Impute and input are similar words that are used in similar contexts in scientific writing. For example, you might see either word in a passage describing information being entered into a database. However, these two words are not interchangeable, and the difference in their meanings is important.

The verb input means the act of entering data into a computer, database, or data processing system.¹

**Example:**
Demographic and treatment characteristics from the patients' medical records were input into our database. (Note: According to Merriam-Webster, inputted is also an acceptable past-tense form of input.²)
**Impute**, on the other hand, has a specific statistical meaning. To impute missing data is to assign values to the data on the basis of the patterns of the other variables in the analysis.³ Multiple imputation is a statistical method that models missing data using the data that are present.

**Example:**
Missing values within the dataset were imputed using the multiple imputation method as described previously.

**References**


--Dawn Chalaire

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