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Prevalent Cohort Design and Analysis: A Case Study

Logistic or other constraints often preclude the possibility of conducting incident cohort studies. A feasible alternative in such cases is a prevalent cohort study. When the interest lies in estimating the lifespan between an initiating event, experienced before the start of the study, and a terminating event, the prevalent subjects may be followed prospectively until the terminating event or loss to follow-up. These prevalent cases have, on average, longer lifespans and hence do not constitute a representative sample from the target population. I discuss the challenges in analyzing such data and illustrate recently developed methodologies using data from the CSHA.