

Celebrating 30 years of the MIDSPAN Studies



**Uncle Norman and
other stereotypes**

Alex McConnachie

Who is “Uncle Norman”?

- The stereotype who
 - leads an overtly unhealthy lifestyle
 - smoking, drinking, bad diet, no exercise
 - lives to a ripe old age

- Undermines public health messages

“The Last Person”

- Another stereotype
 - leads an exemplary lifestyle
 - non smoker, healthy eater, fit
 - sudden cardiac death

- When your time's up...

MIDSPAN

- Renfrew / Paisley
 - large sample of men
 - 45 – 64 years
 - long term mortality follow-up

- Can we find
 - Uncle Norman?
 - The Last Person?

Visible Risk

□ Smoking & BMI

■ “Low visible risk”

- never smoker, $<25 \text{ kg/m}^2$

■ “High visible risk”

- ≥ 20 cigarettes per day, $\geq 30 \text{ kg/m}^2$

Visible Risk

Low

Intermediate

High

N

337

5538

193

Survived to Age 70

292
(86.6%)

3841
(69.4%)

107
(55.4%)

Died from CHD

12
(3.6%)

692
(12.5%)

44
(22.8%)

Died from other causes

33
(9.8%)

1005
(18.1%)

42
(21.8%)

Other risk factors

- Use men at intermediate visible risk
 - develop models for CHD death < 70 years
 - exclude non-CHD deaths

- Apply to high and low visible risk men
 - do less visible risk factors explain these anomalies?

Modelling

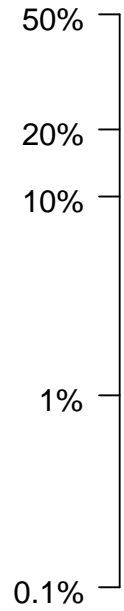
□ Model 1

- smoking, BMI

□ Model 2

- smoking, BMI, age, social class, area deprivation, height, SBP, DBP, cholesterol, %-predicted FEV₁, Rose angina, prolonged chest pain, diabetes, previous stroke, ECG evidence of MI or ischaemia

Predicted Risk



Survivor CHD Death
Low visible risk

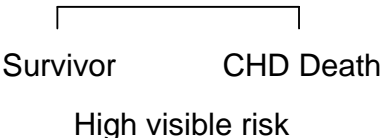
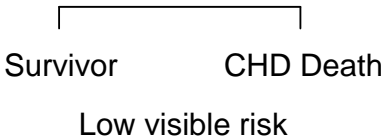
Survivor CHD Death
High visible risk

