

Discussion Article 1*for January 26*

Read the articles by Stefanski and Diaconis/Mosteller as posted on the course web site.

Be prepared to discuss:

1. Do you play the lottery? Why or why not? Do these articles make you more or less likely to play?
2. Stefanski describes a wide sense and a narrow sense of understanding coincidences. Do you prefer one perspective or the other? Why or why not?
3. Diaconis and Mosteller state that “in many problems our intuitive grasp of the odds is far off. We are surprised by things that turn out to be fairly likely occurrences.” Of all the coincidences they explore and explain, which was the most surprising to you?
4. Have you experienced the “new word” coincidence effect described in the Diaconis/Mosteller paper? Are you convinced by their explanation?
5. How do you think non-statisticians understand coincidences or events of very small probabilities? How do you think that should affect your role as a statistical consultant?