

**Applying Statistical Models to Health Outcomes  
For Australian Patients with Bronchiectasis**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**April 2021**

## CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, [Pitchaya Kingkam] declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of doctoral degree, in the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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Date: 30 April 2021

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisors, Professor James Brown, Associate Professor Stephen Woodcock and Associate Professor Lucy Morgan. My priceless journey started when Professor James Brown and Dr. Stephen Woodcock accepted me to work on this project. I am extremely thankful for all supports, guidance and insightful comments throughout the development of this thesis. Without their help and kindness, I would not have survived from unexpected situations. Indeed, I do appreciate their excellent supervision, motivation and valuable support. For years, I have learned a lot for being a good researcher. This is a precious time and wonderful experience in my life.

I would like to express my very great appreciation to Professor Tony Moon. He is such a guardian angel for me and Thai students. I am grateful to meet him in Sydney. I will never forget his encourage and kindness for the rest of my life.

I would like to express my special thanks to Doctor Lucy Morgan, Concord Hospital, and Lung Foundation Australia for helping me to understand chronic lung disease (especially bronchiectasis) and how statistics can help us all understand the patient journey.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my family, friends and all Thai government staffs for their caring and great supports when I faced difficult situations.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my deceased father, who passed away during my study. His love gave me forces to make this project.

## ABSTRACT

Bronchiectasis is a common disease caused by chronic infection in the small airways of the lungs. Patients often carry a heavy burden of symptoms. Unfortunately, little is known about the impact of bronchiectasis on Australians or on our healthcare system. For many years, bronchiectasis was considered as another Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and was bundled (for costing purposes) with COPD or other pulmonary infections, without recognition that the condition was associated with significant, particular clinical features that required longer and more complex admissions to hospital than COPD. Prior to July 2018, there was no disease specific code within the system that allocates hospital funding and consequently, episodes of care for patients with bronchiectasis were assigned into other respiratory illness in the AR-DRG system. This misallocation is likely to have affected hospital funding which is calculated based on ALOS associated with the AR-DRG group of diseases. The main purpose of this thesis was to explore the factors contributing to the length of stay and hospital readmission for patients with bronchiectasis in Australia in three parts;

i) An evaluation of the effect of a specific AR-DRG on funding of length of hospital stay for bronchiectasis patients and a comparison of the actual length of stay in hospital (LOS) with the average length of stay (ALOS) based on the assigned AR-DRG. We found that the AR-DRG system consistently underestimated the LOS and costs for acute hospital admissions due to bronchiectasis.

ii) An investigation of the effect of seasonality of presentation and patient characteristics (sex, age, smoking status, ABR registry status) on hospital LOS and ALOS. The cohort in this study included 299 patients who were diagnosed as bronchiectasis with 505 admissions of >24 hours to Concord Hospital, NSW between July 2011-June 2018. The results were showing significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the non ABR-registry and the response  $\ln$ ALOS. This implied that bronchiectasis patients who participated with ABR- registry tend to have length of stay in hospital shorter than patients who did not register in the ABR.

iii) An analysis of the time between episodes of care of bronchiectasis patients using longitudinal data analysis and multilevel models. Bronchiectasis patients who were smokers and hospital LOS, were statistically significant risk factors for readmission. Hospital LOS was negatively correlated with time to readmission suggesting that longer stays in hospital can reduce readmission risk. In addition, patients who were smokers had a significantly higher readmission rate than patients who were not smokers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER1- Introduction

1.1 Project overview and motivation.....	1
1.2 Project Aims and Objective.....	2
1.3 Layout of the Thesis.....	3

### CHAPTER2-Literature Review

2.1 Bronchiectasis .....	4
2.1.1 Causes of bronchiectasis.....	5
2.1.2 Symptoms of bronchiectasis.....	6
2.1.3 Diagnosis.....	8
2.1.4 An overview of prevalence of bronchiectasis.....	8
2.1.5 Bronchiectasis treatments.....	11
2.1.6 The Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups.....	14
2.1.7 Length of hospital stay.....	17
2.2 Statistical models.....	21
2.2.1 Linear Regression models.....	21
2.2.2 Multilevel models.....	23
2.2.3 Survival Analysis Models.....	25
2.3 Conclusion.....	28

