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**Motivating regression analysis: confounding, moderation and mediation**

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*Abstract Text:*

The primary biostatistical tools in epidemiologic and clinical research are single-outcome, multiple predictor methods, shortly called regression analyses. The most common forms are (1) multiple linear regression for continuous outcomes, (2) logistic regression for binary outcomes, and the (3) Cox proportional hazards regression models for time-to-event outcomes. The presence of confounding, moderation (effect modification), and mediation motivates the application of regression analysis.

In this paper, these three important concepts - confounding, moderation and mediation - will be illustrated with the use of direct acyclic graphs and examples from the VHM&PP. The examples are drawn from the context of cardiovascular epidemiology but generalize to other areas of application.

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