PhD School in Statistics
cycle XXXIII, 2018

Theory and Methods of Inference

Instructors: Alessandra Salvan (course coordinator), Nicola Sartori, Luigi Pace and Brunero Liseo and Andrea Tancredi for 'Bayesian data analysis and computation' specialist course

Syllabus

Some prerequisites. Empirical distribution function. Convergence of sums of r.v.'s. Order statistics. Density functions. Scale and location families. Exponential families. Multivariate normal distributions. Parametric inference: basics.

Statistical models and uncertainty in inference. Statistical models. Paradigms of inference: the Bayesian and frequentist paradigms. Prior specification. Model specification (data variability). Levels of model specification. Problems of distribution (variability of statistics). Simulation. Asymptotic approximations and delta method.

Generating functions, moment approximations, transformations. Moments, cumulants and their generating functions. Generating functions of sums of independent random variables. Edgeworth and Cornish-Fisher expansions. Notations $O_p(\cdot)$ and $o_p(\cdot)$. Approximations of moments and transformations. Laplace approximation.

Likelihood: observed and expected quantities, exact properties. Dominated statistical models. Sufficiency. Likelihood: observed quantities. Examples: a two-parameter model, grouped data, censored data, sequential sampling, Markov chains, Poisson processes. Likelihood and sufficiency. Invariance properties. Expected likelihood quantities and exact sampling properties. Reparameterizations.

Likelihood inference: first-order asymptotics. Likelihood inference procedures. Consistency of the maximum likelihood estimator. Asymptotic distribution of the maximum likelihood estimator. Asymptotic distribution of the log-likelihood ratio: simple null hypothesis, likelihood confidence regions, comparisons among asymptotically equivalent forms, non-null asymptotic distributions, composite null hypothesis (nuisance parameters), profile likelihood, asymptotically equivalent forms and one-sided versions, testing constraints on the components of the parameter. Non-regular models.

Bayesian Inference. Noninformative priors. Inference based on the posterior distribution. Point estimation and credibility regions. Hypothesis testing and the Bayes factor. Linear models.

Likelihood: numerical and graphical aspects in R. A scalar parameter example: log likelihood, plot of the log likelihood, MLE and observed/expected information, Wald confidence intervals, deviance confidence regions, simulation, numerical optimization methods, significance function.

A vector parameter example: plot of the log likelihood, parameter estimates, simulation. Parameter of interest and profile likelihood. Examples in the Weibull model. Deviance intervals: simulation. Stratified models.

Estimating equations and pseudolikelihoods. Misspecification. Estimating equations. Quasi likelihood. Pairwise likelihood. Empirical likelihood.

Data and model reduction by marginalization and conditioning. Distribution constant statistics. Completeness. Ancillary statistics. Data and model reduction with nuisance parameters: lack of information with nuisance parameters, pseudo-likelihoods. Marginal likelihood. Conditional likelihood.

The frequency-decision paradigm. Statistical decision problems. Efficient estimators: Cramér-Rao lower bound, asymptotic efficiency, Godambe efficiency, Rao-Blackwell-Lehmann-Scheffé theorem, other constraints for point estimation. Optimal tests: Neyman-Pearson lemma, composite hypotheses: families with monotone likelihood ratio, locally most powerful tests, two-sided alternatives, other constraint criteria. Optimal confidence regions.

Exponential families, Exponential dispersion families, Generalized linear models. Exponential families of order 1. Mean value mapping and variance function. Multiparameter exponential families. Marginal and conditional distributions. Sufficiency and completeness. Likelihood and exponential families: likelihood quantities, conditional likelihood, profile likelihood and mixed parameterization. Procedures with finite sample optimality properties. First-order asymptotic theory. Exponential dispersion families. Generalized linear models.

Group families. Groups of transformations. Orbits and maximal invariants. Simple group families and conditional inference. Composite group families and marginal inference.

Bayesian data analysis and computation. Prior distributions: objective vs. subjective. Monte Carlo and posterior simulation. Bayesian model selection and model checking. MCMC in practice (Linear, Generalized linear and other models). Hierarchical and Empirical Bayesian models. Approximate Bayesian Computation.

References

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Lectures and topics (tentative schedule)

date		topic	instructor
27/02/18		course presentation, some prerequisites	AS
01/03/18		statistical models and uncertainty in inference: Bayesian models and frequentist inference,	
		model specification and problems of distribution	AS
13/03/18		generating functions, approximation of moments, transformations	AS
15/03/18		likelihood: observed and expected quantities, exact sampling properties	AS
20/03/18		likelihood: observed and expected quantities, exact sampling properties	AS
22/03/18		likelihood inference (first-order asymptotics)	NS
27/03/18		likelihood inference (first-order asymptotics)	NS
05/04/18		Bayesian inference: noninformative priors, point and interval estimation	AS
10/04/18		Bayesian inference: hypothesis testing and the Bayes factor; normal linear model	AS
12/04/18		estimating equations and pseudolikelihoods	NS
17/04/18		likelihood and Bayesian inference in `R`	NS
19/04/18		likelihood and Bayesian inference in `R`	NS
24/04/18		data and model reduction by marginalization and conditioning	AS
26/04/18		data and model reduction.../ the frequency decision paradigm	AS
03/05/18		the frequency decision paradigm	AS
15/05/18		exponential families	AS
16/05/18		exponential families	AS
17/05/18		exponential dispersion models, generalized linear models	AS
22/05/18		group families	AS
24/05/18		group families	AS
29/05/18	9.30–12.30	Prior distributions: objective vs. subjective	BL
29/05/18	15.00–17.00	Monte Carlo and posterior simulation	BL
30/05/18	10.00–12.00	Introduction to Markov chain Monte Carlo	BL
30/05/18	14.00–16.00	Bayesian model selection and model checking	BL
05/06/18	15.00–17.00	MCMC in practice (Linear, Generalized linear and other models)	AT
06/06/18	10.00–12.00	Hierarchical and empirical Bayesian models 1	AT
06/06/18	15.00–17.00	Hierarchical and empirical Bayesian models 2	AT
??/06/18		writing papers and reports + paper assignment	AS+NS
??/06/18	3 hours	written exam	
??/06/18	3 hours	practical exam	
??/09/18		oral presentations	AS+AS+LP

Instructors: AS is Alessandra Salvan, NS is Nicola Sartori, BL is Brunero Liseo, AT is Andrea Tancredi.

Luigi Pace (LP) collaborates in lecture material, in the final exam and in paper assignment and evaluation.

NOTE: attendance to lectures by BL and AT is optional for undergraduate students, while it is mandatory for graduate students.