

MS-C1620 Statistical inference

2 Confidence intervals and hypothesis testing

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Point estimates

With parametric models, we often want to estimate the value of some **parameter** using the sample x_1, \dots, x_n .

- We estimate the expected value μ of a normal distribution $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ by the maximum likelihood estimate \bar{x} .
- We estimate the population skewness coefficient γ by the corresponding sample estimate $\hat{\gamma}$.

Such estimates are called **point estimates**.

A point estimate on its own rarely gives us enough information. To gain some idea of the **precision** of a point estimate, they are usually accompanied with some measures of their accuracy.

Confidence interval

A **confidence interval** gives an estimated range of values which is likely to contain the value of an unknown population parameter.

The **confidence level** of a confidence interval determines the probability that the confidence interval produced (interpreted as a random interval) will contain the true parameter value.

E.g. if 95% confidence intervals for an unknown parameter are computed from 100 independent samples, approximately 95 of these will contain the true parameter value — but we do not know which!

Note that any particular realized confidence interval either contains the true value or not! (there is not probability involved)

The bootstrap

The standard formulas for confidence intervals either make heavy parametric assumptions or work only for parameters estimable by means (CLT).

The standard non-parametric procedure for estimating confidence intervals is known as the **bootstrap**.

Bootstrap creates pseudo-samples by drawing n observations from the data **with replacement**, repeating the procedure for a large number of times.

If n is large enough, the pseudo-sampling approximates true sampling from the population.

Bootstrap confidence intervals

Let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be independent and identically distributed (i.i.d.) sample from a distribution (parametric model) F_x .

Let θ be a parameter of the distribution F_x and assume that $\hat{\theta}$ is a point estimate of θ .

An approximate confidence interval for θ can now be obtained by bootstrap resampling as follows:

Bootstrap confidence intervals

- 1 Select n data points randomly with replacement from the original sample $\{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$. Each data point can be selected once, multiple times, or not at all. (Note that the sample size of the new sample is the same as the sample size of the original sample.)
- 2 Use this new sample to calculate a new estimate for the parameter θ .
- 3 Repeat the previous steps B times.
- 4 After the replications, order the B estimates from the smallest to the largest.
- 5 A $100(1 - \alpha)\%$ confidence interval is now obtained by choosing the $\lfloor B \times (\alpha/2) \rfloor$ ordered estimate as the lower endpoint and the $\lfloor B \times (1 - \alpha/2) \rfloor$ ordered estimate as the upper endpoint.

Exact confidence intervals

Often, when the type of the distribution is known, also exact confidence intervals can be calculated.

Bootstrap, however, while an approximation, makes not assumption on the distribution of the data.

Exact confidence intervals, normal distribution

Let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be an i.i.d. sample from the normal distribution $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ where both $\mu \in \mathbb{R}$ and $\sigma^2 > 0$ are unknown.

A level $100(1 - \alpha)\%$ **confidence interval for μ** is obtained as,

$$\left(\bar{x} - t_{n-1, \alpha/2} \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}, \bar{x} + t_{n-1, \alpha/2} \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \right),$$

where $t_{n-1, \alpha/2}$ is the $(1 - \alpha/2)$ -quantile of the Student's t -distribution with $n - 1$ degrees of freedom.

For large values of n , the Student's t -distribution with $n - 1$ degrees of freedom approaches the standard normal distribution and its corresponding quantile can be substituted in place of $t_{n-1, \alpha/2}$.

Exact confidence intervals, normal distribution

A level $100(1 - \alpha)\%$ **confidence interval for σ^2** is obtained as,

$$\left(\frac{(n-1)s^2}{\chi_{n-1, \alpha/2}^2}, \frac{(n-1)s^2}{\chi_{n-1, 1-\alpha/2}^2} \right),$$

where $\chi_{n-1, \alpha/2}^2$ is the $(1 - \alpha/2)$ -quantile of the χ_{n-1}^2 -distribution and $\chi_{n-1, 1-\alpha/2}^2$ is the $(\alpha/2)$ -quantile of the χ_{n-1}^2 -distribution.

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Hypothesis testing

Statistical tests are applied extensively in various fields of science.

Examples of statistical testing situations

- Testing whether psychic can predict the winner of a sports match,
- Testing whether a treatment works better than the old one,

Hypothesis testing

Statistical hypothesis testing is based on

- ① Selecting a statistical model/assumptions and
- ② Setting a null hypothesis and often also an alternative hypothesis,
- ③ Choosing a suitable test statistic, the value of which is calculated from a sample of observations.

