

TEACHING of STATISTICS in the HEALTH SCIENCES

Jodi Lapidus

From the Section Chair



Newsletter Highlights

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Hello Section Members! Welcome to the summer months of 2010. I hope many of you have had a fruitful year thus far, and have been involved in stimulating activities in both your professional and personal lives. The section has been busy this year, not only planning for the Joint Statistical Meetings (thank you to Mary Gray and Nichole Carlson, 2010 and 2011 Program Chairs, respectively), but also getting involved in some new activities. I must thank Patrick Arbogast, 2009 Section Chair, Ed Gracely our newsletter editor, and Bob Oster for helping keep me on track with Section Chair duties.

As for my own stimulating professional activities in the teaching arena, this June I taught in the Summer Research Training Institute for American Indian and Alaska Native Health Professionals, sponsored by my university (Oregon Health & Science University), Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board and the US Indian Health Service. This is an activity I have had the fortune to participate in for many years, usually teaching introductory biostatistics topics and/or statistical software use. This year, I am proud to note that a course on Intermediate Biostatistics Concepts was requested and developed (and well attended, I might add, by really smart/motivated native students and professionals from all over the US, including Alaska and Hawaii). What is so successful about institutes such as these is that they foster careers of individuals who are best suited to identify and solve public health problems of the communities from which they come. I have just shared one of my passions... looking to more non-traditional teaching opportunities health science-oriented statistics... and I hope I can bring some ideas in

that arena to the section. In that same vein, I call everyone's attention to the invited panel session that Mary Gray organized for our section at JSM, *Teaching to Diversity*, which will be held on Monday, 8/2/10, 10:30 AM - 12:20 PM, in the Convention Center room 118. It promises to be an interesting discussion and we look forward to having a large and engaged audience.

One new activity I would like to make the section membership aware of is our involvement in meetings of the ASA Education Council which is comprised of all education-oriented committees, sections, groups within ASA (see all the councils at <http://www.amstat.org/committees/committeelist.cfm>). The Section Chairs of TSHS and Stat Ed are naturally included as part of this group. On a recent conference call, it became clear (to me at least) that there are untapped synergies between various ASA education-focused committees and sections. In particular, the Committee on Outreach Education has many common interests. I have had preliminary discussions with leaders of that committee about jointly sponsoring educational webinars, and possibly sponsoring activities at future meetings together. Of course, we will keep membership posted about progress, and welcome involvement and ideas of others.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at JSM in Vancouver, which is just around the corner! I have already alluded to some exciting activities that TSHS section has scheduled. But, please be sure to search the online JSM 2010 program to see activities sponsored or co-sponsored by our section (<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2010/onlineprogram/index.cfm>). Also, please reserve time in your busy JSM schedule to attend the TSHS Business Meeting and Mixer which will be held Monday evening, 8/2/10, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM in the Convention Center room 208.

If we do not get to meet in person at JSM, or if you would like to connect with me before that time, please feel free to drop me a note any time at lapidusj@ohsu.edu. Thank you to all for helping to grow and for keeping our section invigorated with such wonderful energy all these years.



JSM 2010 – TSHS sessions

Mary Gray and Nichole Carlson



“Teaching to Diversity” is the title of the TSHS sponsored invited session at the Vancouver JSM. Organized by Program Chair Mary Gray of American University, the session reflects diversity of audience ethnicity, discipline, and geography. “Open wide! Statistics for dentists” is the title of Nora Donaldson’s talk (Kings College London Dental Institute). Patrick Arbogast (Vanderbilt) will relate his experience “Teaching pharmacoepidemiology/biostatistics to healthcare professionals in Japan,” while Violeta Nolberto (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima) will talk about “Teaching biostatistics with Peruvian health cases.” For an even broader sweep, we will hear Gary Shapiro (Statisticians without Borders) speak on “Health statistics without borders.” Finally, the topic of Jodi Lapidus (Oregon Health Sciences University) is “Training Native researchers and practitioners to effectively understand and utilize health-related data.”

