Contents

	Incidence Studies 21	
Introduction 1	Cumulative Incidence 21	
	Incidence Density (Person-Years) 21	
Clinical Questions and Clinical Epidemiology 2 Health Outcomes 2 The Scientific Basis for Clinical Medicine 3 Basic Principles 5 Variables 6 Numbers and Probability 6 Populations and Samples 6 Bias (Systematic Error) 6	Basic Elements of Frequency Studies 22 What Is a Case? Defining the Numerator 22 What Is the Population? Defining the Denominator 24 Does the Study Sample Represent the Population? 25 Distribution of Disease by Time, Place, and Person 25	
Chance 10	Time 25	
The Effects of Bias and Chance	Place 26	
Are Cumulative 10	Person 26	
Internal and External Validity 11	Uses of Prevalence Studies 27	
Information and Decisions 12	What Are Prevalence Studies Good for? 27	
Organization of This Book 12	What Are Prevalence Studies Not Particularly Good for? 28	
2 Frequency 17 Are Words Suitable Substitutes for Numbers? 17	3 Abnormality 31	
Prevalence and Incidence 18	Types of Data 32	
Prevalence 18	Nominal Data 32 Ordinal Data 32	
Incidence 18	Interval Data 32	
Prevalence and Incidence	Performance of Measurements 33	
in Relation to Time 19	Validity 33	
Relationships Among Prevalence, Incidence, and Duration of Disease 19	Reliability 34	
Some Other Rates 20	Range 35	
Studies of Prevalence and Incidence 20	Responsiveness 35	

Prevalence Studies 21

Interpretability 35

Variation 36 Variation Resulting from Measurement 36 Variation Resulting from Biologic Differences 36 Total Variation 37 Effects of Variation 38 Distributions 39 Describing Distributions 39 Actual Distributions 39 The Normal Distribution 39 Criteria for Abnormality 41 Abnormal = Unusual 42	Likelihood Ratios 68 Odds 68 Definitions 69 Use of Likelihood Ratios 69 Why Use Likelihood Ratios? 69 Calculating Likelihood Ratios 70 Multiple Tests 71 Parallel Testing 72 Clinical Prediction Rules 73 Serial Testing 74 Serial Likelihood Ratios 74 Assumption of Independence 74
Abnormal = Biologic Dysfunction 43 Abnormal = Illness 45	
Abnormal = Treating the Condition Leads to a Better Clinical Outcome 47 Regression to the Mean 48	5 Risk: Basic Principles 78
	Risk Measurement 79
4 Diagnosis 53	Risk Factors 79 Recognizing Risk Factors 80 Long Latency 80
Simplifying Data 53 The Accuracy of a Test Result 54 The Gold Standard 55 Sensitivity and Specificity 55 Definitions 55 Use of Sensitive Tests 55 Use of Specific Tests 57 Trade-Offs Between Sensitivity and Specificity 57 The Receiver Operator Characteristic (ROC) Curve 58	Immediate Versus Distant Causes 80 Common Exposure to Risk Factors 80 Low Incidence of Disease 81 Small Risk 81 Multiple Causes and Multiple Effects 81 Risk Factors May or May Not Be Causal 81 Risk Prediction Models 82 Combining Multiple Factors 82 Evaluating Risk Prediction Tools 83 Discrimination 83 Calibration 85 Validating Models 86
Studies of Diagnostic Tests 59 Spectrum of Patients—the Study Population 60 Bias 61 Chance 61 Imperfect Gold Standards 62	External Validation 86 Comparing Models 87 Assessing Models in Clinical Practice 87 Risk Stratification 87 Clinical Uses of Risk Factors, Prognostic Factors,
Predictive Value 64 Definitions 64 Determinants of Predictive Value 65 Estimating Prevalence (Pretest Probability) 66 Implications for Interpreting the Medical Literature 68	and Risk Prediction Tools 88 Risk Prediction and Pretest Probability for Diagnostic Testing 88 Using Risk Factors to Choose Treatment 89 Risk Stratification for Screening Programs 89 Removing Risk Factors to Prevent Disease 89

