual Conference in Alexandroupolis and two received Conference Awards for Scientists.

This year, in November, MEDINF'2007, the Annual Conference of the Romanian Medical Informatics Society, took place in Sibiu, and had a special section of Biostatistics and Clinical Epidemiology. This section was organised in collaboration with the RNG. Also, our group organised two tutorials: "Design and Analysis of Bioavailability and Bioequivalence Studies", leader Denis Enachescu (Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Bucharest) and "Missing data in clinical

trials: a practical guide", leader James Carpenter (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, University of London, UK). Eighteen participants at MEDINF'2007 attended these tutorials, fifteen of them affiliated to the RNG and three to the Hungarian National Group of ISCB, HNG.

Our group invited Leon Bobrowski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Biocybernetics and Biomedical Engineering, Dean of the Faculty of Computer Science - Bialystok Technical University, Poland, Deputy Representative of the Poland Group of ISCB) as keynote speaker beside Jan van Bemmelen (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands), Francesco Sicurello (AITIM, Italy) and Rolf Engelbrecht (EFMI, Germany).

Sixteen members of RNG and two from the HNG gave oral presentations in Biostatistics and Clinical Epidemiology Section and presented posters.

In the future, we plan to continue our activities; we plan to organize an ISCB course in Romania to which we expect people from the neighbouring countries. We plan to participate in the ISCB annual conferences, partly by applying for scientist awards.

## Book Review by Tiberiu Postelnicu (Romania)

G. A. Young and R. L. Smith

Essentials of Statistical Inference

Cambridge (2005) 780521839716

This book, published in the Cambridge Series in Statistical and Probabilistic Mathematics, is a modern and accessible treatment of the procedures used to draw formal inferences from data. Aimed at advanced undergraduate and graduate students in mathematics and related disciplines, as well as those in other fields seeking a concise treatment of the key ideas of statistical inference, it presents the concepts and results underlying the Bayesian, frequentist, and Fisherian approaches, with particular emphasis on the contrasts between them. Contemporary computational ideas, as well as basic mathematical theory, are explained.

Written in a lucid and informal style, this concise text provides basic material on the main approaches to inference, as well as more advanced material on modern developments in statistical theory, including: contemporary material on Bayesian computation, such as MCMC; higher-order likelihood theory; predictive inference; bootstrap methods and conditional inference.

The Contents is the following: 1. Introduction; 2. Decision theory; 3. Bayesian methods; 4. Hypothesis testing; 5. Special methods; 6. Sufficiency and completeness; 7. Two-sided tests and conditional inference; 8. Likelihood theory; 9. Higher-order theory; 10. Predictive inference; 11. Bootstrap methods.

The book contains numerous extended examples of the application of formal inference techniques to real data, as well as historical commentary on the development of the

subject. Throughout, the text concentrates on concepts, rather than on mathematical detail, while maintaining appropriate levels of formality. Each chapter ends with a set of accessible problems. Prerequisites for the book are calculus, linear algebra and some knowledge of basic probability. Some previous familiarity with the objectives of and main approaches to statistical inference is helpful, but not essential. Key mathematical and probabilistic ideas are reviewed in the text where appropriate.

The book arose from material used in teaching of statistical inference to students, both undergraduate and graduate, at the University of Cambridge. The bootstrap approach to inference, presented in the last chapter, has been made possible by recent availability of cheap computing power, and offers the prospect of techniques of statistical inference which avoid the need for awkward mathematical analysis, but retain the key operational properties of methods of inference studied elsewhere in the book, in particular in relation to the repeated sampling principle. May I mention that, since its introduction by Efron in 1979, the bootstrap has become a method of choice for empirical assessment of errors and related quantities in a vast range of problems of statistical estimation. It offers highly accurate inference in many settings. Together with Markov Chain Monte Carlo methods, which are now routinely applied in Bayesian analysis of complex statistical models, bootstrap methods stand among the most significant methodological developments in statistics of the late twentieth century.

## **ISCB Education SC: Webpage**

From Rumana Omar

The Education Subcommittee had decided to have a section on the ISCB website devoted to educational material, e.g. a list of past courses, career of a biostatistician, some lecture notes and links.

Here is the first part, a document on the career of a biostatistician.

### Working as a Biostatistician or Medical Statistician

Biostatistics or Medical Statistics is a challenging profession that helps in the improvement of the overall health and safety of people. Biostatisticians apply quantitative thinking to medical research and may develop new statistical methods in situations where the existing methodology is not sufficient. The field of Biostatistics/Medical Statistics offers a wide variety of jobs for statisticians with applications in laboratory statistics, genetics, clinical trials, epidemiology, public health and health services research. There are job opportunities within the academia, pharmaceutical industry, health regulatory departments, hospitals, and contract research organizations. More information can be found at the following links

The Royal Statistical Society

A career as a ... [Biometrician](#)

A career as a ... [Health service statistician](#)

A career as a ... [Medical statistician](#)

A career as a ... [Pharmaceutical statistician](#)

[Société Française de Statistique](#) (in French)

[International Statistics Institute](#) (under construction)

[American Statistical Society](#)

[Careers in Statistics: Health & Medicine](#)

[Animal Health](#)

[Biostatistics](#)

[Clinical Trials](#)

[Epidemiology](#)

[Genetics](#)

[Pharmacology](#)

[Public Health](#)

[Biostat.org](#)

The International Biometric Society

<http://www.tibs.org/>.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Medizinische Informatik, Biometrie und Epidemiologie

[Biometry](#) (in German)

[Informatics for Medicine](#) (in German)

[Epidemiology](#) (in German)

[Società Italiana di Statistica](#)

[Corso di laurea specialistica in Biostatistica e statistica sperimentale](#) (Università degli Studi di MILANO-BICOCCA)

[Corso di Laurea Specialistica in "Statistica per la biomedicina, l'ambiente e la tecnologia"](#) (Università degli Studi di ROMA "Sapienza")

## **ISCB Statistics in Regulatory Affairs SC: Comments**

From Jorgen Selstrup and Christoph Gerlinger

The EMEA has published the final version of the "Reflection Paper On Methodological Issues In Confirmatory Clinical Trials Planned With An Adaptive Design" (see

<http://www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/human/ewp/245902enadopted.pdf>).

The sub-committee on Statistics in Regulatory Affairs had previously submitted comments on the draft version which had a slightly different title (see

[http://www.iscb.info/iscbdocs/adaptive\\_design\\_draft\\_ISCB\\_comments.ZIP](http://www.iscb.info/iscbdocs/adaptive_design_draft_ISCB_comments.ZIP)).

The majority of our comments have been taken into consideration by the CHMP.

## ***Book Review by Andy Vail (UK)***

Janet Peacock and Sally Kerry

Presenting Medical Statistics from Proposal to Publication

Oxford (2006) 0-19-859966-8

Remarkably for any statistics text, numerous clinical researchers have shown an interest in this book whilst it has been on my desk for review. The title clearly meets a perceived need amongst its target readership.

The broad structure of the book is in two parts. The opening chapters cover general issues of the research process: writing statistical aspects of protocols; structuring a report; and presenting data summaries graphically and numerically. Chapters 6 to 12 cover specific examples, including single and two-group studies, matched data, linear and logistic regression and survival analyses. The final chapter covers randomised trials largely through description, explanation and examples of CONSORT guidelines. The chapters total 165 pages, with the majority given to the second part.

Throughout the chapters, my guess would be that the main flow of text constitutes a minority of the space. Extensive use is made of inserted boxes containing examples, tips and additional information on specific aspects. Figures are also used generously, in particular to give examples of how the output of an analysis looks in both SPSS (version 12) and STATA (version 8) in order to show where to identify the key information. As is the danger with any text describing software, both are already superseded versions, but these are standard analyses for which the outputs are likely to change little.