The result of statistical hypothesis testing is a p -value, based upon which the conclusions are drawn.

Statistical model

- **Statistical model/assumptions** casts the problem in a mathematical context and defines the rules of probability governing it.
- Statistical models are usually of the form:
“Let x_1, \dots, x_n be an i.i.d. sample from the distribution F with the unknown parameter θ ”.
- The validity of the model can, and should, be tested separately.

Examples of statistical models/assumptions

- A psychic guesses the winner of each of the n sports matches correctly with the probability p , independent of his previous guesses.
- The treatment group responses x_1, \dots, x_n are an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu_1, \sigma^2)$ and the control group responses y_1, \dots, y_m are an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu_2, \sigma^2)$.

Null hypothesis

- The statement of interest about a model parameter is called the **null hypothesis** H_0 .
- H_0 is assumed to be true unless there is strong evidence that indicates otherwise, in which case it is rejected.
- In simple statistical tests the null hypothesis can often be stated as $H_0 : \theta = \theta_0$, where θ is the parameter being tested and θ_0 is a fixed value of the parameter.
- The null hypothesis is often conceptually of the form “*is the same*” or “*there is no difference*”.

Examples of null hypotheses

- $H_0 : p = 0.5$.
- $H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2$.

Alternative hypothesis

- The null hypothesis is usually accompanied by an alternative hypothesis H_1 , which is often the logical opposite of H_0 (though not always).
- If H_0 is rejected, then H_1 is accepted.
- The alternative hypothesis is often conceptually of the form “*is not the same*” or “*there is a difference*”.

Examples of alternative hypotheses

- $H_1 : p \neq 0.5$.
- $H_1 : \mu_1 > \mu_2$.

Most tests in these lecture slides are for simplicity formulated using *two-tailed alternative hypotheses*,

$$H_0 : \theta = \theta_0 \quad H_1 : \theta \neq \theta_0.$$

Test statistic

- **Test statistic** measures deviation of the observed sample from the null hypothesis H_0 .
- A test statistic is a random variable and its value depends on the observations.
- The distribution of the test statistic under the null hypothesis H_0 must be known for assessing the compatibility of the observations and the null hypothesis H_0 .

Examples of test statistics

- The proportion of correct guesses out of the total n .
- $\bar{x} - \bar{y}$

p -value

- The p -value of a statistical test is the probability of observing at least as deviating value towards H_1 as the observed value of the test statistic under the null hypothesis H_0 .
- Note that what is considered as “deviating” depends on the form of the hypotheses.
- If the p -value is *too small* (the observation is too strange to have happened under H_0), we reject H_0 in favor of H_1 .
- Note that we can never accept H_0 based on the test, only “continue to believe in it”.

Significance level and critical values

- **Significance level α** is used to make a cut-off between small and large p -values.
 - ▶ If $p < \alpha$ we reject H_0 .
 - ▶ If $p \geq \alpha$ we do not reject H_0 .
- Commonly used significance levels are $\alpha = 0.05, 0.1, 0.01, 0.001$. and it **should be set before the study**.
- The set of values of the test statistic for which the null hypothesis is rejected (i.e. the values that yield a p -value smaller than α) is called the **critical region**.
- The threshold values delimiting the regions of non-rejection and rejection for the test statistic are called the **critical values**.

Errors in statistical hypothesis testing

There are two kinds of errors related to the rejection of the null hypothesis H_0 .

- **Type 1 error**: True null hypothesis is rejected.
- **Type 2 error**: False null hypothesis is not rejected.

The **type 1 error rate** is the probability of rejecting a true H_0 . It is at most α .

The **type 2 error rate** is the probability of not rejecting a false H_0 . Type 2 error rate is more difficult to control as it is usually a function of the possible distributions under H_1 .

Power of a test is equal to $1 -$ “type 2 error rate”. The larger the power, the better the test detects false null hypotheses.

Steps of statistical hypothesis testing

- 1 Select the statistical model and state the hypotheses.
- 2 Select a test statistic.
- 3 Pick a sample (for which the model holds).
- 4 Calculate the value of the test statistic.
- 5 Calculate the p -value corresponding to the observed value of the test statistic.
- 6 Draw conclusions and reject/do not reject the null hypothesis.

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One-sample t -test

One-sample t -test compares the expected value of a distribution to a given constant.

