

Biostatistics 208 HW #2, Solutions

Question 1

What is the crude or unadjusted association of regular exercise with fasting glucose at baseline?

```
. reg glucose0 exercise
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs = 2032		
Model	1412.50418	1	1412.50418	F(1, 2030)	=	14.97
Residual	191605.195	2030	94.3867954	Prob > F	=	0.0001
				R-squared	=	0.0073
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0068
Total	193017.699	2031	95.0357946	Root MSE	=	9.7153

glucose0	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
exercise	-1.692789	.4375862	-3.87	0.000	-2.550954	-.8346242
_cons	97.36104	.2815138	345.85	0.000	96.80895	97.91313

In an unadjusted comparison among post-menopausal women with CHD, average fasting glucose was 1.7 mg/dL lower (95% CI 0.8-2.6, $p < 0.0005$) among those who exercised at least 3 times per week, as compared to women who exercised less.

Question 2

Use a multi-predictor linear model to estimate the adjusted association of exercise with glucose0, adjusting for age, race/ethnicity, and smoking. Is there substantial confounding of the association between exercise and baseline glucose by the other factors? Is exercise a significant predictor after adjustment?

```
. reg glucose0 exercise age i.raceth smoker
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs = 2032		
Model	2213.72401	5	442.744803	F(5, 2026)	=	4.70
Residual	190803.975	2026	94.1776776	Prob > F	=	0.0003
				R-squared	=	0.0115
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0090
Total	193017.699	2031	95.0357946	Root MSE	=	9.7045

glucose0	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
exercise	-1.821726	.4441249	-4.10	0.000	-2.692715	-.950737
age	-.0043868	.0328457	-0.13	0.894	-.0688017	.060028
raceth						
2	.1559008	.9040724	0.17	0.863	-1.617108	1.928909
3	3.093502	1.366503	2.26	0.024	.4136038	5.773399
smoker	-1.120567	.6323409	-1.77	0.077	-2.360673	.1195392
_cons	97.78406	2.252041	43.42	0.000	93.3675	102.2006

- After adjustment for age, race/ethnicity, and current smoking, average glucose levels were 1.8 mg/dL lower (95% CI 1.0-2.7, $p < 0.0005$) among women who exercised at least 3 times per week. So clearly exercise is a significant predictor after adjustment.
- Since the coefficient for **exercise** is larger in absolute value after adjustment, there is slight *negative* confounding, by smoking, and exercise remains highly statistically significant after adjustment. The negative confounding is explained by the fact that smoking is much less prevalent among women who exercise (8 vs 20%), so they are inversely correlated, but both are associated with lower glucose levels, possibly because women who smoke are thinner on average.

Question 3

In practice, it can be difficult to distinguish confounding from mediation. It is not possible on statistical grounds. Instead, it is judgment call based on plausible models of causation. In particular, do you think BMI is a confounder or a mediator of the association between exercise and glucose levels? Describe a plausible mechanism for the effect of exercise on glucose under which BMI is a mediator.

- Long-term regular exercise, for which current exercise could be a decent surrogate, may have helped prevent weight gain
- Increased exercise may have resulted in recent weight loss

Come up with one under which BMI is a confounder.

- Higher BMI makes it more difficult to exercise
- BMI is a marker for other lifestyle factors such as diet that more directly increase glucose levels

If we do add BMI to the model, exercise still appears protective, but the effect is only half as large:

```
. reg glucose0 exercise age i.raceth smoker bmi0
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	2030
Model	13979.4852	6	2329.9142	F(6, 2023)	=	26.34
Residual	178976.732	2023	88.4709498	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.0724
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0697
Total	192956.217	2029	95.0991704	Root MSE	=	9.4059

glucose0	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
exercise	-.9372157	.4376237	-2.14	0.032	-1.795456	-.0789754
age	.0572837	.0323737	1.77	0.077	-.0062056	.120773
raceth						
2	-.5751108	.8785541	-0.65	0.513	-2.298076	1.147854
3	3.089222	1.324498	2.33	0.020	.4916996	5.686745
smoker	-.1087472	.6195892	-0.18	0.861	-1.323847	1.106352
bmi0	.4854092	.0421249	11.52	0.000	.4027964	.568022
_cons	79.76392	2.695955	29.59	0.000	74.47678	85.05106

If you primarily view BMI as a mediator of long-term exercise patterns, then the result for **exercise** in this model would represent the effects of exercise by pathways other than BMI. If you view it primarily as a confounder, this might be seen as representing the overall effect of exercise.

Question 4

A previous HERS paper has shown that hormone therapy prevented progression to diabetes. Does change in glucose from baseline to the first annual visit (**glucchange**) differ in the hormone therapy and placebo groups? What is the average change in each treatment group?

