

Medical Prejudice across Gender

Medical textbooks use the male caucasian body as the standard model. As a result, women are often left behind, misdiagnosed and mistreated.

The FDA tried to counteract this, by introducing new guidelines to include more women in trial in 1993 with a new roadmap in 2016 [1].

[1] <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/evaluation-gender-differences-clinical-investigations#:~:text=FDA%20requires%20sponsors%20to%20include,in%20response%20can%20be%20detected>



Before 1993

Before 1993, there were few rules in place, to ensure that clinical studies were conducted equally across genders, ensuring a fair and even interest in both men and women.

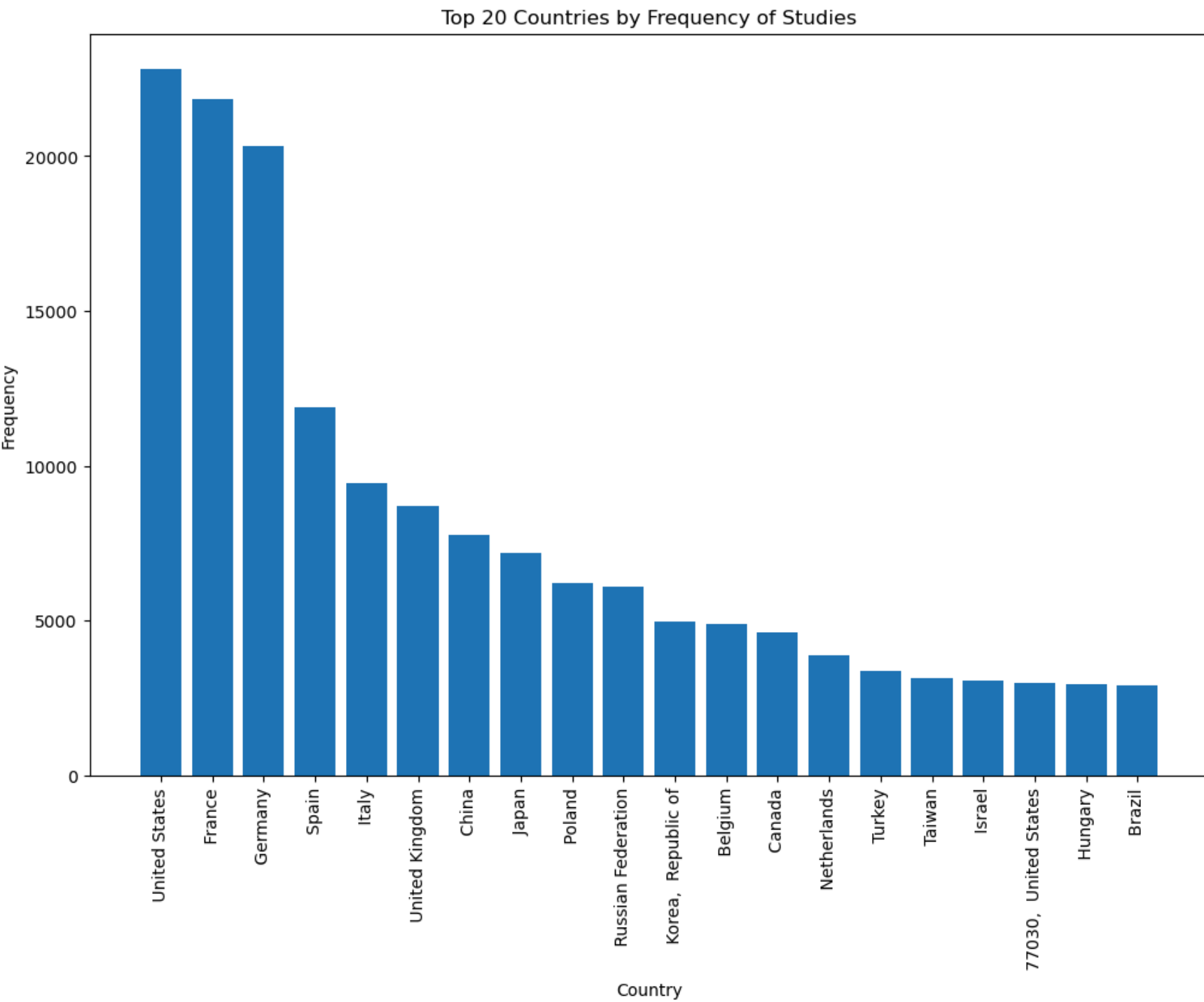
Often women are excluded from such trials, because of concerns related to pregnancy or fertility.

In other cases, women are just not considered or there is more interest in studying men.

Eligibility Criteria Classification

We trained a SVM classifier on Eligibility Criteria to decide the probability of a statement being an inclusion or exclusion criteria. With an accuracy of 0.88 and an f-1score of 0.9, we created a well performing model. As we only have two classes but high-dimensionality, a SVM was an adequate choice.

Most studies listed on the Clinical Trials FDA site are conducted in the USA, followed by large European Countries.



After 1993 and 2016

Looking at clinical studies from 1993 until today, after the introduction of new FDA guidelines to include more women in clinical trials, does not suggest a decrease in bias towards women. Words like ‘pregnant’ or ‘women’ still appear quite often as exclusion criteria, while words attributed to men only ever appear as inclusion criteria. Concerns related to pregnancy still persist, not necessarily with bad intent, but it still neglects women.

