



Statistical Rules of Thumb

By Gerald van Belle

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Praise for the First Edition:

"For a beginner [this book] is a treasure trove; for an experienced person it can provide new ideas on how better to pursue the subject of applied statistics."

—*Journal of Quality Technology*

Sensibly organized for quick reference, *Statistical Rules of Thumb, Second Edition* compiles simple rules that are widely applicable, robust, and elegant, and each captures key statistical concepts. This unique guide to the use of statistics for designing, conducting, and analyzing research studies illustrates real-world statistical applications through examples from fields such as public health and environmental studies. Along with an insightful discussion of the reasoning behind every technique, this easy-to-use handbook also conveys the various possibilities statisticians must think of when designing and conducting a study or analyzing its data.

Each chapter presents clearly defined rules related to inference, covariation, experimental design, consultation, and data representation, and each rule is organized and discussed under five succinct headings: introduction; statement and illustration of the rule; the derivation of the rule; a concluding discussion; and exploration of the concept's extensions. The author also introduces new rules of thumb for topics such as sample size for ratio analysis, absolute and relative risk, ANCOVA cautions, and dichotomization of continuous variables.

Additional features of the *Second Edition* include:

- Additional rules on Bayesian topics
- New chapters on observational studies and Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM)
- Additional emphasis on variation and causation
- Updated material with new references, examples, and sources

A related Web site provides a rich learning environment and contains additional rules, presentations by the author, and a message board where readers can share their own strategies and discoveries. *Statistical Rules of Thumb, Second Edition* is an ideal supplementary book for courses in experimental design and survey research methods at the upper-undergraduate and graduate levels. It also serves as an indispensable reference for statisticians, researchers, consultants, and scientists who would like to develop an understanding of the statistical

foundations of their research efforts. A related website www.vanbelle.org provides additional rules, author presentations and more.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Good scientists learn early on not to do everything by the book. Respected statistician Gerald Van Belle has compiled the unpublished wisdom of his profession in the invaluable *Statistical Rules of Thumb*. Those mathematicians involved in statistical work will applaud its clarity and organization, while other scientists will find their experimental design and analysis vastly improved by its suggestions. Each of the 99 rules has a brief introduction, a simple statement of the rule, illustrations, theoretical underpinnings, and extensions. Topics covered include covariation, design, consultation, epidemiology, and data representation. Van Belle is providing Web support for this ongoing project, so we can expect to see even greater breadth and refinement as it develops. --*Rob Lightner*

Review

?This is a unique and effective contribution. Unlike some statistical books, this is a truly enjoyable read.? (*Doody's Reviews*)

"For the applied researcher who does much of her or his own data analysis, this book is a must-have. Even the applied statistician would benefit from owning a copy of this collection. It is certain that some 'rules' will be new, and the descriptions in the text can come in quite handy when one is trying to explain a concept to a non-statistician. In short, this collection of 'rules' is highly recommended." (*MAA Reviews*, December 10, 2008)

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—Thomas A. Louis, PhD, Department of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

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Users Review

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Margarita Toman:

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Garry Brown:

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