```
. reg glucchange ht
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	1933
Model	2768.22866	1	2768.22866	F(1, 1931)	=	20.41
Residual	261844.603	1931	135.60052	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.0105
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0099
Total	264612.832	1932	136.963163	Root MSE	=	11.645

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
ht	-2.393937	.5298372	-4.52	0.000	-3.43305 -1.354824
_cons	1.983789	.3706569	5.35	0.000	1.256859 2.710719


```
. lincom _cons + ht
```

```
( 1) ht + _cons = 0
```

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
(1)	-.410148	.3786039	-1.08	0.279	-1.152663 .3323675

So HT did produce a net average reduction of 2.4 mg/dL (95% CI 1.4-3.4, $p < 0.0005$) in glucose levels over the first year of treatment. Average changes by group were

- an increase of 2.0 mg/dL (95% CI 1.3 to 2.7) in the placebo group
- a decrease of 0.4 mg/dL (95% CI -0.3 to 1.2) in the HT group.

The treatment effect is statistically significant even though the CI for the average change in the HT group includes zero, because we estimate the treatment effect by the *difference* between the average changes in the treated and placebo groups, not just by the change in the treated group. This could have been done with equal validity using a *t*-test.

```
. ttest glucchange, by(ht)
```

Two-sample t test with equal variances

Group	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[95% Conf. Interval]
placebo	987	1.983789	.427926	13.44396	1.144039 2.82354
E+P	946	-.410148	.3058667	9.407577	-1.010405 .1901085
combined	1933	.812209	.2661865	11.70313	.2901661 1.334252
diff		2.393937	.5298372		1.354824 3.43305


```
diff = mean(placebo) - mean(E+P)
```

```
diff = 2.393937
```

```
t = 4.5183
```

```
degrees of freedom = 1931
```



```
Ha: diff < 0
```

```
Pr(T < t) = 1.0000
```



```
Ha: diff != 0
```

```
Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000
```



```
Ha: diff > 0
```

```
Pr(T > t) = 0.0000
```

Question 5

Is there an interaction between the predictors 1) hormone therapy and 2) baseline glucose on the outcome change in glucose? Give and interpret the statistical test of interaction.

A simple solution is to treat baseline glucose as a continuous variable, and let Stata set up cross-product with the treatment indicator.

```
. reg glucchange i.ht##c.glucose0
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs = 1933		
Model	9723.53001	3	3241.17667	F(3, 1929)	=	24.53
Residual	254889.302	1929	132.13546	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Total	264612.832	1932	136.963163	R-squared	=	0.0367
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0352
				Root MSE	=	11.495

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1.ht	2.424923	5.264795	0.46	0.645	-7.900365	12.75021
glucose0	-.1701347	.0376219	-4.52	0.000	-.2439186	-.0963508
ht#						
c.glucose0						
1	-.051057	.0541798	-0.94	0.346	-.1573141	.0552001
_cons	18.48772	3.667813	5.04	0.000	11.29442	25.68101

- The effects on HT on first-year change in glucose appeared similar across levels of baseline glucose ($p = 0.35$), so there is essentially no evidence for interaction.
- Nonetheless, there is an association between baseline levels and subsequent change, possibly due to regression to the mean. This also arises from the fact that the outcome is calculated as the difference between the year 1 and baseline values, so the latter is effectively included – with different signs – on both sides of the regression equation, producing the strong negative association. From the previous analysis with no interaction, we know that glucose levels increased on average in the placebo group. However, the coefficient for `glucose0` in this analysis suggests that the average placebo-group increase in glucose was smaller by 0.17 mg/dL (95% 0.10-0.24, $p < 0.0005$) for each mg/dL increase in baseline glucose. The big p -value for interaction suggests that the association between baseline and change is the same in the HT and placebo groups.
- Centering `glucose0` (and by extension the cross-product term) would make the estimate of the effect of `ht` in the `regress` output more interpretable, but would not change the results for participants with given values of baseline glucose, computed using `lincom` statements below.

Based on the linear model you fit for interaction, estimate the effect of hormone therapy on glucose change (**glucchange**), with a 95% CI, among patients with baseline glucose of 80, 90, 100, and 110 mg/dL.

Here is the table we need to figure out the right `lincom` statement:

HT	Baseline Glucose	_cons	ht	glucose0	1.ht#c.glucose0
yes	k	1	1	k	k
no	k	1	0	k	0
	Diff.	0	1	0	k

So we can use `lincom ht + k*1.ht#c.glucose0`. This can be implemented using a `forvalues` loop (though it is certainly fine to type the commands one at a time):