### CHAPTER3-The Data

3.1 Background to the data.....	30
3.1.1 Definitions.....	30
3.1.2 Australian Admitted Patient Care during 2017-18.....	31
3.1.3 Bronchiectasis hospitalizations in Australia.....	32
3.1.4 Hospital Performance Indicator: Average length of stay.....	33
3.2 The Australian Bronchiectasis registry (ABR).....	34
3.3 Bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital 2011-2018.....	36
3.4 Conclusion.....	41

### CHAPTER4- Models for Analyzing Patient Length of Stay in Hospital

4.1 Average length of stay in hospital (ALOS).....	42
4.2 Bronchiectasis in the AR-DRG classification System.....	43
4.2.1 Bronchiectasis length of stay in Concord Hospital (2011-2018).....	46
4.3 Bronchiectasis Patient Characteristics.....	49
4.4 Model Assumptions.....	52
4.5 Results.....	54
4.5.1 Regression models for analyzing the relationship between LOS and ALOS.....	54
4.5.2 Two–Level hierarchical models for investigating the relationship between LOS and ALOS.....	59
4.5.3 Factors affecting bronchiectasis hospital length of stay.....	63
4.6 Conclusion.....	72

## **CHAPTER 5-Models for analyzing time to readmission among bronchiectasis patients**

5.1 Introduction to analysis.....	73
5.2 Preparing the data.....	74
5.3 Model Assumptions.....	76
5.4 Modelling the time to readmission among bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital..	78
5.5 Results.....	80
5.5.1 Multilevel Logistic Model for time to hospital readmission.....	80
5.5.2Multilevel Logistic Model for investigating factors affecting to hospital Readmission.....	86
5.6 Conclusion.....	94

## **CHAPTER 6-Conclusion and Discussion**

6.1 Summary of thesis contribution.....	96
6.2 Summary of the results.....	97
6.3Limitations.....	101
6.4 Further Works.....	102
REFERENCES.....	104

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 2.1</b> Symptoms of bronchiectasis severity.....	7
<b>Table 3.1</b> Separations, by principal diagnosis, between public and private hospitals 2017-18 .....	32
<b>Table 3.2</b> Average length of stay (ALOS), publics and private hospitals from 2013-14 to 2017-18.....	34
<b>Table 3.3</b> Percent of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital by gender, July 2011-June 2018.....	37
<b>Table 3.4</b> Number of episode of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital by age-groups, July 2011- June 2018.....	38
<b>Table 3.5</b> Bronchiectasis hospital admissions were categorized by season in Concord Hospital during July 2011- June 2018.....	40
<b>Table 4.1</b> The most common assignment for bronchiectasis patients, Concord Hospital 2011- 2018.....	44
<b>Table 4.2</b> Bronchiectasis patient length of stay in Concord Hospital, Sydney July 2011-June 2018.....	46
<b>Table 4.3</b> Comparison of ALOS of bronchiectasis patients (E77) with the two most common disease groups (E62A, E65A) into which bronchiectasis patients were likely to have been coded (2018-19).....	49
<b>Table 4.4</b> Comparison of age groups of bronchiectasis patients during July2011- June2018 in Concord Hospital.....	50
<b>Table 4.5</b> Models Summary.....	55
<b>Table 4.6</b> Parameter Estimates.....	55
<b>Table 4.7</b> Analysis of variance table.....	55
<b>Table 4.8</b> single-level model with one predictor variable ( lnALOS ).....	61
<b>Table 4.9.1</b> Parameter estimates of the empty multilevel model1 (null model).....	61
<b>Table 4.9.2</b> Parameter estimates of the empty multilevel model2 (null model).....	62
<b>Table 4.10</b> Two-level model with one predictor variable ( lnALOS ).....	63
<b>Table 4.11</b> Parameter estimates by adding age groups as a predictor of a two-level model 1.....	64
<b>Table 4.12</b> Parameter estimates by adding age groups as a predictor of a two-level model 2.....	65
<b>Table 4.13</b> Parameter estimates by including gender into a two-level model 1.....	66
<b>Table 4.14</b> Parameter estimates by including gender into a two-level mode l 2.....	66
<b>Table 4.15</b> Parameter estimates by including smoking status as a predictor of a two-level model 1.....	67

