

Chapter 212

Non-Inferiority Tests for the Odds Ratio of Two Proportions

Introduction

This module provides power analysis and sample size calculation for non-inferiority tests of the odds ratio in two-sample designs in which the outcome is binary. Users may choose between two popular test statistics commonly used for running the hypothesis test.

The power calculations assume that independent, random samples are drawn from two populations.

Example

A non-inferiority test example will set the stage for the discussion of the terminology that follows. Suppose that the current treatment for a disease works 70% of the time. Unfortunately, this treatment is expensive and occasionally exhibits serious side-effects. A promising new treatment has been developed to the point where it can be tested. One of the first questions that must be answered is whether the new treatment is as good as the current treatment. In other words, do at least 70% of treated subjects respond to the new treatment?

Because of the many benefits of the new treatment, clinicians are willing to adopt the new treatment even if it is slightly less effective than the current treatment. They must determine, however, how much less effective the new treatment can be and still be adopted. Should it be adopted if 69% respond? 68%? 65%? 60%? There is a percentage below 70% at which the ratio of the two treatments is no longer considered ignorable. After thoughtful discussion with several clinicians, it was decided that if the odds ratio is no less than 0.9, the new treatment would be adopted. This odds ratio is called the *margin of non-inferiority*. The margin of non-inferiority in this example is 0.9.

The developers must design an experiment to test the hypothesis that the odds ratio of the new treatment to the standard is at least 0.9. The statistical hypothesis to be tested is

$$H_0: O_1/O_2 \leq 0.9 \text{ versus } H_1: O_1/O_2 > 0.9$$

Notice that when the null hypothesis is rejected, the conclusion is that the odds ratio is at least 0.9. Note that even though the response rate of the current treatment is 0.70, the hypothesis test is about an odds ratio of 0.9. Also notice that a rejection of the null hypothesis results in the conclusion of interest.

Technical Details

The details of sample size calculation for the two-sample design for binary outcomes are presented in the chapter “Tests for Two Proportions,” and they will not be duplicated here. Instead, this chapter only discusses those changes necessary for non-inferiority tests.

This procedure has the capability for calculating power based on large sample (normal approximation) results and based on the enumeration of all possible values in the binomial distribution.

Suppose you have two populations from which dichotomous (binary) responses will be recorded. Assume without loss of generality that the higher proportions are better. The probability (or risk) of cure in population 1 (the treatment group) is p_1 and in population 2 (the reference group) is p_2 . Random samples of n_1 and n_2 individuals are obtained from these two populations. The data from these samples can be displayed in a 2-by-2 contingency table as follows

Group	Success	Failure	Total
Treatment	x_{11}	x_{12}	n_1
Control	x_{21}	x_{22}	n_2
Totals	m_1	m_2	N

The binomial proportions, p_1 and p_2 , are estimated from these data using the formulae

$$\hat{p}_1 = \frac{a}{m} = \frac{x_{11}}{n_1} \text{ and } \hat{p}_2 = \frac{b}{n} = \frac{x_{21}}{n_2}$$

Define $O_i = p_i/(1 - p_i)$. Let $p_{1.0}$ represent the group 1 proportion tested by the null hypothesis, H_0 . The power of a test is computed at a specific value of the proportion which we will call $p_{1.1}$. Let ψ_0 represent the smallest odds ratio (margin of non-inferiority) between the two proportions that still results in the conclusion that the new treatment is not inferior to the current treatment. For a non-inferiority test, $\psi_0 < 1$. The set of statistical hypotheses that are tested is

$$H_0: O_1/O_2 \leq \psi_0 \text{ versus } H_1: O_1/O_2 > \psi_0$$

which can be rearranged to give

$$H_0: O_1 \leq O_2 \psi_0 \text{ versus } H_1: O_1 > O_2 \psi_0$$

There are three common methods of specifying the margin of non-inferiority. The most direct is to simply give values for p_2 and $p_{1.0}$. However, it is often more meaningful to give p_2 and then specify $p_{1.0}$ implicitly by specifying the difference, ratio, or odds ratio. Mathematically, the definitions of these parameterizations are

