

Derandomizing Knockoffs

— *Stable Variable Selection with Error Control*

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Collaborators



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Replication crisis

- ▶ Bayer Healthcare could replicate only 25% of 67 pre-clinical experiments [Prinz et al., 2011]
- ▶ Amgen could only confirm the findings in 6 out of 53 landmark cancer papers [Begley & Ellis, 2012]
- ▶ Social science papers in Science and Nature (2010 - 2015): only 13 out of 21 are consistent



<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-39054778>

Stability

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Reproducibility is imperative for any scientific discovery. More often than not, modern scientific findings rely on statistical analysis of high-dimensional data. At a minimum, reproducibility manifests itself in stability of statistical results relative to “reasonable” perturbations to data and to the model used. Jackknife, bootstrap, and cross-validation are based on perturbations to data, while robust statistics methods deal with perturbations to models.

Variable selection

Explanatory Variables

Response

(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_p) \longrightarrow

Y

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Detect the **important variables** that explain the response.

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Stable and consistent selection

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- ▶ from perturbed datasets (error control);

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- ▶ from perturbed datasets (error control);
- ▶ from different runs of one procedure.

Variable selection

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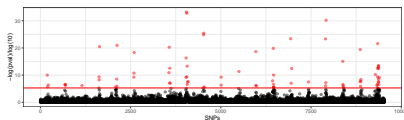
Response

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GWAS

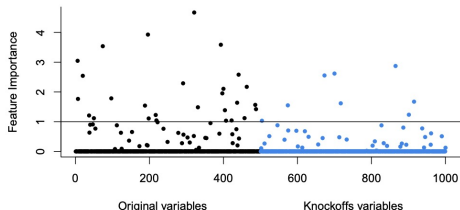
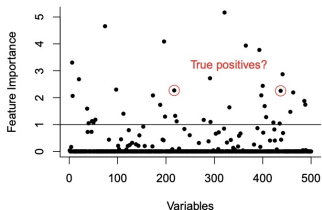


MRI

Image from K. Pauly, G. Gold, RAD 220

Model-X knockoffs framework

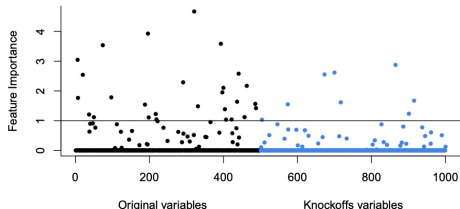
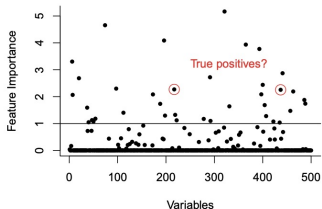
— [Barber and Candès, 2015; Candès et al., 2018]



- ▶ Generate **random** “fake” copies.
- ▶ Controls the FDR.
- ▶ Another version [Janson and Su, 2016] controls the PFER and k -FWER.

Model-X knockoffs framework

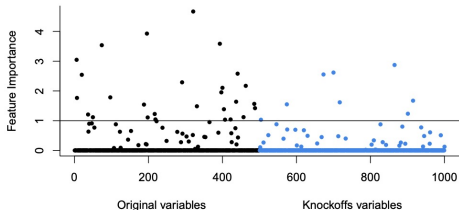
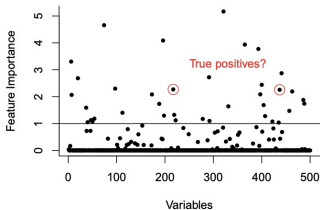
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different runs \Rightarrow different selection sets

Model-X knockoffs framework

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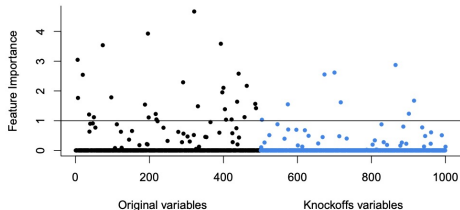
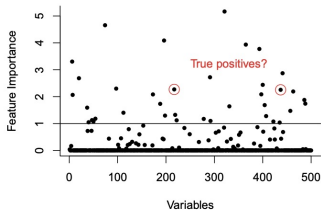
[Candès et al., 2018]

different runs \Rightarrow different selection sets

Selection frequency	Cluster Representative (Cluster Size)	Chrom.	Position Range (Mb)	Confirmed in Franke et al. (2010)?	Selected in WTCCC (2007)?
100%	rs11805303 (16)	1	67.31-67.46	Yes	Yes
100%	rs11299026 (2)	1	67.31-67.42	Yes	Yes
100%	rs6431654 (20)	2	233.94-234.11	Yes	Yes
100%	rs6601764 (1)	10	3.85-3.85	No	No
100%	rs7095491 (18)	10	101.26-101.32	Yes	Yes
90%	rs6688532 (33)	1	169.4-169.65	Yes	No
90%	rs17234657 (1)	5	40.44-40.44	Yes	Yes
90%	rs3135503 (16)	16	49.28-49.36	Yes	Yes
80%	rs9783122 (234)	10	106.43-107.61	No	No
80%	rs11627513 (7)	14	96.61-96.63	No	No
60%	rs4437159 (4)	3	84.8-84.81	No	No

