



OREGON
HEALTH
AUTHORITY

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology for Outbreak Investigations

Rosalie Trevejo, DVM, MPVM, PhD

Oregon Public Health Division

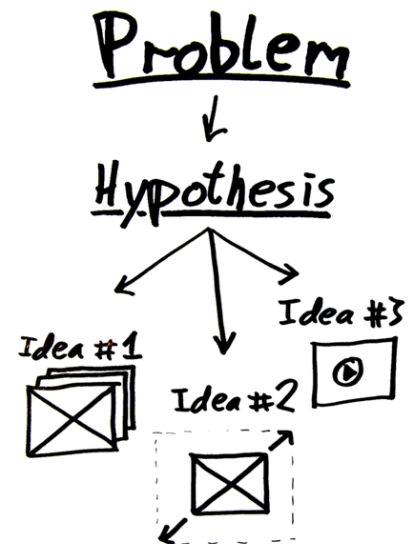
Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention

Objectives

- Define analytic epidemiology
- Describe types of studies to investigate outbreaks
- Discuss control group selection
- Prepare 2 x 2 table
- Calculate and interpret measures of association

Analytic Epidemiology

- Differs from descriptive epi (person, place, time)
- Develop then test hypothesis
- Examine **exposures** and **outcomes**
- Use **comparison group** (controls)



Exposure and Outcome

- Exposure= potential risk factor
 - Food item
 - Occupational
 - Behavioral (e.g., smoking)
- Outcome= Disease
 - Cancer
 - Diarrhea
 - Injury

Common Types of Studies

- Cohort
- Case-Control
- Case-case

- These are **observational** studies, as compared with experimental studies

Cohort Design

- Start with defined group, classified by exposure status
 - Exposed group
 - Non-exposed group
- Assess who developed disease

