

Research Article

Advancing Multimorbidity Analysis: A Computational Approach to Frequency-Based Odds Ratios and Temporal Disease Progression Modeling with Potential for Use in Clinical Assessment

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Multimorbidity — the presence of multiple medical conditions occurring simultaneously or over time within an individual — presents significant challenges in clinical practice and epidemiological research. Traditional Odds Ratios (ORs) provide static associations between conditions but fail to capture diagnostic frequency as an index of disease severity and the temporal evolution of multimorbidity. To address these limitations, this study introduces refined Frequency-Based Odds Ratios (FORs) and Temporal Ratios of Ratios, implemented in Python-based computational tools designed for large-scale clinical datasets. These analytical scripts, developed with assistance from ChatGPT-4.0 and presented at the 2024 World Psychiatry Association Congress in Mexico, integrate Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) and sequence-based analysis to quantify disease progression dynamically. The computational models were embedded into graphical user interfaces (GUIs) that facilitate interactive visualization of multimorbidity progression. These tools enable clinicians to assess disease trajectories in real time, optimize personalized treatment planning, and identify high-risk patients based on diagnostic patterns. The implementation of FORs and Temporal Ratios of Ratios in clinical decision-making supports proactive, data-informed interventions, making these computational tools valuable for precision medicine, epidemiology, and public health planning. This study underscores the transformative role of AI-assisted analytics in advancing multimorbidity research and clinical management.

Introduction

The study of multimorbidity—the presence of multiple medical conditions occurring simultaneously or over time within an individual—has become increasingly important in clinical and epidemiological research^[1]. Traditional Odds Ratios (OR), while widely used in medical statistics, are limited in their ability to capture diagnostic frequency distributions and disease progression over time. Specifically, ORs provide static associations between conditions but fail to incorporate the severity and temporal evolution of disease states^{[2][3]}. To address these gaps, a refined Frequency-Based Odds Ratio and Temporal Ratio of Ratios were developed to assess diagnostic frequency as an index of disease severity and track how multimorbidity evolves before and after specific medical conditions^[4].

This study details the CHATGPT-4.0 assisted development of Python-based analytical scripts that integrate FOR and Temporal Ratios of Ratios calculations to enhance the quantification of multimorbidity first presented at the 2024 World Psychiatry Association Congress in Mexico. These scripts allow researchers and potentially clinicians to accomplish the following:

- Measure diagnostic frequency over time, providing an indirect but powerful index of disease burden and severity.
- Analyze disease trajectories dynamically, capturing how the likelihood of developing additional diagnoses changes before and after a specific condition.
- Enable real-time visualization of multimorbidity progression using computational modeling and interactive data analytics.

By incorporating temporal sequences of diagnoses and patient-normalized frequencies, these methods provide a more precise and scalable approach to analyzing multimorbidity in clinical settings, making them suitable for large-scale clinical datasets and predictive modeling in epidemiology. Moreover, the integration of these computational tools into interactive graphical user interfaces (GUIs) enhances day-to-day clinical decision-making by allowing clinicians to visually explore disease trajectories, assess multimorbidity progression in real-time, and identify high-risk patients. Such GUI-driven systems facilitate personalized treatment planning, optimize resource allocation, and improve care coordination for patients with complex multimorbid conditions, ultimately supporting more proactive and data-informed clinical interventions.

The main goals of the study related to this paper were to develop clinically useful applications that accomplished the following:

- Report the Ratio of Biomedical Diagnosis Frequency before or after any mental diagnosis expressed as a ratio of the Biomedical Diagnosis Frequency with no mental diagnosis present.
- Report the probable membership in clinical groupings with and without mental disorder based on the sequence of diagnoses with which a patient presents.

The algorithms were named affectionately the Rosetta Stones and were developed well in advance of ChatGPT, nevertheless ChatGPT was invaluable in their translation into the Python programming language.

Data and Security

Data for this study was collected under the University of Calgary Human Research Ethics Board approval (REB15-1057). The dataset is not authorized for release. A total of 10585 individuals born in 1993 had approximately 1 million physician-assigned ICD diagnoses by the end of 2009. The health data used in this study were completely anonymous and de-identified at the source. Analyses were based on grouped data to prevent anyone from identifying individuals in the results. Analyses were run locally - not on a network and are not shared on the internet. All files were kept secure via password protected, encrypted storage. The program was set up so that no outside websites or services were employed, ensuring the data remained private and protected at all times.