The structure of the book must have required substantial consideration. The main aim is clearly to describe how to present statistical information, but it would be difficult to do

this without mention of which statistical methods would be suitable when. Sometimes for me the balance is lost, particularly in the opening chapters. These contain many gems of practical advice for subjects as diverse as choosing a funding source and writing information sheets for ethics committees, but it is not clear that readers would be looking for this information under the given title.

The book is strongest in chapters 5 to 12 when covering generic and then specific issues in presenting data. Chapter 5 in particular covers many of the heart-sink issues, such as spurious precision and ambiguous notation, familiar to anyone working in consultancy or refereeing clinical articles.

Although it would be impossible to cover all 'standard' techniques, there are some surprising omissions. For example, the section discussing sensitivity and specificity does not also cover ROC curves, and there is no mention of meta-analysis. Following chapters 6 to 11 on presentation of specific analyses, chapter 12 describes how to apply the preceding information in randomised trials, over and above the chapter on 'comparing two groups'. Similar chapters to show application in other common study designs would be a welcome addition.

The main strength of the book will be for clinical researchers who know what statistical methods to apply (as after consultation) but are unsure how to present them. I have no hesitation in recommending the book for this purpose.

## ***Book Review by Victor Moreno (Spain)***

Robert Gentleman, Vincent J. Carey, Wolfgang Huber, Rafael A. Irizarry and Sandrine Dudoit (Eds.)

Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Solutions Using R and Bioconductor

Springer (2005)  
0-387-25146-4

This is an edited monograph on bioinformatics and statistical methods for genomic and proteomic data that will be very useful for anyone starting in this field. The editors and authors of the chapters are experts in the field and developers of R packages, most of them in the Bioconductor project ([www.bioconductor.org](http://www.bioconductor.org)). The intended audience is the statistician or data analyst with knowledge in R who needs to start analyzing genomic data. The emphasis is how to do it more than the theoretical details.

The topics are a careful selection of established methods in this vast field. Most of the examples are based on microarray expression data, but the authors mention additional genomic or proteomic data that can be analyzed in a similar way. The book is organized into five sections: processing data, annotation, statistical analysis, graphs and networks and case studies. The first section starts with an overview of genomic data structures and Bioconductor. Following chapters detail specific data management and quality control strategies for microarray data with emphasis on Affymetrix and two-colour arrays. Cell-based assays and proteomic data based on SELDI-TOF mass spectrometry are also considered in detail. The real challenge of genomic data is to summarize in a human readable way the information. The second section shows how to use Bioconductor annotation and visualization tools to prepare lists of genes with annotations and links to external databases like PubMed for references or KEGG for pathways.

The analysis section is focused on microarray data, but can be easily adapted to mass-spectrometry, array comparative genomic hybridization (aCGH) or chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP). The methods first proposed are unsupervised technologies – clustering – followed by the supervised analysis of differential gene expression based on linear models as implemented in the *limma* package. These chapters provide introductions to the techniques and the last section of the book (case studies) has two additional chapters with examples analyzed in detail.

The analysis section also includes a chapter on multiple testing procedures which is a summary version of the excellent technical reports on this issue by K.S. Pollard, S. Dudoit and M.J. van der Laan. The section ends with two chapters more focused to machine learning methods for classification, with emphasis on ensemble methods like bagging, random forests and boosting applied to survival data for the analysis of prognostic factors.

I have found most interesting section IV that introduces novel exploratory techniques of complex datasets using graphs and networks. One chapter has interesting case studies exploring relationships between gene expression and protein complex co-membership, Gene Ontology (GO) relationships, co-citations and pathways.

The editors have succeeded in the selection of consolidated techniques for this monograph. This topic is very dynamic and every day new methods are proposed. The information in this book will be still useful as starting point. The use of evolving computing packages has the potential limitation of becoming obsolete in a short period of time, but the Bioconductor repository is well maintained and will provide an additional source of information for those in need of the last version of the packages.

Statistical monitoring of a clinical trial enables early stopping of a trial due to (i) an early positive benefit, (ii) an early indication of harm, or (iii) a neutral effect which probably indicates an insufficient treatment effect at the end of the study. The monitoring of a clinical trial is performed by a Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) which comprises a relatively small number of external experts (clinical researchers, epidemiologists, statisticians, and sometimes an ethicist) being independent of the study sponsor and the investigators' affiliations. In the past, DMCs have been called Data and Safety Monitoring Boards (DSMB) which is sometimes still used if the primary focus is safety (see (iii)). The central charge of the DMC is to review all of the data at predefined time points and to recommend either early stopping due to (i), (ii), (iii) or to continue the study as planned by the study protocol. Moreover, the responsibilities of a DMC have been enlarged in common practice, meaning that DMCs might review the progress of patient recruitment, the occurrence of protocol deviations, and the compliance of statistical assumptions for the sample size rationale as well.

Statistical methods used for the monitoring procedures go back to 1947 [1] but were enriched in the late 70s and early 80s to an extent which is still the core of up-to-date use ([2], [3], [4], [5]). The book under review is clearly not about the operation of DMCs for which [6] should be consulted, and regulatory guidance is available [7], [8]. An interesting discussion on the independence of the statistician can be found in a dedicated issue of *Statistics in Medicine* [9].

"Statistical Monitoring of Clinical Trials – Fundamentals for Investigators" motivates and provides the statistical tools needed for the monitoring of clinical trials. Its main audience consists of clinical investigators and medical students who usually lack a broad mathematical education but who are engaged to equip themselves with a basic understanding of the principles up to the knowledge of how to conduct the statistical analysis in detail. Some sections of chapters 5-7 include a star in their titles indicating that the respective material is more challenging for readers with a weak background in probability. Readers with a low level of mathematical background are recommended to read through chapters 1 to 7 (excluding sections with a '\*' in the title and appendices), whereas higher level educated readers go from chapter 1 to chapters 4-8 consulting the appendices as needed.

The structure of the book is as follows:

Chapter 1 ('Here, there be dragons'): history of clinical investigations and trials before and after 1940; motivation of control groups, randomization, blinding in clinical trials; emerging need for DMCs; Brownian motion

Chapter 2 ('The basis of statistical reasoning in medicine'): three principles of sample-based research; random sampling; limitations of a representative sample of the study population; statistical inference (hypothesis testing, p-values, confidence intervals, Frequentist versus Bayesian approach)

Chapter 3 ('Probability tools for monitoring rules'): probability of events; transition from countable to uncountably many events; standard normal distribution; motivation of the path of a test statistic over time (i.e. in dependence of the currently evaluated number of patients)

Chapter 4 ('Issues and intuitions in path analysis'): statistical issues with repeated testing (multiplicity), large variances in small samples, dependence of interim and final results; example of the path of a test statistic; parallels to Brownian motion; transformation of terms of the test statistic to equivalent terms of Brownian motion; application of Brownian motion properties

Chapter 5 ('Group sequential analysis procedures'): accumulation of information provided by groups of patients (e.g. patients 1 to 10, 1 to 20,...); looking backward approach (basically used in the past) versus looking forward approaches (used at present and detailed in Chapter 6); using Brownian motion to monitor efficacy; information time (e.g. ratio of currently occurred events and total number of expected events as used in the sample size rationale); alpha spending functions

Chapter 6 ('Looking forward: Conditional power'): looking forward approaches; stochastic curtailment, conditional power; stopping for early efficacy

Chapter 7 ('Safety and futility'): monitoring safety; symmetric and asymmetric boundaries for critical region; adjustments for multiple endpoints; combined safety endpoints; interdependence of conditional power and boundaries for critical regions; 'associative' versus 'causal' adverse events regarding treatment; monitoring safety more ethics-driven than monitoring efficacy; stopping for futility (i.e. no sufficient treatment effect expected by the end of the study); fusion of boundaries for monitoring early efficacy, safety, and futility at the same time

Chapter 8 ('Bayesian statistical monitoring'): Bayesian versus frequentist thinking; pros and cons of both approaches; necessity of specifying an a priori distribution for the parameter of interest; possibility of combining several sources of a priori information to one a priori distribution; availability of good a priori information suggests Bayesian approach as a natural alternative; little or no a priori information leads to classical approaches

The book describes the various approaches in a very intuitive way and carries out detailed analyses as well. Primarily intended for clinical investigators and medical students, it is also highly recommendable to statisticians, from the pharmaceutical industry as well as from academia, who would like to get started with statistical monitoring of clinical trials.

