**Statistical Advisory Service**

The Research Institute for Primary Care and Health Sciences (iPCHS) offers a free bio-statistical advisory service to the Medical School via drop-in sessions. Consultations can be arranged with experienced statisticians, with advice given on:

* study design to obtain appropriate data;
* statistical analysis of data;
* interpretation of analyses;
* how best to record, store and manage your data;

The service will offer 30 min time slots, up to a maximum of 4 sessions per month initially. If not all 4 slots are taken up, and more time is needed for a specific project, sessions can be extended to 60 minutes. Note that advice is not given by phone, only by face-to-face consultation with a follow-up email where necessary.

**Guidelines**

1. Initial half-hour meetings are made by appointment and by completing a request form (see attached) to be sent to a dedicated e-mail account: primarycare.statadvice@keele.ac.uk
2. Limited follow-up support may be given, normally by email, via the dedicated account.
3. The commitment of the statistical advisory service will not extend beyond this limited follow-up. If more extensive support is required, please contact Peter Yeates, who will discuss requests by Medical School staff or students for more extensive statistical support for research projects with iPCHS’s team of statisticians. Depending on the amount of time or resource required, this may potentially need funding.
4. Last-minute requests for assistance with abstracts/publications/grant applications cannot be accommodated.

It should be remembered that all human subject research must be considered and approved by the appropriate regulatory bodies, e.g. Ethics Committee and, if appropriate, NHS, prior to starting the project. Further information on this can be obtained from supervisors or Heads of School, not from the statistical advisory service. If advice is being sought on the analysis of data that already exist, the statistical advisor will assume you have gained the appropriate regulatory approval to use these data and that the confidentiality of research subjects has been protected. It is not the advisor’s role to check that this has been done.

### Booking an appointment

Appointments must be booked by completing the appropriate form, to be sent to primarycare.statadvice@keele.ac.uk:

When you complete the form be sure to state clearly whether you are a student or member of staff, and **describe your problem carefully**. Having a clear idea of your problem in advance will enable the advisor to prepare a more detailed response, helping you to get more out of the service. Thinking carefully in advance, and writing down the nature of your statistical problem may also help you to decide on the type of advice that you're seeking.

#### What you can expect from the statistics advisor?

1. This is an **advisory service.** You should expect advice from the statistician on how to collect and manage your data, or carry out a statistical analysis. This could entail looking at data on the PC together, with the statistician guiding you through an example analysis step by step. However, the expectation is that you will perform the main analysis.
2. It is not the advisor's role to do the work for you, or to take responsibility for monitoring your work. Hence letters confirming the suitability of your study methods and/or analysis for such purposes as peer review or regulatory approval cannot be provided.
3. The advisor will not always have an immediate answer and may need to follow up the initial meeting via email. Alternatively, you may be referred to another statistical advisor for specialist help.
4. Those seeking advice cannot necessarily expect support on a software package that is not centrally licensed by the University or whose main use is not statistical.
5. The role of the advisor is to provide advice and guidance for you, and also your supervisor if you are a student. We strongly advise that the supervisor accompanies a student for the consultation with the statistics advisor.

#### What the statistics advisor expects from you?

1. Recognition that statistical input to a project at its planning stage helps to lead to better designed studies, as well as saving time and resources. This is as important as input into data analysis after data collection.
2. It takes time to provide the advice and to act on it. Thus, if you have a deadline to meet and need prior statistical advice, we urge you to seek the advice well in advance.
3. Please try to explain the whole problem to the statistical advisor at the initial meeting, rather than presenting different components of your problem at later times. This will make for greater efficiency and understanding on the part of the advisor. It will also help to ensure you are given the correct advice first time round. If you can bring along clear protocols, and any necessary diagrams or output, that will be useful.
4. Try to write a succinct but detailed description of your statistical problem on the web form when requesting an appointment. It will be helpful in identifying an appropriate advisor, and will allow them time to prepare for the meeting.
5. Please do not acknowledge the advice received in a paper, report, funding proposal or ethics application without prior approval of the statistical advisor. They are likely to wish to read what has been written before approving it.

### Repeat visits

If agreed by the statistical advisor in the initial meeting, a follow-up visit with the drop-in service will need to be booked through the web form again. You should indicate the name of the advisor you have seen before. Usually you should see the same advisor for follow-up advice about the same problem. Please note however, if demand is high we will prioritise new requests.