Methods

The computational framework for analyzing multimorbidity patterns was implemented in Python and structured into three key components:

Diagnostic Frequency as an Index of Disease Severity

The frequency with which a specific diagnosis appears over time within a patient population can serve as a proxy for disease severity. A higher frequency of diagnosis recurrence in a given timeframe indicates greater disease burden, while a progressive accumulation of diagnoses suggests an increasing complexity of multimorbidity. To quantify this, the Python scripts normalize diagnostic frequencies by patient group, ensuring comparability:

The Interactive Rosetta python script computed diagnostic frequency ratios by grouping data according to diagnosis, sex, and mental disorder linked categories (-1, 0, 1), ensuring normalization by the total number of unique patients in each category. This approach is consistent with the proposed FOR formula, but it introduces an additional step of normalization, which is essential for ensuring statistical accuracy. Specifically, the ratios in the script are calculated using Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) analysis to assess diagnostic frequency distributions before computing ratios. As a result, the proposed formula must explicitly normalize the numerator and denominator using total patient counts within each category. The refined formula for the frequency-based Odds Ratio is as follows:

$$FOR = \frac{\left(\frac{F_{D+}/N_{D+}}{F_{-D+}/N_{-D+}} \right)}{\left(\frac{F_{D-}/N_{D-}}{F_{-D-}/N_{-D-}} \right)}$$

where N_{D+} and N_{-D+} represent the total number of unique patients in each diagnostic category, ensuring that ratios are not skewed by differences in sample size. F_{D+} and F_{-D+} account for diagnostic frequencies across different time intervals

Similarly, the Temporal Ratio of Ratios, designed to measure the impact of a diagnosis before and after a key event, aligns with the approach taken in the Encrypted Rosetta Predictor script (Appendix 2). The script does not merely compute static before-after frequency comparisons but instead uses sequence-matching algorithms to assess whether diagnostic sequences before and after a key event exhibit an exact match or significant overlap. This methodology refines the Temporal Ratios of Ratios formula by incorporating probability-based sequence matching, which is not accounted for in traditional odds or risk ratio calculations. The refined formula for Temporal Ratios of Ratios at a given time step t is:

$$RoR_t = \frac{\left(\frac{F_{D+}(t+1)/N_{D+}(t+1)}{F_{-D+}(t+1)/N_{-D+}(t+1)} \right)}{\left(\frac{F_{D+}(t-1)/N_{D+}(t-1)}{F_{-D+}(t-1)/N_{-D+}(t-1)} \right)}$$

where $t-1$ represents the period before the diagnosis, and $t+1$ represents the period after the diagnosis. This refinement accounts for temporal shifts in diagnostic patterns and enhances the ability to track disease progression dynamics. F_{D+} and F_{-D+} account for diagnostic frequencies across different time intervals. These calculations were integrated into Python functions, which analyzed patterns of comorbidity before and after key diagnostic events.

The Temporal Ratios of Ratios framework was implemented to analyze how multimorbidity evolves over time relative to a specific diagnosis. This method extends traditional before-and-after analysis by

computing the relative increase or decrease in diagnostic frequency following an index. This refinement allows for the dynamic tracking of diagnostic patterns and identifies whether a diagnosis accelerates or decelerates the onset of additional multimorbid conditions.

Computational Implementation and Visualization

A Dash-based Python application was developed to enable real-time visualization of diagnostic patterns, allowing researchers to accomplish the following:

- Select specific diagnoses and time intervals for multimorbidity tracking.
- Generate dynamic scatter plots representing how diagnostic frequency ratios change over time.
- Identify diagnoses with significant shifts in prevalence before and after key medical events.

The final implementation provides a scalable and interactive tool for clinical researchers and epidemiologists to explore multimorbidity trends, improving predictive analytics and data-driven decision-making in healthcare.

