

Research Problem

Info from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research Codebook of the Civil Justice Survey of State Courts, 2001

The Civil Justice Survey of State Courts, 2001 is a systematic examination of civil trials, specifically bench and trial jury cases, disposed in State general jurisdiction courts in the nation's 75 most populous counties. In 2001, the Bureau of Justice Statistics awarded a grant to the National Center for State Courts to gather detailed information on tort, contract, and real property rights trials in 46 jurisdictions chosen to represent the 75 most populous counties in the nation. These counties accounted for about 37 percent of the U.S. population and about half of all civil filings.

Some basic terminology: The plaintiff is the person (or group of people) who initiate a lawsuit in court against the defendant (could be one person or a group of people). If the plaintiff is successful, the court will give judgment in the plaintiff's favor; court orders are then given to enforce rights, award damages (money), or prevent an action from taking place. You may retain a lawyer to represent you in court (or have one appointed for you); you may also waive this right and choose to represent yourself.

There has been some public outcry about the size of the damages awarded in some civil court cases. In particular, some plaintiffs have been awarded excessively large amounts of money; others have received very little. It has become of interest what types of court cases contribute to the total amount of damages a plaintiff receives. Your research group is approached by a litigation advocacy watchdog group that is trying to determine the relationship between amount of damages awarded and several characteristics of civil court cases. They believe that there is a multivariate linear regression normal error model underlying the relationship of total damages with several predictors. The definitions of the variables are listed below:

TOTDAM: total amount of damages awarded to plaintiff (in \$)

DEMANDED: total amount of damages requested from the court by plaintiff (in \$)

TRIDAYS: how many days the trial lasted

CLAIMTYPE: type of claim the plaintiff made - *categorized as follows:* 1: motor vehicle;
2: premises liability; 3: malpractice; 4: fraud; 5: rental/lease ; 6: other

You have been given the information for the court cases from the previous month in which some damages were awarded. The advocacy group is specifically interested in the relationship between total damages and the amount demanded by the plaintiff. They also hypothesize that a longer trial corresponds to a larger amount awarded to the plaintiff. In addition, it is thought that there are some claim types with significant relationships with amount awarded and some that have insignificant relationships.

We are interested in predicting the amount awarded to a plaintiff who demands \$100,000, has a trial of five days long, and a malpractice claimtype.