Parameter	Computation	Hypotheses
Difference	$\delta_0 = p_{1.0} - p_2$	$H_0: p_1 - p_2 \leq \delta_0 \text{ versus } H_1: p_1 - p_2 > \delta_0$
Ratio	$\phi_0 = p_{1.0}/p_2$	$H_0: p_1/p_2 \leq \phi_0 \text{ versus } H_1: p_1/p_2 > \phi_0$
Odds Ratio	$\psi_0 = O_{1.0}/O_2$	$H_0: O_1/O_2 \leq \psi_0 \text{ versus } H_1: O_1/O_2 > \psi_0$

Odds Ratio

The odds ratio, $\psi = O_1/O_2 = (p_1/(1 - p_1))/(p_2/(1 - p_2))$, gives the relative change in the odds of the response. Testing non-inferiority uses the formulation

$$H_0: O_1/O_2 \leq \psi_0 \quad \text{versus} \quad H_1: O_1/O_2 > \psi_0$$

or equivalently

$$H_0: \psi \leq \psi_0 \quad \text{versus} \quad H_1: \psi > \psi_0.$$

For non-inferiority tests with higher proportions better, $\psi_0 < 1$. For non-inferiority tests with higher proportions worse, $\psi_0 > 1$.

A Note on Setting the Significance Level, Alpha

Setting the significance level has always been somewhat arbitrary. For planning purposes, the standard has become to set alpha to 0.05 for two-sided tests. Almost universally, when someone states that a result is statistically significant, they mean statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Although 0.05 may be the standard for two-sided tests, it is not always the standard for one-sided tests, such as non-inferiority tests. Statisticians often recommend that the alpha level for one-sided tests be set at 0.025 since this is the amount put in each tail of a two-sided test.

Power Calculation

The power for a test statistic that is based on the normal approximation can be computed exactly using two binomial distributions. The following steps are taken to compute the power of these tests.

1. Find the critical value using the standard normal distribution. The critical value, $z_{critical}$, is that value of z that leaves exactly the target value of alpha in the appropriate tail of the normal distribution.
2. Compute the value of the test statistic, z_t , for every combination of x_{11} and x_{21} . Note that x_{11} ranges from 0 to n_1 , and x_{21} ranges from 0 to n_2 . A small value (around 0.0001) can be added to the zero-cell counts to avoid numerical problems that occur when the cell value is zero.
3. If $z_t > z_{critical}$, the combination is in the rejection region. Call all combinations of x_{11} and x_{21} that lead to a rejection the set A .
4. Compute the power for given values of $p_{1.1}$ and p_2 as

$$1 - \beta = \sum_A \binom{n_1}{x_{11}} p_{1.1}^{x_{11}} q_{1.1}^{n_1 - x_{11}} \binom{n_2}{x_{21}} p_2^{x_{21}} q_2^{n_2 - x_{21}}.$$

5. Compute the actual value of alpha achieved by the design by substituting $p_{1.0}$ for $p_{1.1}$ to obtain

$$\alpha^* = \sum_A \binom{n_1}{x_{11}} p_{1.0}^{x_{11}} q_{1.0}^{n_1 - x_{11}} \binom{n_2}{x_{21}} p_2^{x_{21}} q_2^{n_2 - x_{21}}.$$

Asymptotic Approximations

When the values of n_1 and n_2 are large (say over 200), these formulas often take a long time to evaluate. In this case, a large sample approximation can be used. The large sample approximation is made by replacing the values of \hat{p}_1 and \hat{p}_2 in the z statistic with the corresponding values of $p_{1.1}$ and p_2 , and then computing the results based on the normal distribution.

Test Statistics

Two test statistics have been proposed for testing whether the odds ratio is different from a specified value. The main difference between the test statistics is in the formula used to compute the standard error used in the denominator. These tests are both likelihood score tests.