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David L. DeMets, Curt D. Furberg and Lawrence M. Friedman  
(Editors)

Data Monitoring in Clinical  
Trials

Springer (2006) 9-780387-203300

The editors of this book have collected 29 case studies of challenging situations and decisions that have confronted data monitoring committees. Some of these case studies have been discussed in journal articles; others are published for the first time in this book. For anyone interested in the practice of data monitoring committees, this book should be of special interest. In addition to the three editors, 79 other individuals contributed to the case studies.

The book is divided into four sections and also includes two appendices and an index. "Section 1: Introduction/ Overview" contains two chapters authored by the editors — "Monitoring Committees: Why and How" and "Lessons Learned" — in which they provide an overview of their own collective experiences in data monitoring and direct the reader's attention to specific case studies that illustrate the issues they discuss. The third chapter in Section 1, "FDA and Clinical Trial Data Monitoring Committees" by Susan Ellenberg and Jay Siegel provides a history of the experience of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's interactions with such committees. These two authors refer to a few cases that are not discussed elsewhere in this book.

The cases studies are classified into those in which data monitoring committees were dealing with "General Benefit" (Section 2), "General Harm" (Section 3), and "Special Issues" (Section 4). The editors introduce each section with a discussion of several issues that have arisen under these headings and point to specific examples. Section 2 begins with two case studies of which versions were published earlier in Controlled Clinical Trials, i.e. those from the Diabetic Retinopathy Study (DRS) and from the Beta-Blocker Heart Attack Trial (BHAT). These two are followed by nine other case studies from clinical trials in cardiovascular disease, cancer, AIDS, and diabetes. Section 3 also begins with a case study discussed earlier in Controlled Clinical Trials, i.e. the Coronary Drug Project (CDP). The other eight case studies in the "General Harm" section are from experiences in clinical trials in a variety of medical and health conditions. Section 4 includes another nine case studies; a version of one of these, from the Nocturnal Oxygen Therapy Trial (NOTT), was published earlier in Controlled Clinical Trials. Although the majority of the other eight case studies are from clinical trials in cardiovascular disease and cancer, two are from experiences in trials of treatments for encephalitis.

For this reader, the most useful parts of each case study were the summary of lessons learned at the

end of each one and references to publications about individual clinical trials or data monitoring experiences of which I previously was unaware. Some, but not all, of the case studies acknowledged the members of the data monitoring committee from the specific clinical trials discussed, for example, "Case 7, Challenges in Monitoring the Breast Cancer Prevention Trial". Such a list at the end of each case study would be useful to an individual responsible for nominating prospective members of the data monitoring committee for a new clinical trial. Although Appendix 1 ("Data Monitoring Committee Members") is labelled as a master list of individuals who "have served on one or more monitoring committees", the specific clinical trials for which they served in this role is not indicated. Those listed presumably were affiliated with the clinical trials discussed in this book.

Although this reviewer found the book of great interest and read all of it during a few vacation days, there were annoying instances of poor copyediting or inadequate proofreading; for example:

- "review was of this study was" (page 112)
- "is seems as" (page 228)
- "should to be given" (page 264)
- "before to the start" (page 309)
- "the value of the value of" (page 337).

But the favourite among the 29 such errors noted was "adequately enough" (page 369). Although other readers may ignore such distractions more easily, one hopes that these problems will be corrected in future printings or any revision of the book.

In summary, the book belongs in the library of all clinical trialists interested in the art and science of data monitoring. In particular, the introductory remarks of the editors and the experiences described in the case studies remind the reader that unexpected events often challenge the members of data monitoring committees and that the expertise and judgement of those members are crucial to making good decisions. This book is a worthy companion to *Data Monitoring Committees in Clinical Trials. A Practical Perspective* by Ellenberg, Fleming, and DeMets which was published by John Wiley and Sons in 2002. Together the two books provide the basis for a course on data monitoring for the novice clinical trialist and substantial "continuing education" for the experienced clinical trialist.

***Book Review by Jenó Reiczigél (Hungary)***

Daniel Zelterman

Discrete Distributions: Applications in the Health Sciences

Wiley (2004) 0-470-86888-0

There is life beyond the well-known discrete distributions such as the hypergeometric, binomial, Poisson, and negative binomial distributions – this could be the message of the book. New discrete distributions are presented, which arise as sampling distributions under different sampling schemes and can be used to carry out exact statistical inference.

Presumably we will not use these distributions from tomorrow morning in our everyday work, but one can never know when a problem comes up in which they turn out to be useful.

The author is Professor of Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Public Health at the School of Public Health at Yale University. He is Associate Editor of several journals including *Biometrics*. His research interests cover statistical methodology developments for categorical and survival data, modeling of cancer mechanisms, cancer epidemiology and genetics.

There are several topics addressed in the book, which are just loosely connected. The distributions presented in the first three chapters can be regarded as generalizations of the negative binomial distribution. In the negative binomial distribution we sample with replacement until  $c$  successes. Two further sampling plans are possible, namely to sample (1) until either  $c$  successes or  $c$  failures, or (2) until  $c$  successes and  $c$  failures. The resulting distributions are called the minimum and the maximum negative binomial. If the above sampling schemes are applied to sampling without replacement from a finite population, we obtain the minimum and the maximum negative hypergeometric distributions. The book describes elementary properties and asymptotic approximations of these distributions, and also describes methods for estimation of parameters.

The next two chapters present some distributions that can be used to model variables in twin studies. The sampling scheme is to take always two items at a time. Based on this,

permutation tests are constructed and exact permutation distributions are determined. An application to illustrate the usefulness of these methods is also presented: it aims to investigate the genetic components influencing longevity of humans by comparing twins to independent pairs taken from the population, and also by comparing monozygotic twins to dizygotic twins. Data are taken from the Danish Twin Registry.

The third topic is modeling disease clustering in families. In such studies, several sampling schemes are applied in practice, some of which are known to be biased. In the last four chapters of the book, the author introduces exact distributions and exact tests based on these distributions in order to differentiate between randomness and clustering of occurrence of disease in families.

I enjoyed the novelty of the methods described in the book. It seems a bit to be a play, but it is the case with all good mathematics. The author also presents some real examples, which have motivated the development of these models and illustrate their use well.

The book also includes listings of computer programs for the proposed distributions, models, and statistical analyses, among others an R program to fit the maximum negative binomial distribution to data, SAS programs for the univariate and multivariate distributions and models for twin data, and FORTRAN programs for the exact test for clustering in family health data. A little disappointment: although the back cover promises that “software and data sets are made available on the Web”, I was not able to find them anywhere.

The potential readership includes graduate students of statistics or epidemiology, applied statisticians, as well as health professionals with solid background in probability theory.

***Book Review by Hamid Pezeshk (Iran)***

Rasmus Nielsen (Ed.)

