

Monday, February 28, 3:30PM-5:00PM  
Concurrent Breakout Session B

***Analytic Methods Toolbox for Birth Defects Surveillance***

Moderator: Russell Kirby, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

*A comedy of errors and other star-crossed analytic acts*

**Russel Rickard**, Colorado Responds to Children with Special Needs, Denver, CO

Data cleaning, linking, analysis and interpretation are day to day functions of birth defects registries. User-friendly software packages have evolved to aid us in accomplishing these tasks; however it is not always apparent that these activities may have gone awry in relation to our expectations. Mr. Rickard will present some often overlooked related situations and potential tips to recognize and avoid them.

*A little sensitivity goes a long way: tools for conducting a simple sensitivity analysis*

**Sarah Tinker**, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA

Although sensitivity analyses can be very informative, they are often complex enough to warrant their own publication. However, even simple sensitivity assessments of one or two potential sources of bias can provide important information to the researcher and the reader regarding the robustness of results presented in birth defects literature. Dr. Tinker will present an overview of simple sensitivity analyses that can be used in birth defects research, including available software [Excel plug-in].

*But she said, he said, they said...it is as clear as mud*

**Sarah Tinker and Russel Rickard**

It is no secret that we all have the desire to derive [from scratch] every epidemiologic principle and statistical test theory; however we are limited in our time to do so. In practice, this translates to putting our faith into assumptions and so-called “standard” ways to proceed through our data analyses. We then hope this faith is never tested or standards challenged. Although the presenters are not claiming to have definitive methods to relieve this situation, they will bring up some possible alternative courses of thought/actions for consideration and open discussion.