



International Society for Clinical Biostatistics

Number 7

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Editor: Mats Lörstad

MEMORIES OF MAASTRICHT

EDITOR'S NOTE

I believe there is a need for the ISCB. It is unique in its ambitious goal to further the communication between research workers in biostatistics and those in clinically related disciplines.

I also believe in the need for such a thinly spread organization to have a means of communication outside the annual meetings, educating and entertaining as they may be. It is for this reason I have taken on the responsibility to ensure that the ISCB-News, started by Jørgen Seldrup in 1984, will be issued twice a year. It is, however, neither my intention nor my ambition to produce the written material. In this I must rely on contributions from the membership.

Is it true that statisticians are poor communicators?

That they cannot say anything worthwhile without the blackboard where they can scribble their unintelligible symbols and formulae which make sense only in their own brotherhood, at the utmost?

How come the attendance at our meetings seem to include an ever-shrinking proportion of non-statisticians?

Are we to become yet another society for mutual admiration, getting together to complain of how badly other research workers apply our, repeat our, tools?

How about a response? If you think I have a point, give your ideas on how we can improve the situation and the readership will be informed. Together we can make the first issue of the 90's a valuable proof of how far we can reach with a real cooperative effort.

WOLFGANG KÖPCKE – ISCB PRESIDENT 1989/90

Now who is he, our new president? The calendar shows that he was born in the middle of the summer of 1943.



He comes from Münster in Westfalen and if "Westfallians" were known for their sense of humour and readiness for a hearty laughter he would be a very good representative of his tribe. His academic career started off in mathematics, sliding into economics with a doctorate in 1974, before he turned his interest to the real thing: Biostatistics.

In the meantime, he realised the need for statisticians to entertain close connections with the medical profession. But he really went for it: he married Henny, Dr. med, in 1971 and together they have specialized in daughters, three of them, now in the age range 4 to 11.

In 1980 he was appointed Director of the Biometric Center for Therapeutic Studies in Munich and since 1985 he has been the Head of the Biostatistical Section at the University of Munich. During his academic career he became Professor for Statistics and Medical Informatics in 1986, also in Munich.

As can be expected from the professorship one of his main research areas is biostatistical teaching software. Otherwise it has been more concerned with the clinical trials area: planning and evaluation in general and methods for interim analyses and early stopping in particular.

Although he has spent 15 years in Munich his preference for all thing Munich has not been extended to the local beer. He prefers instead Alsace wines whilst lingering over a good meal enjoyed in good company. Suggest fast food and he saddens. Outdoors he is a walker and cross-country skier, weather permitting. His taste for walking is very exclusive: it must be on the Northsea coast in North Jutland, otherwise he takes the car!

There is much hope for the future of the Society and for the furthering of our goal of establishing a common meeting ground for statisticians and clinicians from all over the world. Wolfgang takes a firm stand against frontiers of all kinds and in that he includes the problems created by bureaucratic minds.

ISCB-10 OPENING SESSION DEDICATED TO PETER ARMITAGE

During the planning of the ISCB-10, the organizers realized that there was an event in the history of biostatistics which they could not pass by without due recognition – the 65th birthday of Peter Armitage, and so it was decided to dedicate the opening session in his honour.

The session was opened by the chairman of the session, Mats Lörstad, as follows:

"This first session is dedicated to Professor Peter Armitage on the occasion of his 65th birthday. I am privileged to give the reasons for this decision.

This is the first time we have dedicated a session to a person who is still active and, furthermore, we have done so on the occasion of our own 10th anniversary which is indeed a unique combination of events.

From the ISCB point of view, academic proficiency in statistics would not be sufficient for this, but nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that Peter has played leading roles in no less than three very prestigious statistical research organisations: The Medical Research Council, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and finally at Oxford University.

Let me clarify why this is not good enough: the ISCB ranks the importance of the communication of statistical knowledge into other fields higher than mere excellency in theoretical statistics! It is as a communicator that Peter has made his most remarkable contributions, but even this can be seen in two dimensions: within and beyond the field of statistics. Within the field he has been president of no less than two societies wellknown in our circles: the Biometric Society and the Royal Statistical Society.

