

2. Matthews DR, McPherson K. Doctors' ignorance of statistics [editorial]. *Br Med J*. 1987;294(6576):856-857.
3. Horton NJ, Switzer SS. Statistical methods in the journal [letter]. *N Engl J Med*. 2005;353(18):1977-1979.
4. Emerson JD, Colditz GA. Use of statistical analysis in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In: Bailar JC III, Mosteller F, eds. *Medical Uses of Statistics*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: NEJM Books; 1992:45-57.

In reply: I fully agree with Dr Horton's comments concerning biostatistics in the current medical literature. As he notes, the statistical methods used in modern research reports are becoming increasingly complex, compounding the problem of poor clinician understanding of basic statistical concepts. Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that researchers often apply statistical techniques inappropriately, perhaps as a result of their own incomplete comprehension of the methodology.¹ As neatly stated by Altman,² "the main reason for the plethora of statistical errors is that the majority of statistical analyses are performed by people with an inadequate understanding of statistical methods. They are then peer reviewed by people who are generally no more knowledgeable."

This unfortunate inadequacy of knowledge on the part of both consumers and producers of the medical literature is inconsistent with medicine's goal of optimal decision making for patient care. Alternative approaches to statistical education are required, and I am hopeful that renewed attention to this

problem will result in innovative efforts that aid practicing clinicians, researchers, and our patients.

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1. Altman DG, Bland JM. Improving doctors' understanding of statistics. *J R Stat Soc [A]*. 1991;154(pt 2):223-267.
2. Altman DG. Statistical reviewing for medical journals. *Stat Med*. 1998; 17:2661-2674.

CORRECTIONS

Incorrect use of initial: In the article by Guyatt et al entitled "Exploration of the Value of Health-Related Quality-of-Life Information From Clinical Research and Into Clinical Practice," published in the October issue of *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* (*Mayo Clin Proc*. 2007; 82(10):1229-1239), Dr Alonso prefers to use only his first initial: **J. Alonso**.

Incorrect name of institution: In the article by Agarwal entitled "Effects of Statins on Renal Function," published in the November 2007 issue of *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* (*Mayo Clin Proc*. 2007;82(11):1381-1390), the name of Dr Agarwal's institution was printed incorrectly. It should read as follows: Richard L. **Roudebush** VA Medical Center, Indianapolis, IN.

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