

Categorical Data Analysis

Dr. Wan Nor Arifin

Biostatistics and Research Methodology Unit
Universiti Sains Malaysia
wnarifin@usm.my / wnarifin.github.io



Last update: Dec 19, 2025

Outlines

- Introduction
- Chi-squared Test of Association
- Fisher's Exact Test
- McNemar's Test

Learning outcomes

- Understand the concepts behind each test
- Understand when to use each test
- Able to perform chi-squared, Fisher's exact and McNemar's tests using SPSS, and interpret the results

Introduction

Introduction

- Factor (IV) and Outcome (DV) variables are both categorical
- Analyses of contingency / cross-tabulation table
- Depending on # categories of each
- e.g. 2x2, 3x2, 3x3 and so on
- Analyze cell counts

Introduction

- Analyses covered:
 - Chi-squared test
 - Fisher's exact test
 - McNemar's test

Chi-squared Test of Association

About

- Non-parametric test
- TWO independent samples
- Association between TWO categorical variables

About

- Cross-tabulation between TWO variables
- The association between the variables are made by comparing the observed cell counts (from data) with the expected cell counts (i.e. the count when variables are not associated to each other)

Observed Count (O)

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	20	12	32
No	55	113	168
Column Total	75	125	200

62.5%

32.7%

Expected Count (E)

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	$32 * 75 / 200 = 12$	$32 * 125 / 200 = 20$	32
No	$168 * 75 / 200 = 63$	$168 * 125 / 200 = 105$	168
Column Total	75	125	200

$$E = (\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}) / \text{Grand Total}$$

Chi-square (χ^2)

$$\chi^2 = \text{SUM}\left(\frac{[O - E]^2}{E}\right)$$

$$df = (r - 1)(c - 1)$$

df = degree of freedom, r = # row, c = # column

$$\chi^2 = \text{SUM}([O - E]^2/E)$$

Smoker	Lung Cancer		
	Yes	No	
Yes	$(20-12)^2/12$ $=5.33$	$(12-20)^2/20$ $=3.20$	
No	$(55-63)^2/63$ $=1.00$	$(113-105)^2/105$ $=0.61$	
	$\chi^2 = \text{SUM}([O-E]^2/E)$		10.14

These values will be used by statistical software to get P-value

$$df = (2-1) * (2-1) = 1$$

Limitation

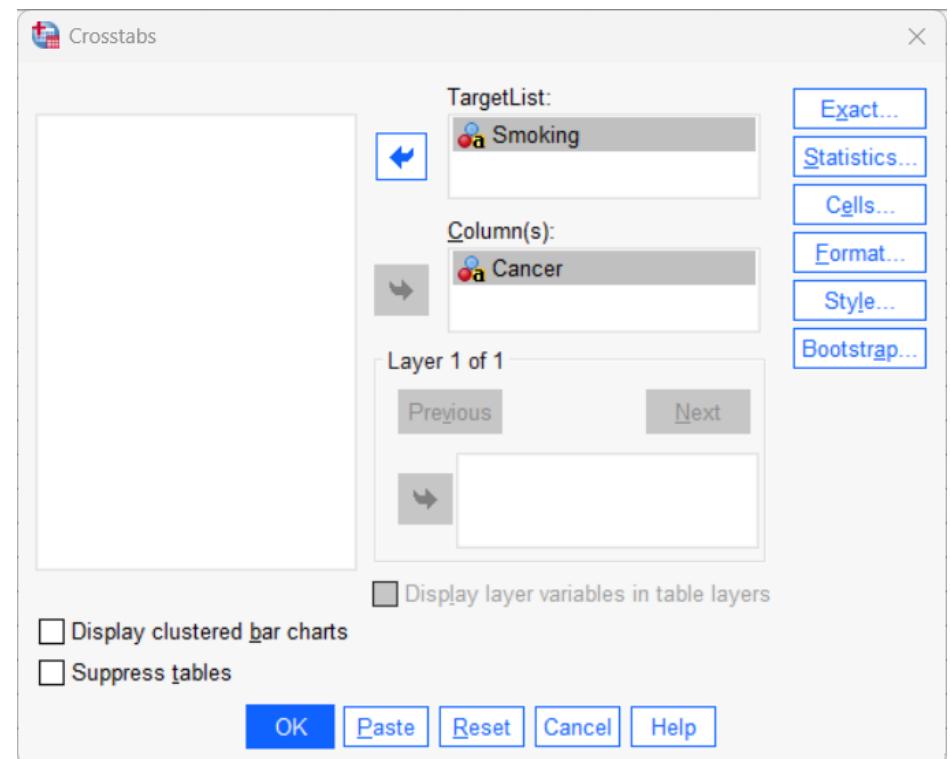
- Requirement – < 25% expected cell counts < 5
- If this assumption of χ^2 is violated → Use Fisher's exact