Cohort Studies examples

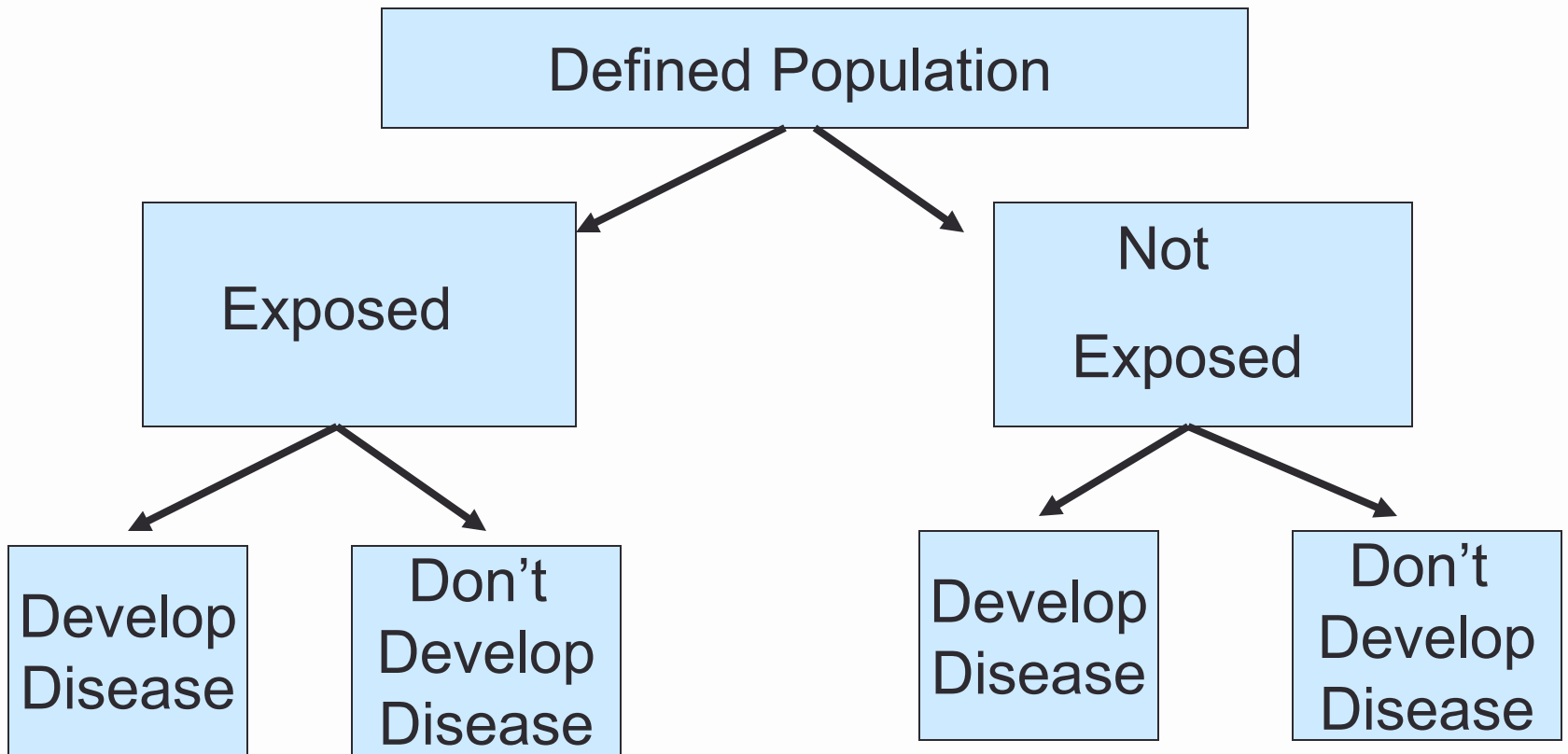
www.nhs3.org

- Nurse's Health Study- 1970's
120,000 female nurses – risk factors for cancer and cardiovascular disease
- Outbreak following a wedding reception
- Illness in a school classroom
- Outbreak after church potluck

Why use a cohort?

- Known denominator: # at **risk** of disease
- Compare exposed and unexposed groups
- However, not always possible to define cohort





Everyone who attended the wedding reception

Ate melon
from buffet

Did not eat
melon from
buffet

Developed
Salmonella

Didn't
develop
Salmonella

Developed
Salmonella

Didn't
develop
Salmonella

Case-Control Design

- Classify people by outcome
 - Cases: have disease
 - Controls: do not have disease
- Assess past exposure

Case-control study examples

- Smoking and lung cancer, 1950s
- *Salmonella* outbreak associated with nationally distributed product
- Restaurant outbreak of norovirus



