

SSA Biostatistics & Bioinformatics Newsletter Q3 2020

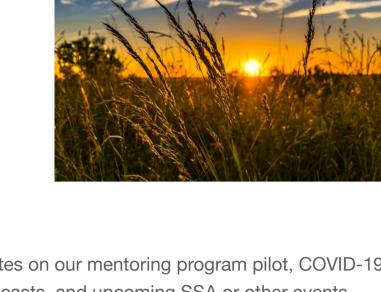
Welcome to our third newsletter of 2020!

The Biostatistics and Bioinformatics section committee hope you, your family, and your friends are keeping well. Spring has arrived and we hope you have been able to enjoy some sunny days. We wish to shout out to our mailing list members in Victoria for their

patience, sacrifice, and resilience shown to successfully control the second wave.

version of last year's workshop on statistical consultancy. Two half-day workshops will be held in October, cohosted with the SSA Statistical Consulting Network. For those with an interest in bioinformatics, Prof Melanie Bahlo will be presenting a webinar on genetic data analyses methods organised by our section mid-October.

We are pleased to announce an online



If you have any ideas to support you better during these challenging times, please let us know, we are there for you! The SSA Biostatistics and Bioinformatics section committee

Statistical Consultancy Workshop

Together with the Statistical Consulting Network, we are pleased to offer the following

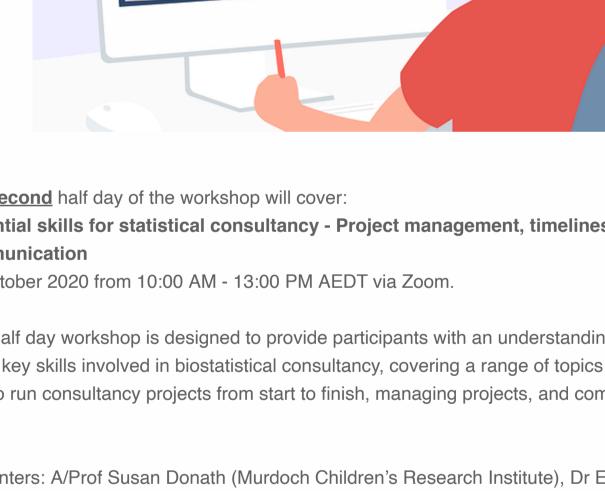
The **first** half day of the workshop will cover: Getting started with statistical consultancy - Establishing a client base, an operational model and a team

16 October 2020 from 10:00 AM - 13:00 PM AEDT via Zoom.

This half day workshop is designed to provide participants with an understanding and tips of some of the key considerations involved in setting up and running a statistical consultancy from within a university environment: covering a range of topics including funding and operational models, reaching and securing clients, building and funding a team.

Bioinformatics, Queensland), Prof Julie Simpson (University of Melbourne) Register here: statsoc.org.au/event-3986877

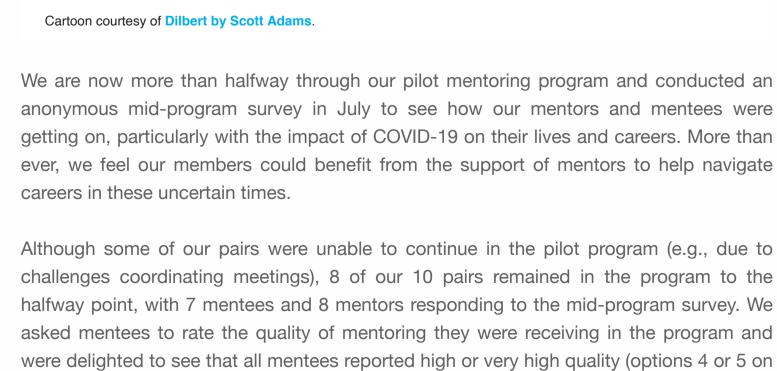
Presenters: A/Prof Jason Ferris (University of Queensland), Dr Anne Bernard (QCIF