Predicted Risk



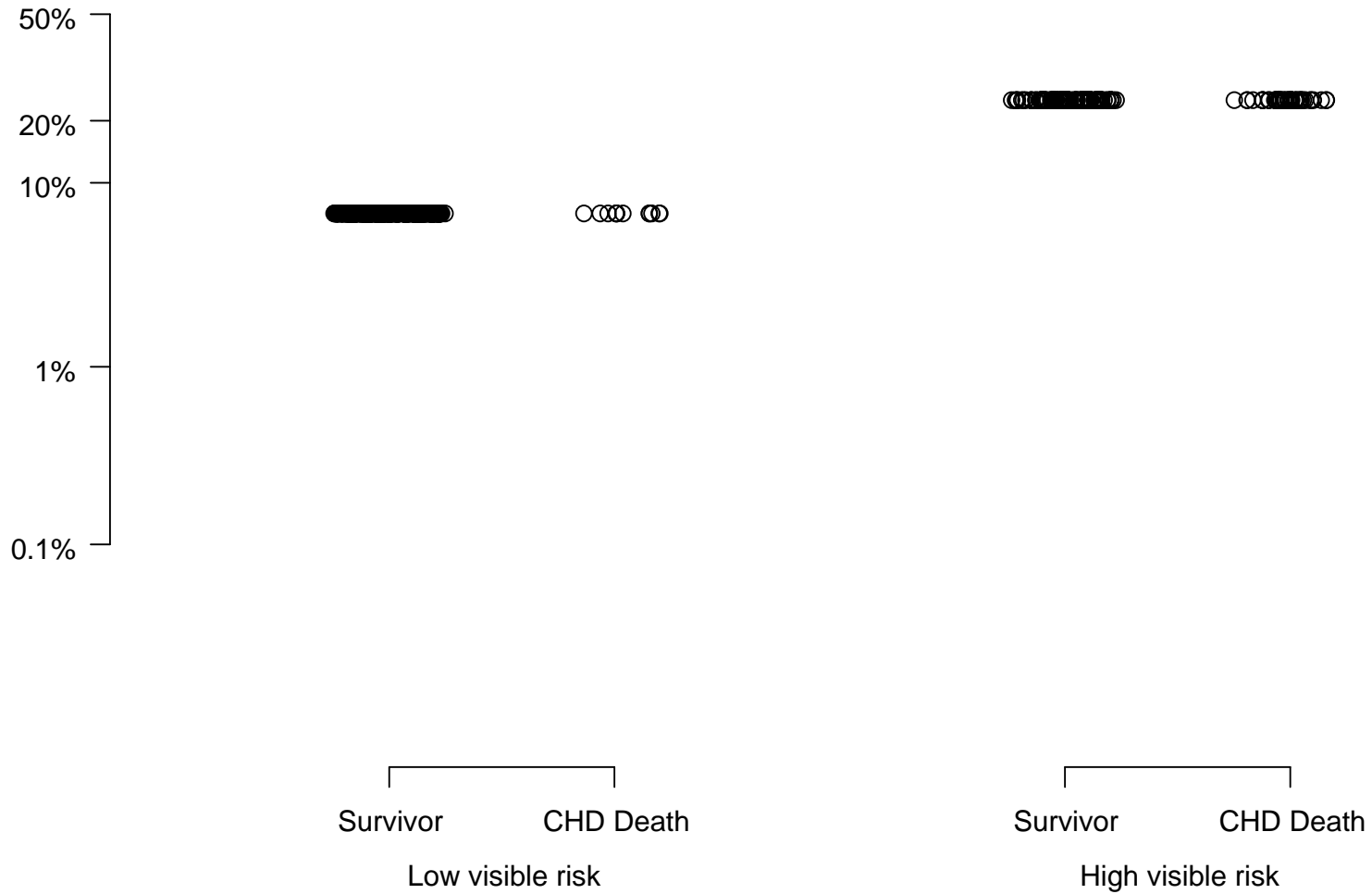
The Last Person

Uncle Norman

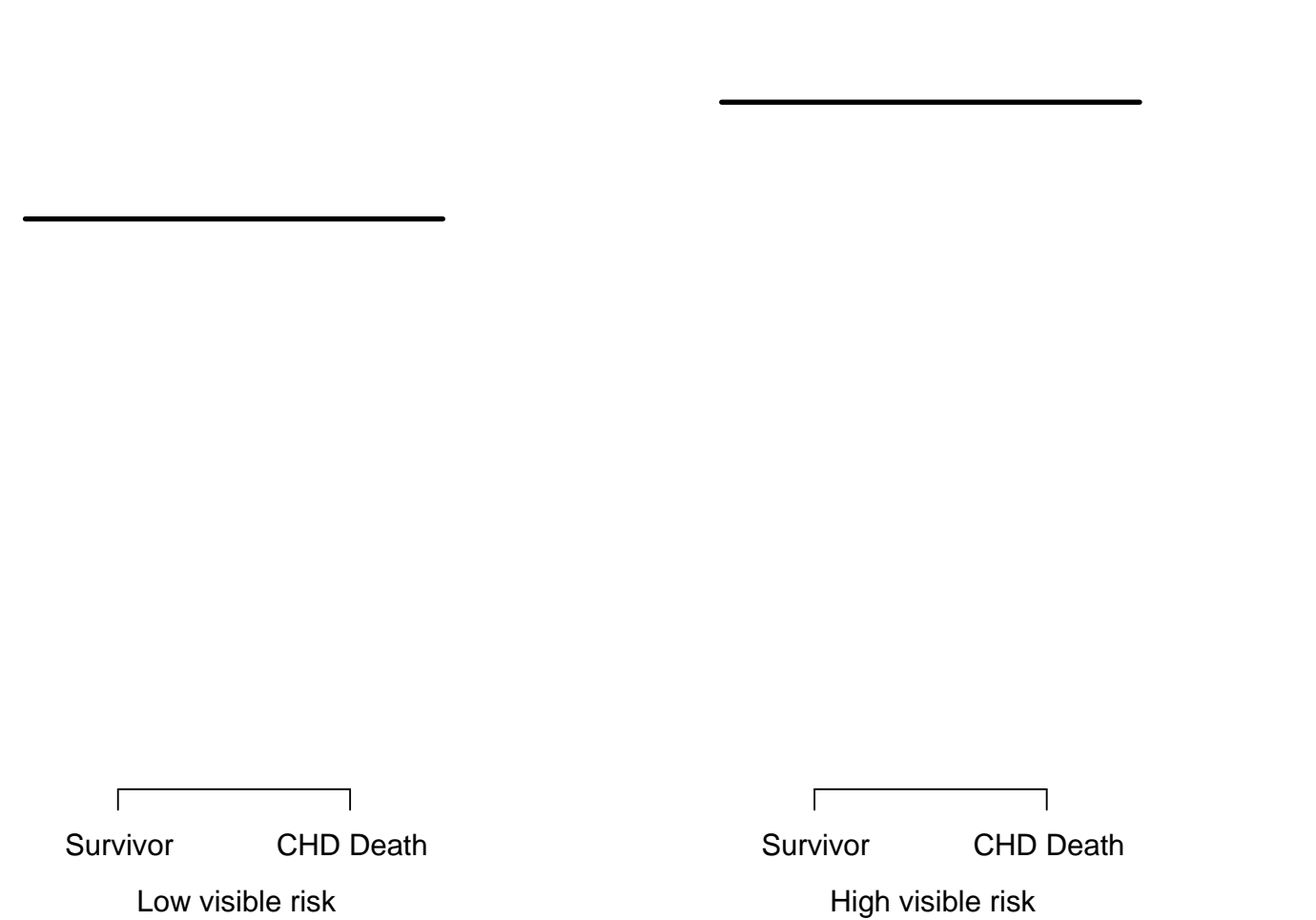
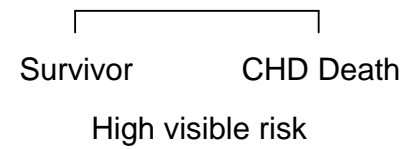
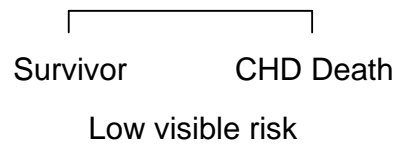
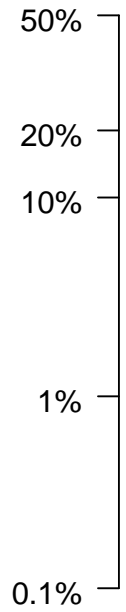


Model 1 (smoking & BMI)

