



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Methods in Clinic and Epidemiologic Research (e-learning) (blended)

2122-1-F8203B001

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#### Learning objectives

The objectives of the course are: to introduce the uncertainty of the diagnostic process; to critically examine the measures available in the scientific literature about the validity of the diagnosis, the clinical discordance, the frequency of diseases and of outcomes, the association between exposures and risk of disease, as well as the efficacy and clinical impact of treatments. Moreover, the methodological aspects related to the different study designs will be examined in depth in order to acquire the expertise for critically reading the medical scientific literature and writing a protocol of both experimental and observational studies and meta-analyses.

#### Contents

1. Uncertainty of the diagnostic process
2. Frequency of clinical events
3. Random and systematic errors of diagnostic measures
4. Observational and experimental studies
5. Meta-analyses

#### Detailed program

##### 1. Uncertainty measures of the diagnostic process

Uncertainty of the diagnostic process

Operative characteristics of a diagnostic test  
Predictive values of a diagnostic test  
Multiple tests  
Agreement between clinicians

## **2. Measures of frequency of clinical events and their predictors**

Incidence and prevalence  
Measures of incidence  
Measures of association  
Measure of impact  
The efficacy of treatments

## **3. Random and systematic errors of clinical measures**

Precision of measures  
Validity of measures  
The role of confounding

## **4. Observational and experimental studies**

Cohort studies  
Case-control studies  
Experimental studies

## **5. Systematic reviews and meta-analysis**

Introduction to systematic reviews and meta-analysis, from data source to meta-analytic estimates by using fixed- or random effect models. Introduction to the main methods for taking into account bias. Guidelines: from the systematic search of the literature to the formulation of the recommendations adopted in clinical practice.

## **Prerequisites**

No formal prerequisite required.

## **Teaching methods**

E-learning/Frontal lectures.

The major part of the course will be provided through the e-learning platform of the University. Teaching material will be regularly uploaded (lectures, scientific papers, readings and other in-depth material) on the online course page. Moreover, at the end of each of the five sections the course is divided in, a frontal lecture is scheduled in order to resume and to clarify the main subjects of the course.

## **Assessment methods**

The exam consists of a final oral exam, during which students will be invited to discuss with the teacher the main subjects of the course, with the aim of verifying whether they have achieved the objectives that the course was intended for.

At the end of each section of the course, after the frontal lesson of the relative section, an assignment (i.e. exercises and theoretical questions, depending on the topics covered by the relative module) will be uploaded by the teacher on the e-learning platform. Students will have to perform the assignment and to upload it on the platform. Each assignment will be scored from 1 to 5. Assignments are intended for the teacher to monitor the grade of

attendance of the students and to verify learning abilities. However, the final oral exam is not restricted to students who completed all the assignments.

## **Textbooks and Reading Materials**

There is no specific reference text.

For each argument of the course, the teaching material will be available on the e-learning platform (slides of the lectures, exercises, scientific papers).

## **Semester**

I Semester (Ciclo I-II) and II Semester (Ciclo III-IV)

## **Teaching language**

Italian

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