It is his interest and skill in spreading statistical knowledge to not only colleagues and pupils but also to fellow researchers that forms the basis of his fame. In the field of clinical trials his early contributions to sequential analysis have had a tremendous impact on the interest in the technique and its applications. I wonder how many of you were aware that his first published paper on this subject came out in 1947?

Since there is no Nobel Prize in the art of applying statistics I can do no better than assure Peter of the ISCB's great respect for his achievements in this field which we have as our aim to promote."

Peter expressed his thanks, eloquently as always, to the ISCB for this token of appreciation, but as a more longlasting contribution to the future of the ISCB, he accepted his nomination and unanimous election as Vice-President.

THE ISCB-10

Report from Ronald J.M.M. Does, Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee

The invitation to hold the Tenth Meeting of the ISCB in Maastricht, the Netherlands was accepted by the Executive Committee in February 1988.

In the summer of 1988 preliminary programme was set up by the Programme Committee. The First Announcement together with a pre-registration form was available at the Ninth Meeting of the ISCB in Innsbruck, Austria.

In December 1988 the Call for Papers was mailed to all those who had sent back the pre-registration form (about 100) and to about 1000 colleagues working in the field of clinical biostatistics. The total number of abstracts received two weeks after the deadline of February 28, 1989 was 108 (a new record). 84 abstracts were accepted for oral presentation, 13 abstracts were accepted for poster exhibition and 9 abstracts were withdrawn or rejected after the adjudication procedure.

The final number of participants was 276. In addition 23 accompanying persons attended the meeting. Twenty countries were represented as follows:

Australia	2
Austria	7
Belgium	5
Canada	3
Denmark	3
Finland	3
France	29
Federal Republic of Germany	37
German Democratic Republic	2
India	1
Ireland	1
Italy	11
Japan	3
The Netherlands	94
Norway	4
Poland	1
Sweden	14
Switzerland	10
The United Kingdom	33
The United States of America	13

The main social events were a welcome reception in one of the buildings of the University of Limburg, a civic reception by the Mayor of Maastricht in the Town Hall and a traditional Limburgian "Schuttersfeest" followed by the Conference Dinner at Fort St. Peter. Apparently many people enjoyed

them especially the "Schuttersfeest". During the "Schuttersfeest" the president Dr. Mats Lörstad was crowned as the King of the ISCB!

During the Conference dinner a historical breakthrough was made, namely that mere lack of space do not stop statisticians from dancing. More than 150 extra drinks were ordered after the closing of the conference dinner. For those colleagues I want to say:

"Don't worry, be happy, we have paid the bill."

Following the meeting a one day course on Clinical Trials Methodology was held on Friday 15 September 1989. The course was run by Prof. S.J. Pocock, Dr. S.J.W. Evans and Dr. S.G. Thompson. The total number of participants was 91.

The Meeting was sponsored by the University, the Government, the Industry and Scientific Societies. A complete list of sponsors together with an appropriate acknowledgement was presented in the book of abstracts.

After the Meeting the Local Organizer received letters of thanks expressing gratefulness for the excellent organization of the meeting, its high scientific standard and its warm atmosphere. I should like to thank the president of the ISCB during the meeting Mats Lörstad and the Chairman of the Programme Committee Roel van Strik for their excellent cooperation at each stage of the conference.

Finally I thank my colleagues on the Local Organizing Committee, especially Mr. Michel Janssen, for their efforts to make the meeting a success.

ISCB - MEMBERSHIP

Those interested in joining the Society should write to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Douglas W. Wilson, Tenovus Institute for Cancer Research, Heath Park, Cardiff CF4 4XX, UK.

Fees for 1990: Ordinary Membership £15; U.K. Subscribers to 'Statistics in Medicine' (plus membership) is £95, Non-U.K. subscribers (plus membership) is £105.