Karahalios (University of Melbourne/Monash University), Dr Karen Lamb (University of Melbourne) Register here: statsoc.org.au/event-3986878

SSA Biostatistics & Bioinformatics section mentoring update

AND THAT MAKES YOU I DON'T YOU FOR A WEEK. DO YOU MAKES ME FEEL HUNGRY TO EVEN SEE SUCCEED? HOW THOSE YOU FEEL DIFFERENT? UNDERPAID. THINGS ARE YES. CONNECTED.



that the mentees are enjoying the support from their senior mentors. We are using the information from these surveys to help inform a larger program in 2021, either through the Biostatistics & Bioinformatics Section or (hopefully) in the SSA more broadly so watch this space if you are interested in participating. If you want any further information about the mentoring program, please feel free to contact Karen Lamb at klamb@unimelb.edu.au. **SSA** webinars and events Inferring genetic relatedness to identify disease-causing variants and selection

Belz Lecture on World Statistics Day

"Connecting the world with data we trust". You can celebrate with us by joining the annual Belz lecture, "Trust in Official

Presenter Teresa Dickinson is the Deputy Australian Statistician at the Australian Bureau

of Statistics (ABS), where her responsibilities include leading the 2021 census. In this

DAY

20.10.2020

CONNECTING

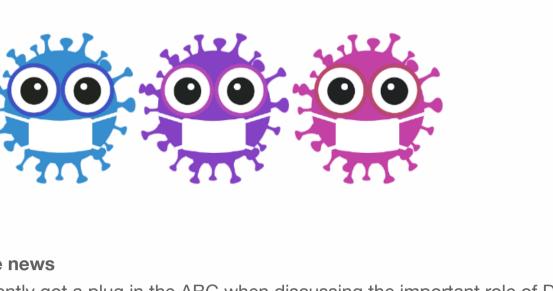
THE WORLD

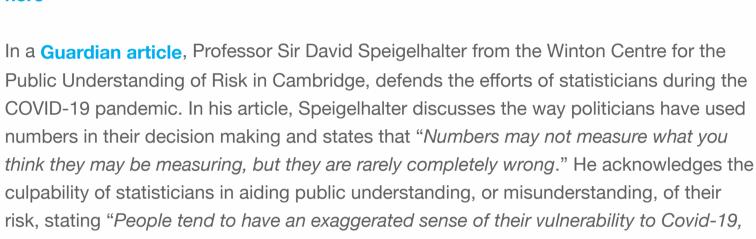
WITH DATA

WE CAN TRUST Statistics", which will be followed by a Q&A.

lecture, she will explore the concept of trust in relation to official statistics produced by the government: Can we trust the ABS to keep our personal census data secure? As a passionate believer in the power of data to improve lives, Teresa will talk about both trust in the statistics produced and trust in statistical institutions. All upcoming SSA webinars and events can be found here. Our section is planning to

Biostatistics in the news Biostatisticians recently got a plug in the ABC when discussing the important role of Data Safety Monitoring Boards when assessing the safety of new treatments, like COVID-19





March, a Twitter post reminded us of the implications of COVID-19 on our biostatistical workloads. Darren L Dahly, PhD Retweeted **Andrew Althouse** @ADAlthousePhD · Mar 30 Hey stats twitter, what's the preferred method for handling "missing outcome data due to global pandemic that canceled outcome assessments for a few months?" Asking for a friend. Ok, for me. \triangle \bigcirc 18 1 41 388 This led to some of our committee members frantically planning for the unavoidable disruptions to clinical trials caused by COVID-19. As you would expect, many statisticians

Newsletter members, or any COVID-19 biostatistics related news items you want to share, please contact Karen Lamb and we will add these to future newsletters. Meet our mailing list Name: Ben Harrap

Statistics in Biopharmaceutical Research.