Contributed talks include Lori Lyn Price’s description of an outreach program at Tufts University, Tufts Medical Center and affiliates, “Successes and lessons learned in developing a research training program” and “Use of case studies in a graduate course in applied regression,” described by Scott Emerson of the biostatistics department at the University of Washington. Deborah Dawson of the University of Iowa is also concerned with the statistical training of dentists in her talk, “Presentation of advanced statistical modeling topics in the graduate dental education setting.” Also discipline-focused are “Statistical concepts busy clinicians need to know” by Darcy Vavrek of the Western States Chiropractic College and “QIS in teaching an elementary class in statistical literacy to nursing majors” by Robert Dean Curley of the University of Central Oklahoma.

There will be three round table coffee sessions organized by Program Chair–elect Nichole Carlson of University of Colorado Denver (UCD). Two of the sessions cover new ideas coming out of the Clinical and Translational Science Awards. Jeri Harwood (UCD) will be discussing “Promoting statistical literacy among clinical and laboratory researchers” a “Statistics 101” seminar series and Laurel Beckett (University of California-Davis) will be discussing “CTSpedia Education Initiatives: Statistics Teaching, the Clinical and Translational Science Award Sites, and the Web” a new web based repository for statistical teaching tools. Finally, Paulette Ceesay (Merck) and Darcy Hille (Temple University) will be talking about “Incorporating Lean Six Sigma into a MBA Statistics Course” using health sciences examples.

For a more detailed list, see the next article.

SECTION JSM 2010 PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

Contributed by Mary Gray, Program Chair (2010) and Robert Oster, Publications Officer (2010) *To appear in the July 2010 issue of Amstat News. Provided with permission.*

Officers of the Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences (TSHS) Section are pleased to present the section's diverse and exciting portion of the JSM 2010 program. As described below, the section is sponsoring and co-sponsoring a wide variety of invited and contributed sessions, posters, and roundtables on statistical education and training. Please search the online JSM 2010 program for a complete list of all TSHS-related activities. We look forward to seeing you at TSHS activities in Vancouver!

Section meeting and mixer

On Monday, August 2, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., the section will hold its annual business meeting and mixer, open to all JSM participants. A highlight of this meeting will be the presentation of the new TSHS Outstanding Teaching Award to a section member.

Invited sessions

"Teaching to Diversity," an invited panel featuring applications and the conference theme of Innovation in a Data-Centric World, will take place on Monday, August 2, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m. Speakers from the US, the UK and Peru will discuss the challenges and rewards in teaching statistics to diverse professional and geographic audiences as well as serving as Statisticians without Borders consultants to a variety of projects around the world. The session is co-sponsored by the Section on Statistics and the Environment.

The invited panel "Establishing a Career in Statistics Education" will introduce various paths that present themselves in this field. Scheduled for Tuesday, August 3, 8:30-10:20 a.m., it is co-sponsored with the Section on Statistical Education and the Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts.

Co-sponsored with *The American Statistician*, the Committee on Career Development, the Section on Quality and Productivity, and the Section on Statistical Education and focusing on the conference theme is the invited panel "Statistics Training in a Data-Centric World." At the Thursday, August 5, 10:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m. time slot will be speakers from academe and the government.

Topic-contributed sessions

Establishing the reality of and prospects for professional service is the panel "Statistics in the Community: Present and Future." This Sunday, August 1, 4:00-5:50 pm. session is co-sponsored with the Sections on Statistical Consulting and on Quality and Productivity.

The session "Statistical Literacy 2010" includes the topics "Probability in Decline" and "The Undetectable Difference: An Experimental Look at the 'Problem' of p-Values" as well as the

perhaps more expected statistical literacy short course, statistical literacy for managers and statistical literacy as a quantitative rhetoric course. The Section on Statistical Education is the principal sponsor for this Monday, August 2, 8:30-10:20 a.m. session.

A session on “Consulting for Translational Research: Emerging Issues and Recommendations” looks at this critical topic of rising importance. Perspectives include transition from genetic studies to personalized medicine, the role of bench scientists, and regulatory challenges as well as the provocative “Translational Research and the T1-T2 continuum: Implications for Statisticians.” Scheduled for Tuesday, August 3, 2:00-3:50 p.m., its principal sponsor is the Section on Statistical Consulting.

