Variable Selection for
High-Dimensional Longitudinal Omics
Data with a Continuous or
Misclassified Binary Outcome

Steve Broll July 2025

Alternative Title: TB or not TB

Collaborator gives you hundreds (or thousands) of longitudinal -omics variables and a clinical outcome of interest, with the motivating question depending on the type of outcome:

- Longitudinal continuous outcome, e.g. some measure of disease severity
 - Which omic variables co-vary over time with the outcome?
- Binary outcome that could be misclassified, e.g. disease recurrence or an indicator for some condition
 - Which omic variables are associated with the (latent) outcome?

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- High-dimensional omics data is recently more feasible to collect and will be increasingly common in clinical data
- Variables selected from the -omics pool could be used as non-invasive markers for early disease progression, and provide insight into biological processes
- There is extensive work in the omics arena, especially in differential expression/abundance between groups.
 However, we have identified two main gaps in the longitudinal omics setting.

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- We propose a joint model that leverages correlation over time as well as correlation between variables to select a sparse set of biomarkers
- We provide a framework for uncertainty quantification AND inference with two or more treatment groups

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- First-differencing longitudinal omics data and incorporating observed covariate dependence via weighted graph Laplacian
- PROLONG Penalized regression on outcome-guided longitudinal omics data with network and group constraints
- Uncertainty quantification in a network-constrained sparse group lasso model for outcome-guided high-dimensional omics data with multiple treatment groups
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Section 1 - First Differencing and graph Laplacian

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- Leverages potentially useful correlation information in predictors by nudging coefficients for correlated variables together (smoothing over dependence network)
- Alleviates numerical challenges typical to lasso type problems in presence of multicollinearity
- If two variables are identical, the respective coefficients will be identical
- The penalization allows us to obtain a maximum likelihood estimator (MLE) for the noise variance $\hat{\sigma}^2$ of Y

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Grouping Effect Example

Theorem (Grouping Effect) Given data (Y, X) and fixed scalar λ , let $\hat{\beta}(\lambda)$ be a Laplacian-penalized estimator. Suppose $\hat{\beta}_i \hat{\beta}_j > 0$ and the two vertices i and j are only linked to each other on the network, $d_i = d_i = w(i, j)$. Define

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then

$$D_{\lambda}(i,j) \leq \frac{\sqrt{2(1-\rho)}}{2\lambda}$$

where $||Y||_1 = \sum_{i=1}^n |Y_i|$ and $\rho = X_i^T X_{.i}$ captures the sample correlation.

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- Outcome is TB mycobacterial load measured by Time to Positivity (TTP), which is inversely related to TB severity
- 15 TB patients taking the same combination drug RHEZ
- 4 time points, one at baseline and 3 following RHEZ treatment
- 352 untargeted urinary metabolites as our predictors
- These untargeted metabolites are typically known to have low signal and high noise

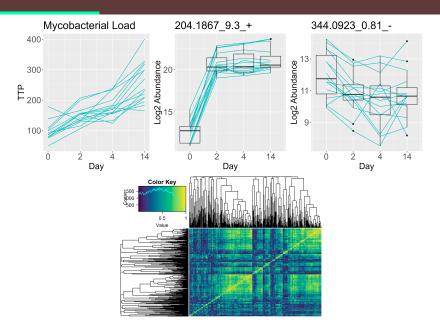
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Tuberculosis Data



General Idea

• First-difference the data, then stack our t-1 values of X and Y so we have

$$Y = [Y_4 - Y_3 Y_3 - Y_2 Y_2 - Y_1]^T$$

And for each variable j we have

$$X_j = [X_{j4} - X_{j3} X_{j3} - X_{j2} X_{j2} - X_{j1}]^T$$

- Set up design matrix so that each first-differenced Y
 value is regressed on all prior first-differenced values of X
 to account for potential lags
- Apply Laplacian and group lasso penalties to induce sparsity while utilizing correlation and inherent group structure

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Vectorized Y

$$\tilde{Y} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{Y}_{11} & \cdots & \tilde{Y}_{1T} \\ & \vdots & \\ \tilde{Y}_{n1} & \cdots & \tilde{Y}_{nT} \end{bmatrix}_{n \times T} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \Delta \tilde{Y}_{11} & \cdots & \Delta \tilde{Y}_{1(T-1)} \\ & & \vdots \\ \Delta \tilde{Y}_{n1} & \cdots & \Delta \tilde{Y}_{n(T-1)} \end{bmatrix}_{n \times (t-1)}$$