```

. forvalues glucose0 = 80(10)110 {
2.     dis _newline as result "Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 'glucose0':"
3.     lincom 1.ht + 'glucose0'*1.ht#c.glucose0
4.     }

```

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 80:

$$(1) \quad 1.\text{ht} + 80 \cdot 1.\text{ht}\#c.\text{glucose0} = 0$$

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
(1)	-1.659638	1.044825	-1.59	0.112	-3.708744 .389467

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 90:

$$(1) \quad 1.ht + 90*1.ht\#c.glucose0 = 0$$

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
(1)	-2.170209	.6366019	-3.41	0.001	-3.418709	-.9217084

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 100:

$$(1) \quad 1.ht + 100*1.ht\#c.glucose0 = 0$$

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
(1)	-2.680779	.553131	-4.85	0.000	-3.765576	-1.595981

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 110:

$$(1) \quad 1.\text{ht} + 110 \cdot 1.\text{ht} \# c.\text{glucose0} = 0$$

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
(1)	-3.191349	.8909184	-3.58	0.000	-4.938613	-1.444085

Here is a summary of the results:

Baseline Glucose (mg/dL)	Estimated effects of HT		
	Net reduction (mg/dL)	95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
80	1.7	-0.4, 3.7	0.112
90	2.2	0.9, 3.4	0.001
100	2.7	1.6, 3.8	< 0.0005
110	3.2	1.4, 4.9	< 0.0005

Note that this analysis assumes a linear interaction between HT and baseline glucose, with the estimated HT effects increasing by a constant 0.5 mg/dL for each 10 mg/dL increase in baseline glucose. Of course, the interaction is clearly not statistically significant, and this shows up in these relatively minor differences by baseline glucose level, as compared to the average net reduction of 2.4 mg/dL estimated for HT in the unadjusted analysis for Question 4.

This problem could also be examined using categorization of baseline glucose levels. I split them at 85, 95, and 105 mg/dL, on the argument that 90 and 100 at least are thus more or less in the middle of their respective categories, though this is not the only possible way to do it.

```
. recode glucose0 min/85 = 1 86/95=2 96/105=3 106/max=4, gen(grp)
(2032 differences between glucose0 and grp)
```

```
. reg glucchange i.grp##i.ht
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs =	1933
Model	11560.9659	7	1651.56655	F(7, 1925) =	12.56
Residual	253051.866	1925	131.455515	Prob > F =	0.0000
Total	264612.832	1932	136.963163	R-squared =	0.0437
				Adj R-squared =	0.0402
				Root MSE =	11.465

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
grp						
2	-3.816878	1.28931	-2.96	0.003	-6.34547	-1.288287
3	-5.745294	1.312074	-4.38	0.000	-8.31853	-3.172058
4	-6.284194	1.421726	-4.42	0.000	-9.072479	-3.495908
1.ht	-1.681171	1.580772	-1.06	0.288	-4.781376	1.419034
grp#ht						
2 1	-.4230616	1.792138	-0.24	0.813	-3.937798	3.091675
3 1	-.9857429	1.822226	-0.54	0.589	-4.559488	2.588002
4 1	-1.918053	2.009375	-0.95	0.340	-5.858833	2.022727
_cons	6.51	1.146541	5.68	0.000	4.261408	8.758592

Here are the tables we need to figure out how to compute treatment effects for the four participants of interest. First, the effect of HT in a participant with baseline glucose of 80 mg/dL (subgroup 1):

