

## Causal-comparative studies

January 21, 2004

## Characteristics

- Also called ex post facto (after the fact)
- Non-experimental in that no treatments are given
- Heavy reliance on description
- Looks to the past to determine a (*possible*) cause or consequences of pre-existing conditions

## Variables can't be manipulated

- ...or should not be manipulated for ethical reasons
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Particular illnesses
- SES
- Family structure

## Types

- Explore effects caused by membership in a group
- Explore causes of group membership
- Explore consequences of an intervention

## Limitations

- Little control over threats to the integrity of the research
- Causation is never fully established

## Steps

- Identify phenomena of interest and develop some ideas about cause
- Draw a sample of subjects to be researched (more on how to do this)
- Pick the test or measurement
- Design the study
- Analyze the data

## Study design

Group	Independent variable Drop out: Yes or no	Dependent variable Salary in 10 yrs
1	Drop out: Yes	\$\$ in 10 yrs
2	Drop out: No	\$\$ in 10 yrs