On Wednesday, August 4, 8:30-10:20 a.m., there is a panel on the ever-popular topic “NIH funding of Biostatistical Research and Training.” Co-sponsors are the Biometrics Section and ENAR. Among the speakers will be representatives of funders and of recipients of funds.

The panel “Survey Data and Online Analysis Systems” will feature their use in the classroom in a variety of settings. Scheduled for Thursday, August 5, 8:30-10:20 a.m., its principal sponsor is the Section on Statistical Education

Contributed sessions

An Oral Poster Presentation will take place Monday, August 2, from 2:00 to 3:50 p.m. The topics include the relationship between attitude and knowledge in healthcare statistics, attitudes and beliefs toward statistics of health science students, the development of a non-credit research training program for clinical researchers and the intriguing “Respondent-Driven Sampling Implementation in Rural Arkansas: Lessons Learned.”

“Biostatistics in the Health Sciences: Improving Literacy, Building Careers” examines issues in teaching nursing majors, dentists-to-be, public health students, and clinicians. The long-term problem of “Building the Biostatistics Pipeline” is discussed, and the captivating question “Misuse of Statistical Terms: What Should We Do About It?” is addressed. This happens Wednesday, August 4, 10:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.

Roundtables

On Monday, August 2, 7:30-8:15 a.m., there is a Roundtable with Coffee on “Incorporating Lean Six Sigma Into an MBA Statistics Course.”

The following day you can have coffee with “CTSpedia Education Initiatives: Statistics Teaching, the Clinical and Translational Science Award Sites, and the Web.” Tuesday, August 3, 7:00-8:15 a.m.

Then on Wednesday, August 4, wake up with “Promoting Statistical Literacy Among Clinical and Laboratory Researchers.” 7:00-8:15 a.m.

**BOOK
REVIEW**

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Robert Alan Greevy, Jr, PhD
Assistant Professor of Biostatistics
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine



Title: Data Analysis and Graphics Using R: An Example-Based Approach (Cambridge Series in Statistical and Probabilistic Mathematics) [Hardcover]

Authors: John Maindonald and W. John Braun

Publisher: Cambridge

Year of Publication: 2010 (3rd edition)

Number of Pages: 552

ISBN-10: 0521762936

ISBN-13: 978-0521762939

Price: \$80.00 (USA list price)

Becoming facile in several statistical methods requires not only learning the statistical philosophies of those methods and their mathematical foundation, but also their elements of good practice and a set of tools to implement them. It is these last two elements of applied statistical analysis where teaching through example is often the best approach. Such is the strategy taken by *Data Analysis and Graphics Using R: An Example-Based Approach*. This text provides an example-driven guide to using R for several statistical methods. The text assumes prior exposure to statistical philosophy and basic methodology. It provides a brief review of the concepts of inference, but not enough for someone who has not already had an introductory statistics course. The bulk of the text is on regression methodology, including linear regression, multiple linear regression, generalized linear models, survival analysis, time series models, multi-level models and repeated measures, and tree-based classification. The authors have chosen a nice selection of additional methods to present, including spline smooths, regression on propensity scores or principal components, regression using Bayesian

MCMC, and many useful topics for working with and graphing in R.

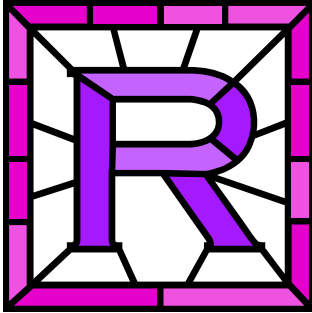
In general, the text is very readable. The writing itself is pithy; at points, bordering on terse. It is not weighed down by excessive explanation, but there are frequently sections where further discussion would have been helpful. The authors provide additional resources listed throughout the text for those looking for where to find more detailed explanations. The graphs are well chosen and well done throughout -- highlighting one of the strengths of the R program. The R code, which is the meat most readers will skim for, is set off in verbatim font. This readability, along with the inclusion of a solid index, make the text useful as a reference book that can be quickly skimmed for how to perform a certain analysis. The exercises contain both material review questions and extension questions. Solutions can be found on the book's website:

<http://maths.anu.edu.au/~johnm/r-book/>.