Practical in SPSS

- Dataset: lung.sav
- Variables:
 - Smoking = Yes/No
 - Cancer = Yes/No

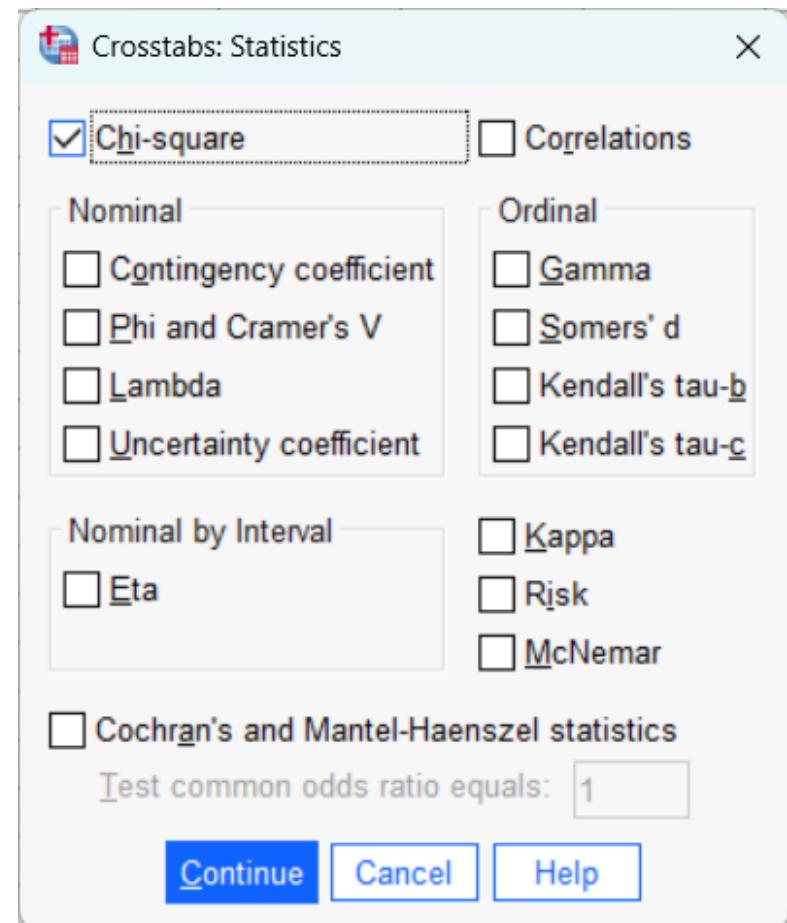
Practical in SPSS

- Open Crosstabs menu
 - Analyze → Descriptive Statistics → Crosstabs
 - TargetList = Smoking, Column(s) = Cancer