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Moving X from Tensor to Matrix

$$\tilde{X}^{[j]} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{X}_{11}^{[j]} & \cdots & \tilde{X}_{1T}^{[j]} \\ \vdots & & \vdots \\ \tilde{X}_{n1}^{[j]} & \cdots & \tilde{X}_{nT}^{[j]} \end{bmatrix}_{n \times T} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \Delta \tilde{X}_{11}^{[j]} & \cdots & \Delta \tilde{X}_{1(T-1)}^{[j]} \\ \vdots & & \vdots \\ \Delta \tilde{X}_{n1}^{[j]} & \cdots & \Delta \tilde{X}_{n(T-1)}^{[j]} \end{bmatrix}_{n \times (T-1)}$$

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Moving X from Tensor to Matrix

Now replace each $\Delta \tilde{X}_{it}^{[j]}$ with row vector

$$\Delta ilde{X}_{it} = |\Delta ilde{X}_{it}^{[1]} \Delta ilde{X}_{it}^{[2]} \dots \Delta ilde{X}_{it}^{[p]}|$$
 0
 0
 0

$$(Y - X\beta)^T (Y - X\beta) + \lambda_1 \sum_{j=1}^{p} \|\beta_{(j)}\|_2 + \lambda_2 \beta^T L\beta,$$

- λ_1 is the tuning parameter for our group lasso penalty
- ullet λ_2 is the tuning parameter for the network penalty
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Instead of directly minimizing

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we fit group lasso to the Laplacian augmented data

$$\begin{bmatrix} Y \\ \mathbf{0} \end{bmatrix}, \quad \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+\lambda_2}} \begin{bmatrix} X \\ \sqrt{\lambda_2} S^T \end{bmatrix}$$

where $L = SS^T$. We then rescale $\hat{\beta}$ by $\frac{1}{\sqrt{1+\lambda_2}}$.

Note that this is similar to the elastic net but with S instead of I, and like with the elastic net we can potentially select all p variables even when p > n.

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Grouping Effect

Theorem (Grouping Effect) Given data (Y, X) and fixed scalars λ_1, λ_2 , let $\hat{\beta}(\lambda_1, \lambda_2)$ be the PROLONG solution. Suppose $\hat{\beta}_i \hat{\beta}_j > 0$, the group sizes p_i, p_j are the same, and the two vertices i and j are only linked to each other on the network, $d_i = d_j = w(i, j)$. Define

$$D_{\lambda_1,\lambda_2}(i,j) = \frac{1}{||Y||_1} \left| \hat{\beta}_i(\lambda_1,\lambda_2) - |\hat{\beta}_j(\lambda_1,\lambda_2) \right|.$$

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Performance with Real Data

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Applying PROLONG

- R package 'prolong', available on Github currently, takes in raw time-scale data and
 - First-differences and shapes the data into the block design structure
 - Automatically selects hyper-parameters and fits the model
 - Provides visualizations for the full data and for selected variables

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R Package Selected Variable Trajectories



Section 3 - Uncertainty Quantification

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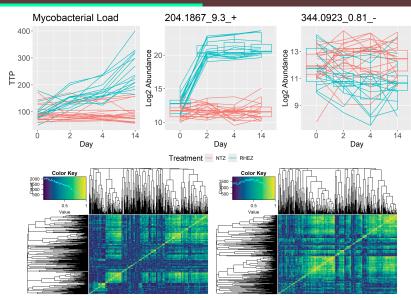
- Motivated by recent results on the sparse group lasso, we move PROLONG from group lasso + network to sparse group lasso + network penalization.
- We construct a debiased estimator to enable uncertainty quantification and inference.
- Given multiple treatment groups, we provide a framework that allows for joint inference while allowing model hyper-parameters to vary by treatment group.
- If we tune hyper-parameters across all groups, low signal groups like our NTZ data in the following slide can lead to over-sparsifying the other groups.

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Pooled Data



NTZ RHEZ

Sparse Group Lasso

Our combined sparse group lasso + network penalty is

$$\lambda_1 |\beta|_1 + \lambda_1 \sqrt{(\tau)} \sum_{k=1}^K \sqrt{p_k} \|\beta^{(k)}\|_2 + \lambda_2 \beta^\top L \beta,$$

where we have a weighted sum of lasso and group lasso penalty terms.