Model-X knockoffs framework

— [Barber and Candès, 2015; Candès et al., 2018]



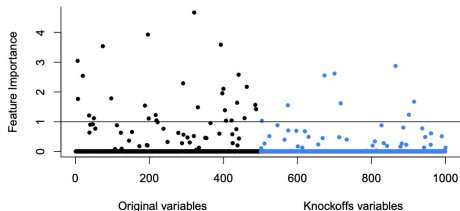
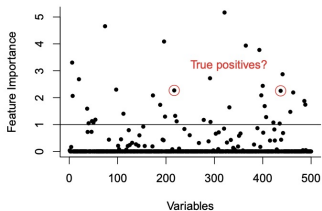
[Sesia, Sabatti and Candès, 2019]

different runs \Rightarrow different selection sets

Selection frequency	SNP (cluster size)	Chr.	Position range (Mb)	Confirmed in Franke et al. [57]	Found in WTCCC [49]	Found in Candès et al [8]	Marginal p-value
100%	rs11209026 (2)	1	67.31–67.42	rs11209026	rs11805303	rs11805303	$2.57 \cdot 10^{-24}$
99%	rs6431654 (20)	2	233.94–234.11	rs3792109	rs10210302	rs10210302	$1.44 \cdot 10^{-14}$
98%	rs6688532 (33)	1	169.4–169.65	rs17234657	rs12037606	rs12037606	$3.48 \cdot 10^{-8}$
97%	rs17234657 (1)	5	40.44–40.44	rs11742570	rs17234657	rs17234657	$8.06 \cdot 10^{-13}$
95%	rs11805303 (16)	1	67.31–67.46	rs11209026	rs11805303	rs11805303	$5.22 \cdot 10^{-14}$
91%	rs7096491 (18)	10	101.26–101.32	rs4409764	rs10883365	rs10883365	$2.81 \cdot 10^{-7}$
91%	rs135503 (16)	16	49.28–49.36	rs2076756	rs17221417	rs17221417	$9.55 \cdot 10^{-11}$
81%	rs7768538 (1145)	6	25.19–32.91	rs1799664	rs9469230	rs9469230	$5.83 \cdot 10^{-6}$
80%	rs6601764 (1)	10	3.85–3.85	rs6601764	rs6601764	rs6601764	$1.83 \cdot 10^{-8}$
75%	rs7655059 (5)	4	89.5–89.53	rs2076756	rs17221417	rs17221417	$2.14 \cdot 10^{-7}$
73%	rs6500315 (4)	16	49.03–49.07	rs2076756	rs17221417	rs17221417	$5.73 \cdot 10^{-7}$
72%	rs2738758 (5)	20	61.71–61.82	rs4809330	rs11742570	rs11742570	$2.64 \cdot 10^{-6}$
70%	rs7726744 (46)	5	40.35–40.71	rs11742570	rs17234657	rs17234657	$7.34 \cdot 10^{-13}$
68%	rs11627513 (7)	14	96.61–96.63	rs7714584	rs1000113	rs1000113	$6.70 \cdot 10^{-6}$
66%	rs4246045 (46)	5	150.07–150.41	rs7714584	rs1000113	rs1000113	$2.00 \cdot 10^{-6}$

Model-X knockoffs framework

— [Barber and Candès, 2015; Candès et al., 2018]



Stability?

different runs \Rightarrow different selection sets



Stability selection

Stability selection

[N Meinshausen, P Bühlmann](#) - *Journal of the Royal Statistical ...*, 2010 - Wiley Online Library

Estimation of structure, such as in variable selection, graphical modelling or cluster analysis, is notoriously difficult, especially for high dimensional data. We introduce stability selection. It is based on subsampling in combination with (high dimensional) selection algorithms. As ...

☆  Cited by 2038 [Related articles](#) [All 27 versions](#) [Web of Science: 992](#) 

Variable selection with error control: another look at stability selection

[RD Shah, RJ Samworth](#) - ... of the Royal Statistical Society: Series ..., 2013 - Wiley Online Library

Stability selection was recently introduced by Meinshausen and Bühlmann as a very general technique designed to improve the performance of a variable **selection** algorithm. It is based on aggregating the results of applying a **selection** procedure to subsamples of the data. We ...