Analysis of the Python scripts confirms that the proposed advanced frequency-based Odds Ratio and Temporal Ratio of Ratios formulae aligns with the methodology implemented in the scripts, with necessary constraints for graphical representation (e.g., Temporal Ratios of Ratios > 9). The Dash application (Appendix 1)

Overall, the refinements to the FOR and Temporal Ratios of Ratios formulas ensure that the calculations reflect not only frequency-based diagnostic distributions but also time-dependent sequence patterns. The use of FFT normalization and sequence-matching algorithms in the scripts represents an important methodological advancement in medical data analysis, allowing for a more precise and dynamic evaluation of diagnostic relationships. The refined formulas now better align with the computational methods used in the Python scripts, ensuring their applicability in epidemiological research and clinical decision-making.

Sample Data

The data employed to develop the algorithm and graphical user interface (GUI) consisted of grouped data based on 10585 newborns with age less than 1 year in the first 1 year of a 16-year dataset. Over the study period the sample has approximately ~1,000,000 physician-assigned diagnoses.

Table 1 provides an overview of the variables included in the dataset and their corresponding formats. Each individual is uniquely identified by the variable *patient* (integer ID). Demographic information is represented by *sex* (coded as a byte variable) and *maxage* (age in years at the last available observation). Temporal information is captured using *sdate* (a string variable denoting the start date index) and *sdate_stata* (a Stata-formatted string version of the start date).

Variable Name	Type	Format	Label
patient	int	%8.0g	encrypted id
sex	byte	%8.0g	sex
maxage	byte	%8.0g	age
sdate	str10	%10s	index start date
mdlinked	byte	%8.0g	linked to mental disorder- values(-1,0,1)
diagnosis	int	%8.0g	ICD9
freqdiag	int	%8.0g	frequency of diagnosis
sumtotalfreqd~t	int	%8.0g	sum of diagnoses
sdate_stata	str9	%9s	linked index start date
seq_diag	int	%8.0g	sequence
seq_length	byte	%8.0g	sequence count (diagnosis frequency)

Table 1. Data variable description

Clinical data are represented through multiple diagnostic indicators. The variable *diagnosis* contains physician-assigned ICD-9 codes, while *freqdiag* reflects the frequency with which a specific diagnosis was recorded for a given individual. The cumulative burden of diagnoses is captured in *sumtotalfreqd~t*, denoting the total number of diagnoses assigned. The variable *mdlinked* identifies whether a mental disorder was present, with values of -1, 0, or 1 corresponding to occurrence before, absent, or after the biomedical diagnosis, respectively.

Finally, diagnostic trajectories are characterized by *seq.diag* (the diagnostic sequence number) and *seq.length* (the count of diagnoses in a sequence). Collectively, these variables support both cross-sectional and temporal analyses of multimorbidity, enabling the application of Frequency-based Odds Ratios and Temporal Ratios of Ratios in the study.

Results

A total of 10,585 individuals born in 1993 contributed approximately one million physician-assigned ICD diagnoses by the end of 2009. Table 2 describes the sample by groupings of males and females with and without any mental disorder and descriptive statistics for the sample stratified by sex and the presence or absence of any mental disorder. Among males without a mental disorder ($n = 3,531$), the mean number of diagnoses was 24.34 ($SD = 11.13$), with a range of 1 to 71.

Sample Sizes by Groups Unique Individuals		Number ICD Diagnoses			
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Male Sample Size No MD	3531	24.34	11.13	1	71
Male Sample Size MD	2525	34.63	11.76	1	90
Female Sample Size No MD	2866	23.24	10.97	1	83
Female Sample Size MD	1663	34.29	13.29	1	86
Total	10585	29.13	11.79	1	82

Table 2. Counts of males and females with and without any mental disorder.

Males with a mental disorder ($n = 2,525$) had a higher mean number of diagnoses ($M = 34.63$, $SD = 11.76$), ranging from 1 to 90. For females without a mental disorder ($n = 2,866$), the mean was 23.24 ($SD = 10.97$), with a range of 1 to 83, while females with a mental disorder ($n = 1,663$) averaged 34.29 diagnoses ($SD = 13.29$), ranging from 1 to 86. Overall, across the full sample, the mean number of diagnoses was 29.13 ($SD = 11.79$), with individual counts ranging from 1 to 82 (Table 2).

The following figures show the results of searches resulting from the two GUIs using clinical data. Figures 1-4 show examples of association of mental disorder associated biomedical disorders. Clicking on any of the colored dots in the live application shows the name of the represented diagnosis. The dot selected in Figure 1 for females was lymphangioma, which occurred 64.62 times more frequently before any mental disorder.