go back to study and started a PhD. I ended up in statistics because I was more interested in the design of experiments and how data is gathered and interpreted than I was in the field of psychology itself. Realising that was what led me to the master's degree and here I am! Why did you want to work in this field? Biostatistics was one of the few fields that combines my interest in experiment design and data with my desire to do work that has a positive impact on people's lives. It also helped that Julie Simpson was very friendly and

welcoming when I enquired about the master's course at the University of Melbourne

What is the most exciting concept/idea upcoming in your work or field? I'm not sure

confidence intervals, and estimation in general should be used, especially comparing how

If you didn't pursue biostatistics and/or bioinformatics, what would have been your

alternate career? If I had gone with my original plan I would've ended up doing clinical

psychology, but if I had to switch careers now I'd want to try out science communication

it's exciting, but I'm really fascinated by the changing opinion on how p-values,

statisticians talk about it compared to non-statistician researchers.

What are your background studies in and how did you join this field? My

undergraduate degree was actually a Bachelor of Arts majoring in psychology, but my

master's so I've been working jobs here and there, but in March I decided it was time to

master's degree was in biostatistics. It's been a couple of years since finishing my

Podcasts A range of biostatistics and bioinformatics blogs and

episodes available here. Do you have a favourite statistical podcast or blog? If you would be happy to provide a brief overview of your favourite statistical podcast or blog to feature on our mailing list, please contact Alysha De Livera with the details.

Featured articles

Can confidence intervals be interpreted?

@epiellie

In any statistical analysis, we compute the point estimate (e.g. mean, regression

recent publication (your own or other) that you'd like to have featured in our newsletter,

The bioinformatics chat is produced by Roman Cheplyaka, a

episodes, to date, cover computational biology, bioinformatics,

and next generation sequencing. The episodes are available

Ukrainian software developer and bioinformatician. The 50

Naimi, A.I. and Whitcomb, B.W., 2020. American Journal of Epidemiology People think confidence intervals But really confidence intervals are more like ring toss: -the true value is fixed 2 the interval might end up around it. confidence confidence

eepiellie

please contact Nicole De La Mata with the details. Other upcoming events While there is generally a range of other events of interest for our biostatisticians and bioinformaticians, the schedule of events have been substantially impacted by the COVID pandemic and many events have been cancelled. Please always check out the

affordable and accessible.

Our Section Committee is interested in biostatistics and bioinformatics and we are committed to assisting you with your career in biostatistics or/and

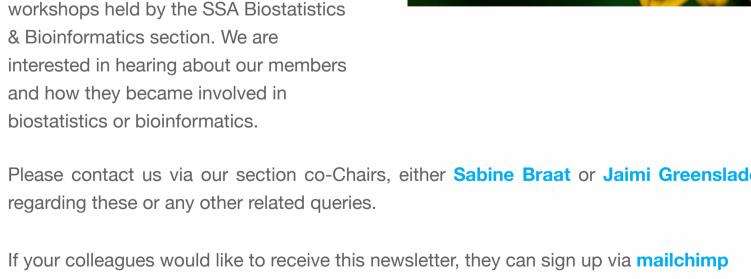
Statistical Consulting Network 2020 Meeting

Virtual conference, 7th-9th Dec 2020

presentations, webinars or workshops held by the SSA Biostatistics & Bioinformatics section. We are interested in hearing about our members and how they became involved in biostatistics or bioinformatics. Please contact us via our section co-Chairs, either Sabine Braat or Jaimi Greenslade regarding these or any other related queries.

