

From: [Statistical Society of Australia](#)
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Subject: Stats Matters & Events
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STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

9 May 2024

Not long to go now until Mother's Day, and those of us lucky enough to have a mother or mother-figure in our life probably have a meaningful greeting card ready to be presented. I posted mine a couple of weeks ago to my 93 year old mum in Germany.

When it comes to thinking of a few words to add to the card, if you're like me, you'll hesitate when placing the apostrophe. Is it a day for our individual mother, or are we congratulating mothers collectively?

Thanks to Google, the correct answer is readily available. Google tells us that 'Mothers' Day' would imply a day belonging to mothers collectively, which deviates from the original intent of the day.

Anna Maria Jarvis, born in 1864, initiated the concept of Mother's Day in the United States. Inspired by her mother's wish for such an occasion, Anna took the lead in advocating for its establishment following her mother's death. Her intention was to recognise and appreciate the unique role that mothers play in our lives. Anna wished for the day to honour each family's individual mother, so, to get back to the point (or place, rather) of the apostrophe, Anna wished for the day to honour each family's individual mother, hence it became

“Mother’s Day”.

Mother's Day evolved into a more collective celebration over the years. While we still honour and cherish our own mothers or mother figures, the day has also become a time to acknowledge and appreciate mothers as a collective force, shaping our communities and societies.

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in the commercial aspects of Mother's Day—buying flowers, gifts and cards. In fact, over time, Anna Jarvis became so disillusioned with the increasing commercialisation surrounding the day, that she went as far as trying to revoke Mother's Day! [Wikipedia](#) quotes her as having said: “A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world. And candy! You take a box to Mother—and then eat most of it yourself. A pretty sentiment.”

Her attempt to rescind Mother’s Day was not successful, and in 1948 she passed away in poverty in a sanitarium, with her medical expenses covered by individuals from the floral and greeting card sectors.

Anna Jarvis' story reminds us of the true essence of the day: to express gratitude and love for the women who have nurtured and cared for us throughout our lives.

So, as we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day this Sunday, let's remember Anna's original intention and take a moment to honour the unique bond we share with our individual mothers. Whether through a heartfelt card, a phone call or a simple gesture of appreciation, let's make this Mother's Day truly special for the remarkable women in our lives.

[Marie-Louise Rankin](#)

Executive Officer

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The Random Sample Podcast - Latest episode out now



This episode explores the mathematics and physics used to understand the building blocks of the universe.

Our guest is Professor Alessandro Sfondrini from the University of Padua in Italy.

He visited MATRIX earlier this year for a program that explored the deep connections between mathematics, quantum field theory and string theory.

Our host is Dr Gabriele Tartaglino Mazzucchelli from the University of Queensland.

Listen to this podcast (and any previous ones you may have missed) [here](#).

Enhancing clinical trials: A tutorial on Bayesian statistics in regulatory settings

This week BMC published the article by Se Yoon Lee “Using Bayesian statistics in confirmatory clinical trials in the regulatory setting: a tutorial review”.

Bayesian statistics is essential in advancing medical science, aiding in the evaluation of new treatments and procedures by healthcare stakeholders. Its unique advantages, including incorporating prior information and flexibility, have led to increased use in regulatory submissions.

Understanding its frequentist operating characteristics is crucial, especially in complex clinical trial settings. This tutorial provides a comprehensive overview

of Bayesian statistics' role in sample size determination, controlling error rates, handling multiplicity adjustments and using external data in clinical trial regulation. It aims to assist researchers and clinicians in developing innovative trial designs.

Read the full article [here](#).

Stats NZ seeks public input for modernising New Zealand's census

Stats NZ is seeking public input on the future of New Zealand's census, aiming to modernise data collection methods. The proposal suggests a shift towards using administrative data from government agencies alongside surveys and customised solutions for the 2028 census and beyond.

The move is motivated by the changing data landscape, with traditional census methods becoming increasingly burdensome and costly. The public consultation period runs from 8 May to 18 June 2024, with submissions welcomed on the Stats NZ website. The consultation document outlines the challenges and opportunities of this approach, with various formats available including Easy Read, braille, te reo Māori and NZSL. An independent panel will evaluate submissions and provide recommendations to the Government Statistician, with the preferred approach to be presented to Cabinet later in the year. Further consultation and collaboration with stakeholders are planned for the detailed design phase, with a second round of public feedback scheduled for 2025.