Selecting Controls

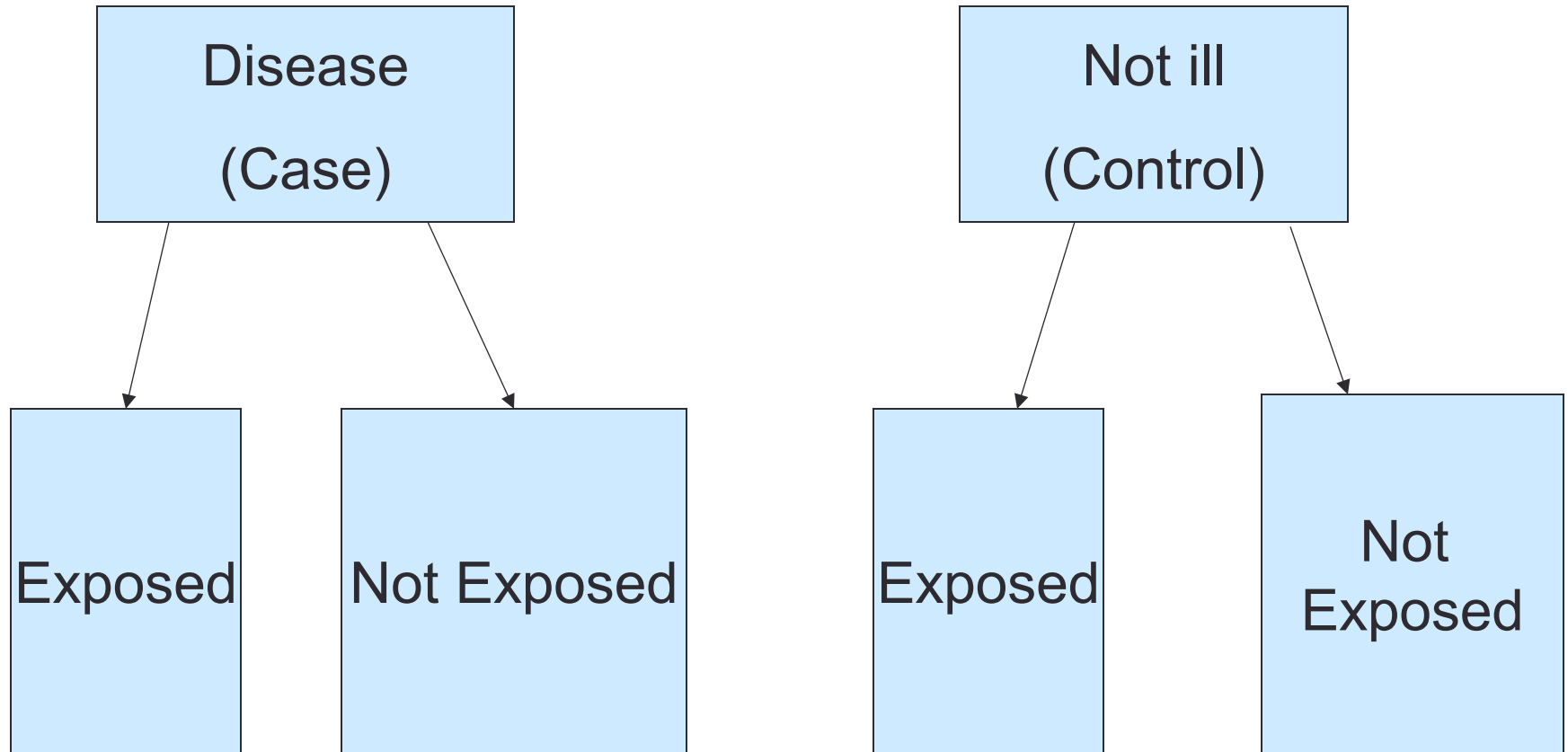
- Do not have the disease
- At risk of disease: had potential for exposure
- Should be representative of cases