The underlying assumption here is that our true β is both sparse not only between groups but also within groups.

Grouping Effect

Theorem (Grouping Effect). Given dataset (Y,X) and fixed scalars $(\lambda_1,\lambda_2,\tau)$, the response Y is centered and predictors X are standardized. Let $\hat{\beta}(\lambda_1,\lambda_2,\tau)$ be the doubly-sparse PROLONG estimator. Suppose that $\hat{\beta}_i(\lambda_1,\lambda_2,\tau)\,\hat{\beta}_j(\lambda_1,\lambda_2,\tau)>0$, the group sizes p_i and p_j are the same, and the two vertices i and j are only linked to each

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Then

$$D_{\lambda_1,\lambda_2,\tau}(i,j) \leq \frac{1}{2\lambda_2} \sqrt{2(1-\rho)} + \frac{\lambda_1 \sqrt{p_i \tau}}{\lambda_2 ||Y||_1}.$$

Debiased Lasso

The KKT conditions for lasso estimator $\hat{\beta}^n$, which describe necessary conditions for finding an optimal solution $\hat{\beta}^n$ without violating our constraints, give

$$\frac{X^{\top}(Y - X\hat{\beta}^n)}{n} = \lambda_1 s$$

where s is a subgradient of the ℓ_1 penalty at $\hat{\beta}_n$.

We add a term proportional to the subgradient to compensate for the downward bias introduced by the ℓ_1 penalty.

$$\hat{\beta}^{u} = \hat{\beta}^{n} + \frac{MX^{\top}(Y - X\hat{\beta}^{n})}{n},$$

Here, M is a matrix designed to 'decorrelate' the columns of X, and controls both the bias and variance for our debiased estimator.

Debiased Lasso

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Obtaining M

Algorithm 1 Relaxed Precision Matrix Estimation

Input: Matrix **X**, scalar μ

Set
$$\widehat{\Sigma} \equiv \left(\mathbf{X}^{\top} \mathbf{X} \right) / n$$
.

for
$$i = 1, 2, ..., p$$
 do

Let m_i be a solution of the convex program:

$$\text{minimize} \quad m^\top \widehat{\Sigma} m \quad \text{ subject to } \left\| \widehat{\Sigma} m - e_i \right\|_\infty \leq \mu$$

where $e_i \in \mathbb{R}^p$ is the vector with one at the *i*-th position and zero everywhere else. \triangleright Set $M = I_{p \times p}$ if not feasible

Purpose of M

- Controlling $|M\hat{\Sigma} I|_{\infty}$, the maximum absolute entry-wise difference, controls the bias of $\hat{\beta}^u$
- Minimizing the diagonal elements of $M\hat{\Sigma}M$ controls the variance of $\hat{\beta}^u$

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Debiased Sparse Group Lasso

We use the same correction as in the debiased lasso,

$$\hat{\beta}^{u} = \hat{\beta}^{n} + \frac{MX^{\top}(Y - X\hat{\beta}^{n})}{n},$$

obtaining an estimator $\hat{\beta}^u$ that is approximately Gaussian with covariance $\sigma^2 M \hat{\Sigma} M/n$.

Obtaining $\hat{\sigma}^2$

Consider the optimization problem

$$\underset{\beta}{\operatorname{argmin}} \left\{ ||Y - X\beta||_2^2 + \beta^\top (\lambda_2 L + \lambda_R I)\beta \right\},$$

where $\lambda_R I$ ensures that $\lambda_2 L + \lambda_R I$ is invertible.

Maximizing the respective log-likelihood $I(\sigma^2, \lambda_2, \lambda_r)$ gives

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{n} y^T \Sigma_L^{-1} y.$$

where

$$\Sigma_L = X(\lambda_2 L + \lambda_R I)^{-1} X^\top + I$$

Wald Test

For treatment groups $a=1,\ldots,A$, we seek to test $|\hat{\beta}_{g,1}^{u\top},\ldots, \hat{\beta}_{g,A}^{u\top}|^{\top}=\mathbf{0}.$

We apply a Wald test with H_0 : $\beta_g = \mathbf{0}$; H_A : $\beta_g \neq \mathbf{0} \quad \forall g$.