Statistical Methods in Molecular Evolution

Springer (2005) 0-387-22333-9

This book is the outcome of a large amount of scholarly effort. It is a reference book for statistical methods in molecular evolution. A comprehensive review of many important statistical problems arising in the field is presented. Each chapter of the book has been written by the researchers who are active in the field of molecular evolution. The contributors cover a wide range of expertise. Statistical procedures based on stochastic modeling along with computational optimization are discussed assuming no advanced mathematical skills beyond basic calculus. Some knowledge of probability theory is needed. So this is a well written book for both the statisticians interested in genomics and bioinformatics and molecular evolutionary biologists interested in obtaining deeper insight of statistical analysis applied to the field.

There are 17 chapters in four parts. Part I contains four introductory chapters. The four chapters of part II are on the practical approaches for data analysis. The four chapters of part III form an important part of the book on models of molecular evolution and the five chapters of part IV are on inferences in molecular evolution. There are several references at the end of each chapter for readers interested in further reading.

Chapter 1 looks at Markov models in molecular evolution. Necessary mathematical background for DNA sequence evolution including continuous-time transition rates, stationary distribution, trees and likelihood are described. Frequently used Markov models of sequence evolution such as the Juke-Cantor model, amino acid model and nonhomogeneous model are briefly reviewed. Markov models for phylogenetic analysis with a stress on simulation of data for comparing tree-building methods and hypotheses testing are discussed. There are 46 references at the end of chapter 1.

Applications of the likelihood function (LF) in molecular evolution at an introductory level are presented in chapter 2. Maximum likelihood estimates (MLEs) and generalized likelihood ratio tests (GLRT) together with their properties are briefly explained. The focus is on reconstructing the phylogenetic history of evolution. Some of the applications of LF as in testing Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium, maximizing the likelihood for a given tree and computation of LF in phylogenetics are reviewed. There are 23 reference at the end of chapter 2.

Chapter 3 gives a good account of computational methods named Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) in the field of molecular evolution. The Metropolis-Hasting and Gibbs sampler are mentioned. The convergence of the limiting distribution of the Markov chain together with burn-in period, trace plots and the idea of running several simultaneous chains on a certain state space are briefly reviewed. There are 27 references at the end of the chapter.

As stated by the author of chapter 4, the aim of the chapter is to provide an introduction to population genetics theory that is relevant to current research in molecular evolution. Some of the major predictions of neutral and nearly neutral models are discussed. The classical Wright-Fisher model of population genetics and their relationships to neutral theory of molecular evolution are mentioned. Ancestral polymorphism and neutral molecular evolution including average pairwise distance and lineage sorting are reviewed. Natural selection is discussed and it is demonstrated how comparing the rate of substitution of a putatively selected class of mutations to a neutrally evolving class can be used to infer the signature of natural selection from sequence data. The effects of linkage and selection on rates of molecular evolution are also discussed. There is an extensive list of 126 references at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 5 is the first chapter of part II of the book. Maximum likelihood (ML) methods for detecting adaptive protein evolution are discussed in this chapter. Phylogenetic Analysis by Maximum Likelihood (PALM) - a package of programs for analysis of DNA or protein sequences by using ML methods - is mentioned. MLE of selective pressure for pairs of sequences, focusing on Markov models of codon evolution and MLE for  $dN/dS$  (the ratio of nonsynonymous to synonymous mutations) are discussed. Phyllogenetic estimation of selective pressure concerning likelihood calculation for multiple sequences on a phylogeny, modeling variable selective pressure among lineage and among sites are considered. Testing statistical hypotheses about the nature of selective pressure by using likelihood ratio test (LRT) is also reviewed. There are 43 references at the end of the chapter for further reading.

The authors of chapter 6 provide a detailed overview of the basic features and use of the HyPhy system. This is a high-level programming language designed for implementation of statistical methods used in molecular evolution. The focus of the chapter is to describe various features of HyPhy. However, as noted by authors, some features of the package (such as the model editor for describing new stochastic models to be used in analyses and the graphical user interface providing a mechanism to define arbitrary constraints among parameters for construction of LRT) are not mentioned. The chapter ends up with 14 references.

There are four sections and three appendices for chapter 7 concentrating on Bayesian estimation of evolutionary parameters. The program MrBayes is mentioned to indicate how one might investigate the important questions in a Bayesian framework.

Three uses of Bayesian methods in molecular evolution, namely; phylogeny estimation, analysis of complex data and estimating divergence times are discussed. The efficiency of the Bayesian MCMC methodology in addressing complex models is also mentioned. There are 76 references at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 8 is on estimation of divergence times from molecular sequence data. The authors of this chapter present a good review of divergence-time estimation methods including Bayesian ones developed by themselves. Branch lengths as products of rates and times, classical molecular clock, uncertainties in the estimated divergence times, multigene analyses and stochasticity in rates of evolution over time are discussed. 53 references are also presented for further reading.

Part III begins with chapter 9 which is on Markov models of protein sequences of evolution. The focus is on models that can be used for inferring the evolutionary history of related proteins (the phylogenetic tree) and determining the physicochemical factors that have been important to the function and evolution of a protein family. The models are assumed to treat evolution as a Markov chain with transitions between amino acid states. Estimation of parameters of the models based on MLEs and counts, modeling heterogeneity across sites and over time, and modeling correlated evolution between sites are discussed. The chapter ends up with a list of 79 references.

The small repeated patterns of DNA, known as microsatellites, are used in different areas of genetic studies. Models of microsatellite evolution and statistical inferences based on these models are discussed in chapter 10. Akaike information criterion (AIC) as one of the statistical tools to compute a score for a model is briefly mentioned. There are 58 references for this rather short chapter.

Chapter 11 is on genome rearrangement. The inversion distance between chromosomes or the smallest number of inversions needed to transform one chromosome into another and reciprocal translocations between chromosomes or chromosomal fission and fusions are discussed. These are models for analyzing whole-genome

evolution using the aforementioned rearrangements. Some examples are presented. The chapter ends up with a list of 22 references.

Phylogenetic hidden Markov models together with some examples are presented in chapter 12. The authors of this chapter discuss how hidden Markov models (HMMs), phylogenetic models and phylo-HMMs all can be considered as special cases of general "graphical models". Formal definition of phylo-HMM, higher-order Markov models for emission and a brief introduction to graphical models are discussed. There are 53 references at the end of the chapter.

Further methods of inference in molecular evolution are presented in Part IV which begins with chapter 13. This is on the evolutionary causes and consequences of base composition variation. This chapter relates the Markov models of molecular evolution to the population genetics in the context of variation of nucleotides composition among species. Empirical patterns of base composition variation, both within and among genomes are presented. The impact of ignoring base composition variation on estimating evolutionary divergence between DNA sequences is considered. There are 57 references for further reading at the end of the chapter.

Recent progress, new application and challenges of statistical alignment are in the title of chapter 14. Pairwise and multiple statistical alignment together with related algorithms and their relationships to evolutionary models and trees are discussed. Multiple hidden Markov models (HMMs), multiple forward-backward and multiple Viterbi algorithms are briefly reviewed. A continuous-time evolution for sequence insertions, deletion and substitutions proposed by Thorne, Kishino and Felsenstein (1991) is also reviewed. 47 references are presented at the end of the chapter.

In chapter 15, estimating substitution matrices for use in alignment problem is discussed. Markov substitution processes, PAM (Accepted Point Mutations) matrices, BLOSUM (BLOCK Substitution Matrix) matrices, and DNA substitution matrices are explained. Comparisons of methods of estimating substitution matrices are presented. There are 38 references at the end of chapter 15.