The dot selected in Figure 2 for females was streptococcal meningitis, which occurred 28.45 times more frequently after a mental disorder compared to before a mental disorder.

The dot selected in Figure 3 for males was “Other Skull Fracture”, which was 109.71 times more likely to after any mental disorder diagnosis compared to occurring before any mental diagnosis.

The dot selected in Figure 4 for males was “No Family Able to Care”, which was 16.36 times more likely to after any mental disorder diagnosis compared to occurring before any mental diagnosis. In clinical terms these examples appear to have theoretical meaning^{[5][6][3]}.

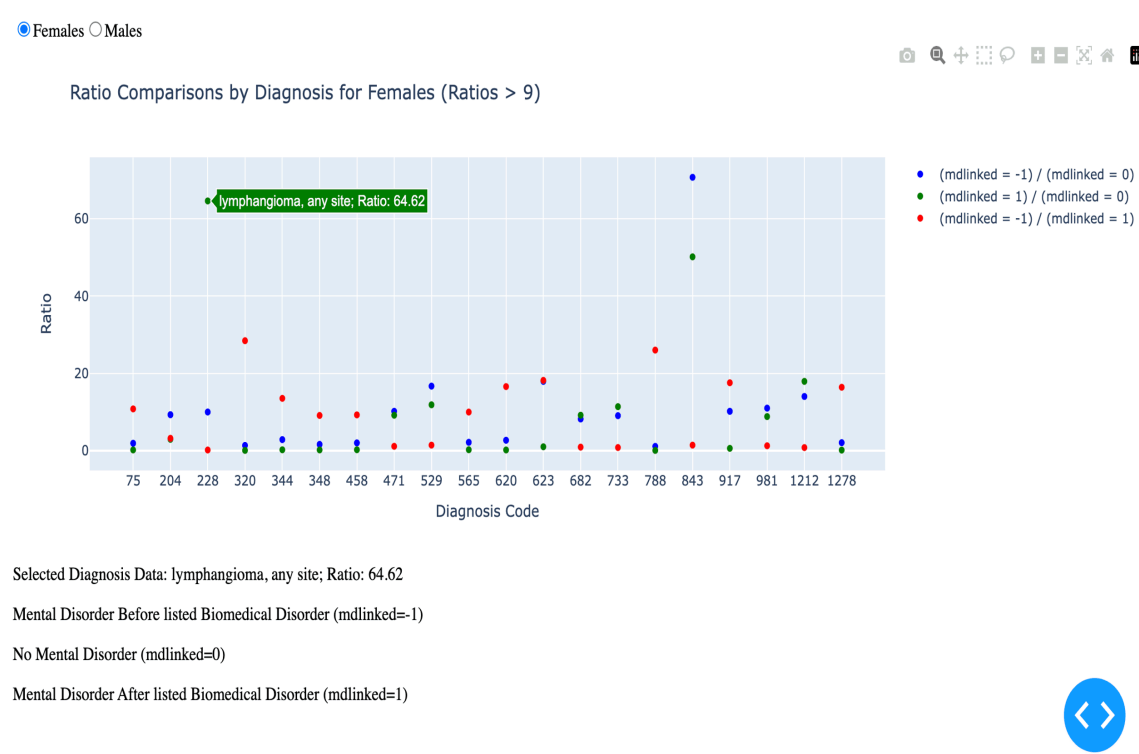
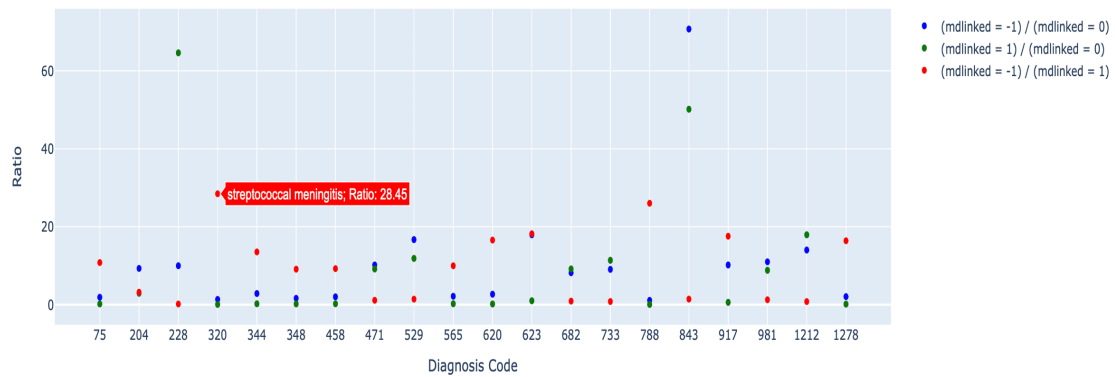