At the time this review is being written, the website is simply a directory structure with links to adequately named folders and files. A hidden gem on the website is the inclusion of the Sweave code that generated the pdf solutions files. In the spirit of teaching by examples, this is a nice inclusion.

Data Analysis and Graphics Using R: An Example-Based Approach is a good text for an applied statistics course where the primary aim of the course is to teach the students R, the secondary aim is to teach good statistical practices, and the tertiary aim is to expose the

students to several popular regression based methods. While this is not the text your students will use to get a deep understanding of statistical methods, it is the book they will keep on their shelf to refer back to long after the course is over.



Fingerspelling "R"

Is it called ρ in Greece?

**American Statistical Association
Section on Teaching Statistics in the Health Sciences
Minutes of the Annual Executive Committee Meeting
Joint Statistical Meetings, Washington, DC
August 2, 2009**

Present: Patrick Arbogast (Chair), Jodi Lapidus (Chair-Elect), Motomi Mori (Chair-Elect-Elect), Carol Bigelow (Program Chair), Mary Gray (Program Chair-Elect), Constantine Daskalakis (Secretary/Treasurer-Elect), Cyndy Long (Council of Sections Representative-Elect), Bob Oster (Publications Officer), Ed Gracely (Newsletter Editor), Dan Byrne (Book Review Editor)

Patrick called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

INTRODUCTIONS

All attendees introduced themselves. Since Lynn Ackerson (Secretary/Treasurer) was not present, Bob took the minutes.

NEW OFFICERS

Patrick introduced the following individuals as our newly elected officers: Motomi Mori as Chair-Elect for 2010, Constantine Daskalakis as Secretary/Treasurer for 2010-2011, and Cyndy Long as Council of Sections (COS) Representative for 2010-2012.

JSM UPDATE

Carol reviewed our two invited sessions and our contributed paper session. She also discussed the surveys that we would be using to obtain information from session attendees for our best paper awards.

Mary reviewed our coffee roundtable. She next mentioned that September 8 was the deadline for organized invited sessions (for the 2010 JSM) to be submitted to the JSM Program Committee. Mary then said that she would contact the Section on Statistical Education (Stat. Ed.) Program Chair to see if some of the sessions submitted to that section should really be in the TSHS JSM program instead. She then described ideas for TSHS invited sessions. Mary asked if TSHS should do more in the area of public relations, and then mentioned that TSHS should consider running a table at the 2010 JSM and offering small items such as bookmarks to JSM attendees. Mary and Carol then briefly discussed the "International Education for Health Professionals" program.

Jodi suggested that TSHS sponsor at least one coffee roundtable each year at the JSM.

Cyndy announced that Bob was the recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Achievement Award. She mentioned the various TSHS positions that Bob had served in during the past several years.

OFFICER REPORTS

Program Chair – Carol gave most of her report under "JSM Update". She added that she was very appreciative of all who helped out with the TSHS JSM program.

COS Representative – Patrick presented the COS Representative report since Janine Janosky (COS Representative) was not present. He attended the earlier meeting of all COS representatives, and then shared the following information:

- a.) Sections need to get their budgets to ASA prior to the deadline.
- b.) Occasionally, ASA members win multiple best paper awards from different sections during the same calendar year. In particular, some student members have been submitting their papers to multiple sections that offer best paper awards, and have been winning awards from more than one section. Should members be restricted to one best paper award per calendar year?
- c.) More section members are needed to make nominations for section awards.
- d.) Next year, the Council of Sections will allocate additional invited sessions for 2011 and beyond. TSHS has had only one allocated invited session until now. Should TSHS ask for an additional invited session for 2011 and 2012? (The TSHS Executive Committee was in favor of this.) TSHS could also consider using unused invited sessions from the Council of Outreach Education (COE), or at least partnering with the COE for their invited sessions.