PSI – STATISTICIANS IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

We have other organizations in the world with goals similar but not identical to ours, one of them firmly based in Europe is PSI. The Chairperson of PSI, Alec Vardy, has provided us with a description:

PSI was formed in October 1977 with the aim of providing a forum for discussion of matters relating to the practice of statistics in the pharmaceutical industry, and of promoting professional standards of statistics in matters pertinent to the Industry.

At present PSI has 280 full members and 140 associate members. Full members are statisticians employed within the Industry in Europe in the many areas of the drug development process. Associate members are those with an interest in the application of statistics in the Industry, the majority being statisticians working outside the Industry in academic establishments or as consultant statisticians, or data management personnel.

Committee activity

The activities of PSI are largely planned, organised and implemented by sub-committees under the direction of the main committee. These committees receive administrative support from the PSI executive secretary, who also provides a permanent contact address for the organisation.

Executive Secretary:

*Elizabeth Richardson,
Royal Society of Medicine,
1 Wimpole Street,
London, W1M 8AE, England*

The Scientific sub-committee organizes a number of scientific meetings each year, in London. In addition, there is a 3-day annual conference attended by over one third of the membership, providing an opportunity both for informal contact and for discussion on applications and new developments.

The Training sub-committee organises an annual training course for statisticians new to the industry. The course, now in its fourth year, aims to broaden participants' knowledge and appreciation of the drug development process from conception through to marketing.

The Academic Liaison sub-committee organises, in conjunction with various academic establishments, short statistical courses specially designed for PSI members, providing an overview and update of current methodology on particular subjects. A booklet

on "Careers for Statisticians in the Pharmaceutical Industry" has been published.

The Newsletter and Publications sub-committee produces proceedings from scientific meetings and the conference annually. In addition, the PSI Newsletter is issued five times a year encouraging and maintaining communication between members.

Collaboration with other organisations

PSI values the contacts it has with other organisations both within and outside the Industry and seeks to achieve greater collaboration and cooperation with them.

PSI has set up working parties as required to meet the needs of both members and external bodies. As a result of discussions with the ABPI, PSI has established two expert groups (Medical and Scientific) of experienced statisticians, to respond to documents, regulatory guidelines or any article containing information of a statistical nature.

PSI has recently established a main committee post to handle collaboration with professional organisations, and has set up a sub-committee to rationalise its contacts with regulatory bodies.

The future

PSI owes much of its growth in size and stature over the years to the involvement and enthusiasm of its members as well as to the support it has received from other organisations.

PSI is now poised at the threshold of a new era of initiatives and development and looks forward to continuing success in its expanding role.

CALL FOR BOOK REVIEWS

ISCB Secretary receives regularly statistical books for reviews. This is a combined announcement of such books and for volunteers to read them and produce a review for the ISCB-News. The review should be written not for the specialist statistician, but rather for the educated layman to reflect the interests of the ISCB membership.

For the time being, we have received the following books from Chapman and Hall.

Chatfield C: *The Analysis of Time Series*, 4th ed., Cox, D.R. and Snell E.J.: *Analysis of Binary Data*, 2nd ed., McCullagh, P. and Nelder, J.A.: *Generalized Linear Models*, 2nd ed.

ISCB-11 IN NÎMES, FRANCE

It is time to go south again. ISCB has not been close to the Mediterranean since ISCB-5, 1984, in San Marino. The time of the year is our usual which in that part of the world is a guarantee for lovely weather – as far as weather can be guaranteed. The exact dates are September 18–21, 1990.

The truly international composition of the Scientific Programme Committee (11 members from 9 countries) is a more trustworthy guarantee, now for many personal contacts to be able to arrange for an attractive score of invited speakers. The Committee is chaired by Prof. Claude Chastang with the members listed in the call for papers.