One-sample t -test, assumptions

Let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$.

One-sample t -test, hypotheses

$$H_0 : \mu = \mu_0 \quad H_1 : \mu \neq \mu_0.$$

One-sample t -test

One-sample t -test, test statistic

- The t -test statistic,

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{s/\sqrt{n}}.$$

- follows Student's t -distribution with $n - 1$ degrees of freedom under H_0 .
- The expected value of t under the null hypothesis H_0 is 0 and if the value of t has **large absolute value**, evidence against the null hypothesis H_0 is found.

If the sample size is large, then the one-sample t -test is not very sensitive to moderate deviations from normality.

Two-sample t -test

Two-sample t -test compares the expected values of two distributions.

Two-sample t -test, assumptions

Let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu_x, \sigma_x^2)$ and let y_1, y_2, \dots, y_m be an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu_y, \sigma_y^2)$. Furthermore, let the two samples be independent.

Two-sample t -test, hypotheses

$$H_0 : \mu_x = \mu_y \quad H_1 : \mu_x \neq \mu_y.$$

Two-sample t -test

Two-sample t -test, test statistic

- The t -test statistic,

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \bar{y}}{\sqrt{s_x^2/n + s_y^2/m}},$$

follows approximately the Student's t -distribution with

$$\frac{(s_x^2/n + s_y^2/m)^2}{((s_x^2/n)^2/(n-1)) + ((s_y^2/m)^2/(m-1))}.$$

degrees of freedom under H_0 .

- The expected value of t under H_0 is 0 and if the value of the test statistic has **large absolute value**, evidence against the null hypothesis H_0 is found.

If the sample size is large, then the two-sample t -test is not very sensitive to moderate deviations from normality.

Paired t -test

- The two-sample t -tests assumes that the samples are independent. What if this is not the case?
 - ▶ A comparison of two measurement devices where both devices are used to measure the same subject under same circumstances.
 - ▶ A drug study where the subjects' responses are measured both before and after the treatment.
 - ▶ A comparison of health-related life style choices of matched pairs, such as spouses.

Paired t -test

Paired t -test, assumptions

Observations consist of an i.i.d. sample of pairs (x_{i1}, x_{i2}) , $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ (the values **within** a pair need not be independent). The differences $d_i = x_{i1} - x_{i2}$ have the normal distribution $\mathcal{N}(\mu_d, \sigma_d^2)$.

Paired t -test, hypotheses

$$H_0 : \mu_d = 0 \quad H_1 : \mu_d \neq 0.$$

The one sample t -test can now be applied to the differences d_i to test whether their expected value is zero (whether there is no systematic difference between the values in a pair).

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Variance test

The variance test compares the variance of a distribution to a given constant.

Variance test, assumptions

Let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$.

Variance test, hypotheses

The null hypothesis

$$H_0 : \sigma^2 = \sigma_0^2 \quad H_1 : \sigma^2 \neq \sigma_0^2.$$

Variance test

Variance test, test statistic

- The χ^2 -test statistic,

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(n-1)s^2}{\sigma_0^2},$$

follows χ^2 -distribution with $n - 1$ degrees of freedom under H_0 .

- The expected value of the test statistic under H_0 is $n - 1$ and both **large** and **small** values of the test statistic suggest that the null hypothesis H_0 is false.

The variance test is sensitive to deviations from normality and does not work, even for large samples, if the underlying distribution is skewed.

Variance comparison test

The variance comparison test compares the variances of two distributions.

Variance comparison test, assumptions

Let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu_x, \sigma_x^2)$ and let y_1, y_2, \dots, y_m be an i.i.d. sample from $\mathcal{N}(\mu_y, \sigma_y^2)$. Furthermore, let the two samples be independent.

Variance comparison test, hypotheses

$$H_0 : \sigma_x^2 = \sigma_y^2 \quad H_1 : \sigma_x^2 \neq \sigma_y^2.$$

Variance comparison test

Variance comparison test, test statistic

- The F -test statistic,

$$F = \frac{s_x^2}{s_y^2},$$

follows the F -distribution with $n - 1$ and $m - 1$ degrees of freedom under H_0 .

- The expected value of the test statistic under H_0 is ≈ 1 and both **large** and **small** values of the test statistic suggest that the null hypothesis H_0 is false.

Also the variance comparison test is sensitive to deviations from normality and does not work, even for large samples, if the underlying distribution is skewed.