Secretary/Treasurer – Patrick presented the Secretary/Treasurer report since Lynn was not present. He presented a brief membership update for TSHS, and noted that our membership numbers have been increasing. He reviewed our revenue and expense statements for 2008 (full year) and for 2009 (January-July). He also asked that all corrections to the minutes for the 2008 TSHS executive committee meeting be given to him.

Publications Officer – Bob presented the Publications Officer report. He first mentioned that the TSHS Executive Committee had re-appointed him as the Publications Officer for the next two years (2010-2011). He noted that he writes a column for each issue of the TSHS newsletter that describes things such as section publications and the section website. Bob then mentioned that he continues to have the website updated as needed. He reported that Cyndy wrote an article for Amstat News about his receiving the TSHS Distinguished Achievement Award. He mentioned that he intended to have a second article in Amstat News describing the TSHS JSM program, but that this article did not appear in print due to some confusion between him, Patrick, and Carol. Bob said that he will try to make sure that we have an article in Amstat News in 2010 that describes our JSM program. He also said that his goal is for TSHS to have at least two articles published per year in Amstat News.

Newsletter Editor – Ed presented the Newsletter Editor report. He stated that things were going well with the production of the newsletter. He then mentioned that he is looking for more contributions of articles (especially short ones) and book reviews for future issues of the newsletter.

Book Review Editor – Dan presented the Book Review Editor report. He mentioned that Robert Greevy would be serving as the new book review editor. Dan also said that he had enjoyed serving in this position for the past several years.

Past Chair – No report was presented since Scott Evans (Past Chair) was not present at the meeting.

Chair-Elect (2009) – Jodi presented the Chair-Elect report. She suggested that TSHS sponsor an invited or topic contributed session on “diversity in teaching”. She also mentioned that TSHS should continue to sponsor webinars and that the section should expand its outreach (to non-TSHS members).

Chair-Elect (2010) – Motomi introduced herself as the 2011 Chair, and expressed appreciation to the section members who voted for her in the ASA-TSHS election.

Program Chair-Elect – Mary gave most of her report under “JSM Update”. She also asked for ideas for TSHS sessions for the 2010 JSM.

Program Chair-Elect-Elect – Jodi stated that Nichole Carlson of the University of Colorado at Denver was appointed as the Program Chair-Elect-Elect (Program Chair-Elect in 2010 and Program Chair in 2011).

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Charter Review – Bob stated that the revisions to the TSHS charter that were proposed by the Charter Review Committee were approved by the TSHS membership in the ASA-TSHS election. He briefly reviewed what the specific revisions were. The Executive Committee asked him to try to get a count of how many TSHS members voted in our elections, how many voted to approve the charter revisions, and how many voted to disapprove of the charter revisions.

OTHER UPDATES

Awards – Patrick stated that there is no Young Investigator Award this year since no one applied for this award. He also mentioned that the winners of the Best Invited Paper Award and the Best Contributed Paper Award have not yet been selected since the paper sessions had not yet taken place.

ENAR 2010 – Patrick will attempt to find a TSHS member to serve as our representative on the 2011 ENAR Program Committee. Constantine served as our representative on the 2010 ENAR Program Committee, upon the request of Scott. It was too late for Constantine to arrange a session when he was appointed as our representative, but he did help with the ranking of the proposals for the 2010 ENAR sessions.

Other Issues – Bob suggested that TSHS develop an award for outstanding teaching (of statistics in the health sciences). He mentioned that this award could be offered every year (but does not have to be offered every year), that the award winner does not need to be a TSHS member, that the award consist of a certificate and a monetary amount to be determined later, and that the award committee consist of the Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past Chair. This suggestion was received favorably by the Executive Committee. Bob will write up draft guidelines for the award and will seek comments and final approval from the Executive Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Patrick adjourned the meeting at 7:35 PM.

FROM THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICER

Robert A. Oster, Ph.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham

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Previous issues of this newsletter contain annual updates on TSHS-sponsored publications and information on selected articles in TSHS publications from 2000 on forward (Oster 2007, 2008, 2009). Following is the update for 2009.