The tests for interaction are of interest with this solution. We could do it one of two ways:

```
. * test for heterogeneity in treatment effects
. testparm i.grp#i.ht
( 1)  2.grp#1.ht = 0
( 2)  3.grp#1.ht = 0
( 3)  4.grp#1.ht = 0

          F( 3, 1925) =    0.44
          Prob > F =    0.7275

. * tests for trend in treatment effects
. test 2.grp#1.ht = 3.grp#1.ht + 3*4.grp#1.ht
( 1)  2.grp#1.ht - 3.grp#1.ht - 3*4.grp#1.ht = 0
          F( 1, 1925) =    1.05
          Prob > F =    0.3048
```

```
. contrast q(1).grp#ht
Contrasts of marginal linear predictions
Margins      : asbalanced
-----
          |          df          F          P>F
-----+-----
      grp#ht |          1          1.05          0.3048
-----
```

Note that the second and third tests, for *trend* rather than *heterogeneity* in the treatment effects across the four categories, are equivalent and more nearly analogous to the test in the first model, where we kept baseline glucose level as continuous and modeled the interaction by a product term, which was also continuous. The `test` statement for the test for trend is based on Table 4.5 on page 82 in VGSM.

Question 6

Here are the code and results for the regression using centered glucose:

```
. sum glucose0

      Variable |          Obs          Mean      Std. Dev.          Min          Max
-----+-----
      glucose0 |         2032      96.66043      9.74863           47          125

. local mglucose0 = r(mean)
. gen cglucose0 = glucose0 - 'mglucose0'
```

STATA notes: After running the `sum glucose0` command to get the mean of baseline glucose, the command `local mglucose0 = r(mean)` stores the mean returned by the `sum` command in a so-called local macro variable called `mglucose0` that we can then use, first to create the centered values. Note that when we call it later we have to enclose `mglucose0` in single quotes (using the key below escape for the leading single quote as usual). To see what else is returned by the `sum` command, type `return list` just after running the command `sum glucose0`.


```
. reg glucchange i.ht#c.cglucose0
```

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs = 1933		
Model	9723.52997	3	3241.17666	F(3, 1929) = 24.53		
Residual	254889.302	1929	132.13546	Prob > F = 0.0000		
Total	264612.832	1932	136.963163	R-squared = 0.0367		
				Adj R-squared = 0.0352		
				Root MSE = 11.495		
glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1.ht	-2.51027	.5232834	-4.80	0.000	-3.536531	-1.48401
cglucose0	-.1701347	.0376219	-4.52	0.000	-.2439186	-.0963508
ht#						
c.cglucose0						
1	-.051057	.0541798	-0.94	0.346	-.1573141	.0552001
_cons	2.042423	.3661201	5.58	0.000	1.32439	2.760456

STATA notes: After running the `sum glucose0` command to get the mean of baseline glucose, the command `local mglucose0 = r(mean)` stores the mean returned by the `sum` command in a so-called local macro variable called `mglucose0` that we can then use, first to create the centered values. Note that when we call it later we have to enclose `mglucose0` in single quotes (using the key below escape for the leading single quote as usual). To see what else is returned by the `sum` command, type `return list` just after running the command `sum glucose0`.

Here is the table we need to figure out the right `lincom` statement:

HT	Baseline Glucose	_cons	1.ht	cglucose0	1.ht#c.cglucose0
yes	k	1	1	k-96.7	k-96.7
no	k	1	0	k-96.7	0
	Diff.	0	1	0	k-96.7

So we can use `lincom ht + (k-96.7)*htglucose0`. This can also be implemented using a `forvalues` loop (though it is certainly fine to type the commands one at a time); we can again use the local variable `mglucose0` to avoid having to type the mean value repeatedly.

```
. forvalues glucose0 = 80(10)110 {
2.     dis _newline as result "Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 'glucose0':"
3.     lincom 1.ht + ('glucose0'-'mglucose0')*1.ht#c.cglucose0
4. }
```

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 80:

```
(1) 1.ht - 16.66043*1.ht#c.cglucose0 = 0
```

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
(1)	-1.659638	1.044825	-1.59	0.112	-3.708744	.389467

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 90:

```
( 1) 1.ht - 6.660433*1.ht#c.glucose0 = 0
```

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
(1)	-2.170209	.6366019	-3.41	0.001	-3.418709	-.9217084

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 100:

```
( 1) 1.ht + 3.339567*1.ht#c.glucose0 = 0
```

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
-----+-----						
(1)	-2.680779	.553131	-4.85	0.000	-3.765576	-1.595981

Effect of HT when baseline glucose = 110:

```
( 1) 1.ht + 13.33957*1.ht#c.glucose0 = 0
```

glucchange	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
(1)	-3.191349	.8909184	-3.58	0.000	-4.938613	-1.444085

You can see that the `lincom` results are unchanged after centering. But with this model, the coefficient for `ht` shown in the regression output estimates the effect of HT when baseline glucose is at the mean value of 96.7 *mg/dL* rather than the impossible value of 0.