In power calculations, the values of \hat{p}_1 and \hat{p}_2 are not known. The corresponding values of $p_{1.1}$ and p_2 may be reasonable substitutes.

Following is a list of the test statistics available in **PASS**. The availability of several test statistics begs the question of which test statistic one should use. The answer is simple: one should use the test statistic that will be used to analyze the data. You may choose a method because it is a standard in your industry, because it seems to have better statistical properties, or because your statistical package calculates it. Whatever your reasons for selecting a certain test statistic, you should use the same test statistic when doing the analysis after the data have been collected.

Miettinen and Nurminen's Likelihood Score Test

Miettinen and Nurminen (1985) proposed a test statistic for testing whether the odds ratio is equal to a specified value, ψ_0 . Because the approach they used with the difference and ratio does not easily extend to the odds ratio, they used a score statistic approach for the odds ratio. The regular MLE's are \hat{p}_1 and \hat{p}_2 . The constrained MLE's are \tilde{p}_1 and \tilde{p}_2 . These estimates are constrained so that $\tilde{\psi} = \psi_0$. A correction factor of $N/(N-1)$ is applied to make the variance estimate less biased. The significance level of the test statistic is based on the asymptotic normality of the score statistic.

The formula for computing the test statistic is

$$z_{MNO} = \frac{\frac{(\hat{p}_1 - \tilde{p}_1)}{\tilde{p}_1 \tilde{q}_1} - \frac{(\hat{p}_2 - \tilde{p}_2)}{\tilde{p}_2 \tilde{q}_2}}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{n_1 \tilde{p}_1 \tilde{q}_1} + \frac{1}{n_2 \tilde{p}_2 \tilde{q}_2}\right) \left(\frac{N}{N-1}\right)}}$$

where

$$\tilde{p}_1 = \frac{\tilde{p}_2 \psi_0}{1 + \tilde{p}_2 (\psi_0 - 1)}$$

$$\tilde{p}_2 = \frac{-B + \sqrt{B^2 - 4AC}}{2A}$$

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$$A = n_2(\psi_0 - 1),$$

$$B = n_1\psi_0 + n_2 - m_1(\psi_0 - 1),$$

$$C = -m_1$$

Farrington and Manning's Likelihood Score Test

Farrington and Manning (1990) indicate that the Miettinen and Nurminen statistic may be modified by removing the factor $N/(N-1)$.

The formula for computing this test statistic is

$$z_{FMO} = \frac{\frac{(\hat{p}_1 - \tilde{p}_1)}{\tilde{p}_1 \tilde{q}_1} - \frac{(\hat{p}_2 - \tilde{p}_2)}{\tilde{p}_2 \tilde{q}_2}}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{n_1 \tilde{p}_1 \tilde{q}_1} + \frac{1}{n_2 \tilde{p}_2 \tilde{q}_2}\right)}}$$

where the estimates, \tilde{p}_1 and \tilde{p}_2 , are computed as in the corresponding test of Miettinen and Nurminen (1985) given above.

Example 1 – Finding Power

A study is being designed to establish the non-inferiority of a new treatment compared to the current treatment. Historically, the current treatment has enjoyed a 62.5% cure rate. The new treatment reduces the seriousness of certain side effects that occur with the current treatment. Thus, the new treatment will be adopted even if it is slightly less effective than the current treatment. The researchers will recommend adoption of the odds ratio of the new treatment to the old treatment is at least 0.80.

The researchers plan to use the Farrington and Manning likelihood score test statistic to analyze the data that will be (or has been) obtained. They want to study the power of the Farrington and Manning test at group sample sizes ranging from 50 to 500 when the actual odds ratio is 1. The significance level will be 0.05.

Setup

If the procedure window is not already open, use the PASS Home window to open it. The parameters for this example are listed below and are stored in the **Example 1** settings file. To load these settings to the procedure window, click **Open Example Settings File** in the Help Center or File menu.

