

Home

Contents

jameslindlibrary.org

Records

Title Page(s) Key Passage(s) Context

[Download key passages/title pages as a PDF](#)

Bain A (1870). Logic. London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer p 362.

Title pages

LOGIC

BY

ALEXANDER BAIN, LL. D.,

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

PART SECOND.

INDUCTION.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, & DYER.

1870.

16. The Elimination of Chance is of great value in Medicine. Its groundwork is Medical Statistics.

Nowhere more than in Medicine may laws of Causation be defeated; there is rarely such a thing as a simple cause yielding a simple effect. Hence, the necessity of ascertaining whether a coincidence is more frequent than would be accounted for by chance. The cinchona bark sometimes fails to cure ague, yet its general efficacy is satisfactorily established.

To prove the efficacy of medicines as a whole, in opposition to some speculators that ascribe all cures to nature (aided by repose and regimen) the physicians of a French hospital made the experiment of withholding drugs from all the patients for a certain time. The conclusion seemed to be that the mortality was not increased, but the recoveries were more protracted. This was a competent inference from statistics.

The difficulties in obtaining a statistical proof of the action of a remedy in a given disease are exactly those already mentioned respecting the use of Agreement in the same determination.* A large hospital statistics is better than the inferences of a single physician in private practice, and yet may come short of the proof. There should always be obtained, if possible, a parallel statistics—cases with, and cases without, the treatment in question. The statistics of cholera treatment may be alleged in favour of many modes; but none appear to be decisively established.

Statistics, as applied to Scarlet Fever, has shown that a second attack is extremely rare; that the ages of two and three are most susceptible to the disease; and that the maximum of prevalence is in October, November, and December, and the minimum in April, May, and June.