Our covariance matrix is block diagonal, with one block for each treatment group *a*:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \hat{\sigma}_1^2 Q_1/n_1^* & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & \hat{\sigma}_A^2 Q_A/n_A^* \end{bmatrix},$$

where $Q_a=M_a\hat{\Sigma}_aM_a$, and M_a is our relaxed inverse of $\hat{\Sigma}_a$.

Debiasing Algorithm

Algorithm 2 PROLONG Debiasing

Input: Vector $y \in \mathbb{R}^{n(T-1)}$, matrix $X \in \mathbb{R}^{n(T-1) \times pT(T-1)/2}$, PROLONG estimator $\hat{\beta}^{n^*}$.

Output: Unbiased estimator $\hat{\beta}^u$, covariance matrix Q.

procedure PROLONG DEBIASING

$$\hat{\Sigma} = \frac{X^{\top}X}{n}$$

$$M = \text{RELAXED INVERSE}(\hat{\Sigma})$$

$$\hat{\beta}^{u} = \hat{\beta}^{n^{*}} + \frac{MX^{\top}(Y - X\hat{\beta}^{n^{*}})}{n^{*}}$$

$$Q = M\Sigma M$$

end procedure=0

Inference

Algorithm 3 PROLONG Inference

Input: Matrices $Y_a \in \mathbb{R}^{n_a \times T}$, tensors $\mathcal{X}_a \in \mathbb{R}^{n_a \times p \times T}$ for $a=1,\ldots,A$, FDR threshold α .

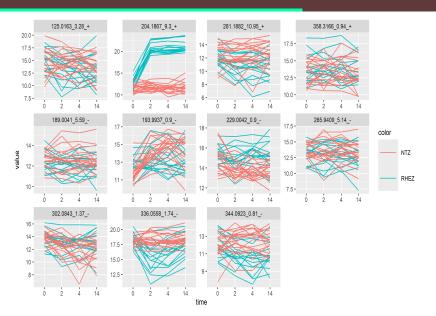
procedure PROLONG INFERENCE

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{for } a=1,\ldots,A \text{ do} \\ &X_a = \text{GetDeltaX}(\mathcal{X}_a) & \triangleright X_a \in \mathbb{R}^{n_a(T-1)\times pT(T-1)/2} \\ &y_a = \text{GetDeltaY}(Y_a) & \triangleright y_a \in \mathbb{R}^{n_a(T-1)} \\ &\hat{\beta}_a^{n^*} = \text{PROLONG}(y_a,X_a) & \triangleright n_a^* = n_a(T-1) \\ &(\hat{\beta}_a^u,Q_a) = \text{PROLONG DEBIASING}(Y_a,X_a,\hat{\beta}_a^{n_a^*}) \\ &\hat{\sigma}_a^2 = \hat{\sigma}_{aMLE}^2 \end{aligned}$$

end for

 $\forall g$ Wald test with FDR correction at specified α end procedure

Inference Procedure Selected Variable Trajectories



Software

- The sparse group lasso update, debiasing step, and inference step will be added to R package 'prolong' into a second main function
- All tuning parameters will be selected automatically via MLE or cross-validation with the exception of an optional FDR threshold

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Section 4 - Binary Outcome

- First-differencing longitudinal omics data and incorporating observed covariate dependence via weighted graph Laplacian
- PROLONG Penalized regression on outcome-guided longitudinal omics data with network and group constraints
- Uncertainty quantification in a network-constrained sparse group lasso model for outcome-guided high-dimensional omics data with multiple treatment groups
- 4. Penalized logistic regression on binary clinical outcomes with potential covariate-related misclassification, with application to longitudinal omics data

- We have some latent binary Y, but can only measure some Y* that may have some misclassification dependent on variables Z.
- For cross-sectional demographic variables, we want to obtain accurate $\hat{\beta}$'s and uncertainty quantification.
- For large sets of longitudinal omics variables, we want to perform variable selection.
- Use information from the observed correlation and adjust for any covariate-related misclassification.

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Model for Latent Y

We are interested in the relationship between some cross-sectional, binary Y and one or more variables X.

We can write our conditional probabilities of Y taking value 1 as

$$P(Y_i = 1 \mid X_i; \beta) = \pi_{i1} = \frac{\exp\{\beta_{1,0} + \beta_{1,X}X_i\}}{1 + \exp\{\beta_{1,0} + \beta_{1,X}X_i\}}$$

We use value 2 as our reference category instead of 0 for ease of indexing.

