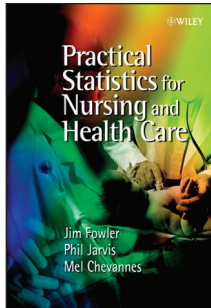




Book Review

Practical Statistics for Nursing and Health Care

J Fowler, P Jarvis, M Chevannes (authors)



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The authors claim in their introduction that this is a book for people who were not good at mathematics in school; in presenting the basics of descriptive and analytic statistics in simple terms, they have achieved

their aim. Despite their simple style, they have retained rigour in their presentation, with guidance on when to use, and when not to use, the different techniques presented.

The book is based on practical examples that nurses might encounter. Formulae are given for calculations, and examples are offered in a step-by-step approach. However, there are no exercises and answers at the end of the chapters for students to test their understanding.

The scope of the text is: summary statistics with confidence intervals for proportions, means and

differences; correlation – both Pearson and Spearman – with tables for testing; regression analysis with one explanatory variable, but no testing; comparison of means – including for matched pairs and more than two samples; and proportions. Both parametric and non-parametric tests are used. There is also a discussion of both cohort and case-control studies, along with their advantages and disadvantages.

As with most textbooks on statistics, there are no guidelines for the beginner on how to ‘clean’ data before analysis by checking of the original data source. If there are outliers in the data, possible ways of dealing with this ought to be given – such as simply deleting observations to determine whether or not the conclusions change.

This book can be highly recommended; but for course work, it would need to be supplemented with a series of practical exercises for students.

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