<b>Table 4.16</b> Parameter estimates by including smoking status as a predictor of a two-level model 1.....	67
<b>Table 4.17</b> Parameter estimates by including non ABR-registry status as a predictor of a two-level model 1.....	69
<b>Table 4.18</b> Parameter estimates by including non ABR-registry status as a predictor of a two-level model 2.....	69
<b>Table 4.19</b> Parameter estimates by including non ABR-registry status and lnALOS as predictors of a two-level.....	69
<b>Table 4.20</b> Number of bronchiectasis patient admissions in Concord Hospital during July 2011- June 2018.....	70
<b>Table 4.21</b> Parameter estimates by including season as a predictor of a two-level model1...71	71
<b>Table 4.22</b> Parameter estimates by including season as a predictor of a two-level model2...71	71
<b>Table 5.1</b> Parameter estimates for the multilevel logistic model for binary response of bronchiectasis patient’s readmission into Concord Hospital during 16 weeks since discharge date.....	83
<b>Table 5.2</b> Parameter estimates for the multilevel logistic model for binary response of bronchiectasis patient’s readmission into Concord Hospital during 16 weeks since discharge date.....	84
<b>Table 5.3</b> Parameter estimates of model 5.3 by using <i>MLwiN</i> .....	84
<b>Table 5.4</b> Analysis of Deviance from Table 5.2.....	85
<b>Table 5.5</b> Estimated Effects of <b>Gender</b> on the Probability of Readmission and Time to Readmission.....	90
<b>Table 5.6</b> Estimated Effects of <b>Age-groups</b> on the Probability of Readmission and Time to Readmission.....	90
<b>Table 5.7</b> Estimated Effects of <b>Smoking-status</b> on the Probability of Readmission and Time to Readmission.....	91
<b>Table 5.8</b> Estimated Effects of <b>ABR-Registry</b> on the Probability of Readmission and Time to Readmission.....	91
<b>Table 5.9</b> Estimated Effects of <b>Seasonality</b> on the Probability of Readmission and Time to Readmission.....	91
<b>Table 5.10</b> Estimated Effects of <b>hospital LOS</b> on the Probability of Readmission and Time to Readmission.....	92
<b>Table 5.11</b> Parameter estimates of Model 5.6 (model with two significant factors: smoker, lnLOS).....	93
<b>Table 5.12</b> Probability of bronchiectasis readmission within 13and 16 weeks.....	94
<b>Table 6.1</b> Probability of bronchiectasis readmission within 16 weeks.....	100