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Structure of X

We focus our application to two general types of X

- Cross-sectional no transformations applied
- Longitudinal omics we recommend first-differencing, but do not strictly require doing so

$$\begin{bmatrix} \tilde{X}_{11}^{[j]} & \cdots & \tilde{X}_{1T}^{[j]} \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ \tilde{X}_{n1}^{[j]} & \cdots & \tilde{X}_{nT}^{[j]} \end{bmatrix}_{n \times T} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \Delta \tilde{X}_{11}^{[j]} & \cdots & \Delta \tilde{X}_{1(T-1)}^{[j]} \\ & \vdots & & \vdots \\ \Delta \tilde{X}_{n1}^{[j]} & \cdots & \Delta \tilde{X}_{n(T-1)}^{[j]} \end{bmatrix}_{n \times (T-1)}$$

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Misclassification Mechanism

Instead of directly observing Y we observe Y^* , which also takes value 1 or 2, that is a potentially misclassified version of Y. We can write Y^* , conditional on Y, as

$$P(Y_i^* = k | Y_i = I, Z_i; \gamma) = \pi_{ikl}^* = \frac{\exp{\{\gamma_{kj0} + \gamma_{klZ} Z_i\}}}{1 + \exp{\{\gamma_{kl0} + \gamma_{klZ} Z_i\}}},$$

where Z is a matrix of covariates that may be related to the misclassification.

Complete Data Log-Likelihood

We can estimate (β, γ) via observed log-likelihood

$$\ell_{\text{obs}}(\beta, \gamma; X, Z) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{k=1}^{2} y_{ik}^* \log \left\{ \sum_{j=1}^{2} \underbrace{\pi_{ikl}^* \pi_{il}}_{\gamma} \right\}.$$

However, jointly maxing β, γ is numerically challenging, so we use the complete log-likelihood with the latent Y, separating the π^* and π components

$$\ell_{\text{complete}}(\beta, \gamma; X, Z) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{l=1}^{2} y_{il} \log \left\{ \underbrace{\pi_{il}}_{\beta} \right\} + \sum_{l=1}^{2} \sum_{k=1}^{2} y_{il} y_{ik}^{*} \log \left\{ \underbrace{\pi_{ikl}^{*}}_{\gamma} \right\} \right].$$

Network Penalized Log-Likelihood

To incorporate the observed dependence from the covariates in X, we again use penalty $\lambda \beta^T L \beta$. We modify the complete data log-likelihood as follows:

$$\begin{split} &\ell_{\mathsf{penalized}}(\beta, \gamma, \lambda, X, Z) \\ &= \ell_{\mathsf{complete}}(\beta, \gamma; X, Z) - \lambda \beta^{\top} L \beta \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{l=1}^{2} y_{il} \log \left\{ \underbrace{\pi_{il}}_{\beta} \right\} + \sum_{l=1}^{2} \sum_{k=1}^{2} y_{il} y_{ik}^{*} \log \left\{ \underbrace{\pi_{ikl}^{*}}_{\gamma} \right\} \right] - \lambda \beta^{\top} L \beta \end{split}$$

We use this log-likelihood as the starting point for the penalized EM algorithm.

In the expectation (E) step, we replace the latent y_{il} with our "best guess" of the probability that $y_{il} = 1$, w_{il}

$$w_{il} = P(Y_i = I | Y_i^*, X, Z) = \sum_{k=1}^{2} \frac{y_{ik}^* \pi_{kl}^* \pi_{il}}{\sum_{\ell=1}^{2} \pi_{ik\ell}^* \pi_{i\ell}}$$