☆  Cited by 246 [Related articles](#) [All 20 versions](#) [Web of Science: 110](#) 

Stability selection (original form)

1. Start with the full dataset $Z_{\text{full}} = Z_1, \dots, Z_n$.

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$$\Pi_j = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{m=1}^M \mathbb{1}\{j \in \widehat{S}^m\}.$$

4. Given a threshold $\eta > 0$, return the final selection set

$$\widehat{S} = \{j \in [p] : \Pi_j \geq \eta\}.$$

**stability
selection**

knockoffs

This work: derandomizing knockoffs

stability
selection

knockoffs

This work: derandomizing knockoffs

stability, error guarantee and enhanced power

A brief review of the knockoffs framework

Variable selection: mathematical formulation

- ▶ A variable X_j defined as *null* if the following hypothesis is true:

$$\mathcal{H}_j : X_j \perp\!\!\!\perp Y \mid X_{-j}.$$

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 - *False Discovery Rate*

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- *k family-wise error rate*

$$k\text{-FWER} \triangleq \mathbb{P}(V \geq k).$$

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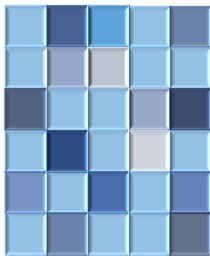
- ▶ **Goal:** detect as many **non-null variables** as possible while **controlling the error** below level α .

Construct knockoffs

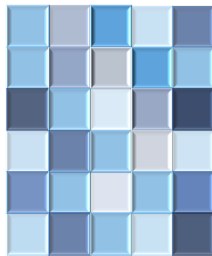
response Y



feature matrix X



knockoff copy \tilde{X}



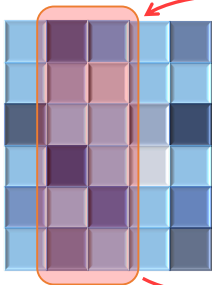
► $\tilde{X} \perp\!\!\!\perp Y \mid X$

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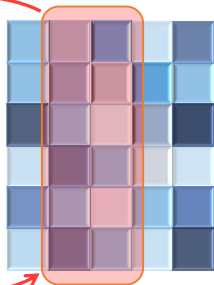
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subset S

▶ $\tilde{X} \perp\!\!\!\perp Y \mid X$

▶ for any subset $S \subset \{1, 2, \dots, p\}$: distribution $(X, \tilde{X})_{\text{swap}(S)} \stackrel{d}{=} (X, \tilde{X})$

A simple example

Suppose $X \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \Sigma)$, how to construct \tilde{X} ?

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$$(X, \tilde{X}) \sim \mathcal{N}(0, G) \quad \text{where} \quad G = \begin{bmatrix} \Sigma & \Sigma - \text{diag}(s) \\ \Sigma - \text{diag}(s) & \Sigma \end{bmatrix}.$$

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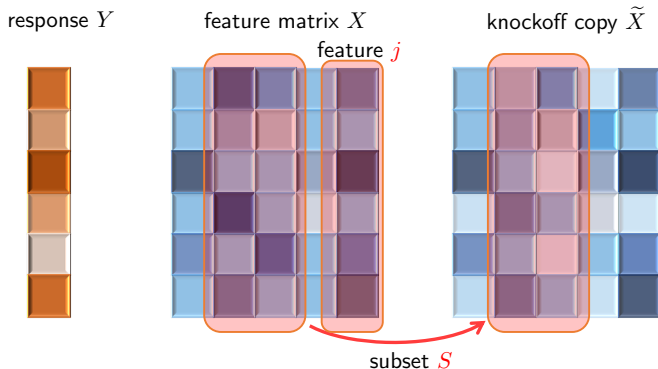
$$\tilde{X} \mid X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, V)$$

where

$$\mu = X - X\Sigma^{-1}\text{diag}(s)$$

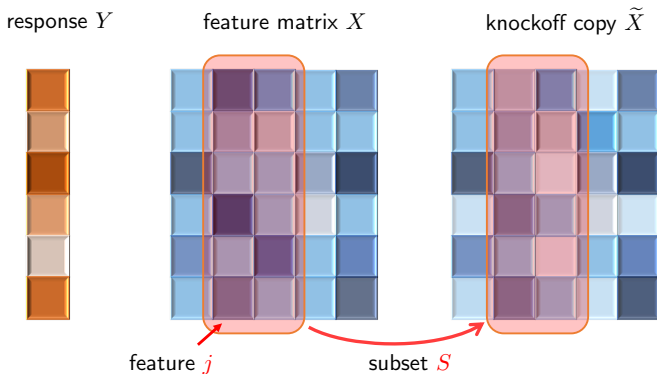
$$V = 2\text{diag}(s) - \text{diag}(s)\Sigma^{-1}\text{diag}(s)$$

Feature statistics $w_j([X, \tilde{X}], y)$



$$w_j([X, \tilde{X}]_{\text{swap}(S)}, y) = w_j([X, \tilde{X}], y) \quad j \notin S$$

Feature statistics $w_j([X, \tilde{X}], y)$



$$w_j([X, \tilde{X}]_{\text{swap}(S)}, y) = -w_j([X, \tilde{X}], y) \quad j \in S$$

A simple example: Lasso coefficient difference

Run Lasso

$$\min_{\beta \in \mathbb{R}^{2p}} \frac{1}{2} \|y - [X, \tilde{X}]\beta\|_2^2 + \lambda \|\beta\|_1$$

Lasso coefficient difference statistics (LCD):

$$W_j = |\hat{\beta}_j(\lambda)| - |\hat{\beta}_{j+p}(\lambda)|$$

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Key properties

- ