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## Common Pitfalls in Reporting the Use of SPSS Software

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Dear Editor,

Over the past year, I was interested to follow the first four issues of volume 23 of *Medical Principles and Practice*. I noticed that multiple authors shared inappropriate referral to the use of the SPSS program within their articles. SPSS, originally standing for ‘Statistical Package for Social Sciences’, is a statistical analysis software that was developed in 1968 by N.H. Nie, D.H. Bent and C.H. Hull. In 1975, SPSS was incorporated with the SPSS Incorporation’s headquarters located in Chicago (Ill., USA) [1]. SPSS Inc. was responsible for the development of the program until version 18 before being acquired by IBM Corp., located in Armonk (N.Y., USA) in 2009. Since then, IBM Corp. has been responsible for developing the newer versions of the program [2]. The transfer of the business was completed in October 2010, when SPSS Inc. ceased to exist.

Since many authors are used to citing the old format of SPSS, they still refer to the newer versions as if they are owned by SPSS

Inc. in Chicago. Of the 50 original articles and short communications published in the first 4 issues of volume 23, 2014, three (9.4%) articles [3–5] did so.

When referring to SPSS versions prior to the IBM acquisition, authors should cite ‘SPSS Statistics for Windows, version x.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Ill., USA)’, but for versions beginning from 19, authors should cite ‘IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version XX (IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA)’ [6].

### References

- 1 SPSS: About SPSS Inc. <http://www.spss.com.hk/corpinfo/history.htm> (accessed August 31, 2014).
- 2 IBM: IBM to acquire SPSS Inc. to provide clients predictive analytics capabilities. 2009. <http://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/27936.wss> (accessed August 31, 2014).
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- 4 Marouf R, Behbehani N, Zubaid M, et al: Transthoracic echocardiography and 6-minute walk test in Kuwaiti sickle cell disease patients. *Med Princ Pract* 2014;23:212–217.
- 5 Mira JJ, Lorenzo S, Navarro I: Hospital reputation and perceptions of patient safety. *Med Princ Pract* 2013;23:92–94.
- 6 IBM: How to cite IBM SPSS Statistics or earlier versions of SPSS. 2014. <http://www-01.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?uid=swg21476197> (accessed August 31, 2014).