Design Tab

Solve For	Power
Power Calculation Method	Normal Approximation
Higher Proportions Are	Better (H1: OR > OR0)
Test Type	Likelihood Score (Farr. & Mann.)
Alpha	0.05
Group Allocation	Equal (N1 = N2)
Sample Size Per Group	50 to 500 by 50
OR0 (Non-Inferiority Odds Ratio)	0.80
OR1 (Actual Odds Ratio)	1.0
P2 (Group 2 Proportion)	0.625

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Output

Click the Calculate button to perform the calculations and generate the following output.

Numeric Reports

Numeric Results

Solve For: **Power**
 Groups: 1 = Treatment, 2 = Reference
 Test Statistic: Farrington & Manning Likelihood Score Test
 Hypotheses: $H_0: OR \leq OR_0$ vs. $H_1: OR > OR_0$

Power*	Sample Size			Proportions			Odds Ratio		Alpha
	N1	N2	N	Non-Inferiority P1.0	Actual P1.1	Reference P2	Non-Inferiority OR0	Actual OR1	
0.13427	50	50	100	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.18885	100	100	200	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.23884	150	150	300	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.28606	200	200	400	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.33101	250	250	500	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.37390	300	300	600	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.41477	350	350	700	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.45368	400	400	800	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.49064	450	450	900	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05
0.52568	500	500	1000	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05

* Power was computed using the normal approximation method.

Power The probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis when the alternative hypothesis is true.
 N1 and N2 The number of items sampled from each population.
 N The total sample size. $N = N1 + N2$.
 P1 The proportion for group 1, which is the treatment or experimental group.
 P1.0 The smallest group 1 proportion that still yields a non-inferiority conclusion. $P1.0 = P1|H_0$.
 P1.1 The proportion for group 1 under the alternative hypothesis at which power and sample size calculations are made. $P1.1 = P1|H_1$.
 P2 The proportion for group 2, which is the standard, reference, or control group.
 OR0 The non-inferiority odds ratio, $[P1/(1-P1)] / [P2/(1-P2)]$, assuming H_0 .
 OR1 The non-inferiority odds ratio, $[P1/(1-P1)] / [P2/(1-P2)]$, assuming H_1 .
 Alpha The probability of rejecting a true null hypothesis.

Summary Statements

A parallel, two-group design will be used to test whether the Group 1 (treatment) proportion (P1) is non-inferior to the Group 2 (reference) proportion (P2), with a non-inferiority odds ratio of 0.8 ($H_0: OR \leq 0.8$ versus $H_1: OR > 0.8$). The comparison will be made using a one-sided, two-sample Score test (Farrington & Manning) with a Type I error rate (α) of 0.05. The reference group proportion is assumed to be 0.625. To detect an odds ratio ($O1 / O2$) of 1 (or P1 of 0.625) with sample sizes of 50 for Group 1 (treatment) and 50 for Group 2 (reference), the power is 0.13427.

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Dropout-Inflated Sample Size

Dropout Rate	Sample Size			Dropout-Inflated Enrollment Sample Size			Expected Number of Dropouts		
	N1	N2	N	N1'	N2'	N'	D1	D2	D
20%	50	50	100	63	63	126	13	13	26
20%	100	100	200	125	125	250	25	25	50
20%	150	150	300	188	188	376	38	38	76
20%	200	200	400	250	250	500	50	50	100
20%	250	250	500	313	313	626	63	63	126
20%	300	300	600	375	375	750	75	75	150
20%	350	350	700	438	438	876	88	88	176
20%	400	400	800	500	500	1000	100	100	200
20%	450	450	900	563	563	1126	113	113	226
20%	500	500	1000	625	625	1250	125	125	250

Dropout Rate	The percentage of subjects (or items) that are expected to be lost at random during the course of the study and for whom no response data will be collected (i.e., will be treated as "missing"). Abbreviated as DR.
N1, N2, and N	The evaluable sample sizes at which power is computed (as entered by the user). If N1 and N2 subjects are evaluated out of the N1' and N2' subjects that are enrolled in the study, the design will achieve the stated power.
N1', N2', and N'	The number of subjects that should be enrolled in the study in order to obtain N1, N2, and N evaluable subjects, based on the assumed dropout rate. N1' and N2' are calculated by inflating N1 and N2 using the formulas $N1' = N1 / (1 - DR)$ and $N2' = N2 / (1 - DR)$, with N1' and N2' always rounded up. (See Julious, S.A. (2010) pages 52-53, or Chow, S.C., Shao, J., Wang, H., and Lokhnygina, Y. (2018) pages 32-33.)
D1, D2, and D	The expected number of dropouts. $D1 = N1' - N1$, $D2 = N2' - N2$, and $D = D1 + D2$.

