

# On the hole-size bound for incomplete block designs

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An incomplete  $t$ -wise balanced design of index  $\lambda$  is a triple  $(X, H, \mathcal{B})$  where  $X$  is a  $v$ -element set,  $H$  is a subset of  $X$  called the hole, and  $\mathcal{B}$  is a collection of subsets of  $X$  called blocks, such that every  $t$ -element subset of  $X$  is either in  $H$  or in exactly  $\lambda$  blocks, but not both. D.L. Kreher and R. Rees have recently shown that if  $H$  is a hole in an incomplete  $t$ -wise balanced design of order  $v$  and index  $\lambda$ , then  $|H| \leq v/2$  if  $t$  is odd and  $(v-1)/2$  if  $t$  is even. They also derived a general upper bound on the size of the hole given that its minimum block size is  $k$ : if  $h$  is the size of the hole, then

$$h \leq \frac{(v + (k-t)(t-2) - 1)}{(k-t+1)}.$$

We present our efforts to show that this bound is sharp infinitely often for all values of  $t$ .