

# Matched cohort study

An example of an epidemiological question that can be answered using a [cohort study](#) is: does exposure to X (say, smoking) associate with outcome Y (say, lung cancer)? Such a study would recruit a group of smokers and a group of non-smokers (the unexposed group) and follow them for a set period of time and note differences in the incidence of lung cancer between the groups at the end of this time. The groups are matched in terms of many other variables such as economic status and other health status so that the variable being assessed, the independent variable (in this case, smoking) can be isolated as the cause of the dependent variable (in this case, lung cancer). In this example, a statistically significant increase in the incidence of lung cancer in the smoking group as compared to the non-smoking group is evidence in favor of the hypothesis. However, rare outcomes, such as lung cancer, are generally not studied with the use of a cohort study, but are rather studied with the use of a [case-control study](#).

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Last update: **2024/08/07 09:31**