Figure 1. Graphical User Interface representation of Temporal Ratios of Ratios greater than the value nine for females.

Ratio Comparisons by Diagnosis for Females (Ratios > 9)



Mental Disorder Before listed Biomedical Disorder (mdlinked=-1)

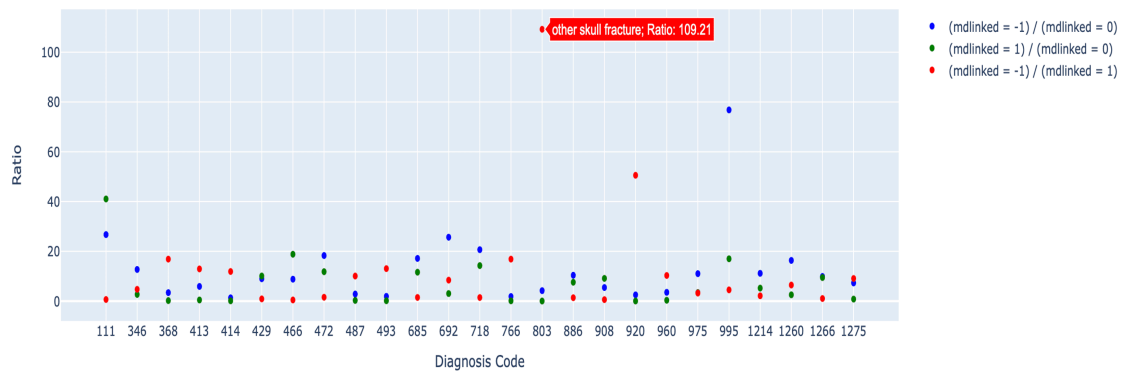
No Mental Disorder (mdlinked=0)

Mental Disorder After listed Biomedical Disorder (mdlinked=1)



Figure 2. Graphical User Interface representation of Temporal Ratios of Ratios greater than the value nine for females.

Ratio Comparisons by Diagnosis for Males (Ratios > 9)



Mental Disorder Before listed Biomedical Disorder (mdlinked=-1)

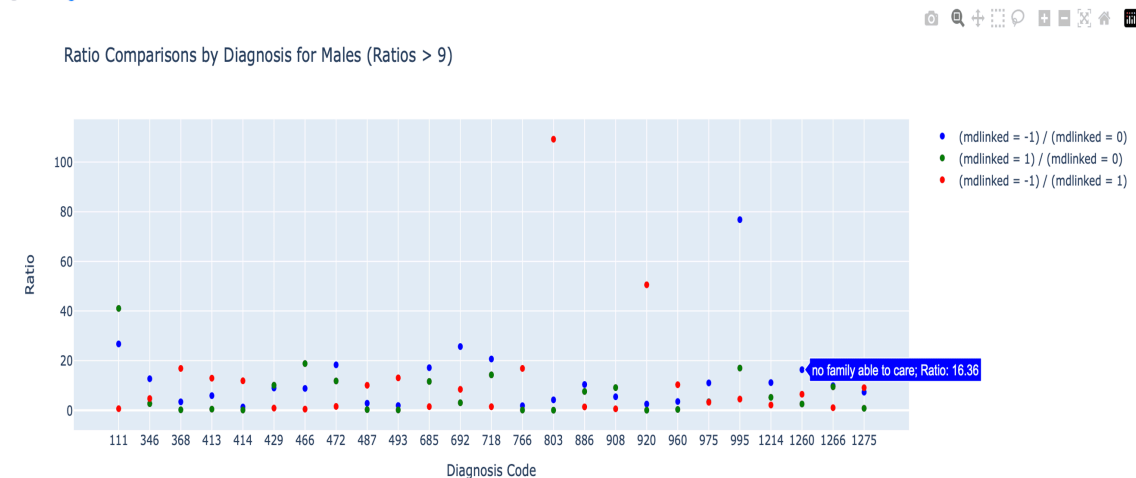
No Mental Disorder (mdlinked=0)

Mental Disorder After listed Biomedical Disorder (mdlinked=1)



Figure 3. Graphical User Interface representation of Temporal Ratios of Ratios greater than the value nine for males.

