

JOKE, SOFTWARE

A MISTAKE IN THE OPERATING ROOM

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A mistake in the operating room can threaten the life of one patient; a mistake in statistical analysis or interpretation can lead to hundreds of early deaths. So it is perhaps odd that, while we allow a doctor to conduct surgery only after years of training, we give SPSS® (SPSS, Chicago, IL) to almost anyone. Moreover, whilst only a surgeon would comment on surgical technique, it seems that anybody, regardless of statistical training, feels confident about commenting on statistical data. If we are to bring the vast efforts of research to fruition, and truly practice evidence-based medicine, we must learn to interpret the results of randomized trials appropriately.

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