Decision tree for evaluating confounding and effect modification

1. Calculate an unadjusted (collapsed) estimate of association between the exposure and outcome of interest (OR, CIR, IDR, RD)

2. Stratify the data based on the potential confounder or effect modifier

3. Calculate stratified estimates of association (OR, CIR, IDR, RD)

4. Compare the stratified estimates using the test for homogeneity

5. Are the estimates the same?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Calculate an adjusted estimate using Mantel-Haenszel method
   - Effect Modification Present
     - Report stratified estimates
   - Effect Modification Not Present

7. Compare the adjusted estimate to the unadjusted estimate
   - (from step 1)

8. Are the estimates the same?
   - Yes
   - No

9. No confounding present
   - Report unadjusted estimate

   Confounding present
   - Report adjusted estimate

Source: Ben Arnold, UC Berkeley