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Causal Inference - Quiz

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Question 1

1/1 point (graded)

Which of the following describes what is known as the "fundamental problem of causality"?

○ a. Determining the direction of causality is often difficult

◉ b. Isolating a causal effect requires comparing something that we see, with something we do not see (the counterfactual) ✔

○ c. You can never be sure whether a relationship is a correlation or a causal relationship

○ d. It is impossible to account for all possible conditions/characteristics/variables that might impact the outcome of interest

Explanation

The fundamental problem of causality is that determining causality requires us to compare something that we do see with something we do not see. Returning to the pill example, the ideal way to measure causality would be to take a person at a particular time, provide her with a pill and see what happens,

but also provide her with no pill and see what happens (and ideally, to repeat this process for a large number of people). By definition, we can observe at most one of the unit-action pairs and the associated outcome, which is the fundamental problem of causality.

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