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We encourage all our members to follow our activities on our social media account links

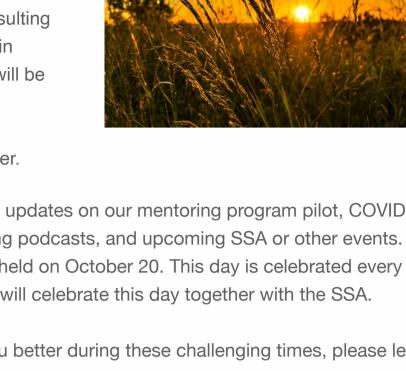
below. We actively promote upcoming events, job opportunities and relevant material. Our

online community is growing with over 719 followers on Facebook and 490 on twitter. If

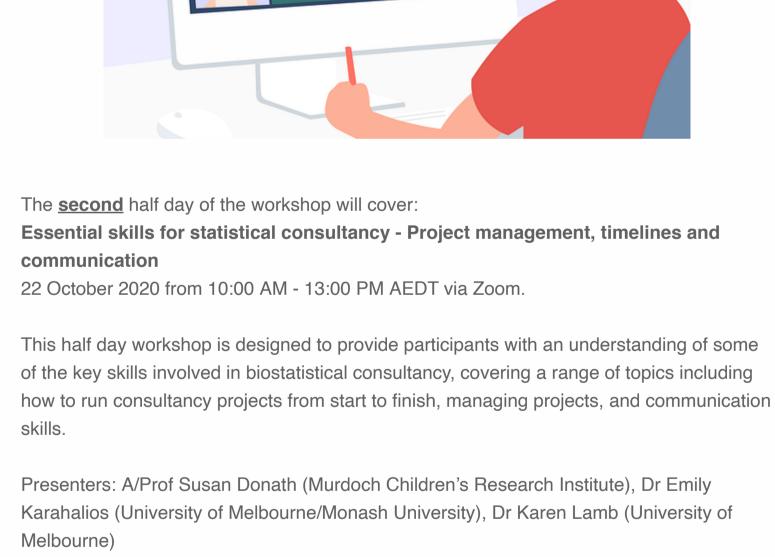
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and you wish to be removed, please contact us at j.greenslade@uq.edu.au or s.braat@unimelb.edu.au.

you have any material you would like us to promote on our social media outlets or share with the fellow members, please let Sabine Braat know.



We are going online with our workshop on statistical consultancy! joint workshops:



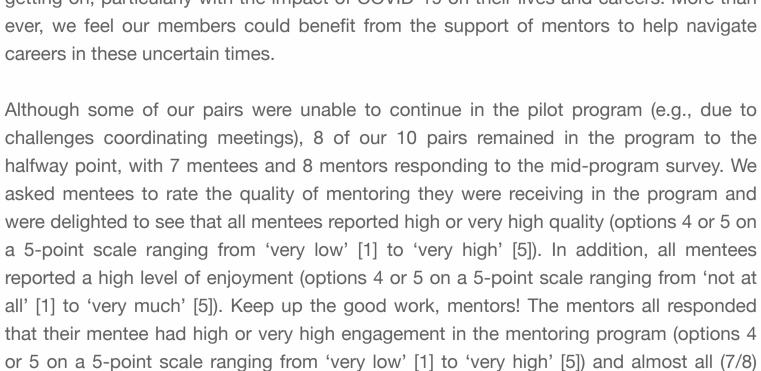
I'VE BEEN MENTORING SPENDING TIME WITH



all' [1] to 'very much' [5]) in the program.

The 20th of October will mark the World

Statistics Day 2020. This years theme is



reported a high level of enjoyment (options 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale ranging from 'not at

We really appreciate the time both mentors and mentees have put into participating in this

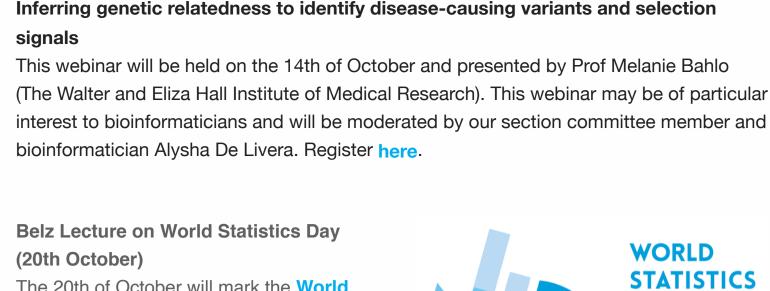
program and value their honest responses to our surveys. We note that some concerns

