

INSTRUCTIONS: Be brief and WRITE CLEARLY. Unless specifically asked for, complete calculations [or even complete sentences] are not needed. Answer in point form when possible. The points for the 14 questions add up to 125. See page 4 re multiple authors. If you work solo, 100%=90 points; if working as a pair, 100%=105 points; if you are a team of three, 100%=115; if a team of four or more, 100%=125. Answers to be handed in at/before the beginning of class on Wednesday May 22

1 True or false, and explain briefly [2 points each].

- If you add 7 to each value on a list, you add 7 to the SD.
- If you double each value on a list, you double the SD.
- If you change the sign of each value on a list, you change the sign of the SD.
- If you duplicate each value in a list, you leave the SD approximately unchanged.
- Half the values on a list are always below the mean.
- In a large set of observations, the distribution of observations follows the Gaussian curve quite closely.
- If two large populations have exactly the same average value of 50 and the same SD of 10, then the percentage of values between 40 and 60 must be exactly the same for both populations.
- An researcher has a computer file of pre-treatment White blood Counts (WBCs) for patients. They range from 2,800 to 38,600. By accident, the highest WBC gets changed to 386,000. This affects the mean but not the median and the IQR.
- The SD of 80 0's and 20 1's is approximately 0.4. The SD of 400000 0's and 100000 1's is also 0.4. [you might use what you said in d]
- A significance test was performed to test the null hypothesis $H_0: \mu = 2$ versus the alternative $H_a: \mu > 2$. The test statistic is $z = 1.40$. The P-value for this test is thus approximately 0.16
- Suppose all students in a class of 20 got the same wrong answer to a multiple choice exam question with 4 choices. To test whether the students colluded [ont triché] while the monitor was out of the room for 2 minutes, the school principal calculated the probability that a random variable Y with a Binomial(20,0.25) distribution would be ≥ 20 .

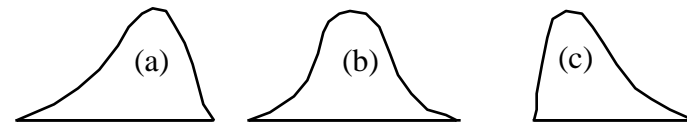
He did this by first calculating $\mu = 20(.25) = 5$ and $SD = \sqrt{\frac{0.25 \times 0.75}{20}}$.

He then calculated $\text{Prob}[Z \geq \frac{20-\mu}{SD}]$ and, finding that the P-value was very small, he concluded that the students had "almost certainly" colluded.

List two problems (1) with the main calculation error and (2) an even bigger logical error in inference; ignore the issue of continuity corrections and the accuracy of the Gaussian approximation.

2. [5 points]

As part of a survey, a large company asked 1000 of its employees how far they commute to work each day (round trip). The average round trip commute distance was 18 Km, with an SD of 25 Km. Would a rough sketch of the histogram for the data look more like (a) or (b) or (c)? Or is there a mistake somewhere? Explain your answer.



3 [5 points]

In a study of the effects of acid rain, a random sample of 100 trees from a particular forest are examined. Forty percent of these show some signs of damage. Which of the following statements are correct?

- 40% is a parameter
- 40% is a statistic
- 40% of all trees in this forest show signs of damage
- more than 40% of the trees in this forest show some signs of damage
- less than 40% of the trees in this forest show some signs of damage

4 [6 points]

In which of the following would X not have a Binomial distribution? Why?

- X = number of women in different random samples of size 20 from the 1990 directory of statisticians.
- X = number of occasions, out of a randomly selected sample of 100 occasions during the year, in which you were indoors. (One might use this design to estimate what proportion of time you spend indoors)
- X = number of months of the year in which it snows in Montreal.

5 [4 points]

A significance test gives a P-value of .04. From this we can... [indicate True/False for each]

- reject H_0 at the $\alpha = .01$ level
- reject H_0 at the $\alpha = .05$ level
- say that the probability that H_0 is false is .04. [be careful!]
- say that the probability that H_0 is true is .04. [be careful!]

6 [9 points]

A health department serves 50,000 households. As part of a survey, a simple random sample of 400 of these households are surveyed. The average number of adults in the sample households is 2.35, and the SD is 1.1.

- Sketch a possible frequency distribution showing the variability in the number of adults per household [don't spend a lot of time on trial and error getting the distribution to match the mean and SD exactly; only the general shape is required]
- If possible, find an approximate 95%-confidence interval for the average number of adults in all 50,000 households. If this isn't possible, explain why not.
- All adults in the 400 sample households are interviewed. This makes 940 people. On the average, the sample people watched 4.2 hours of television the Sunday before the survey, and the SD was 2.1 hours. If possible, find an approximate 95%-confidence interval for the average number of hours spent watching television by all adults in the 50,000 households on that Sunday. If this isn't possible, explain why not.

7. [6 points]

In a simple random sample ($n=225$) of all institutions of higher learning in the U.S., the average enrollment was 3,700, with an SD of 6,000. A histogram for the enrollments was plotted and did not follow the normal curve. However, the average enrollment at all institutions in the U.S. was estimated to be around 3,700 ($SE = 400$).