Chapter 16 is on posterior mapping and posterior predictive distributions. This chapter discusses issues related to the Bayesian approach to statistical inference. Recent methods for estimating the history of mutations from DNA sequence data are reviewed. Posterior mapping as a powerful method to address questions in which detailed data is required, is mentioned. To address the questions on hypothesis testing, the author presents a good amount of detail on predictive distributions. There are 51 references at the end of chapter for further reading.

The last chapter of the book, chapter 17, discusses methods for assessing the uncertainty in phylogenetics inference. Classical or frequentist methods together with Bayesian ones are reviewed. Estimating tree topology and substitution processes of molecular sequences, known as model selection, is discussed. Several measures of confidence used in phylogenetics including Bayesian posterior probabilities, bootstrap probabilities and the approximately unbiased test are mentioned. Testing methods, including parametric bootstrap, the Kishino-Hasegawa, multiple-comparisons tests are reviewed. There is a list of 57 references at the end of the chapter.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable source book for comprehensive reviews of current developments in statistical methods in molecular evolution. It is very readable and provides a wealth of references and pointers for the more interested readers. This very well presented book achieves its aims of being a reference book, written at an introductory level. I recommend it for library purchase for any statistician intending to work in the area of molecular evolution and for any biologist who seeks to learn more on statistical methods useful in the field.

## **ISCB GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Advertising Rates**

<b>The prices are:</b> Full            A4 page:    € 500 Half            A4 page:    € 300 Quarter        A4 page:    € 200	<b>Additionally, we will include loose flyers with the distribution of the newsletter at an initial handling cost of € 500. However, if the addition of the flyers increases the postal charges, the advertiser will also be charged the difference in distribution costs. For further information, please contact the ISCB Office.</b>
<b>Publishing dates:    Jun    2008</b> <b>(and deadlines)    Dec    2008</b>	<b>early May    2008</b> <b>early Nov    2008</b>
<b>Adverts sent to the ISCB emailing list of approximately 800 current and recent members:</b>	<b>€ 750 for 4 emails/year</b> <b>€ 300 for a single email</b>
<b>ISCB webpage advertising:</b>	<b>€ 750 for one year with Link from ISCB's homepage</b>

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE: Email Lists and Personal Information**

ISCB has a strict policy not to give out any information concerning its members to **any** organisation which requests it. If a company wishes to send material to the members, the brochures must be sent to the Society's Permanent Office and News Editor for distribution with the News (see above). Alternatively, small non-commercial announcements can be sent free of charge as an email to most members of ISCB.

### **Society's Aims**

The Society is organised and shall be operated for educational and scientific purposes with the following Aims:

- to stimulate research on the biostatistical principles and methodology used in clinical research;
- to increase the relevance of statistical theory to clinical medicine;
- to promote high and harmonised standards of statistical practice;
- to work with other societies and organisations in the advancement of biostatistics;
- to promote better understanding of the use and interpretation of biostatistics by the general public, and by national and international organisations and agencies within the public and commercial sectors with an interest in, and/or responsibilities for, public health; and
- to provide a common forum for clinicians and statisticians through meetings, seminars and publications

### **Changes of Address or Email**

Please inform the Permanent Office that looks after the membership and mailing list databases. Also, if your **email address changes**, please inform the Office and the News Editor so that your address is changed in the ISCB database and emailing list (googlegroup).

### **Information on Submitting Articles**

Articles sent via email (Word, HTML or text) on almost any topic are most welcome. This is an informal newsletter for you the readers, so please join in and make ISCB News a magazine that's even more interesting and fun to read.

## ISCB Office and Executive Committee: Contact Details

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<p><i>Professor of Biostatistics and Chair of the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. My areas of research include the analysis of correlated data (e.g. repeated measurements, longitudinal studies, clustered data analysis, spatial models), models for missing data, the analysis of interval censored data, correction for measurement error/misclassification, measuring agreement, Bayesian methods and in general the developments of new approaches in the clinical trial area (e.g. sequential methodology).</i></p> <p><i>I have served the Society as an Executive Committee member from 1999, the first two years as an ordinary member, then four years as Secretary followed by two years of Vice-President. I am looking forward to serve the Society as your next President. It is an exciting opportunity to help the Society to progress in the coming years. I believe that our Society and its activities are not yet enough known in the statistical world. Therefore, we need to enhance the collaboration with other statistical societies but also with epidemiological and medical societies. I believe that this is the way to show that our Society is the place to exchange ideas between statisticians and medical/epidemiological researchers about the development of new statistical methodology but also about the usefulness of existing approaches. Finally, I strongly believe that the future of our Society lies in the hands of our students. It is of great importance that we can attract them to our annual meetings and to our Society activities. Any suggestions which help to realise this are welcome.</i></p>				
<b>Vice-President: Norbert Victor</b>	Institut für Medizinische Biometrie und Informatik, Im Neuenheimer Feld 305, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany	+49 6221 56 4140	+49 6221 56 4195	victor@imbi.uni-heidelberg.de
<p><i>Professor of Biostatistics and Chair of the Department of Medical Biometry and Informatics, Medical Faculty, Ruprecht-Karls-University, Heidelberg, Germany. Main activities are biostatistical consulting of clinical research and responsibility for the conduct and analysis of clinical trials. Methodological areas of interest are multiplicity problems in testing, heterogeneity in Meta-Analyses and flexible designs in clinical trials.</i></p> <p><i>I have served ISCB as an Executive Committee member since 2000, and was Treasurer from 2003-06. In 1999, I organised ISCB20 in Heidelberg. As Vice-President, I will try to enlarge the fields of activity of the society, and herewith to increase membership. I would like to make our meetings a discussion forum of all scientists involved in clinical and epidemiological research: Biostatisticians, trialists with medical background and epidemiologists.</i></p>				
<b>Secretary: Harbajan Chadha-Boreham</b>	Rue Porot, F-21440 Francheville, France	+33 3 80 35 17 59		Harbajan.Chadha-Boreham@Actelion.Com
<p><i>Senior Biostatistician in the Department of Biometry, Actelion Pharmaceutical Ltd, Basel, Switzerland. My main activities in pharmaceutical statistics involve design, conduct, analysis and reporting of clinical trials and epidemiology studies across a variety of therapeutic areas.</i></p> <p><i>I joined the ISCB in 1993 and have been an active member of the Society; firstly as a member of the ISCB Subcommittee on Statistics in Regulatory Affairs and later as Chair of the Local Organising Committee of ISCB23 Conference held in Dijon, France. In 2003 I set up the ISCB Subcommittee on Conference Organising; we have developed the "Conference Organising Guidelines" to help the organisers of future conferences. Linked to Conference Organising, the Subcommittee has created facilities for storing documents from past conferences on the ISCB website. As a member of the newly formed ISCB Subcommittee on Membership, I have been involved with ideas for promoting our Society to increase its membership. I have served on the ISCB Executive Committee for four years, firstly as a member for two years and then as Secretary, taking care of the quarterly teleconferences of the ExCom, the Annual ExCom and General Meetings. As Secretary, I would continue looking after the organisational aspects of the meetings and as an Officer of the ExCom, I would like to help ISCB maintain its unique and friendly character while providing high quality and successful annual meetings.</i></p>				
<b>Treasurer: Koos Zwinderman</b>	Academic Medical Centre, Dept. of Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics, University of Amsterdam, PO Box 22660, NL-1100 DD Amsterdam, Netherlands	+31 20 5665820	+31 20 6912683	a.h.zwinderman@amc.uva.nl
<p><i>Professor of biostatistics at the department of Clinical Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Bioinformatics at the Academic Medical Center of the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. I was trained as a mathematician and psychologist at the university of Groningen (Netherlands) and obtained my PhD at the University of Nijmegen (Netherlands). My thesis concerned consistency of estimators and goodness of fit tests of the random-effects logistic regression model. My biostatistical interests are - amongst others - statistical genetics, repeated measures and monitoring, clinical trials, meta-analysis, and I was involved in numerous clinical trials and epidemiological research projects.</i></p> <p><i>I have been a member of ISCB for over 15 years, and was a member of the ExCom for the period 2003- 2006.</i></p>				
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**ISCB Membership and Googlegroups Emailing Lists**

From Rita Schou (ISCB Office) and David W. Warne (Googlegroups Administrator)

Did you know we try to make sure our membership database (in Denmark) is kept up to date?

