

Preface

This book originally began as an exercise to bring together diverse material on health outcomes research. Since the original publication, we have held five summer institutes to teach the material contained in the book. These courses combined didactic material with an opportunity to develop a model study. The experience gained from these courses provided useful insights into material that was not available in the first edition. This edition expands the scope of the presentation as well as updating information and providing new insights into familiar topics.

We owe a great debt to the students of these workshops. They taught us a great deal about how to better present this information and what would be of interest to both clinicians and researchers. We hope that this volume reflects those lessons.

What was once a fairly obscure pursuit in 1997, when the first edition appeared, has now become a major enterprise. Everyone seems to be jumping on the quality bandwagon. However, the approaches to conducting health outcomes research vary a great deal. We strongly believe there continues to be a real need for a text that provides both an overview and insights into some of the more subtle aspects of this pursuit. We view our task as providing neophytes with enough information to get them launched while offering even experienced researchers some new ideas about how to improve their designs and approaches to this complex task.

The authors of the various chapters have been actively involved in conducting outcomes research studies; several of them have also taught in our continuing series.

Robert L. Kane, MD



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