Say whether each of the following statements are true or false, and explain why.

- It is estimated that 95% of the institutions of higher learning in the U.S. enroll between $3,700-800 = 2,900$ and $3,700 + 800 = 4,500$ students.
- An approximate 95%-confidence interval for the average enrollment of all institutions runs from 2,900 to 4,500.
- If someone takes a simple random sample of 225 institutions and goes two SEs either way from the average enrollment of the 225 sample schools, there is about a 95% chance that this interval will cover the average enrollment of all schools.

8 [5 points]

A colony of laboratory mice consisted of several hundred animals. Their average weight was about 30 grams, with an SD of about 5 grams. As part of an experiment, graduate students were instructed to choose 25 animals haphazardly, without any definite method. The average weight of these animals turned out to be around 33 grams. Is choosing animals haphazardly the same as drawing them at random? Discuss briefly, carefully formulating the null and an alternative hypothesis, and computing Z and P.

9 [6 points]

An investigator at a large university is interested in the effect of exercise in maintaining mental ability. He decides to study the faculty members aged 40 to 50, looking separately at two groups: the ones who exercise regularly and the ones who don't. There are large numbers in each group, so he takes a simple random sample of 32 from each group, for detailed study. One of the things he does is to administer an IQ test to the sample people, with the following results:

	regular exercise	no regular exercise
sample size	32	32
average score	132	120
SD of scores	16	16

The difference between the averages is "highly statistically significant". The investigator concludes that exercise does indeed help to maintain mental ability among the faculty members aged 40 to 50 at his university.

- State the null and alternative hypotheses, calculate the p-value and verify the statement about the difference being "highly statistically significant"
- Is the investigator's conclusion justified? Why/why not?

10 [6 points] HIV-1 Transmission

Mastro estimated the probability of HIV-1 transmission, per sexual contact, from female prostitutes to male military prostitutes in Northern Thailand. His conservative estimate of the transmission probability, based on all men, was 0.031 (95% CI 0.025 - 0.040). In a subgroup of men not reporting a history of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) his estimate was 0.012 (0.006 - 0.025). He attributes this unexpectedly high value to the possible presence of STDs in female prostitutes (which may have enhanced HIV transmission) and/or high levels of infectivity among the prostitutes who are likely to be at an early stage of HIV infection.

Mastro apparently overlooks these explanations and assumes that the probability of transmission of HIV between regular partners would be the same as that in prostitute-client contacts. He then used this probability of 0.031 to calculate that over 90% of initially uninfected regular partners of seropositive persons would acquire infection over 1 year.

This is inconsistent with data from prospective studies in developing countries suggesting seroconversion rates among HIV- discordant partners of about 10% per year. If it is assumed that couples on average have two sexual contacts per week, then on the basis of simple probability calculations, this gives an average transmission probability per sexual contact of about 0.001 (over 30 times smaller than the conservative estimate of Mastro). [Excerpt from a letter to Editor of The Lancet, May 21, 1994]

- Carry out the calculation using the 0.031 to arrive at an estimate of "over 90%" [paragraph 2]; assume two sexual contacts per week..
- Assuming again two contacts per week, do the reverse calculation that produces an estimate of 'about 0.001' [paragraph 3].

11 [16 points] TOO TALL?

The US presidential campaign is now gathering pace, with all the customary razzmatazz. Much time and trouble could be saved, however, if the candidates simply had their height measured: with one exception, the President has always been the taller candidate. Tall people are credited with qualities expected of capable people. Nevertheless, all US presidents have been men and almost all studies showing the benefits of tallness have been conducted in male subjects. On casual reading, the paper by Normann and colleagues in Norway on height reduction in tall girls might seem surprising; clearly, positive views about tallness are not shared by Norwegian women. Some girls and their families believe that being "too tall" is a disadvantage, so much so that they are willing to undergo potentially risky treatment.

The Norwegian researchers describe the successful height reduction of 539 girls seen over fifteen years, whose final height prediction was greater than 2.5 standard deviations above the mean (> 181 cm). The population of Norway in 1990 was only 4.24 million, so the large number of patients reported must reflect the tallness of the Scandinavian race (average height 167 cm), the sociocultural definition of normal height, and a general willingness by doctors to treat tallness.... excerpt from Editorial in The Lancet Feb 8, 1992, p339.

Consider the sentences ("The Norwegian researchers... ..to treat tallness") of the second paragraph of the "Too Tall?" editorial above.

- If the relevant population base is 600,000 (six hundred thousand) girls, how many of them would meet the inclusion criteria? Use the data given and state any assumptions you make.
- From the data given, and any assumptions you make, calculate the 95th percentile of height in the female population.
- If the heights of men have a mean of 180 cm, but have the same standard deviation as those of women, what is the probability that a randomly chosen woman is taller than a randomly chosen man?