Risk: Exposure to Disease

Studies of Risk 92

When Experiments Are Not Possible or Ethical 92

Cohorts 93

Cohort Studies 93

Prospective and Historical Cohort Studies 94

Advantages and Disadvantages

of Cohort Studies 96

Ways to Express and Compare Risk 98

Absolute Risk 99

Attributable Risk 99

Relative Risk 99

Interpreting Attributable and Relative Risk 99

Population Risk 100

Taking Other Variables into Account 101

Extraneous Variables 101

Simple Descriptions of Risk 101

Confounding 102

Working Definition 102

Potential Confounders 102

Confirming Confounding 102

Control of Confounding 103

Randomization 103

Restriction 103

Matching 104

Stratification 104

Standardization 105

Multivariable Adjustment 105

Overall Strategy for Control of Confounding 106

Observational Studies and Cause 106

Effect Modification 106

Mendelian Randomization 107

Risk: From Disease to Exposure 111

Case-Control Studies 112

Design of Case-Control Studies 114

The Source Population 114

Selecting Cases 114

Selecting Controls 114

Measuring Exposure 116

The Odds Ratio: An Estimate of Relative Risk 118

Odds Ratio Calculation 119

Odds Ratio as an Indirect

Estimate of Relative Risk 119

Odds Ratio as a Direct Estimate

of Relative Risk 120

Controlling for

Extraneous Variables 120

Investigation of a

Disease Outbreak 121

Prognosis 126

Differences in Risk and Prognostic Factors 126

The Patients Are Different 127

The Outcomes Are Different 127

The Rates Are Different 127

The Factors May be Different 127

Clinical Course and Natural History

of Disease 127

Elements of Prognostic Studies 127

Patient Sample 127

7ero Time 128

Follow-Up 129

Outcomes of Disease 129

Describing Prognosis 129

A Trade-Off: Simplicity Versus

More Information 129

Survival Analysis 130

Survival of a Cohort 130

Survival Curves 132

Interpreting Survival Curves 133

Identifying Prognostic Factors 133

Case Series 134

Clinical Prediction Rules 134

Bias in Cohort Studies 135

Sampling Bias 136

Migration Bias 136

Phases of Clinical Trials 158

Measurement Bias 136	
Bias from "Non-differential"	10
Misclassification 137	Prevention 162
Bias from Missing Data 137	-
Bias, Perhaps, But Does It Matter? 137	Preventive Activities in Clinical
Sensitivity Analysis 137	Settings 162
	Types of Clinical Prevention 163
	Levels of Prevention 163
	Primary Prevention 163
Treatment 142	Secondary Prevention 164
	Tertiary Prevention 164
Ideas and Evidence 142	Confusion About Primary, Secondary, and
Ideas 142	Tertiary Prevention 164
Testing Ideas 143	Scientific Approach to Clinical Prevention 165
Studies of Treatment Effects 144	Burden of Suffering 165
Observational and Experimental Studies	Effectiveness of Treatment 166
of Treatment Effects 144 Randomized Controlled Trials 144	Treatment in Primary Prevention 166
	•
Ethics 145	Treatment in Secondary Prevention 167
Sampling 145 Intervention 147	Treatment in Tertiary Prevention 168
	Methodologic Issues in Evaluating Screening Programs 169
Comparison Groups 147 Allocating Treatment 148	Prevalence and Incidence Screens 169
Differences Arising After Randomization 149	Special Biases 169
Blinding 150	Performance of
Assessment of Outcomes 150	Screening Tests 172
Efficacy and Effectiveness 152	High Sensitivity and Specificity 172
Intention-to-Treat and	Detection and Incidence Methods
Explanatory Trials 153	for Calculating Sensitivity 173
Superiority, Equivalence, and Noninferiority 153	Low Positive Predictive Value 174
Variations on Basic Randomized Trials 155	Simplicity and Low Cost 174
Tailoring the Results of Trials to Individual	Safety 175
Patients 156	Acceptable to Patients and
Subgroups 156	Clinicians 175
Effectiveness in Individual Patients 156	Unintended Consequences
N of 1 Trials 156	of Screening 175
Alternatives to Randomized Controlled	Risk of False-Positive Result 176
Trials 157	Risk of Negative Labeling Effect 176
Limitations of Randomized Trials 157	Risk of Overdiagnosis (Pseudodisease) in
Observational Studies	Cancer Screening 177
of Interventions 157	Incidentalomas 178
Clinical Databases 158	Changes in Screening Tests and Treatments
Randomized Versus	Over Time 179
Observational Studies? 158	Weighing Benefits Against Harms of

Prevention 179

11	Chance	185
Two Approach	es to Chance	185
Hypothesis Te	sting 186	
Falso-Positiv	and False-Na	anative Statistical

False-Positive and False-Negative Statistical Results 186

Concluding That a Treatment Works 186
Dichotomous and Exact *P* Values 187
Statistical Significance and
Clinical Importance 187
Statistical Tests 188

Concluding That a Treatment Does Not Work 189

How Many Study Patients Are Enough? 190

Statistical Power 190

Estimating Sample Size Requirements 190

Point Estimates and Confidence Intervals 193

Statistical Power After a Study Is Completed 194

Detecting Rare Events 194
Multiple Comparisons 194
Subgroup Analysis 196
Multiple Outcomes 197

Noninferiority Studies 198 Multivariable Methods 198 Bayesian Reasoning 200

12 Cause 204

Basic Principles 205

Single Causes 205 Multiple Causes 205

Proximity of Cause to Effect 206

Indirect Evidence for Cause 208

Examining Individual Studies 208 Hierarchy of Research Designs 209

The Body of Evidence for and Against Cause 209

Does Cause Precede Effect? 210
Strength of the Association 210
Dose–Response Relationships 210

Reversible Associations 211
Consistency 211
Biologic Plausibility 211
Specificity 212
Analogy 212
Aggregate Risk Studies 212

Modeling 214
Weighing the Evidence 216

Summarizing the Evidence 219

Traditional Reviews 219
Systematic Reviews 220

Defining a Specific Question 220

Selecting Studies 221

Assessing Study Quality and Characteristics 223

Summarizing Results 225

Combining Studies in Meta-Analyses 226

Are the Studies Similar Enough to Justify Combining? 226

How Are the Results Pooled? 227

Identifying Reasons for Heterogeneity 228

Additional Meta-Analysis Methods 229

Patient-Level Meta-Analysis 229 Network Meta-Analysis 230 Cumulative Meta-Analyses 230

Systematic Reviews of Observational and Diagnostic Studies 231

Strengths and Weaknesses of Meta-Analyses 232

14 Knowledge Management 236

Basic Principles 236

Do It Yourself or Delegate? 236 Which Medium? 237

Grading Information 237

Misleading Reports of Research Findings 233

Looking Up Answers to Clinical Questions 239

Solutions 239

Surveillance on New Developments 241

xiv Contents

Journals 242

"Reading" Journals 243

Guiding Patients' Quest for Health
Information 245

Putting Knowledge Management
into Practice 245

APPENDIX A: ANSWERS TO REVIEW QUESTIONS 249

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL READINGS 262

INDEX 265