In Table 1, the annual and cumulative totals for the following categories for the years 2000-2009 are provided:

- TSHS newsletter articles covering teaching and consulting methods
- Book reviews appearing in the TSHS newsletter
- TSHS-sponsored JSM proceedings papers
- TSHS-sponsored ENAR proceedings papers

These totals do not include counts of columns or other types of articles that have appeared in the TSHS newsletter, or of JSM proceedings papers based on presentations given in TSHS co-sponsored sessions where TSHS was not the primary sponsor.

TSHS sponsored a total of five publications in the selected categories during 2009 (refer to Table 1). This total is fewer than the number of TSHS-sponsored publications in some of the previous years. I am pleased to say that we had one book review in each issue, thanks to the efforts of Robert Greevy and Dan Byrne, and that the number of proceedings papers held constant.

TSHS continues to sponsor JSM proceedings papers each year, so please remember to consider publishing your work in the JSM proceedings if you present in a TSHS-sponsored session at the JSM or ENAR annual meeting. Please note that publishing your article in the TSHS newsletter or JSM proceedings does not preclude you from publishing this work in a peer-reviewed journal since you will retain the copyright on the article.

Table 1. Number of Selected Articles in TSHS-Sponsored Publications from 2000-2009

Year	TSHS Newsletter Pieces		JSM Proceedings Publications		Total
	Topic Articles	Book Reviews	From JSM	From ENAR	
2000	3	2	5	--	10
2001	2	0	2	--	4
2002	2	2	5	--	9
2003	1	2	10	--	13
2004	1	5	5	--	11
2005	1	4	7	--	12
2006	0	3	4	--	7
2007	0	3	4	4	11
2008	3	2	1	1	7
2009	0	3	2	0	5
Total	13	26	45	5	89

Following is a list of the five articles referred to in Table 1 for 2009.

1. "Building Bridges: Making Statistical Issues Accessible to the Biomedical and Translational Researcher" by Taylor R. Pressler, Philip F. Binkley, and Philip R.O. Payne, appearing in the 2009 JSM proceedings (pages 119-129) as a paper presented at the 2009 JSM.
2. "On Developing a Master's-Level Course in Biostatistical Consulting" by Stephen W. Looney and Jennifer L. Waller, appearing in the 2009 JSM proceedings (pages 4991-4995) as a paper presented at the 2009 JSM.
3. Review of "Statistical Modeling for Biomedical Researchers: A Simple Introduction to the Analysis of Complex Data (2nd edition)" by Ray Hoffmann, appearing as a book review in the spring 2009 issue of the TSHS newsletter (pages 5-6).
4. Review of "Sams Teach Yourself SQL in 10 Minutes (3rd edition)" by Robert Greevy, appearing as a book review in the summer 2009 issue of the TSHS newsletter (pages 5-6).
5. Review of "R Through Excel: A Spreadsheet Interface for Statistics, Data Analysis, and Graphics" by Robert Greevy, appearing as a book review in the fall 2009 issue of the TSHS newsletter (pages 4-5).

That is all for this column. I will have another column in the fall 2010 issue of this newsletter!

REFERENCES

Oster, B (2007). From the publications officer: Update on TSHS publications. Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences Newsletter, Summer 2007, 4.

Oster, RA (2008). From the publications officer: Report on TSHS publications during 2007. Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences Newsletter, Spring 2008, 7-9.

Oster, RA (2009). From the publications officer: Report on TSHS publications during 2008. Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences Newsletter, Spring 2009, 3-4.

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**FROM THE EDITOR**

Hope to see some of you in the Pacific northwest in a few weeks. Looking forward to a good JSM and a bit of exploring of a fine city!

Ed

American Statistical Association

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

Section on Teaching Statistics in the Health Sciences

Section web page: http://www.bio.ri.ccf.org/ASA_TSHS/html/index.html

Links to all newsletters: http://www.bio.ri.ccf.org/ASA_TSHS/html/newsletter.htm