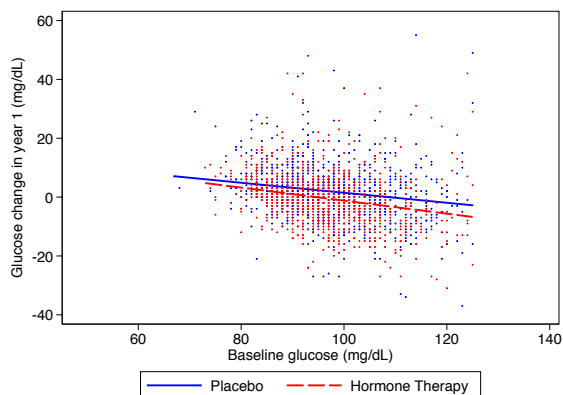
Question 7

Produce a single graph for the fitted regression model showing the association of baseline glucose with change in glucose for each of the treatment groups.

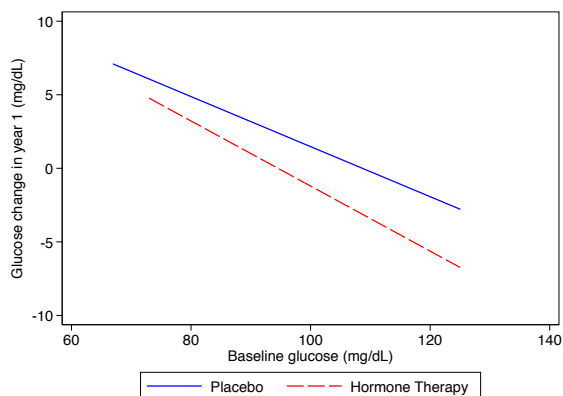
Here is code for the plot. The line separators (`///`) will only work in a do-file.

```
twoway ///
  (scatter glucchange glucose0 if ht==0 & glucchange<75, mcol(blue) msize(vtiny)) ///
  (lfit glucchange glucose0 if ht==0, lpattern(solid) lw(medthick) lcolor(blue)) ///
  (scatter glucchange glucose0 if ht==1, mcolor(red) msize(vtiny)) ///
  (lfit glucchange glucose0 if ht==1, lpattern(longdash) lw(medthick) lcolor(red)), ///
  legend(order(2 "Placebo" 4 "Hormone Therapy")) ///
  ylabel(, angle(horizontal)) ytitle("Glucose change in year 1 (mg/dL)") ///
  xscale(range(60 140)) xlabel(60(20)140) xtitle("Baseline glucose (mg/dL)") ///
  scheme(s1color) name(plota, replace)
graph export hwk2plota.pdf, replace
```

Here is the resulting figure:



I had to limit the range of the data points in the scatter plot for the placebo group to avoid making the two regression lines practically invisible. Omitting the two `scatter` sub-commands gives this plot, which makes the lines easier to see, at the expense of exaggerating the difference.



Another way to make this plot is to fit the interaction model, then plot the fitted values.

```
qui reg glucchange i.ht##c.glucose0
predict fitted, xb
replace fitted = . if missing(glucchange)
twoway ///
    (line fitted glucose0 if ht == 0, sort lpattern(solid) lcolor(blue)) ///
    (line fitted glucose0 if ht == 1, sort lpattern(longdash) lcolor(red)), ///
    legend(order(1 "Placebo" 2 "Hormone Therapy")) ///
    yscale(range(-10 10)) ylabel(-10(5)10, angle(horizontal)) ///
    ytitle("Glucose change in year 1 (mg/dL)") ///
    xscale(range(60 140)) xlabel(60(20)140) xtitle("Baseline glucose (mg/dL)") ///
    scheme(sicolor) name(plotc, replace)
graph export hwk2plotc.pdf, replace
```

I replace one fitted value with a missing outcome that is way off to the left; without this point, the resulting figure looks just like the one above.

Note that a plot does not make sense for the model treating baseline glucose as categorical, which just leads to four point treatment estimates, one for each baseline glucose category, rather than two regression lines.