

# Specificity and sensitivity

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



Specificity and Sensitivity 7th July Specificity and Sensitivity Tappen et al. noted that specificity and sensitivity are clinical terms used to evaluate clinical tests. In most cases, clinical tests are undertaken to confirm or rule out the presence of diseases during the screening process. It is fundamental to note that specificity and sensitivity measures are independent of the population of interest undergoing the test. However, Tappen (2011) further noted that these tests are dependent on the limiting value above or below which the test indicates positive results.

According to Lovallo et al (2010), sensitivity of a given clinical test refers to the ability of a test to accurately classify those patients with disease while specificity refers to the ability of the test to correctly identify patients without the disease. Consequently, Lovallo et al (2010) noted that specificity and sensitivity are inversely related in that the higher the sensitivity in a test, the lower the specificity of the same test. Therefore, a test having high sensitivity and lower specificity will accurately indicate a higher percentage of patients as having a disease while limitedly identifying patients without the disease. Therefore, the use of high sensitivity and lower specificity is best suited in screening a severe but curable disease. On the contrary, the second test with a high specificity and low sensitivity will accurately identify a higher percentage of patients without the disease but inadequately provide information on those patients suffering from the disease.

Therefore, in the case of a deadly disease that is curable, it is essential that clinical tests apply the first test since it will accurately identify a higher percentage of patients having the disease and hence facilitate mitigation of the disease. Prompt and accurate identification of individuals suffering from

the disease will enable early detection and issuance of medical treatment.

The screening process should hence apply test one.

#### References

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