

April 23, 2020

Biased Estimation of Mortality in Setting of Administrative Censoring

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There is a substantial error in the estimation of mortality among patients requiring mechanical ventilation which I fear has led to a biased (overly high) estimate. This is the estimate (88%) that has been cited so often in the media.

Based on the data presented in Table 5 of the manuscript, 1,151 patients hospitalized for COVID-19 required mechanical ventilation (top row of table). Among this group 282 died while hospitalized, 38 were discharged from hospital, and 831 remained alive and hospitalized at the time that data were administratively censored as of April 4th, 2020. The authors estimated ...

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Methodologic flaws that lead to overestimates of mortality from COVID-19

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I read the report by Richardson and colleagues on the outcomes of COVID-19 patients in New York (1). The authors report that 88.1% of patients requiring mechanical ventilation died. This is potentially misleading and subject to misinterpretation.

The study enrolled 5,700 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 during a 35-day period from March 1 to April 4, 2020. Outcome analysis on the 2,634 patients who died or were discharged was performed. The remaining 3,066 patients that were alive and remain in the hospitals were excluded from analysis. Mechanical ventilation was required in 320 (12.1%) of the 2,634 patients in the analysis, and ...

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