

To the Editor:

In his June 2003 article in these pages¹ Dr. Audrius Plioplys compared survival rates of children in the California data base^{2,3} and in his own Chicago-area data base.⁴ His main point is that survival rates reported in the Eyman studies are much more pessimistic than in his own study. He attributes this primarily to superior care in his own cohort.

The real reason for the discrepancy is that the work of Eyman et al. contains methodological mistakes that cause their survival estimates to be too low, while the incorrect methodology used by Plioplys gives estimates that are too high. In brief, Dr. Plioplys did not use a standard survival analysis, such as the Kaplan-Meier method, but instead relied upon an incorrect method of his own. Details on the mistakes

in both authors' work are available on the articles page at <http://www.LifeExpectancy.org>.

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References

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