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STATISTICAL QUESTION

Multiple linear regression

Which, if any, of the following statements are true of multiple linear regression?

- a) It may be used to control confounding in cohort studies
- b) It can only assess a linear (straight line) relationship between variables
- c) It gives misleading results when two or more independent variables are highly correlated
- d) It can be used with dichotomous or categorical independent variables
- e) It can be used with dichotomous or categorical dependent variables

Submitted by John Fletcher

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CASE REPORT

A woman with ataxia

A 41 year old woman was admitted to hospital with a one week history of transient episodes of blurred vision and progressive dysarthria, incoordination and ataxia, such that she could no longer stand.

Three months earlier she had experienced the gradual onset of a mild occipital headache and episodes of transient blurred vision. Her speech had felt slower and slurred and her left hand was clumsy. These symptoms had been preceded by a severe outbreak of cold sores, which had been treated with oral acyclovir. On this occasion, her neurological symptoms gradually resolved over a month. She had no family history or other history of note, and she was not taking any drugs except the oral contraceptive pill.

On examination there were cold sores around her mouth and she had bilateral cerebellar signs, more prominent on the left. She had negative viral serology and a normal magnetic resonance imaging of her head and venous sinuses, and electroencephalogram. Lumbar puncture showed an acellular cerebrospinal fluid with mildly raised protein (0.52 g/l) and unmatched oligoclonal banding. Results of viral polymerase chain reaction testing were negative. Antineuronal antibodies were sent and returned a positive anti-Yo antibody.

Questions

- 1 What is the significance of this result?
- 2 What is your management plan?
- 3 What is the likely prognosis?

Submitted by Phillip Fletcher

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PICTURE QUIZ

An unusual cause of back pain

A 26 year old man with no relevant medical history presented to his general practitioner with an 18 month history of progressive chronic back pain. He had difficulty walking long distances, with progressive pain and weakness in his legs, and had experienced erectile dysfunction in recent months. He was referred to a neuroscience centre for further evaluation, which confirmed the clinical findings and documented a clinical loss of perianal sensation.

His body mass index was 29.8 (normal range: 18.50-24.99). He was not on exogenous steroids and had no clinical signs or symptoms of Cushing's syndrome.

Magnetic resonance imaging of the lumbar spine was performed.

Questions

- 1 In which spinal compartment is the abnormality located?
- 2 Describe the abnormality?
- 3 What is the most likely diagnosis?

Submitted by I Davagnanam, S Harave

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QUIZ Suicide

To enter the quiz, go to www.onexamination.com/endgames. The answers will be available immediately. The quiz closes at midnight on Wednesday.

Here's one question from this week's quiz on suicide taken from the MRCPsych examination.

Which of the following options describes the statement below?

True/False/Don't know

Emile Durkheim's sociological explanations of suicide propound that under-regulation of a man's relationship to society may drive him to an altruistic suicide.

The winner of the prize quiz on abdominal pain in children was Katy Khoo