

ERRATUM

In the review article, “Demographic characteristics of HIV: I. How did HIV spread?”, *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 19 #4, 567--603, 2005, Table 3 is garbled; most of the ratios do not correspond to the designated States. The correct assignments are shown below.

However, the set of ratios remains the same, and the argument based on them remains the same.

PR	38.2	NC	16.3	VT	9.1	TX	6.8
WV	38.0	AL	14.6	OH	8.9	AZ	6.7
AR	25.0	SD	14.3	PA	8.7	DC	6.7
TN	21.4	KS	13.2	NJ	8.7	FL	6.5
DE	20.4	NE	12.5	UT	8.2	OR	5.6
ID	20.0	WY	12.5	MA	8.1	NY	4.9
IA	19.0	WI	12.1	NV	8.0	CO	4.0
MD	19.0	MI	11.6	VA	8.0	RI	4.0
IN	18.4	KY	11.5	NM	7.8	CA	3.8
MO	18.2	OK	9.8	LA	7.5	AK	3.1
MS	17.4	IL	9.7	MN	7.1	WA	2.9
SC	17.3	GA	9.4	CT	6.9	NH	2.3

I am most grateful to the reader who told me of this (and who prefers to remain anonymous).

My correspondent also asked why I had chosen to look at these ratios instead of taking the more customary approach of calculating a correlation coefficient. I should have addressed that point in the article.

In my Editorial in 19 #3, I had mentioned having just learned that correlation coefficients measure the degree to which two sets of data are correlated in the sense of both increasing or both decreasing in monotonic fashion, so that, for example, the numbers 1, 2, 3.... and their squares, 1, 4, 9.... yield a very high correlation coefficient (about 0.97). I had not mentioned that my interest in this had been stimulated by these HIV/AIDS data. Initially, I had indeed asked EXCEL to calculate the correlation coefficient between the HIV and the AIDS numbers, and had been stunned to find that it was high, on the order of 0.8 (depending somewhat on whether one omits certain “outliers”, extreme values). Yet it seemed intuitively obvious that there was not much of a *linear* correlation. And here the issue is indeed one of linear correlation, as illustrated by the fact that the authors of the article that I criticize claimed a ratio of between 3 and 10 as typical of the data.

I’m delighted that the essay aroused enough interest that at least one person read it so carefully. As an author, I yearn for no higher compliment than that.