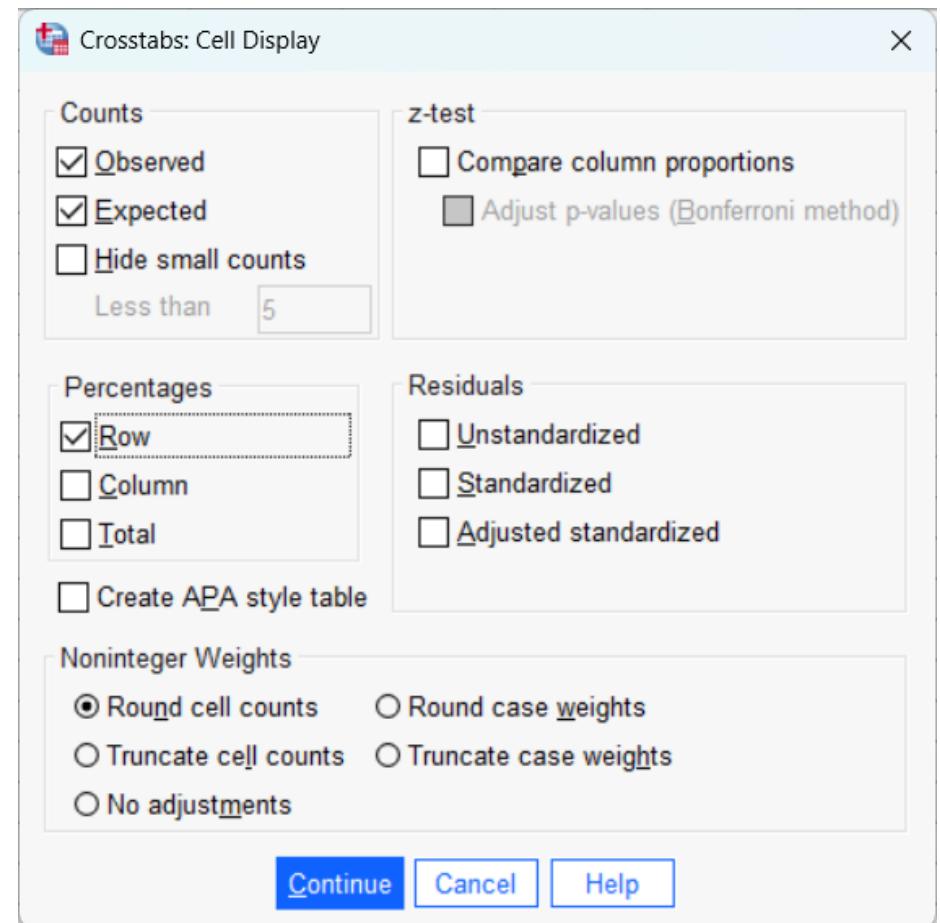
Practical in SPSS

- Statistics button
 - Check Chi-square
 - Continue



Practical in SPSS

- Cells button
 - Check Observed, Expected and Row
 - Continue, then OK in Crosstabs main window



Practical in SPSS

- Results

P < 0.05, Sig. Association between Smoking & Cancer (2 sided)

Assumption fulfilled for χ^2 ($E < 5$ less $< 25\%$)

		Smoking * Cancer Crosstabulation		
			Cancer	
		Count	cancer	no cancer
Smoking	smoking	Count	20	12
		Expected Count	12.0	20.0
		% within Smoking	62.5%	37.5%
	no smoking	Count	55	113
		Expected Count	63.0	105.0
		% within Smoking	32.7%	67.3%
Total		Count	75	125
		Expected Count	75.0	125.0
		% within Smoking	37.5%	62.5%

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.159 ^a	1	.001		
Continuity Correction ^b	8.929	1	.003		
Likelihood Ratio	9.830	1	.002		
Fisher's Exact Test				.002	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.108	1	.001		
N of Valid Cases	200				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Fisher's Exact Test

About

- Alternative of chi-squared test – when its requirement is not fulfilled
- For cross-tabulation with small cell counts (rare disease) – small expected cell counts
- Gives exact P -value, no statistical distribution involved (unlike chi-squared distribution)

Observed Count (O)

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	5	10	15
No	2	28	30
Column Total	7	38	45

33.3%

6.7%

Expected Count (E)

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	$15*7/45 = 2.33$	$15*38/45 = 12.67$	15
No	$30*7/45 = 4.67$	$30*38/45 = 25.33$	30
Column Total	7	38	45

$2/4 \text{ cells} < 5 = 50\%$
Cannot use χ^2 !

Fisher's exact

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	a	b	$a + b$
No	c	d	$c + d$
Column Total	$a + c$	$b + d$	n

$$p = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{a!b!c!d!n!}$$

Fisher's exact

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	a = 5	b = 10	a + b = 15
No	c = 2	d = 28	c + d = 30
Column Total	a + c = 7	b + d = 38	n = 45

Calculate
these by
statistical
software to
get P-value

$$p = \frac{15! 30! 7! 38!}{5! 10! 2! 28! 45!}$$

Fisher's exact

Smoker	Lung Cancer		Row Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	$a = 5$	$b = 10$	$a + b = 15$
No	$c = 2$	$d = 28$	$c + d = 30$
Column Total	$a + c = 7$	$b + d = 38$	$n = 45$

$$p=0.028$$

Practical in SPSS

- Dataset: lung_small.sav
- Variables:
 - Smoking = Yes/No
 - Cancer = Yes/No

Practical in SPSS

- Same steps as chi-squared test, read Fisher's exact result

Practical in SPSS

- Results

P < 0.05, Sig. Association
between Smoking &
Cancer
(exact 2 sided)

Clearly, assumption
violated for χ^2
(E < 5 less < 25%)

		Smoker * Cancer Crosstabulation		
		Cancer		Total
		No	Yes	
Smoker	No	Count	28	30
		Expected Count	25.3	4.7
		% within Smoker	93.3%	6.7%
	Yes	Count	10	15
		Expected Count	12.7	2.3
		% within Smoker	66.7%	33.3%
Total		Count	38	45
		Expected Count	38.0	7.0
		% within Smoker	84.4%	15.6%

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.414 ^a	1	.020	
Continuity Correction ^b	3.574	1	.059	
Likelihood Ratio	5.109	1	.024	
Fisher's Exact Test				.032
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.293	1	.021	
N of Valid Cases	45			

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.33.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

McNemar's Test

About

- Non-parametric test
- TWO dependent samples
- Association between TWO repeated categorical outcomes
- Any change?

