

■ **TABLE 11.2** Examples of Spurious Relationships

Observed Spurious Relationship*	Reason for the Relationship (the Third Variable)
Amount of ice cream sold and deaths by drownings (Moore, 1993)	Season: Ice cream sales and drownings tend to be high during the warm months of the year.
Size of left hand and size of right hand	Genetics: The size of both hands is due to genetic makeup.
Height of sons and height of daughters (Davis, 1985)	Genetics: Heights of sons and daughters are both due their parents' genetic makeup.
Ministers' salaries and price of vodka	Area (i.e., urban or rural): In urban areas, prices and salaries tend to be higher.
Shoe size and reading performance for elementary school children	Age: Older children have larger shoe sizes and read better.
Number of doctors in region and number of people dying from disease	Population density: In highly dense areas, there are more doctors and more people die.
Number of police officers and number of crimes (Glass & Hopkins, 1996)	Population density: In highly dense areas, there are more police officers and more crimes.
Number of homicides and number of churches	Population density: In highly dense areas, there are more homicides and more churches.
Number of storks sighted and the population of Oldenburg, Germany, over a six-year period (Box, Hunter, & Hunter, 1978)	Time: Both variables were increasing over time.
Number of public libraries and the amount of drug use	Time: Both were increasing during the 1970s.
Teachers' salaries and the price of liquor (Moore and McCabe, 1993)	Time: Both tend to increase over time.
Tea drinking and lung cancer	Smoking: Tea drinkers have a lower risk only because they smoke less.

*All but one of the spurious relationships in the first column shows a positive relationship. That is, as one of the variables increases, the other variable also increases. The one negative relationship is the relationship between tea drinking and lung cancer.