Consider the second and third sentences in the first paragraph

- State the hypothesis/claim, implied in the second sentence, in formal statistical terms.
- State the null hypothesis against which you can statistically test the claim.
- There are a few ways to test this; what test statistic you would use?
- What reference distribution will your use to describe the sampling variation of the test statistic under the null hypothesis?

(Third sentence) The number of elections on which the data are based is not given, but say for the sake of this exercise that it is 50.

- Lay out the steps involved in carrying out the statistical test. You do not need to carry out the detailed calculations but you should give sufficiently clear instructions that a non-statistical assistant could follow them.

12 [10 points]

Refer to the article "Inhibition of oxidation of low-density lipoprotein with red wine" by Kondo K et al. Lancet 344 page 1152 October 22, 1994

- Calculate the SD and variance of the 10 lag times at Day 0 and at Day 14.
- The authors used 'error bars' of ± 1 SE rather than \pm some larger multiple of the SE, presumably so as to ensure that the two CI's for day 0 and day 14 did not overlap. If you were going to put a 95% CI at each point, what multiple would you use?
- If the authors calculated a CI for the mean difference as $54.7 - 49.1 \pm m \sqrt{2.6^2 + 2.2^2}$, they would find that for any multiple m bigger than about 1.65, the corresponding confidence interval included a mean difference of zero. Does this mean that the difference is not statistically significant at conventional levels of significance? How does one reconcile this with the $p < 0.01$ reported by the authors?

[Calculating the SE based as $\sqrt{s^2[1/10 + 1/10]}$ where s^2 is the weighted average of the two variances, would give the same SE in this example; so the issue is not one of separate versus pooled variances! Nor is it an issue of 1- versus 2-sided tests!]

13 [5 points]

Length of published reports

Sir: On completion of a study most researchers want to get their results published at the highest possible level. Do most papers need to be as long as they typically are? Despite editorial attempts to limit article lengths, most authors make statements in the summary, repeat some of them in the introduction, describe them in the materials and results sections, and emphasize and elaborate on them in the discussion. Is all this repetition necessary? Do we as doctors or scientists need to have something repeated 2 or 3 times before we accept or understand it? We think not. We think that papers could be shortened without losing their message if much of the repetition was eliminated, details of standard methods were referenced, and the discussion confined to key elements of the study with a minimum of conjecture.

The Scots have a saying that "guid gear often comes in sma' bulk". Although articles in The Lancet are typically concise (mean 3.9, SD 1.1 columns in November, 1993, vs. 4.2 [1.0] in the British Medical Journal [ns] and 5.7 [1.3] in the New England Journal of Medicine [$p < 0.001$], one way that more articles, such as short reports, could be published each week would be to ask authors of full papers to reduce them by 300 or 600 words as a condition of publication; they can do this better than most. With more space available for short reports it would become easier to get one published.

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From the type of summary statistics he used, assume he did a parametric test. Write out the formula for the test; do you have enough information to carry out it out? If not, what is missing?

14 [20 points]

Refer to the article "Variability of young children's energy intake" by Birch in the NEJM Vol 324: pages 322-325 Jan 24, 1991

- Use hypothetical data to illustrate what the authors mean when they say "the CV makes it possible to compare the variability of measures with different mean values [3rd sentence, statistical analysis portion of methods]."
- Explain how the 15 point estimates of Figure 1 were calculated and what they represent.
- Explain carefully how the standard errors in Fig 1 were calculated i.e. what exactly are the components in the SE. Use hypothetical data to illustrate.

- Why did the authors use SE's in Fig 1? After all, isn't the study about SD's, nor SE's?
- Can you check from the data in the article whether the authors might have mixed up SE and SD?
- In Fig 2, what does each point represent? Use hypothetical data to show how one lunch data point was calculated.
- assume that within a particular child (i) across days, the average daily intake is 1500 Kcal (ii) across days, the average intake from each type of meal averages 250 Kcal meal/day (lunch is probably bigger and snacks probably smaller but this simplifying assumption does not change the argument) (iii) for the same type of meal across days, the child's intake from that type of meal has a CV of 30% i.e. a SD of 75 Kcal (iv) the intakes from the six meals in the same or different days are all uncorrelated.

How big would the CV be for the total of the 6 intakes in a day?

Compare your answer with the reported mean within subject CV for total daily energy intake [10.4%, end of 2nd paragraph of results]. Comment on whether the assumption of strong negative correlation between energy intake at one meal and the next meal [see next paragraph] is needed to explain the observed CV for total daily intake.

- Write a short statistical paragraph to the editor explaining how the smaller CV for total daily intake that the individual meal intake could be expected, even if there were no negative correlation. Try to use words rather than formulae.

Authorship

Editors (and others) are beginning to ask authors of multi--author research articles to say how much each contributed to the article. In the same spirit, and given that this take-home examination allows people to go 'solo' or to collaborate, please indicate on your answer sheet whether this was a 'solo' effort, or, if not, who your collaborators were.

If a group of you wish to hand in one team effort, that will make the job of correcting the work easier.