

METHODS IN MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

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Statistical Human Genetics

Methods and Protocols

Second Edition

Edited by

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 **Humana Press**

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ISSN 1064-3745 ISSN 1940-6029 (electronic)
Methods in Molecular Biology
ISBN 978-1-4939-7273-9 ISBN 978-1-4939-7274-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4939-7274-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017951222

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Humana Press imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer Science+Business Media LLC
The registered company address is: 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013, U.S.A.

Preface

The recent advances in genetics, especially in the molecular techniques that have over the last quarter of a century spectacularly reduced the cost of determining genetic markers, open up a field of research that is becoming of increasing help in detecting, preventing, and/or curing many diseases that afflict us. This has brought with it the need for novel methods of statistical analysis and the implementation of these methods in a wide variety of computer programs. The aim in this book is to make these methods and programs more easily accessible to the beginner who has data to analyze, whether a student or a senior investigator. Twenty-eight of the thirty original chapters have been retained (all updated) and, in view of changes in the field, three new chapters have been added. Apart from the first chapter, which defines some of the genetic terms used in the book, each chapter of this book takes up a particular topic and illustrates the use of at least one piece of software that the authors have found helpful for the relevant statistical analysis of their own human genetic data. There is often more than one program that performs a particular type of analysis and, once you have used one program for a particular analysis, you may find you prefer another program—and there is a good chance you will find that the same basic analysis is described in more than one chapter of this book. You may therefore wish to browse over several chapters, in the first place restricting your reading to only the introductory sections, which describe the underlying theory. The chapters are ordered in the approximate logical order in which human genetic studies are often conducted; so, if you are new to research in human genetics, this initial reading could serve as an introduction to the subject. For the most part, the second section of each chapter gives you step-by-step instructions for running programs and interpreting the program outputs, with extra notes in the third section. However, although the aim is very much to offer a “do it yourself” manual, there may well be times when you will need to consult a statistical geneticist, especially for the interpretation of computer output.

Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Robert C. Elston

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