○ Females ● Males



Mental Disorder Before listed Biomedical Disorder (mdlinked=-1)

No Mental Disorder (mdlinked=0)

Mental Disorder After listed Biomedical Disorder (mdlinked=1)



Figure 4. Graphical User Interface representation of Temporal Ratios of Ratios greater than the value nine for males.

Discussion

The integration of Frequency-based Odds Ratios and Temporal Ratios of Ratios into computational epidemiology represents a substantial advance in multimorbidity research. Traditional epidemiological methods are limited in their ability to capture both the intensity and temporal dynamics of diagnostic trajectories. By reconceptualizing diagnostic frequency as a proxy for disease severity and embedding temporal sequence analysis, this framework provides a deeper understanding of how multimorbidity unfolds across the life course.

The descriptive findings from this study underscore the burden associated with mental disorders, where both males and females with a mental disorder averaged approximately 10 additional physician-assigned diagnoses relative to their counterparts without a mental disorder. This elevation in diagnostic frequency highlights the disproportionate biomedical load associated with psychiatric conditions, reaffirming the interdependence of mental and physical health. Such results support the premise that psychiatric illness does not emerge in isolation but is embedded within broader systemic and somatic disease patterns.

The computational implementation in Python, enhanced with Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) normalization and sequence-matching algorithms, enabled scalable analysis of more than one million ICD-coded diagnoses. The capacity to process such large-scale data through an interactive graphical user interface (GUI) establishes a novel paradigm for epidemiological research. Clinicians and researchers can now visualize dynamic shifts in diagnostic associations, facilitating early detection of high-risk trajectories and enabling proactive intervention strategies. Importantly, this approach is not confined to research; it offers real potential for integration into clinical decision support systems where multimorbidity monitoring could be conducted in real time.

These AI-driven tools also open a path toward precision psychiatry. The ability to generate individualized diagnostic pathways has implications for targeted treatment planning, early intervention, and monitoring therapeutic outcomes. Large Language Models (LLMs) and related AI systems could further refine these applications by integrating narrative clinical data, improving diagnostic prediction, and aligning multimorbidity analytics with patient-centered care. Such integration may ultimately support personalized prevention strategies, optimize allocation of healthcare resources, and reduce the long-term societal costs associated with untreated or poorly managed multimorbidity.

Future research should focus on validating these computational approaches across diverse populations, healthcare systems, and diagnostic taxonomies. Moreover, ethical considerations, including transparency in algorithmic decision-making and safeguarding patient data, must remain central to the deployment of such technologies. Taken together, the FREQUENCY-BASED ODDS RATIOS and Temporal Ratios of Ratios framework represents an important methodological and translational step toward redefining how complex multimorbidity is quantified, understood, and clinically addressed.

Limitations and Next Steps

A key contribution of this paper is the introduction of diagnosis frequency as a novel index of disease severity, providing a dynamic way to capture the burden of multimorbidity beyond traditional static measures. Nevertheless, the analysis remains limited by its current focus on aggregated frequency patterns. The next critical step is to fully integrate the order and sequence of diagnoses into the framework, allowing the temporal progression of disease to be analyzed with greater clinical precision. This integration will improve the capacity to model trajectories of multimorbidity and strengthen the translational value of the approach for both research and clinical practice.

A main limitation relates to generalizability. In this study, the main outcome was pre-defined as the presence or absence of any mental disorder diagnosis. For the algorithms to be truly useful in daily clinical practice, they must allow greater flexibility so that clinicians can define the pivot condition themselves—whether it is a single ICD code, user-defined groupings, or ICD-based classes of disorders. This adaptability is essential for tailoring the analyses to a wide variety of clinical and research needs.

