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From Sex to Drugs to Piano Sonatas, Statisticians Are Researching... and Reporting Their Findings at the Joint Statistical Meetings

***More than 5,000 statistics experts will converge on Denver in early August
to share research findings on a wide-ranging variety of topics***

ALEXANDRIA, VA (PRWEB) JULY 21, 2008 – At the annual Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM), statisticians from around the world will report on and discuss the statistical implications of a variety of topics, including teenage sex, dermatological drugs, and piano sonatas, the American Statistical Association (ASA) said today. JSM, the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians, is attended by more than 5,000 statistics experts from government, industry and academia and features some 2,500 presentations, panels, roundtables and other sessions. JSM will be held at the Colorado Convention Center August 3—7.

"It is always fascinating to see the diversity of subjects that statisticians actually touch," said Ron Wasserstein, ASA executive director, "and JSM provides a platform for presenting research that can have wide-ranging impact. It is a place where friends become reacquainted and where junior researchers are introduced to the community. Most of all, it is a place where researchers share ideas, and this sharing of ideas leads to new methods in understanding such diverse topics as medicine, psychology, climate change, politics, sports and music."

A small sample of the 2,500 JSM session topics appears below; additional sessions of interest can be found at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=main>, where you can search on keywords, presenter's name or affiliation. [Note: Members of the press can register for the conference online at <http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/index.cfm?fuseaction=pressregistration>]

Patient Teenagers: Virginity Pledges as a Marker for Lower Sexual Activity (Activity #29)

Presenter: Janet Rosenbaum, University of Illinois at Chicago

The US spends \$200 million annually on abstinence programs, including virginity pledges. Five years post-pledge, 84 percent of pledgers reported having never taken a pledge; pledgers and matched nonpledgers did not differ in premarital sex and sexually transmitted diseases. Pledgers were 10 percentage points less likely than matched nonpledgers to use condoms in the last year, and less likely to use birth control in the past year and at last sex.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300570

A Comparison of Methods to Determine Bioequivalence of Topical Dermatological Drug Products (Activity #279)

Presenters: Ashlyn Hutchinson, William Navidi, Annette Bunge, and Berthe N'Dri-Stempffer, Colorado School of Mines

The FDA regulates the process for establishing bioequivalence with topical dermatological drug products. Different formulations of the drugs are applied to various application sites on test subjects. Current protocol requires eight testing sites per drug formulation, and drug levels are measured at eight distinct times over a 24-hour period. A new technique, the Two Time method, requires only two application sites per subject, resulting in reduced time and cost due to fewer subjects/testing times.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=301513

Golden-Ratio Forms in Piano Sonatas by Mozart and Haydn: A Statistical Analysis (Activity #444)

Presenter: Jesper Ryden, Uppsala University (Sweden) Dept. of Mathematics

The golden ratio (or golden section or golden mean) has attracted interest over the years. Scientists in a wide range of fields have explored or questioned possible presence of golden-ratio proportions. Examples are found in nature as well as in man-made creations (art, architecture). In this paper, a regression technique is used to investigate a problem from musicology: whether the golden-ratio proportion is present in Mozart piano sonatas.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300879

Best Practices in Collecting Survey Data on Sexual Orientation (Activity #343)

Presenters: Christopher Carpenter, University of California, Irvine; Gary Gates, Williams Institute; and Larry Bye, Field Research Corporation

While collecting data on sexual orientation, sexual attraction and sexual behavior has become routine for some research purposes, such as studies of STDs, several studies have recommended broader data collection in order to enrich the analytical possibilities of a data set. This panel will discuss when it is appropriate to collect data on sexual orientation or behavior, how to sample and contact potential respondents, what to ask, how to design a survey instrument, what mode of data collection is most effective, and what effect asking these questions has on response rates..

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300393

Encouraging Statistical Thinking through the Writing of Newspaper Articles (Activity #181)

Presenter: Meike Niederhausen, University of Portland

Group projects are commonly used statistics classes to encourage students to develop their statistical and critical thinking skills. Students are asked to write a journal-style report at the end of the semester in which they are to summarize and statistically analyze the results of the data they collected. This talk will discuss the benefits of students writing a newspaper-style article rather than a journal-style report. The shorter and more creative article encourages students to move beyond the world of statistical terminology and actually think about what their results mean and how they could be explained to a general audience.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=301988

Statistics and Due Process: Two Statistically Significant Issues in Law (Activity #41)

Presenter: Mark G. Haug, Ph.D., JD, University of Kansas School of Business

Dr. Haug will discuss two significant legal issues concerning evidence that determine the due process rights of thousands of litigants each year, including why statistical and epidemiological education are essential for the proper resolution of these evidentiary questions. The two issues are 1) the statistical evaluation of expert evidence and whether it is admissible at trial, and 2) how statistical evidence, once admitted, can be misused at trial.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300486

What Would a Statistician Do with a Climate Model? (Activity #202)

Presenter: Doug Nychka, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder

What is a climate model? How is it used to understand potential changes in climate? Why should a statistician care? This is an informal discussion about some of the largest numerical models used by a scientific community and why concepts of uncertainty and model validation are central to making informed decisions about responding to global warming.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=302374

Should the Democrats Move to the Left on Economic Policy? (Activity #426)

Presenters: Andrew Gelman and Cexun J. Cai, Columbia University

Could John Kerry have gained votes in the last Presidential election by more clearly distinguishing himself from George Bush on economic policy? At first thought, the logic of political preferences would suggest not. In a multidimensional setting, however, or when voters vary in their perceptions of the parties' positions, a party can benefit from putting some daylight between itself and the other party on an issue where it has a public-opinion advantage (such as economic policy for the Democrats). We set up a model based on survey data on voters' perceptions of their own positions and those of the candidates in 2004. Under this model, it turns out to be optimal for the Democrats to move slightly to the right but staying clearly to the left of the Republicans' current position on economic issues.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300070

Electronic Records of Undesirable Driving Events (Activity #318)

Presenters: Oren Musicant, Hillel Bar-Gera and Edna Schechtman, all of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

The cause for the majority of road crashes can be attributed to drivers' behavior. Recent in-vehicle monitoring technologies enable continuous and high resolution measurements of drivers' behavior. We analyze the information received from a novel in-vehicle technology which identifies the occurrence of undesirable driving events such as extreme braking and accelerating, sharp cornering and sudden lane changing.

http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/onlineprogram/index.cfm?fuseaction=abstract_details&abstractid=300893

About JSM

JSM, the world's largest annual gathering of statisticians, is held jointly with the American Statistical Association (ASA), the International Biometric Society (ENAR and WNAR), the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS), and the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC). The theme for this year's conference is *Communicating Statistics: Speaking Out and Reaching Out*. A brief history of the JSM can be found at

<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2008/pdfs/ABriefHistoryoftheASAAnnualMeetings.doc>.

About the American Statistical Association

The American Statistical Association (ASA), a scientific and educational society founded in Boston in 1839, is the second oldest continuously operating professional society in the United States. For more than 160 years, ASA has been providing its 18,000 members serving in academia, government, and industry and the public with up-to-date, useful information about statistics. The ASA has a proud tradition of service to statisticians, quantitative scientists, and users of statistics across a wealth of academic areas and applications. For additional information about the American Statistical Association, please visit the association's web site at <http://www.amstat.org> or call 703.684.1221.

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