- Key: **If they developed the disease, could they be identified as case?**

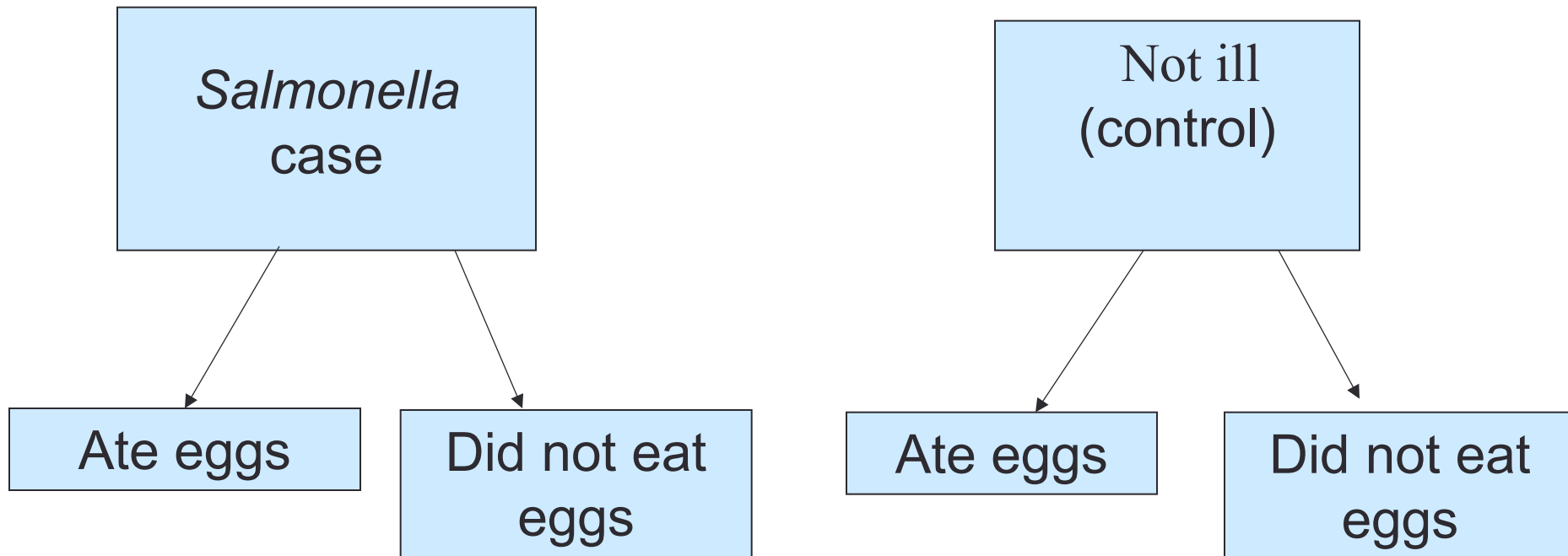
Potential control groups

- Others who ate at same restaurant
- Neighborhood residents
- Family members
- Friends
- Coworkers
- Random digit dialing
- Classmates
- Medical clinic patients

Case-control Study



Case-control Study Example



Advantages & Disadvantages

	Cohort	Case-control
Advantages	Can evaluate rare exposures Can calculate risk	Quick Smaller size Cost effective Can evaluate rare disease
Disadvantages	Inefficient if incubation is long Potential expense Loss to follow up	Recall bias Selection bias

Measures of Association

- Quantifies magnitude of association between exposure and disease
 - Cohort study: relative risk (RR)
 - Case-control study: odds ratio (OR)

2 X 2 table

	Diseased	Not diseased	Row total
Exposed	a	b	a+b
Not exposed	c	d	c+d
Column total	a+c	b+d	a+b+c+d= Grand total

Cohort Study: Relative Risk (RR)

- Risk of disease in exposed \div risk of disease in unexposed
- $RR = a/(a+b) \div c/(c+d)$

		Disease	
		Yes	No
Exposure	Yes	a	b
	No	c	d

How to interpret If $RR = 1$?

Calculate RR for Cohort Study

- *Salmonella* Enteritidis outbreak among group of coworkers that had catered lunch with taco bar
- 40 workers ate fresh salsa; 30 developed *Salmonella* Enteritidis and 10 did not
- Another 40 workers did not eat fresh salsa; 2 developed *Salmonella* Enteritidis and 38 did not

Relative Risk 2 X 2 table

	<i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis	No <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis	Total
Salsa	a	b	a+b
No salsa	c	d	c+d

Fill in table and calculate RR
Put your answer in chat

2X2 table results

	<i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis	No <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis	Total
Salsa	30	10	40
No salsa	2	38	40

$$RR = a/(a+b) \div c/(c+d)$$

$$30/(30+10) \div 2/(2+38)$$

$$RR= 15$$

Relative Risk conclusion:

Those who ate salsa had higher risk (15X) of developing *Salmonella* Enteritidis than those who didn't eat salsa



Case-Control Study: Odds Ratio (OR)

- Compare odds of exposure for cases and controls
- **Odds Ratio (OR) =**
 - $a/c \div b/d$
 - **ad/bc**

		Disease	
		Yes	No
Exposure	Yes	a	b
	No	c	d

Cross product

Case-Control Study: Calculate OR

- Cases: 40 restaurant patrons with *Salmonella* Enteritidis; 30 ate eggs and 10 did not
- Controls: 40 restaurant patrons without *Salmonella* Enteritidis; 2 ate eggs and 38 did not

Why might a case-control study be good option for restaurant outbreak?

