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The selective advantage of synergy – one biologist's perspective on the importance of collaborating with statisticians

Human beings are one of the most successful species on the planet. Our capacity to cooperate is an important underpinning. Operating as groups, humans have enjoyed the selective survival advantages offered by synergistic outcomes. Diversity in forms and function are hallmarks of synergistic systems and for living systems, they explain how billions of years of evolution has given rise to incredible complexity. Similarly, modern organizations involved in drug development rely on the benefits derived from the interaction of diverse and highly specialized teams. The power of relationships between scientists and statisticians is rooted in complementarity and is critical to effectively managing and mitigating the risks associated with data driven decisions needed to deliver safe and efficacious products to patients. Based on learnings from experience (n=me and <30 statisticians over 35 years), this presentation will highlight some of the challenges encountered in interacting with statisticians and how embracing the idea of a “shared fate” enabled advancements in the field of cell and gene therapy.