[Read more](#).

Navigating the ethical terrain of Artificial Intelligence (AI): Insights from 'Harvard Thinking' podcast"

In the "Harvard Thinking" podcast episode, three experts from various fields, including law, computer science and statistics, engage in a nuanced discussion about the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI). Sheila Jasanoff, a science and technology expert at Harvard Kennedy School, emphasises the need for a more nuanced understanding of the threats and promises posed by AI, highlighting a disconnect between the discussions of threat and promise. Martin Wattenberg, a computer scientist at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, notes the surprising development of AI, moving beyond traditional depictions to incorporate creativity and literary aspects. Susan Murphy, Professor of Statistics and of Computer Science, Associate Faculty,

Kempner Institute, Harvard University, stresses the importance of integrating ethics into AI development and education, citing initiatives like Harvard's Embedded EthICS program. The panel agrees on the necessity of ethical considerations in AI research to mitigate unintended consequences.

Host Samantha Laine Perfas guides the conversation exploring both the perils and promise of AI.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).

NCHS launches Data Query System (DQS): Enhancing access to public health data

The US National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has launched a new tool called the Data Query System (DQS), aimed at enhancing public health data accessibility. This system provides users with the ability to filter and visualise data on over 120 public health topics, such as death rates, disabilities, nutrition, health insurance and obesity. Users can customise their searches by selecting demographic, geographic and socioeconomic categories, supporting research on health equity.

The DQS can be utilised for various purposes including tracking health progress, informing evidence-based recommendations, creating policies and improving health literacy. It consolidates data from multiple sources like the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, National Health Interview Survey and National Vital Statistics System.

Future updates will incorporate additional data sources. The DQS is accessible on the [NCHS website](#).

From previous newsletters:

SSA's Golden Jubilee Travel Grant

SSA's Golden Jubilee Travel Grant provides overseas travel funds to student members of the Society, who can prove consecutive SSA membership for a minimum of two years.

A maximum of \$1000 is available per application, limited to a single trip during the course of the student's studies. Students will not be supported in their first year of study and will have had to be members of the Society for at least two

years prior to the application deadline. Applications are required to be lodged in advance of travelling.

Application deadline: 31 May 2024

[Find out more.](#)

Last chance: SSA PhD or Masters top-up scholarships 2024

SSA PhD Top-Up Scholarships: the SSA wants to support you!

Are you undertaking a PhD or Masters degree with a project in the development of statistical or data science methodology, in the assessment of statistical or data science methodology, or in the development of statistical/data science software?

The Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) wants to support you!

Up to 4 Scholarships, worth \$2500 each, will be awarded to SSA student members. Find out more about the eligibility criteria and find the application form [here](#).

Application deadline: 12 May 2024

SSA Events

Statistical Consulting Network Monthly Meet-Up

31 May 2024, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM AEST, held online

Come along with your thinking cap, maybe a problem, and some lunch!

The Statistical Consulting Network invites you to their monthly meet-up, a virtual lunchtime meeting where statisticians help each other out with problems that they aren't sure how to deal with. This virtual meeting is held on Zoom at lunchtime on the last Friday of each month, 12:30-1:30 PM (AEST). We start each meet-up with announcements, or occasionally a special topic discussion, then discuss problems that attendees have brought along with them.

We also have a Slack workspace where members of the consulting network can communicate between meetings, or post problems or relevant materials

they would like to discuss during a meeting.

[Zoom link](#)

Password: 660145

[Slack Workspace link](#)

NSW Branch

**David Warton and Houying Zhu - Macquarie University and via Zoom –
16 May 2024, 11am – 2pm (AEST), lunch provided**

**Multivariate Spatial Models for Community Ecology Using a Basis
Function Approach-** David Warton

Statistical Solutions: From Wildfire Losses to Protein Engineering-
Houying Zhu

Venue:

12 WW Room 803, Macquarie University and via Zoom

Schedule

- 11am – 12pm: Dr Houying Zhu (Macquarie) - Statistical Solutions: From Wildfire Losses to Protein Engineering
- 12pm – 1pm: Complementary pizza lunch with speakers
- 1pm – 2pm: Prof David Warton (UNSW) - Multivariate Spatial Models for Community Ecology Using a Basis Function Approach

[For details and to register click here](#)

WA Branch: Early Career & Student Statisticians Evening

14 May 2024, 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM (AWST), at the Cheryl Praeger Lecture Room, The University of Western Australia

All visitors are welcome to attend this event, especially anyone studying or interested in pursuing a career in statistics or data science. Two speakers have been invited to speak at this event: George Malone (recipient of the 2023 Honours Scholarship) and Alistair Martin (Graduate student at Murdoch).