The list of speakers already lined up is impressive:

Jacques BENICHO, France
David BYAR, USA
Yves ESCOUFFIER, France
Mitchell GAIL, USA
John O'QUIGLEY, France
Jean-Louis STEIMER, Switzerland
John WHITEHEAD, UK

The Programme is being set up around the following themes:

- * Randomized Clinical Trials
- * Epidemiologic Methods
- * Multivariate Analysis in Biomedicine
- * Repeated Measurements in Medical Research
- * Statistical Aspects of AIDS
- * General Aspects of Clinical Biostatistics

In accordance with our tradition there is also a minisymposium aimed more directly at an audience composed of clinicians with layman knowledge of statistics. The title in Nîmes is:

Methodology of Phase I and II Trials.

The organizers will ensure that even if the title might be understood to indicate that the content of the minisymposium could be very demanding as far as statistical background knowledge is concerned, that is not the case. The subject is of a statistical nature but the level is aimed at discussion of the basics.

ISCB COURSE

Twice before, in Cardiff and Maastricht, ISCB has organized a one-day course on a subject within the clinical research methodology domain. Next year it is time again, now on Sequential Methods. And what better choice than John Whitehead with members of his staff from University of Reading, UK. Among his research activities in this subject John is also the author of "The Design and Analysis of Sequential Clinical Trials."

The course will be run on the Monday immediately preceding the Meeting, i.e., September 17.



Statistical
Services Centre

Department of Applied Statistics
Whiteknights
Reading RG6 2AN
United Kingdom

* MEDICAL STATISTICS Week 1 * January 1990

ANALYSIS of SURVIVAL DATA
from
CLINICAL TRIALS
8-10 January

META-ANALYSIS
of
CLINICAL TRIALS
10-11 January

Lecturers: Eleanor Allan, Dave Collett, Anne Whitehead,
John Whitehead

* MEDICAL STATISTICS Week 2 * April 1990

SEQUENTIAL CLINICAL TRIALS
2-4 April

STATISTICAL METHODS
for
ORDERED CATEGORICAL DATA
4-6 April

Directed by: Dr John Whitehead

These courses will be presented at a level suitable for statisticians involved in medical research in public sector institutes and in the pharmaceutical and related industries.

For more details contact Alison Ansell
at the
Statistical Services Centre,
University of Reading,
Reading RG6 2AN
Telephone no: 0734 318025 Fax: 0734 753169

DIARY OF MEETINGS WITH BIOSTATISTICAL COMPONENT

1990 Event	Date	Place	Organizer
11th Annual Meeting	May 6-9	Toronto, Canada	Society for Clinical Trials
13th Nordic Conference in Mathematical Statistics	June 11-15	Odense, Denmark	Danish Society for Theoretical Statistics
15th Int'l Biometric Conference	July 2-6	Budapest, Hungary	Biometric Society
11th Int'l Meeting on Clinical Biostatistics	Sep 18-21	Nîmes, France	ISCB
1991			
12th Int'l Joint Meeting	July 8-12	Brussels, Belgium	Joint ISCB and SCT

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ISCB 1989-90

Officers:

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Köpcke
(President - FR Germany)
Prof. Dr. Peter Armitage
(Vice-President - UK)
Dr. Jørgen Seldrup
(Secretary - France)
Dr. Douglas Wilson
(Treasurer - UK)
Dr. Mats Lörstad
(Past President - Sweden)

Members:

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R.A. Dixon (UK)
R. Does (The Netherlands)
E.A. Gehan (USA)
E. Marubini (Italy)
A. Morabito (Italy)
R. van Strik (The Netherlands)
Th. Zwingers (FR Germany)

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ISCB HON. SECRETARY

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Honorary Secretary - ISCB

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F-94270 Le Kremlin-Bicetre Cedex
France

P.S. CALL FOR PAPER

A "Call for Paper" has been distributed to all receivers of the ISCB-News in December 1989. If you have not received it or would like to have further copies, contact:

Conference Secretariat ISCB - 11
Département d'Information Médicale
Hôpital Caremeau, rue du Pr Robert Debré
30 000 Nîmes, France

The most important date in it is the last day for submission which is February 28, 1990.