Odds Ratio 2 X 2 Table

	<i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis	No <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis
Eggs	a	b
No eggs	c	d
Total	a+c	b+d

Fill in table and calculate OR
Put your answer in chat

Odds Ratio 2 X 2 Table

	<i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis	No <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis
Eggs	30	2
No eggs	10	38
Total	40	40

Odds ratio 2X2 table results

- Odds Ratio (OR) = $(a*d)/(b*c)$
- $30 \times 38 \div 10 \times 2$
- **OR= 57**

- Conclusion:
Cases were 57 times
more likely than controls to
have eaten eggs



Case-case study example: Shotgun

- Compare exposures between 2 groups of cases
- Cluster of STEC 4 cases: compare exposure frequencies with background exposure frequencies in Shotgun database
- Shotgun database provides background exposure frequencies from previously interviewed cases (Salmonella and STEC)

Exposure Code	YES	%	Backgrnd	Binomial
331 CarrotsLoose	2 / 4	50	18%	0.1547
336 PepperBell	2 / 4	50	26%	0.2813
338 PepperRed	2 / 4	50	16%	0.1180
339 PepperYellow	2 / 4	50	9%	0.0456

Is this a true association?

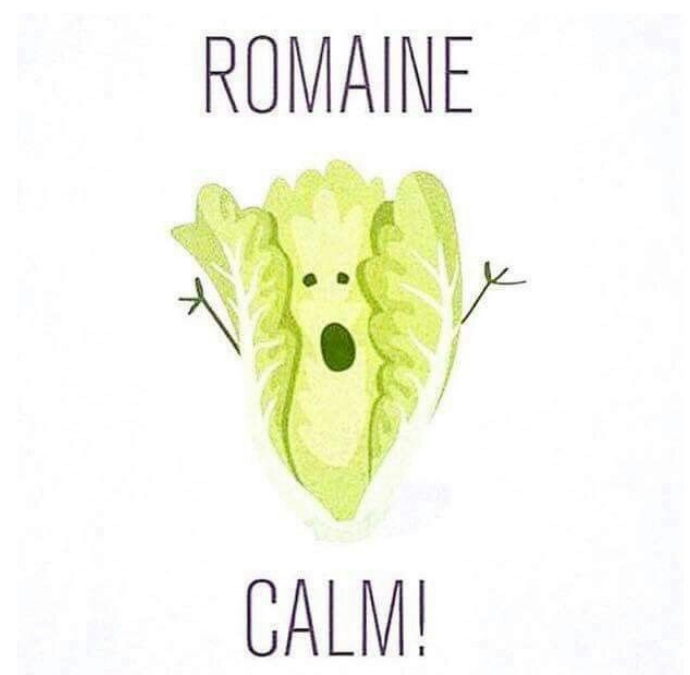
- P-value <0.05)
<https://tidsskriftet.no/en/2015/09/why-p-value-significant>
- Case control study example
OR=57 (95% CI, 12–280) P<0.0001
<https://www.medcalc.org/calc/index.php>



Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Questions?

**Stand up and stretch
break**



Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Exercise

- Handout: CD 303 Exercises (questions 1-4)
- Complete each question before proceeding to next question
- Review questions together at end

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Review of Opening Scenario

On **August 10**, the Oregon County Health Department received a report of a child with *E. coli* O157 (O157) diarrhea. This was their first O157 report in over a year. Within 24 hours Oregon County had received 3 more reports of O157 infection in children.