Members, visitors, and guests are invited to mingle over wine, beer, cider, soft drinks and pizza from 5:30PM. Following the meeting you are invited to dine with fellow attendees at a nearby restaurant. Early career and students will

receive \$20 off their meal.

For more details on the talks and to register please click [here](#).

SSA WA: Perth Biostats/Bioinfo Meetup 2024

11 Jun 2024, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM (AWST), McCusker Auditorium, Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research (North), QEII Medical Centre, 6 Verdun Street, Nedlands WA 6009

The purpose of this event is to bring together those with expertise and/or interest in medical and healthcare statistics in Perth. It is an opportunity to socialise and network, and to encourage upcoming professionals to pursue a career in this worthwhile field.

The invited speakers this evening are Dr Emma de Jong and Dr Charlotte Rasmussen.

For details on the speakers and their talks, please click [here](#).

This event is **free** but please [register your attendance](#) to assist with catering and meeting dietary requirements.

Early Career & Student Statisticians Conference 18th - 21st November 2024

Join us for the biennial Early Career & Student Statisticians Conference (ECSSC). Organised by the ECSS Network of SSA and SECS Network of NZSA, this event offers invaluable insights and networking opportunities.

This year, we're excited to host local hubs in Perth, WA, Hobart, Tasmania and New Zealand, as well as a livestream option. Don't miss out on this incredible experience!

Important Dates:

- 1 July 2024: Call for abstracts
- 15 July 2024: Registrations open
- 26 July 2024: Deadline for abstract submission

Please note that these dates might be adjusted as the conference approaches. Bookmark the [event website](#).

Also participate in our Logo Competition: Design the official conference logo

for a chance to win a free registration to the conference! Submit your logo to events@statsoc.org.au.

Other events

Dealing with Sensitive Data - Public Lecture

Join Distinguished Professor Kerrie Mengersen (Queensland University of Technology) at 6pm, Monday 24 June, for a public lecture on how to deal with datasets of interest to statisticians that are subject to privacy conditions.

This lecture, part of the AMSI Winter School, is available to attend in-person at The University of Queensland or online.

Find out more and register [here](#).

ACSPRI's [2024 Winter Program](#)

Just a quick reminder that you have one week to enrol in the [2024 Winter Program](#) offered by the the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated (ACSPRI) and get the early-bird discount. The early-bird closes at midnight on **Wednesday, 15 May**. The savings are significant if you are a full time student at a member organisation (SSA is not a member).

The deadline for the [Winter Program Indigenous HDR Scholarship applications](#) is also 15 May.

If you have any questions about any of our [scholarships](#), courses, or ACSPRI membership, please contact us on 03 8376 6496 or you can email us at info@acspri.org.au.

Australasian Applied Statistics Conference 2024

2-5 September, Rottnest Island, Western Australia

The [Australasian Applied Statistics Conference 2024](#) (AASC2024) will be held on Rottnest Island at the Samphire Resort on 3-5 September 2024, with pre-conference workshops being held on 2 September in Fremantle.

The conference will provide you with the opportunity to liaise with fellow statisticians within the agricultural, biological and environmental sciences and keep abreast of the most recent developments in statistics within this area.

The invited speakers are: Hans-Peter Piepho, Kerrie Mengersen, Lucy Marshall, Roger Payne, Adrian Baddeley and Anna Hayes.

International Conference on Teaching Statistics (ICOTS) 2026

ICOTS12 will be held in Brisbane, Australia in 2026. Save the date!

More information available [here](#).

Current Vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

[0116496 Associate Researcher, Biostatistics](#)

New South Wales

The University of Sydney

2x Full-time, 12-month fixed-term roles ...

[View All Jobs](#)

If you have news from the Australian statistical community to share in Stats Matters and Events, please get in touch [with us](#)! We love getting feedback too.

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