

## 2nd STRATOS Workshop at the Banff International Research Station (Canada), June 2-7, 2019

**Michal Abrahamowicz (Montréal, Canada)**

Following the very successful and productive 1st STRATOS workshop, in July 2016, at the Banff International Research Station (BIRS), the BIRS Scientific Review Committee has accepted the STRATOS application for the 2nd workshop, to be held in Banff, in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, on June 2-7, 2019 ([www.birs.ca](http://www.birs.ca)). The organizers are Michal Abrahamowicz (contact organizer), Richard Cook, Marianne Huebner and Willi Sauerbrei, with James Carpenter and Els Goetghebeur as additional members of the Scientific Program Committee.



The overall objectives of the 2019 workshop “Next Stages Toward a Comprehensive, Integrated Framework for Advanced Statistical Analyses of Observational Studies” will be to develop, accelerate and consolidate the work of the members of STRATOS initiative’s Topic Groups and Panels. In particular, building on recommendations that will be proposed by each Topic Group, to address the main analytical challenges within their area of expertise, we will continue drafting guidance documents and designing comprehensive strategies to deal simultaneously with several problems likely to be encountered in real-life empirical studies. The workshop will facilitate such inter-disciplinary discussions and developments.

The 4 general inter-related objectives of the workshop are:

- 1) to provide an overview of the methods, related to the area of expertise of individual Topic Groups, applied in the current empirical studies and identify the priorities for improving the methodological quality of such studies;
- 2) to identify methodological challenges, within the area of expertise of each of the 9 Topic Groups, that require further validation or comparison of new or existing methods, and outline the analytical work or simulation studies necessary to provide reliable evidence supporting specific approaches and demonstrating the limitations of other methods, in the spirit of ‘neutral comparison studies’ ([onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/bimj.201700129/](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/bimj.201700129/));
- 3) To set the definitive objectives, design, and methods of the comprehensive series of simulations that will approximate the complexity of large real-life empirical observational studies and investigate issues at the cross-roads of the interests of various Topic Groups;
- 4) To develop the uniform format, criteria, and general content for the integrated STRATOS-based guidance documents.

STRATOS Topic Groups and Panels will present drafts of their guidance, related to fundamental issues and relying on recent methodological developments in their respective areas. Debating these will lead to evidence supported decisions and, on the other hand, will help focus the meeting on novel research projects aiming at the development and validation of new multi-stage methods, necessary to simultaneously address several frequently encountered analytical challenges.

BIRS workshops can accommodate up to 42 participants (including 4-6 research trainees) and 3 observers. As STRATOS membership has grown to >80 members, it will be impossible to invite all members. Therefore, the final decisions for inviting STRATOS members to attend the 2019 BIRS workshop will be taken by the Chairs of Topic Groups and Panels, based on individual researchers’ contributions to the relevant STRATOS activities.

We look forward to another very productive and enjoyable meeting in Banff!