Predicted Risk

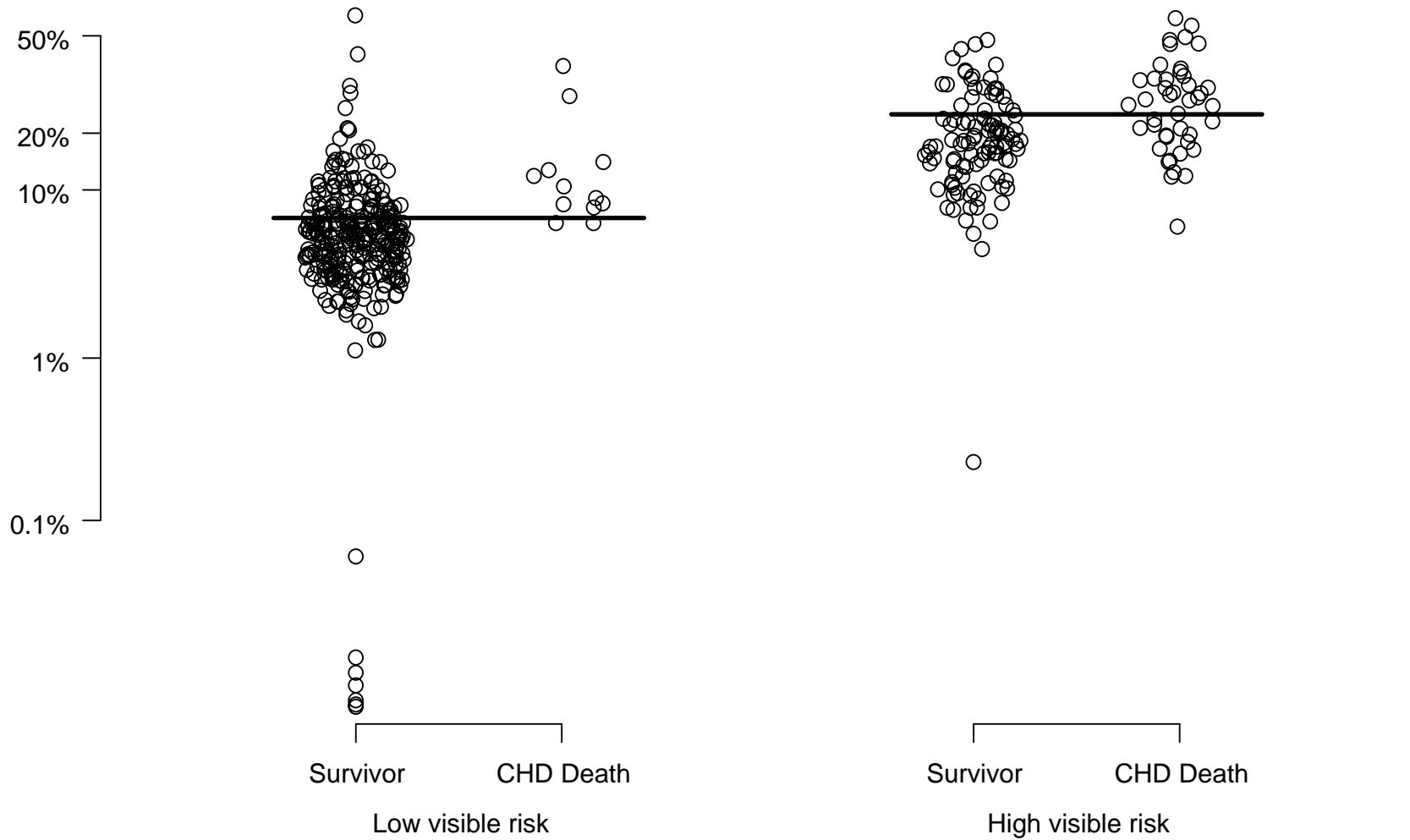


Predicted Risk



Model 2 (fully adjusted)

Predicted Risk



Conclusion

- Visible risk has dramatic effect on CHD mortality before 70 years
 - 23% in high visible risk
 - 4% in low visible risk
- Uncle Norman is uncommon
 - < 2%
- The Last Person is rare
 - < 0.2%

Conclusion

- Uncle Norman and The Last Person are often linked with other risk factors
 - 10 / 12 (83%) Last Persons at higher risk
 - 81 / 107 (76%) Uncle Normans at lower risk
- Public health messages should recognise these stereotypes within the lay perception of CHD risk

*McConnachie A, Hunt K, Emslie C, Hart CL,
Watt GCM (2001).*

“Unwarranted survivals” and “anomalous deaths” from coronary heart disease?:
prospective general population survey.

BMJ; **323**: 1487-1491.