

More New Statistical Terms

In the last issue of *CBE Views*, "The Lighter View" quoted excerpts from an article by Sherman Chottiner, published in the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*. Chottiner, a scientist who has tried to put a friendlier face on the dry subject of statistics, has invented new, upbeat terms to replace old, worn-out ones, such as "nice" for "mean" and "grandiose hypothesis" for "null hypothesis."

Here are more statistical terms that Chottiner suggests replacing.

DEPARTMENT OF PONDEROUS PROSE

Can you translate the passage below into simple English?

From time immemorial, it has been known that the ingestion of an "apple" (i.e., the pome fruit of any tree of the genus *Malus*, said fruit being usually round in shape and red, yellow, or greenish in color) on a diurnal basis will with absolute certainty keep a primary member of the health care establishment absent from one's local environment.

(Answer on page 73)

Statistical term	New term	Comments
Random sample	Purposeful sample	Haphazard methods just won't do in the new statistics.
Normal	Spectacular	Statistics is not ordinary. With the new terminology, we will have spectacular curves, spectacular distributions, spectacular equations. The paradox "normal deviates" will be called "spectacular magnificent amounts."
Chi-square	Chi-cool	Like hip, dude.
Blocking	Scoring	Statistics is established as a winner.
Kurtosis	Healthy	We don't need terms that sound like diseases or bad breath. Along those lines, "robust" will replace "histogram," which sounds too much like a medical procedure.

From Chottiner, Sherman. *Statistics: Toward a Kinder, Gentler Subject*. Reprinted by permission from the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*, 1990;35(6):14.

The Lighter View consists of short articles, cartoons, quotations, or any other type of humorous material about the editing life. We invite you to make suggestions and contribute material that you find humorous. Send ideas to Barbara Cox, MedEdit Associates, 5429 SW 80 St, Gainesville FL 32608. Phone (9AM to 4 PM EST), Monday through Friday) 352-376-3071; fax 352-336-8377.