

possible to place the variable sun exposure on the lines and the variable skin cancer on the columns of a contingency table. Tables may be easier to understand by including total values in lines and columns. These values should agree with the sum of the lines and/or columns, as appropriate, whereas relative values should be in accordance with the exposure variable, i.e., the sum of the values mentioned in the lines should total 100%.

It is such a display of percentage values that will make it possible for risk or exposure groups to be compared with each other, in order to investigate whether individuals exposed to a given risk factor show higher frequency of the disease of interest. Thus, table 4 shows that 75.0%, 9.0%, and 0.3% of individuals in the study sample who had been working exposed to the sun for 20 years or more, for less than 20 years, and had never been working exposed to the sun, respectively, developed non-melanoma skin cancer. Another way of interpreting this table is observing that 25.0%, 91%, 0%, and 99.7% of individuals who had been working exposed to the sun for 20 years or more, for less than 20 years, and had never been working exposed to the sun did not develop non-melanoma skin cancer. This form of presentation is one of the most used in the literature and makes the table easier to read.

The relationship between two numerical variables or between one numerical variable and one categorical variable may be assessed using a scatter diagram, also known as dispersion diagram. In this diagram, each pair of values is represented by a symbol or a dot, whose horizontal and vertical positions are determined by the value of the first and second variables, respectively. By convention, vertical and horizontal axes should correspond to outcome and exposure variables, respectively. Figure 5 shows the relationship between weight and height among 18-year-old youngsters from Pelotas, Southern Brazil, in 2010.³⁴ The diagram presented in figure 5 should be interpreted as follows: the increase in subjects' height is accompanied by an increase in their weight.

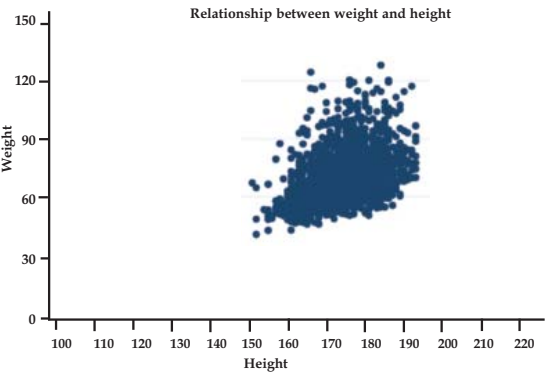


FIGURE 5: Point diagram for the relationship between weight (kg) and height (cm) among 18-year-old youngsters from the city of Pelotas (n = 2.194). Pelotas, Brazil, 2010.

BASIC RULES FOR THE PREPARATION OF TABLES AND GRAPHS

- Ideally, every table should:
- Be self-explanatory;
 - Present values with the same number of decimal places in all its cells (standardization);
 - Include a title informing what is being described and where, as well as the number of observations (N) and when data were collected;
 - Have a structure formed by three horizontal lines, defining table heading and the end of the table at its lower border;
 - Not have vertical lines at its lateral borders;
 - Provide additional information in table footer, when needed;
 - Be inserted into a document only after being mentioned in the text; and
 - Be numbered by Arabic numerals.
- Similarly to tables, graphs should:
- Include, below the figure, a title providing all relevant information;
 - Be referred to as figures in the text;

TABLE 4: Sun exposure during work and non-melanoma skin cancer (hypothetical data).

Work exposed to the sun	Non-melanoma skin cancer				Total	
	Yes		No		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
20 or more years	30	75.0	10	25.0	40	100
<20 years	9	9.0	90	91.0	99	100
Never	1	0.3	300	99.7	301	100
Total	40	9.0	400	91.0	440	100