

14.9: Statistical Literacy

Learning Objectives

- Regression Toward the Mean in American Football

In a discussion about the Dallas Cowboy football team, there was a comment that the quarterback threw far more interceptions in the first two games than is typical (there were two interceptions per game). The author correctly pointed out that, because of regression toward the mean, performance in the future is expected to improve. However, the author defined regression toward the mean as, "In nerd land, that basically means that things tend to even out over the long run."

Example 14.9.1: what do you think?

Comment on that definition.

Solution

That definition is sort of correct, but it could be stated more precisely. Things don't always tend to even out in the long run. If a great player has an average game, then things wouldn't even out (to the average of all players) but would regress toward that player's high mean performance.

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