We also have an electronic mailing list called [iscb@googlegroups.com](mailto:iscb@googlegroups.com), which allows members from the current and past year to be contacted to discuss statistical ideas and to receive news about ISCB events.

From time to time we compare the 2 databases and if we find you've got 2 email addresses, we'll ask which you prefer.

If you haven't done so already, please send us your email address to allow us to contact you more easily.

If you've sent us your email, but haven't accepted the invitation to join the [iscb googlegroup](#), please accept the next invitation by pressing Reply-Send.

Rest assured that no company will send you any junk email – all emails are checked by the Office or the Googlegroup Administrator.

## ISCB Subcommittees: Contact Details

Please contact the chairs of these subcommittees for further information.

Title & Email	Terms of Reference	Members	Email addresses
Conference Organising iscb-conf-org@ googlegroups.com	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring together ISCB conference organisers or ISCB members who have an interest in sharing and passing on their knowledge and experience to help future ISCB conference organisers.</li> <li>2. Document processes and systems for assisting ISCB conference organisers.</li> <li>3. Review and update the documents whenever necessary and promote their usage for improving the procedures or meetings.</li> </ol>	<b>Chair/Secretary:</b> Harbajan Chadha-Boreham (CH) <b>Members:</b> Emmanuel Lesaffre (B)  Bjarne Nielsen (DK) Catherine Quantin (F)  Norbert Victor (D)  John Whitehead (UK) Koos Zwinderman (NL) David W Warne (CH) Giota Touloumi (GR) Zdenek Valenta (CZR)	Harbajan.Chadha-Boreham@ Actelion.Com  emmanuel.lesaffre@ med.kuleuven.be bn@ Cyncron.com catherine.quantin@ chu-dijon.fr victor@ imbi.uni-heidelberg.de j.whitehead@ lancaster.ac.uk a.h.zwinderman@ amc.uva.nl david_w_warne@ bluewin.ch gtouloum@ med.uoa.gr valenta@ euromise.cz
Education iscb-education@ googlegroups.com	To support and organise one or two day courses on contemporary methods in clinical biostatistics in locations represented by the Society. Guidelines and a list of courses offered in the past are available.	<b>Chair/Secretary:</b> Rumana Omar (UK) <b>Members:</b> Mike Campbell (UK), Nicole Close (USA), Carol Redmond (USA), Maria Grazia Valsecchi (I), Havi Murad (ISR), Elisabeth Svensson (S),  Catherine Quantin (F)  Jenö Reiczigel (H) Eric Cobo (E)	Rumana@ stats.ucl.ac.uk  m.j.campbell@ sheffield.ac.uk ncclose@ yahoo.com ckr3@ pitt.edu grazia.valsecchi@ unimib.it  havim@ gertner.health.gov.il elisabeth.svensson@ esi.oru.se catherine.quantin@ chu-dijon.fr jreiczig@ univet.hu erik.cobo@ upc.edu
Membership Iscb-membership@ googlegroups.com	To explore strategies to increase the ISCB membership by means of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highlighting the unique position of the ISCB, i.e. bringing together clinicians, methodologists, epidemiologists and biostatisticians</li> <li>2. Make strategic links with medical and epidemiological societies in order to make publicity at their meetings and bring clinicians/epidemiologists with a methodological/biostatistical interest to our ISCB meeting</li> <li>3. Widen the geographical spread of the ISCB members</li> <li>4. Ensure the regeneration of our current core membership.</li> <li>5. Provide guidelines for future conference organisers on choosing a scientific programme committee that will help in widening membership</li> <li>6. To consider the future of the Newsletter, including ways to support the Editor, procedures for transition of editorship.</li> <li>7. To maintain the ISCB homepage on the World Wide Web and facilitate placement of annual meeting information on the homepage.</li> <li>8. To consider other communications with members, such as through email or the World Wide Web.</li> </ol>	<b>Chair/Secretary:</b> Emmanuel Lesaffre (B)  <b>Members:</b> Harbajan Chadha-Boreham (CH), Norbert Victor (D),  John Whitehead (UK) KyungMann Kim (USA), Toshiro Tango (JPN), Michal Abrahamowicz (CDN) Philip Hougaard (DK) Bjarne Nielsen (DK) Maria Grazia Valsecchi (I) David W. Warne (CH)	emmanuel.Lesaffre@ med.kuleuven.be  Harbajan.Chadha-Boreham@ Actelion.Com victor@ imbi.uni-heidelberg.de j.whitehead@ lancaster.ac.uk kmkim@ biostat.wisc.edu  tango@ niph.go.jp michal@ epimgh.mcgill.ca  phou@ lundbeck.com bn@ Cyncron.com grazia.valsecchi@ unimib.it  david_w_warne@bluewin.ch

**How to Contact the ISCB Subcommittees (continued)**

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<p>National Groups</p> <p>iscb-national-groups@ googlegroups.com</p>	<p>1. To help those who are interested in forming a National Group through the approval process.</p> <p>2. To review the arrangements with the current National Groups, specifically regarding financial matters.</p> <p>3. To set rules and standards for funding of ISCB members of National Groups and others from countries with exchange control restrictions or barriers.</p> <p>4. The Subcommittee administers the Conference Awards for Scientists for the annual ISCB meetings.</p>	<p><b>Chair/Secretary:</b> Julia Singer (A),</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Elia Biganzoli (I), Krista Fischer (EST) Ewa Kawalec (PL), Catherine Quantin (F)</p> <p>Norbert Victor (D), John Whitehead (UK)</p>	<p>julia_singer@ baxter.com</p> <p>elia.biganzoli@ unimi.it Krista.Fischer@ ut.ee mxkawale@ cyf-kr.edu.pl catherine.quantin@ chu- dijon.fr victor@ imbi.uni-heidelberg.de j.whitehead@ lancaster.ac.uk</p>
<p>Statistics in Regulatory Affairs</p> <p>iscb-reg-aff@ googlegroups.com</p>	<p>The subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs will review, comment upon and seek to influence the development of regulatory requirements, guidelines and other documents concerning the scientific aspects of data generation, collection, management, analysis, and reporting. In general, the subcommittee will seek out and handle all regulatory issues in the name of the Society with the approval of the President or in his/her absence, the Vice-President.</p>	<p><b>Chair/Secretary::</b> Jørgen Seldrup (F)</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Helmut Schäfer (D), Harbajan Chadha-Boreham (CH), Christoph Gerlinger (D), Anna Petroccione (I) Martin Schumacher (D)</p>	<p>Jorgen.seldrup@ quintiles.com</p> <p>hsimbe@ med.uni-marburg.de Harbajan.Chadha-Boreham@ Actelion.Com Christoph.Gerlinger@ Schering.de anna.petroccione@ nervianoms.com ms@ imbi.uni-freiburg.de</p>
<p>Student Conference Awards</p> <p>iscb-stud-conf-awrd@ googlegroups.com</p>	<p>Student conference awards are available for registered postgraduate students to attend the annual meeting and present a paper. The Subcommittee shall receive submissions, judge them, and administer the awards. The rules are announced in a timely issue of the Newsletter.</p>	<p><b>Chair/Secretary:</b> KyungMann Kim (USA)</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Marc Buyse (B), Bruno Cesana (I), Jan Lanke (S), Marie Reilly (S) Vana Sypsa (GR)</p>	<p>kmkim@ biostat.wisc.edu</p> <p>Marc.Buyse@ iddi.com cesana@ med.unibs.it jan.lanke@ stat.lu.se Marie.Reilly@ ki.se vsipsa@ cc.uoa.gr</p>

The **International Society for Clinical Biostatistics (ISCB)** was founded in 1978 to stimulate research into the principles and methodology used in the design and analysis of clinical research and to increase the relevance of statistical theory to the real world of clinical medicine.