Dropout Summary Statements

Anticipating a 20% dropout rate, 63 subjects should be enrolled in Group 1, and 63 in Group 2, to obtain final group sample sizes of 50 and 50, respectively.

References

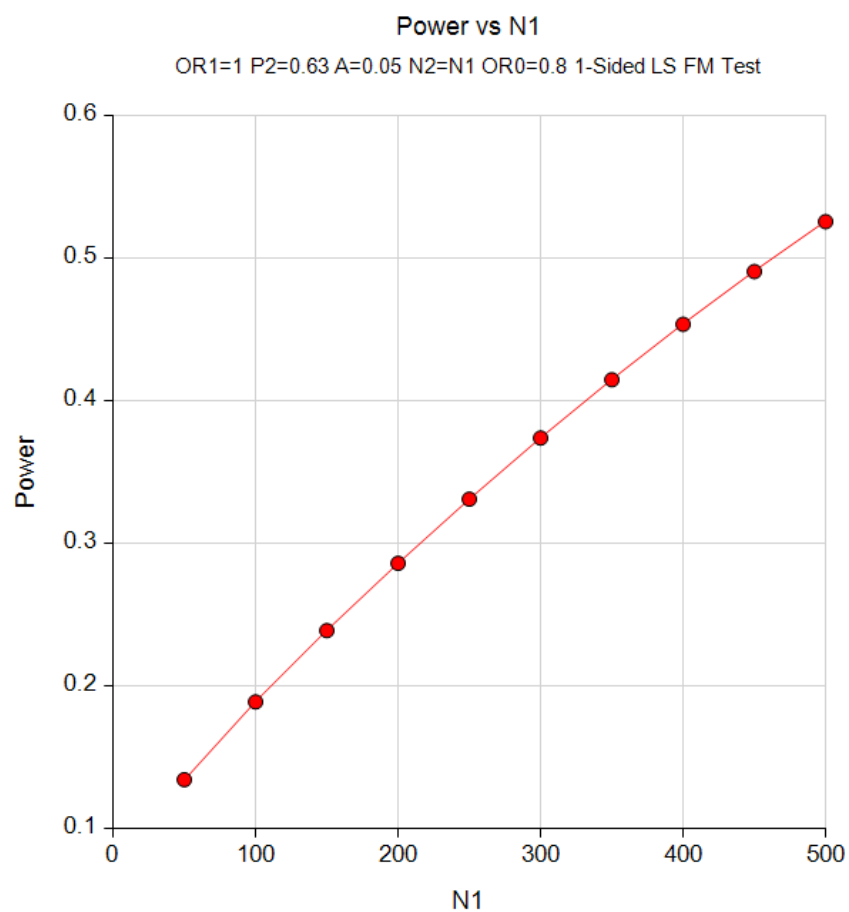
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- Miettinen, O.S. and Nurminen, M. 1985. 'Comparative analysis of two rates.' Statistics in Medicine 4: 213-226.

This report shows the values of each of the parameters, one scenario per row.

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Plots Section

Plots



The values from the table are displayed in the above chart. These charts give us a quick look at the sample size that will be required for various sample sizes.

Example 2 – Finding the Sample Size

Continuing with the scenario given in Example 1, the researchers want to determine the sample size necessary to achieve a power of 0.80.

Setup

If the procedure window is not already open, use the PASS Home window to open it. The parameters for this example are listed below and are stored in the **Example 2** settings file. To load these settings to the procedure window, click **Open Example Settings File** in the Help Center or File menu.