About

- Cross-tabulation between TWO variables limited to 2x2 only
- It is concerned with whether the subjects still have the same outcomes (concordant) or different outcomes (discordant) upon repetition (pre-post)
- The association is determined by looking at the discordant cells

Observed Count (O)

		Knowledge After		Row Total
Knowledge Before		Good	Poor	
Good	Good	88	8	96
	Poor	22	55	77
Column Total		110	63	173

Discordant pairs

63.6%

55.5%

The table illustrates the observed counts (O) for knowledge levels before and after an intervention. The 'Good' row total is 96, and the 'Poor' row total is 77. The 'Good' column total is 110, and the 'Poor' column total is 63. The total sample size is 173. The cell containing the value 22 is highlighted with a red oval.

Chi-square (χ^2) for McNemar

Knowledge Before	Knowledge After		Row Total
	Good	Poor	
Good	a	b	a + b
Poor	c	d	c + d
Column Total	a + c	b + d	n

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(b - c)^2}{b + c} \text{ with } df = 1$$

Chi-square (χ^2) for McNemar

Knowledge Before	Knowledge After		Row Total
	Good	Poor	
Good	88	8	15
Poor	22	55	30
Column Total	7	38	45

These values will be used by statistical software to get P-value

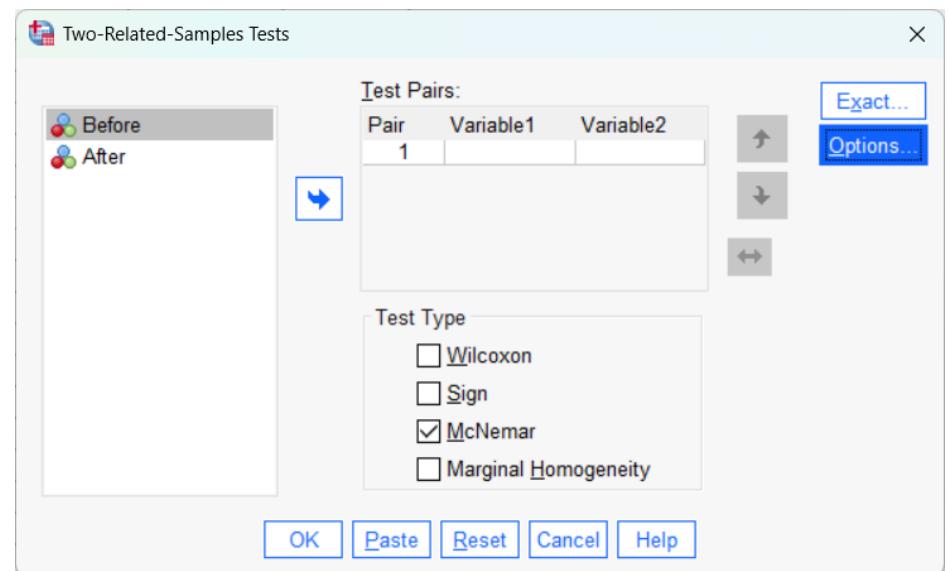
$$\chi^2 = \frac{(8-22)^2}{8+22} = 6.53, df = 1$$

Practical in SPSS

- Dataset: knowledge.sav
- Variables:
 - Before = Good/Poor
 - After = Good/Poor

Practical in SPSS

- Open 2 Related Samples menu
 - Add Before and After in Test Pairs
 - Uncheck Wilcoxon, Check McNemar
 - OK



Practical in SPSS

- Results

SPSS uses exact P-value
instead of χ^2

$P < 0.05$, Sig. change pre-post

Smoker & Cancer

		Cancer	
		Smoker	No
Smoker	No	28	2
	Yes	10	5

Test Statistics^a

Smoker & Cancer	
N	45
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.039 ^b

a. McNemar Test

b. Binomial distribution used.

Tutorial

Tutorial

- Datasets:
 - X²: alzheimer.sav
 - Fisher: eofad.sav
 - McNemar: mmse.sav