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1</b> Computed Tomography of bronchiectasis.....	5
<b>Figure 2</b> A cycle of infection and inflammation of bronchiectasis .....	6
<b>Figure 3</b> Chest Physiotherapy and Postural Drainage.....	13
<b>Figure 4</b> Inlier bound (ALOS) calculation.....	19
<b>Figure 5</b> Residuals vs Fitted plots.....	22
<b>Figure 6</b> Quantile-Quantile plot.....	22
<b>Figure 7</b> A two- level hierarchical structure of patients in hospitals.....	25
<b>Figure 8</b> Survival curves after chemotherapy for solid tumors stratified by tumor response .....	28
<b>Figure 9</b> Rate of hospitalizations of bronchiectasis from 2006-07 to 2016-18.....	33
<b>Figure 10</b> Differences by gender on bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital during July 2011- June 2018.....	37
<b>Figure 11</b> The proportion of age groups of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital, July 2011-June 2018.....	38
<b>Figure 12</b> Proportion of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital, by smoking status, July 2011- June 2018.....	39
<b>Figure 13</b> Season of admissions of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital during July 2011-June 2018.....	40
<b>Figure 14</b> Groups of 8( AR- DRGs) for 299 bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital July 2011-June 2018.....	45
<b>Figure 15</b> LOS histogram with a normal distribution curve superimposed for bronchiectasis patients, Concord Hospital, July 2011- June2018.....	47
<b>Figure 16</b> ALOS with a normal distribution curve for bronchiectasis patients, Concord Hospital, July 2011-June 2018.....	47
<b>Figure 17</b> The boxplots of the actual length of stay (LOS) and the average length of stay (ALOS) in hospital of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital during July 2011- June 2018.....	48
<b>Figure 18</b> LOS of bronchiectasis patients by gender, Concord Hospital during July 2011- June 2018.....	50
<b>Figure 19</b> Boxplots of LOS by Age groups of bronchiectasis patients in Concord Hospital (July 2011-June 2018).....	51
<b>Figure 20</b> LOS of Bronchiectasis patients by smoking status, Concord Hospital, July 2011- June 2018.....	51
<b>Figure 21</b> Bronchiectasis patients by registry status, Concord Hospital, July 2011- June 2018 .....	52
<b>Figure 22</b> Residuals VS fitted Values for simple linear regression model.....	56

<b>Figure 23</b> Residuals VS fitted values for log-log linear regression model.....	57
<b>Figure 24</b> Q-Q plot for simple linear regression model.....	57
<b>Figure 25</b> Q-Q plot for log- log linear regression model.....	58
<b>Figure 26</b> The relationship between the LOS and ALOS of bronchiectasis patients (Concord Hospital July2011- June 2018) by the log transformed model.....	59
<b>Figure 27</b> Histogram of time between episodes of care in months (Concord Hospital bronchiectasis patients in the period July 2011- June 2018).....	75
<b>Figure 28</b> Boxplots shown distributions between censored group (No- readmission) and return group (readmission)of bronchiectasis patients to Concord Hospital during July 2011- June2018.....	75
<b>Figure 29</b> The relationship between ALOS, LOS, patient characteristics and readmission...77	77
<b>Figure 30</b> Hazard for Time to Readmission within 16 weeks.....	80
<b>Figure 31</b> The Kaplan-Meier Survival Curve for Time to Readmission 16 weeks.....	82
<b>Figure 32</b> Probability for Time to Readmission within 16 weeks.....	86
<b>Figure 33</b> The Kaplan-Meier Survival Curve for Time to Readmission between males and females within 16 weeks.....	87
<b>Figure 34</b> The Kaplan-Meier Survival Curve for Time to Readmission between aged- groups within 16 weeks.....	88
<b>Figure 35</b> The Kaplan-Meier Survival Curve for Time to Hospital Readmission of patients' smoking status within 16 weeks.....	88
<b>Figure 36</b> The Kaplan-Meier Survival Curve for Time to Hospital Readmission of patients' ABR-registry status within 16 weeks.....	89
<b>Figure 37</b> Kaplan-Meier Survival Curve for Time to Hospital Readmission based on seasonality within 16 weeks.....	89
<b>Figure 38</b> Probability for Time to Readmission of bronchiectasis patient in Concord Hospital within 16 weeks by adding the couple significant factors: smoking status and lnLOS (mean of LOS =11.19).....	93
<b>Figure 39</b> The relationship between LOS, patient smoking status and readmission.....	95

## LIST OF PUBLICATION

KINGKAM, P., VISSER, S., BROWN, J., WOODCOCK, S., BAIRD, T., JACKSON, D. & MORGAN, L. 2017. The argument for a bronchiectasis specific AR-DRG: analysis of hospital discharge data (2012-2016) for patients registered to the Australian Bronchiectasis Registry. *Respirology*, 22, 206-207.