Design Tab

Solve For **Sample Size**
 Power Calculation Method **Normal Approximation**
 Higher Proportions Are **Better (H1: OR > OR0)**
 Test Type **Likelihood Score (Farr. & Mann.)**
 Power **0.8**
 Alpha **0.05**
 Group Allocation **Equal (N1 = N2)**
 OR0 (Non-Inferiority Odds Ratio) **0.80**
 OR1 (Actual Odds Ratio) **1.0**
 P2 (Group 2 Proportion) **0.625**

Output

Click the Calculate button to perform the calculations and generate the following output.

Numeric Results

Solve For: [Sample Size](#)
 Groups: 1 = Treatment, 2 = Reference
 Test Statistic: Farrington & Manning Likelihood Score Test
 Hypotheses: H0: OR ≤ OR0 vs. H1: OR > OR0

Power		Sample Size			Proportions			Odds Ratio		
Target	Actual*	N1	N2	N	Non-Inferiority P1.0	Actual P1.1	Reference P2	Non-Inferiority OR0	Actual OR1	Alpha
0.8	0.80003	1057	1057	2114	0.5714	0.625	0.625	0.8	1	0.05

* Power was computed using the normal approximation method.

The required sample size is 1057 per group.

Example 3 – Comparing the Power of the Two Test Statistics

Continuing with Example 2, the researchers want to determine which of the two possible test statistics to adopt by using the comparative reports and charts that **PASS** produces. They decide to compare the powers from binomial enumeration and actual alphas for various sample sizes between 1000 and 1200.

Setup

If the procedure window is not already open, use the PASS Home window to open it. The parameters for this example are listed below and are stored in the **Example 3** settings file. To load these settings to the procedure window, click **Open Example Settings File** in the Help Center or File menu.

Design Tab

Solve For	Power
Power Calculation Method	Binomial Enumeration
Maximum N1 or N2 for Binomial Enumeration	5000
Zero Count Adjustment Method	Add to zero cells only
Zero Count Adjustment Value	0.0001
Higher Proportions Are	Better (H1: OR > OR0)
Test Type	Likelihood Score (Farr. & Mann.)
Alpha	0.05
Group Allocation	Equal (N1 = N2)
Sample Size Per Group	1000 1100 1200
OR0 (Non-Inferiority Odds Ratio)	0.80
OR1 (Actual Odds Ratio)	1.0
P2 (Group 2 Proportion)	0.625

Reports Tab

Show Comparative Reports	Checked
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Comparative Plots Tab

Show Comparative Plots	Checked
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Non-Inferiority Tests for the Odds Ratio of Two Proportions

Output

Click the Calculate button to perform the calculations and generate the following output.

Power Comparison of Two Different Tests

Hypotheses: $H_0: OR \leq OR_0$ vs. $H_1: OR > OR_0$

Sample Size			Power					
N1	N2	N	P2	OR0	OR1	Target Alpha	F.M. Score	M.N. Score
1000	1000	2000	0.625	0.8	1	0.05	0.7790	0.7790
1100	1100	2200	0.625	0.8	1	0.05	0.8129	0.8125
1200	1200	2400	0.625	0.8	1	0.05	0.8414	0.8411

Note: Power was computed using binomial enumeration of all possible outcomes.