In the maximization (M) step, we separate our expected log-likelihood into functions of β , γ_{k1} , and γ_{k2}

$$Q = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{l=1}^{2} w_{il} \log \left\{ \frac{\pi_{il}}{\beta} \right\} + \sum_{l=1}^{2} \sum_{k=1}^{2} w_{il} y_{ik}^* \log \left\{ \frac{\pi_{ikl}^*}{\gamma} \right\} \right]$$

$$\Rightarrow Q_{\beta}^{L} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{l=1}^{2} w_{il} \log \left\{ \frac{\pi_{il}}{\beta} \right\} \right] - \lambda \beta^{\top} L \beta,$$

$$Q_{\gamma_{k1}} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{k=1}^{2} w_{i1} y_{ik}^* \log \left\{ \frac{\pi_{ik1}^*}{\beta} \right\} \right] \quad \text{(sensitivity component)},$$

$$Q_{\gamma_{k2}} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{k=1}^{2} w_{i2} y_{ik}^* \log \left\{ \frac{\pi_{ik2}^*}{\gamma} \right\} \right]$$
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We fit the Q_{γ} components via weighted logistic regression where the outcome is Y^* . We can rewrite Q_{β}^L as

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$$\pi_{il}^{L} = \frac{\exp \{ \beta_{l0} + \beta_{lX} X^{L} \}}{1 + \exp \{ \beta_{j0} + \beta_{lX} X^{L} \}}$$

$$L = SS^{\top}$$

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Grouping Effect

Theorem (Grouping Effect) Given data (Y,X) and fixed scalar λ , let $\hat{\beta}(\lambda)$ be the estimator obtained via the proposed EM algorithm. Suppose $\hat{\beta}_i\hat{\beta}_j > 0$ and the two vertices i and j are only linked to each other on the network, $d_i = d_j = w(i,j)$. Define

$$D_{\lambda}(i,j) = \frac{1}{||Y||_{1}} \left| \hat{\beta}_{i}(\lambda) - \hat{\beta}_{j}(\lambda) \right|.$$

then

$$D_{\lambda}(i,j) \leq \frac{\sqrt{2(1-\rho)}}{2\lambda}.$$

Data Application: MEPS

Data used in original unpenalized method 'COMBO':

- Outcome is self-reported history of MI
- Variables of interest are Age along with Smoking and Exercise Status
- Covariates for Misclassification are Age and Sex

Correlation Table:

| | Smoking | Exercise | Age |
|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| Smoking | 1.0000 | 0.0284 | -0.0593 |
| Exercise | 0.0284 | 1.0000 | 0.0109 |
| Age | -0.0593 | 0.0109 | 1.0000 |

Sanity Checking with Low Correlation Data

| Parameter | Estimates | SE | Estimates | SE |
|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Intercept | -4.3741 | 0.0655 | -4.3874 | 0.0670 |
| Smoking | 1.5437 | 0.1066 | 1.5496 | 0.1039 |
| Exercise | 0.3034 | 0.1257 | 0.3066 | 0.1262 |
| Age | 0.0939 | 0.0097 | 0.0938 | 0.0091 |
| gamma11 | 2.9692 | 0.0997 | 2.9973 | 0.0988 |
| gamma21 | -1.7656 | 0.0363 | -1.7759 | 0.0363 |
| gamma31 | -0.1984 | 0.0047 | -0.1995 | 0.0046 |
| gamma12 | -3.5796 | 0.1124 | -3.5749 | 0.1128 |
| gamma22 | -0.8183 | 0.1084 | -0.8184 | 0.1083 |
| gamma32 | 0.0835 | 0.0050 | 0.0833 | 0.0050 |

Group Lasso Modification

In some applications, we may prioritize variable selection over unbiased dense coefficient estimation, e.g. biomarker discovery with large p omic data. We can supplement our network penalty with a group lasso penalty, replacing Q_{β}^{L} with

$$Q_{\beta}^{g} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \left[\sum_{l=1}^{2} w_{il}^{L} \log \left\{ \pi_{il}^{L} \right\} \right] - \lambda_{g} \sum_{k=1}^{K} p_{k} \beta^{(k)},$$

where p_k is the group size. We maximize Q_{β}^g using group lasso, selecting λ_g via cross-validation after we select λ and augment w_{il}^L, X^L .

Future Data Work

This project is particularly motivated by very similar data to the first two, but with binary TB Recurrence as our outcome.

- Consider the same data structure, but now our outcome indicates whether the TB comes back in the next few years after treatment
- This indicator may be misclassified, as some patients can be clinically, but not microbiologically, confirmed
- Can we identify biomarkers for later recurrence of TB?

Another motivating data application is finding early metabolomic biomarkers for drug-resistant TB. Drug resistance in TB can lead to delays in adequate treatment and result in worse disease progression - identifying drug-resistance early is critical.

Acknowledgements

My Committee



My Family



Thank You!