The ISCB organises an annual scientific meeting which members and non-members are able to attend. The main objective of the annual scientific meetings is to create an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas among clinicians, statisticians and members of other disciplines, such as epidemiologists, clinical chemists and clinical pharmacologists, working or interested in, the field of clinical biostatistics.

The scientific meetings cover a broad spectrum of biostatistical interests and regularly include sessions on the design and analysis of clinical trials, epidemiology and statistical methodology, as well as from time to time considering more specialist issues such as, for example, education of biometricians and biometrics users, pharmacokinetics, medical data-bases and pharmaco-epidemiology.

Meetings in recent years have been held in London (2003), Leiden (2004), Szeged (2005), Geneva (2006) and Alexandroupolis (2007). The next meeting will be held in Copenhagen (2008). A selection of talks at the meetings, for which papers are submitted for review and which are eventually accepted, are published in *Statistics in Medicine*. The ISCB benefits from a special journal concession from John Wiley & Sons Limited, the publishers of *Statistics in Medicine*, so that members are able to subscribe to the journal at a preferential rate.

The ISCB also organises courses to cover particular statistical topics. These are run to precede or follow on from the annual scientific meeting and are given by the foremost researchers in the field.



The composition of the **Executive Committee** (ExCom) for 2008 is as follows:

**Officers:**

President: Emmanuel Lesaffre (B),  
Vice-President: Norbert Victor (D),  
Secretary: Harbajan Chadha-Boreham (CH),  
Treasurer: Koos Zwinderman (NL).

**Members:**

News Editor: David W. Warne (CH),  
Webmaster: Bjarne Nielsen (DK),  
Members: Adriano Decarli (I),  
KyungMann Kim (USA), Rumana Omar (UK),  
Catherine Quantin (F), Jeno Reiczigel (H),  
Marie Reilly (S), Martin Schumacher (D),  
Vana Sypsa (GR).

The Annual General Meeting of the ISCB is organised to coincide with the scientific meeting. Membership of the Society is drawn from around 40 countries worldwide and the number of members is about 800.



The ISCB also has special **Subcommittees** dealing with particular aspects of biostatistics.



The Society publishes a **Newsletter** twice a year. The ISCB News editor is David W. Warne, Chemin du Petit-Bel-Air 115, CH-1226 Thônex, Switzerland. Items for inclusion in the Newsletter should be sent to him via email to: **david\_w\_warne@bluewin.ch**

**Membership** of the Society is open to all with an interest in biostatistics. The current annual (to 31 December 2008) Ordinary membership fee is €40. The Full-time Student Membership fee is €20.


**Applications** for membership should be sent to:

ISCB Permanent Office,  
P.O. Box 130,  
Datavej 24,  
DK-3460 Birkerød, Denmark

Tel: +45 4567 2279  
Fax: +45 7022 1571  
email: office@iscb.info  
www: http://www.iscb.info

**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL BIOSTATISTICS**

**2008 Membership Subscription**

Surname: _____	First name: _____
Title (Prof/Dr/etc): _____	Post held: _____
Address: _____ _____	
Post code and country: _____	
Phone No.: _____	E-mail: _____
Fax No.: _____	<b>Please provide your email address as it will be used to send you the ISCB News in the future.</b>
<b>SUBSCRIPTION:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinary membership of ISCB (to 31 December 2008):	Euros (EUR) 40.00
(please tick one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student Membership of ISCB (to 31 December 2008):	Euros (EUR) 20.00 (students should provide a letter from their supervisor or head of department)
Have you previously been a member of ISCB? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
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	Euro Account No. 6687 4511 Bank Sort Code: 20-18-15 IBAN: GB28 BARC 2018 1566 8745 11 SWIFT/BIC: BARCGB22
Please return this form either by e-mail to: office@iscb.info	
or by post to: ISCB Permanent Office PO Box 130 Datavej 24 DK-3460 Birkerod Denmark	
Tel: +45 4567 2279	
Fax: +45 7022 1571	

## Calendar

**17 - 21 August 2008**

**Copenhagen, Denmark**

ISCB29  
Info: Bjarne Nielsen email: bn@cyncron.com, web: <http://www.iscb2008.info>