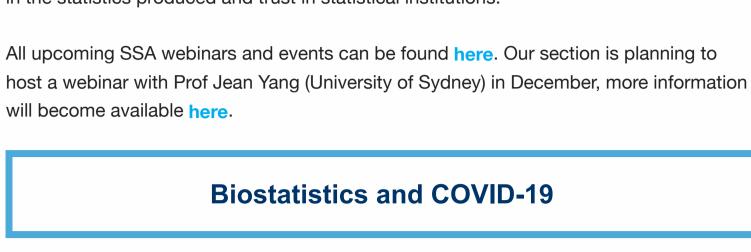
were raised about the impact of the pandemic on both mentors and mentees ability and

time to participate in the program, as well as the relevance of some advice that mentors

would typically offer that may not be possible during a pandemic (e.g., international

collaborative work trips, conference presentations!). However, we are very happy to see





vaccinations. In her ABC article, Kelsie Iorio notes that "Biostatisticians are crucial components of DSMBs, as they determine whether any adverse effects are likely to be related to the vaccine trial or not." More details can be found here. Meanwhile, an interesting article by the BBC mentioned the challenge in understanding exponential growth, and the propensity for people to be susceptible to the "exponential

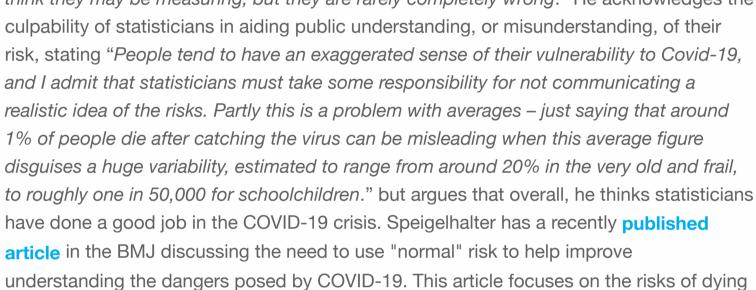
growth bias", which makes it difficult to explain the threat posed by COVID-19. People

underestimation of the risk of COVID-19. The full article by David Robson can be found

much more naturally think of growth in linear terms and this can lead to an

here.

transparent communication.



from COVID-19 and compares this to the risk of death from all causes each year to aid in

Resources for biostatistician dealing with COVID-19 trial disruptions

Although in the midst of worrying about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on

ourselves, our friends and families, colleagues and people in our communities back in

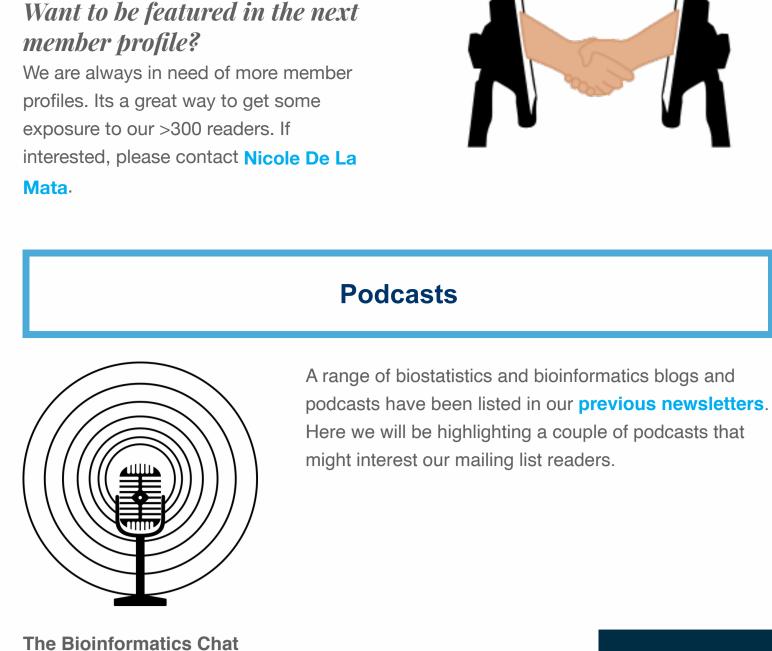
had an opinion on how these disruptions could be handled, leaving us wondering which option to choose. Thankfully, some people posted some useful resources in the Twitter thread for us to look into. We have provided some resources for biostatisticians and triallists in our previous two newsletters. Further resources can be found below and may be helpful for members who are facing challenges handling the impact of the pandemic on their own trials. The NHMRC released a guidance document for institutions, Human Research Ethics Committees, researchers and sponsors for trials during COVID-19. • The Industry Working Group "Estimands in Oncology" provided an article on

'Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on the Clinical Trial Objective and Analysis of

Oncology Clinical Trials – Application of the Estimand Framework' in the journal

If you have any resources you want to share with our SSA Biostatistics & Bioinformatics

Where do you currently work? Part-time at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, and part-time PhD student at the Indigenous Health and Epidemiology Unit at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health full-time working from home though! What field do you associate with, biostatistics or bioinformatics (or both)? Biostatistics.



(thanks Julie!).

or beer brewing!

here.

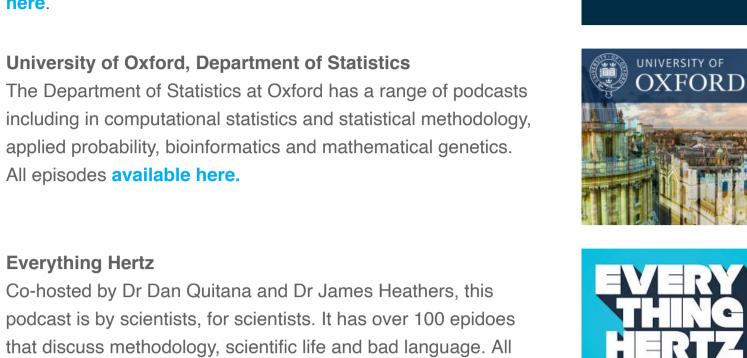
All episodes available here.

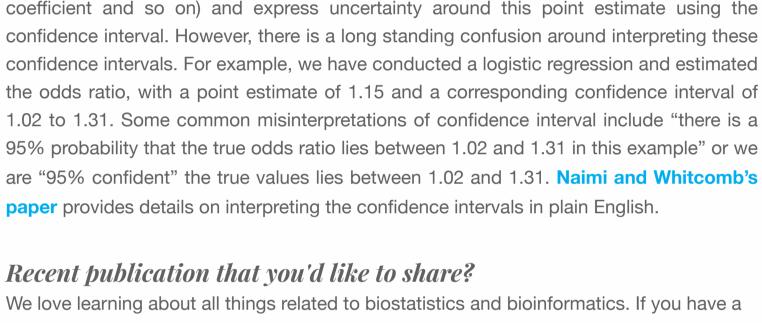
are like archery:

true

-the toract is fixed & the true value might end up in the interval

Everything Hertz





International Population Data Linkage Network Conference 2020 Virtual conference, 1st-13th Nov 2020 The Australian Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Society Virtual conference, 24th-26th Nov 2020

If you would like to advertise any upcoming biostatistics or bioinformatics events to our

Closing comments

mailing list, please contact one of our co-Chairs, Sabine Braat or Jaimi Greenslade

conference website to ensure you have the latest information on the conference. On the

other hand, this has lead to the creation of many virtual events that are often more

bioinformatics. We are interested in hearing from our members, especially regarding ideas for future events,

To view previous newsletters please see our **section's webpage**. Social media