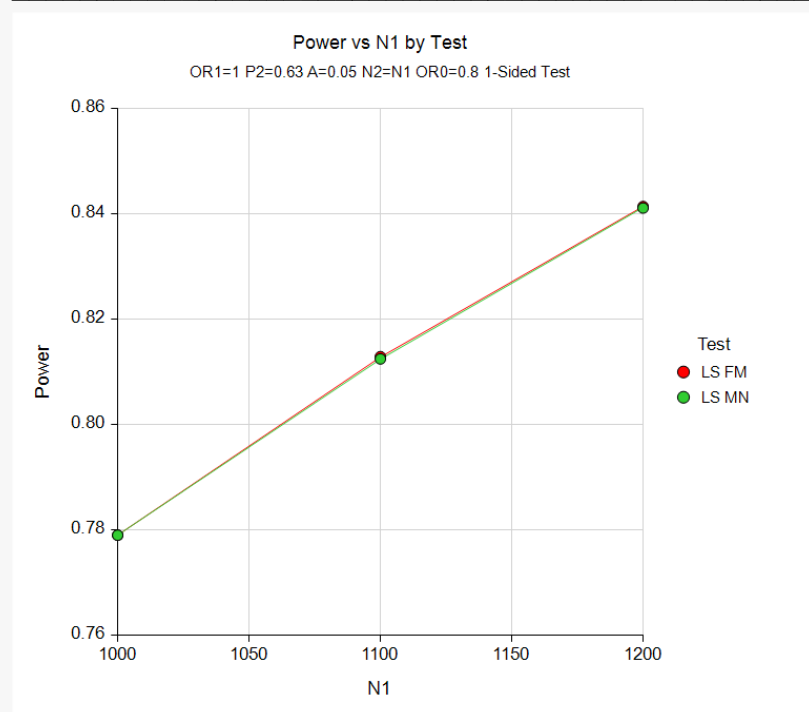
Actual Alpha Comparison of Two Different Tests

Hypotheses: $H_0: OR \leq OR_0$ vs. $H_1: OR > OR_0$

Sample Size			Alpha					
N1	N2	N	P2	OR0	OR1	Target	F.M. Score	M.N. Score
1000	1000	2000	0.625	0.8	1	0.05	0.0499	0.0498
1100	1100	2200	0.625	0.8	1	0.05	0.0502	0.0501
1200	1200	2400	0.625	0.8	1	0.05	0.0500	0.0498

Note: Actual alpha was computed using binomial enumeration of all possible outcomes.

Plots



The power is almost exactly the same for both tests, which is not surprising given the large sample size.

Example 4 – Comparing Power Calculation Methods

Continuing with Example 3, let's see how the results compare if we were to use approximate power calculations instead of power calculations based on binomial enumeration.

Setup

If the procedure window is not already open, use the PASS Home window to open it. The parameters for this example are listed below and are stored in the **Example 4** settings file. To load these settings to the procedure window, click **Open Example Settings File** in the Help Center or File menu.

Design Tab

Solve For **Power**
 Power Calculation Method **Normal Approximation**
 Higher Proportions Are **Better (H1: OR > OR0)**
 Test Type **Likelihood Score (Farr. & Mann.)**
 Alpha **0.05**
 Group Allocation **Equal (N1 = N2)**
 Sample Size Per Group **1000 1100 1200**
 OR0 (Non-Inferiority Odds Ratio) **0.80**
 OR1 (Actual Odds Ratio) **1.0**
 P2 (Group 2 Proportion) **0.625**

Reports Tab

Show Power Detail Report **Checked**

Click the Calculate button to perform the calculations and generate the following output.

Output

Power Detail Report

Test Statistic: Farrington & Manning Likelihood Score Test
 Hypotheses: H0: OR ≤ OR0 vs. H1: OR > OR0

Sample Size						Normal Approximation		Binomial Enumeration	
N1	N2	N	P2	OR0	OR1	Power	Alpha	Power	Alpha
1000	1000	2000	0.625	0.8	1	0.78044	0.05	0.77899	0.0499
1100	1100	2200	0.625	0.8	1	0.81377	0.05	0.81289	0.0502
1200	1200	2400	0.625	0.8	1	0.84250	0.05	0.84139	0.0500

Notice that the approximate power values are close to the binomial enumeration values for all sample sizes.

Example 5 – Validation

We could not find a validation example for a non-inferiority test for the odds ratio of two proportions. The calculations are basically the same as those for a non-inferiority test of the ratio of two proportions, which has been validated using Blackwelder (1993). We refer you to Example 5 of Chapter 211, “Non-Inferiority Tests for the Ratio of Two Proportions,” for a validation example.