Several future steps are also required. Because this is among the first attempts to propose Frequency-based Odds Ratios and Temporal Ratios of Ratios for clinical application, the results must be reproduced across diverse geographical and cultural contexts. The framework should also be integrated into undergraduate and graduate medical education to prepare clinicians for managing complex multimorbidity. Finally, given the enormous number of diagnostic permutations—even in this relatively small, geographically-limited, 16-year dataset of ~1 million diagnoses across ~10,000 children—dynamic AI-driven large language models and very large datasets will be needed to advance analysis and establish a foundation for this emerging field.

The study of complex multimorbidity remains a relatively novel field, yet it represents one of the greatest challenges for medicine in the 21st century^[1]. By introducing diagnostic frequency as an index of disease severity and advancing methods to capture temporal diagnostic trajectories, this work contributes to shaping a new paradigm for understanding and managing the interplay of mental and physical disorders. However, the true translational value of these approaches depends on their rapid integration into continuing professional education, as well as undergraduate and graduate medical curricula ^{[7][8]}. As Norman Sartorius and colleagues have long emphasized ^[9] the future of psychiatry and medicine lies not only in analytic innovation but also in the cultivation of clinical leadership, teaching, and workforce development to prepare practitioners for the systemic nature of multimorbidity. Embedding multimorbidity analytics into medical education worldwide is therefore essential to equip clinicians with the knowledge and mindset required to manage the growing complexity of patient care.

Conclusion

Mental health research and practice must evolve beyond traditional diagnostic categories to address the systemic nature of multimorbidity. The findings of this study reaffirm that psychiatric disorders do not exist in isolation but are deeply interwoven with biomedical conditions, early-life trauma, and neuroimmune pathways^{[6][10]}. By demonstrating that individuals with a mental disorder carry a

markedly higher burden of biomedical diagnoses, this work highlights the necessity of re-framing psychiatry as an integrative discipline embedded within the broader landscape of physical health.

The integration of Frequency-based Odds Ratios and Temporal Ratios of Ratios into computational epidemiology provides a methodological foundation for this paradigm shift. These tools enable quantification of diagnostic frequency as an index of disease severity and track the evolution of multimorbidity across time. The capacity to process large-scale data using interactive, AI-driven platforms allows for both population-level surveillance and individualized disease trajectory modeling. This dual functionality positions the methodology as a cornerstone of precision psychiatry and public health alike.

The implications extend beyond epidemiology into direct clinical practice. Embedding FOR and Temporal Ratios of Ratios analytics into clinical decision-support systems could facilitate earlier recognition of complex multimorbid trajectories, guide personalized treatment planning, and improve long-term outcomes. Moreover, integration with Large Language Models (LLMs) and AI systems opens opportunities for synthesizing structured and unstructured clinical data, bridging the gap between population-level evidence and patient-level care.

The future of psychiatry, therefore, lies in uniting AI-driven analytics, trauma-informed care, and multimorbidity research within a cohesive, patient-centered framework. Such an approach promises not only to improve diagnostic accuracy and treatment precision but also to reshape our understanding of mental health as a systemic phenomenon inseparable from broader biomedical, developmental, and social contexts. This paradigm shift has the potential to redefine how mental health is diagnosed, treated, and conceptualized in the 21st century, ultimately supporting more resilient, equitable, and integrated models of care.

Appendix 1

Interactive Rosetta Graphic User Interface (GUI)

Functional Title: Interactive Rosetta DASH for Diagnosis Ratio Analysis

Overview

This script sets up a Dash web application that visualizes frequency and ratio comparisons of different diagnoses based on their association with mental disorders. It processes medical diagnosis data,

performs FFT (Fast Fourier Transform) analysis, and generates interactive graphs displaying the relationships between mental and biomedical disorders.

Summary of Functionality

This application:

1. Processes and normalizes medical diagnosis data.
2. Performs FFT to analyze diagnosis frequency patterns.
3. Computes comparative ratios between different mental disorder groupings.
4. Visualizes significant trends using an interactive dashboard.
5. Allows user selection and interactive diagnosis exploration.

This script is useful for clinical research, epidemiology, and AI-driven diagnostics by identifying significant temporal relationships between mental and biomedical disorders.

Notes

This paper was presented at the WPA Mexico City 2024 annual congress. Contact the author for more information^[11].

About the Author

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Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.