**23 - 27 August 2009**

**Prague, Czech Republic**

ISCB30  
Info: Zdenek Valenta email: valenta@euromise.cz



For the latest conference info, see: <http://isi.cbs.nl/calendar.htm>



March 4 - 7	8 <sup>th</sup> German Open Conference on Probability and Statistics to be held in Aachen, Germany. The meeting provides an international forum for presentation and discussion of new results in probability and statistics. Participants from universities, business, administration, and industry are welcome. <b>Information:</b> Christine Müller, Udo Kamps <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gocps2008@stochastik.rwth-aachen.de">gocps2008@stochastik.rwth-aachen.de</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://gocps2008.rwth-aachen.de">http://gocps2008.rwth-aachen.de</a>
March 7 - 8	The Institute of Statistics of the RWTH Aachen University will host the 8 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Ordered Statistical Data and Its Applications OSDA 2008. The meeting will be held at the RWTH Aachen, Germany. OSDA 2008 will provide an international forum for presentation and discussion of new results on ordered statistical data as well as to review and consolidate existing literature. <b>Information:</b> Erhard Cramer, Udo Kamps <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:osda2008@stochastik.rwth-aachen.de">osda2008@stochastik.rwth-aachen.de</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://osda2008.rwth-aachen.de">http://osda2008.rwth-aachen.de</a>
April 21 - 25	The International Conference on Trends and Perspectives in Linear Statistical Inference LINSTAT 2008 in Celebration of Tadeusz Caliński's 80 <sup>th</sup> Birthday, to be held in Bedlewo, Poland. The aim of the conference is to bring together researchers sharing an interest in a variety of aspects of statistics and offer them a possibility to discuss current developments in these subjects. <b>Information:</b> Katarzyna Filipiak <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:linstat@au.poznan.pl">linstat@au.poznan.pl</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://linstat08.au.poznan.pl">http://linstat08.au.poznan.pl</a>
May 15 - 16	The Pentecost Meeting of the German Statistical Society, to be held at the Technische Universität Berlin. It is a methodology orientated conference which is organised by four sections of the Society and the Section Stochastics of the German Association of Mathematicians. (Submissions of talks until 17. February 2008) <b>Information:</b> Nana Dyckerhoff (Managing Director, German Statistical Society) <b>Phone:</b> +492214704130 <b>Fax:</b> +492214705084 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:post@dstatg.de">post@dstatg.de</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.dstatg.de">www.dstatg.de</a>
June 21 - 28	XIII International Summer Conference on Probability and Statistics and Seminar on Statistical Data Analysis, Sozopol (Black Sea Cost), Bulgaria. <b>Information and application for participation online:</b> Nick Yanev <b>Phone:</b> +35929793861 <b>Fax:</b> +35929713649 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:yanev@math.bas.bg">yanev@math.bas.bg</a> , <a href="mailto:statlab@math.bas.bg">statlab@math.bas.bg</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://stochastics.fmi.uni-sofia.bg">http://stochastics.fmi.uni-sofia.bg</a>
June 26 - 28	Workshop on Nonparametric Inference - WNI2008, to be held at the Dep. Mathematics, Univ. Coimbra, Portugal. The purpose of the workshop is to illustrate active trends in nonparametric statistics. <b>Information:</b> Prof. Paulo Eduardo Oliveira <b>Phone:</b> +351-239791150 <b>Fax:</b> +351-239832568 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:wni2008@mat.uc.pt">wni2008@mat.uc.pt</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.mat.uc.pt/~wni2008/">www.mat.uc.pt/~wni2008/</a>
June 30 - July 4	Joint ICMI / IASE Study: Statistics Education in School Mathematics: Challenges for Teaching and Teacher Education, Monterrey, Mexico, 2008. The aim of this study is analysing the situation of teaching statistics at school level and making recommendations about how to train mathematics teachers to better succeed in educating statistical literate students <b>Information:</b> Carmen Batanero, Facultad de Educación, Campus de Cartuja, 18071 Granada, Spain <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:batanero@ugr.es">batanero@ugr.es</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ugr.es/~icmi/iase_study/">http://www.ugr.es/~icmi/iase_study/</a>
July 6 - 13	Research and development in the teaching and learning of probability, TSG 13 ICME11 - to be held in Monterrey, Mexico. There are arguments in favour of a strong role for probability within stochastics curricula. The challenge is to teach probability through designing materials that encourage understanding. We encourage submissions related to: Individuals' corner - Impact of technology - Teacher's corner - Fundamental ideas <b>Information:</b> Manfred Borovcnik <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:manfred.borovcnik@uni-klu.ac.at">manfred.borovcnik@uni-klu.ac.at</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://tsg.icme11.org/tsg/show/14">http://tsg.icme11.org/tsg/show/14</a>
July 8 - 12	The III European Congress of Methodology, held in conjunction with the Society for Multivariate Analysis in the Behavioural and Social Sciences (SMABS), will be held in Oviedo, Spain. The main goal of the Congress is to contribute to the improvement of teaching and research in methodology in the fields of Social Sciences, Health, Education and Behaviour. <b>Information:</b> José Muñoz University of Oviedo, Faculty of Psychology, Plaza de Feijoo s/n, 33003 Oviedo <b>Phone:</b> 0034985104162 <b>Fax:</b> 0034985104144 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://methodology.cop.es">http://methodology.cop.es</a>

July 13 - 18	The XXIV <sup>th</sup> International Biometric Conference will be at University College Dublin. The programme includes Invited and Special Sessions, contributed talks and posters, pre-conference short courses. Abstracts for contributed oral and poster presentations can be submitted from 1st October 2007 - 31st January 2008 through the conference website. <b>Information:</b> Leah Duxbury ( <a href="http://www.confpartners.ie">download leaflet</a> ) <b>Phone:</b> +353.1 296 8688 <b>Fax:</b> +353.1 296 8678 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:leah@confpartners.ie">leah@confpartners.ie</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.confpartners.ie">www.confpartners.ie</a>
July 14 - 19	The seventh joint meeting of the <a href="http://www.bernoulli.org">Bernoulli Society</a> and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (BS WC/IMS AM 2008), to be held at the National University of Singapore, 3 Prince George's Park, Singapore 118402, Republic of Singapore. The programme will cover a wide range of topics and will include about a dozen plenary lectures presented by leading specialists. In addition, there will be invited paper sessions highlighting topics of current research interest, as well as many contributed talks and posters. <b>Fax:</b> +65 6873 8292 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:wc2008@ims.nus.edu.sg">wc2008@ims.nus.edu.sg</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ims.nus.edu.sg/Programs/wc2008/index.htm">http://www.ims.nus.edu.sg/Programs/wc2008/index.htm</a>
July 15 - 17	LASR 2008: The Art and Science of Statistical Bioinformatics The 27 <sup>th</sup> Leeds Annual Statistical Research Workshop to be held in Leeds, UK In 2008, we will continue to explore the LASR themes of statistical bioinformatics, shape and image analysis, and interdisciplinary statistics. <b>Information:</b> Dr. Stuart Barber <b>Phone:</b> +44 (0)113 343 5146 <b>Fax:</b> +44 (0)113 343 5090 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:workshop@maths.leeds.ac.uk">workshop@maths.leeds.ac.uk</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.maths.leeds.ac.uk/lasr2008">www.maths.leeds.ac.uk/lasr2008</a>
July 21 - 25	The 9 <sup>th</sup> World Meeting of the International Society for Bayesian Analysis (ISBA), is being held on Hamilton Island (Australia). The meeting will broadly follow the tradition of past meetings, combining an excellent scientific program that embraces all things Bayesian, with ample opportunities to explore this beautiful location on the world famous Great Barrier Reef. <b>Information:</b> Clair Alston <b>Phone:</b> +61 7 31381338 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:isba08@qut.edu.au">isba08@qut.edu.au</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.isba2008.sci.qut.edu.au">www.isba2008.sci.qut.edu.au</a>
July 23 - 26	The 17 <sup>th</sup> International Workshop on Matrices and Statistics, IWMS-08, in Honor of Professor T.W. Anderson's 90 <sup>th</sup> Birthday, will be held in Tomar, Portugal. <b>Information:</b> Professor Francisco Carvalho <b>Phone:</b> +351 249 328 100 <b>Fax:</b> +351 249 328 186 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:fpcarvalho@ipt.pt">fpcarvalho@ipt.pt</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ipt.pt/iwms08">www.ipt.pt/iwms08</a>
August 12 - 14	user! 2008, the R user conference, takes place at the Department of Statistics, Universität Dortmund, Germany. The conference is focused on R as the 'lingua franca' of data analysis and statistical computing, providing a platform for R users to discuss and exchange ideas how R can be used to do statistical computations, data analysis, visualization and applications. <b>Information:</b> Uwe Ligges (conference), Achim Zeileis (program) <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:user-2008@R-project.org">user-2008@R-project.org</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.R-project.org/user-2008">www.R-project.org/user-2008</a>
August 17 - 21	The 29 <sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Society for Clinical Biostatistics (ISCB-29) will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark and aims to provide a forum for the exchange of methods, applications and theory of biostatistics in medical research and practice among clinicians, statisticians and members of other relevant disciplines. <b>Information:</b> Bjarne Nielsen <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:BN@cyncron.com">BN@cyncron.com</a> Chair of the Local Organising Committee: Bjarne Nielsen Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee: Philip Hougaard <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ISCB2008.info">www.ISCB2008.info</a>
August 24 - 29	COMPSTAT 2008: International Conference on Computational Statistics, to be held in Porto, Portugal <b>Fax:</b> (+351)225505050 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:compstat08@fep.up.pt">compstat08@fep.up.pt</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.fep.up.pt/compstat08">http://www.fep.up.pt/compstat08</a>
September 15 - 18	The Annual Meeting of the German Statistical Society, to be held at the University of Cologne, Germany. The plenary sessions are under the frame topic "Statistics in Marketing". The programme will cover a wide range of topics and will include an outstanding lecture, the so-called "Gumbel Lecture", which will be held by a young and prominent statistician. (Submissions of talks until April 2008.) <b>Information:</b> Nana Dyckerhoff (Managing Director, German Statistical Society) <b>Phone:</b> +492214704130 <b>Fax:</b> +492214705084 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:post@dstatg.de">post@dstatg.de</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.dstatg.de">www.dstatg.de</a>