Preamble
This book is dedicated to Peter Armitage and Marvin Zelen. It covers all aspects of clinical trials in a comparatively brief but simple, exposition which enables ready access to individual issues without the necessity of extensive reading. It is a suitable marker in the era of clinical trials methodology, as it stands at the border between the initial phase of the understanding and acceptance of clinical trials, and the subsequent phase of sophisticated and complex statistical analysis.

Aims
There is an ever-increasing number of treatment innovations which require proper investigation to see if they are of genuine benefit to patients. The randomized controlled clinical trial has become widely regarded as the principal method for obtaining a reliable evaluation of treatment effect on patients. The purpose of this book is to explain in practical terms the basic principles of clinical trials. Particular emphasis is given to their scientific rationale, including the relevance of statistical methods, though ethical and organizational issues are also discussed in some detail. My intention has been to present the methodology of clinical trials in a style which is comprehensible to a wide audience. I hope the book proves to be especially useful to clinicians and others who are involved in conducting trials and it would be particularly gratifying if this text encouraged more clinicians to undertake or collaborate in properly designed trials to resolve relevant therapeutic issues (Preface, page xi).

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