All 4 ill children that were reported to Oregon County Health Department over 24-hour period had attended the Oregon County Fair and had bloody diarrhea. The fair had been held **August 1 – 6**. Over ~120,000 people had attended this fair. However, the fair ended 3 days earlier. The fairground facilities are used for activities throughout the year.

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Additional Information:

The Oregon County Fair is a major annual event in Oregon each August. It is a large agricultural fair with hundreds of animal exhibits, food vendors, and amusement rides. More than 170,000 visits were recorded this year.

The fairgrounds are supplied by shallow wells approximately 20-feet deep. Since the fairgrounds are only in operation 42 days of year, the fairground water supply is not considered a community water system but is considered an alternative water source and is regulated under the food code. This type of well must be tested within 60 days of an event. Testing for coliforms was performed on June 20th and was negative.

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Question 1: What hypotheses do you want to evaluate?

- *E. coli* was obtained at the fair but exactly where is unknown.
- The usual suspects would be food, water and animals. More specifically, unpasteurized milk, cheese, juice, alfalfa sprouts, uncooked beef and farm animals, (cow, sheep, goats).
- Need to further investigate the water source (wells) as possible source.

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Additional information

An environmental investigation of the fairground revealed that much of the fair was supplied by chlorinated water. However, in one area of the fairground, a shallow well (well #6) provided unchlorinated water to several vendors who used the water to make beverages and ice. This area was close to the large animal barn.

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Question 2: Do we need a study, if so what type of study?

- Oregon County health department Investigators decided to conduct a case-control study.
- Initial evidence is usually not enough to conclude a point source and investigators look at several possible hypotheses.

Why might case control study be used in this investigation?

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Additional information

Cases eligible for inclusion in case control study were people who had attended the Fair and who had stool culture positive for *E. coli* O157 and were the first case in a household (primary cases).

Why limit to first case in household?

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Question 3: Whom might you get for controls? How do you find them?

- Family members
- Friends of cases
- Neighbors of case household
- Random digit telephone dialing

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Additional information

For the Oregon County Fair, controls were obtained from credit card receipts of attendees and from persons entered in photography exhibit and children's art exhibit. Controls were selected who had a similar age distribution as the cases.

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Results

Investigators identified 46 primary cases and 84 controls. All primary cases had attended the fair during the last 4 days. Analysis included only controls who attended the fair at least once during the final 4 days and cases and controls with available exposure data (32 cases and 57 controls).

Hypothesis 1: Water from well #6

Among cases, 26 were exposed to well #6 and 6 were not exposed. Among controls, 9 were exposed to well #6 and 48 were not exposed.

Hypothesis 2: Vendor A chicken

Among cases, 14 were exposed to Vendor A chicken and 18 were not exposed. Among controls, 5 were exposed to Vendor A chicken and 52 were not exposed.

Complete 2X2 tables for each exposure.

Table 1: exposure to water from well #6

	Cases (ill)	Controls (not ill)
Yes, exposed	26 (a)	9 (b)
No, not exposed	6 (c)	48 (d)
Total	32	57

Table 2: exposure to Vendor A chicken

	Cases (ill)	Controls (not ill)
Yes, exposed	14 (a)	5 (b)
No, not exposed	18 (c)	52 (d)
total	32	57

Study Design and Analytic Epidemiology

Question 4: What is an appropriate measure of association for a case-control study? (put in chat)

- Odds ratio
- $\frac{a}{c} = \frac{ad}{bc}$
- $\frac{b}{d} = \frac{ad}{bc}$

- Measure of association for water from well #6? (put in chat)
 - OR=?

- Measure of association for Vendor A chicken? (put in chat)
 - OR=?

Calculating odds ratios (a*d)/(b*c)

Exposure to water from well #6

$$\frac{26 \times 48}{9 \times 6} = \frac{1248}{54} = 23.1$$

Exposure to Vendor A chicken

$$\frac{14 \times 52}{5 \times 18} = \frac{728}{90} = 8.1$$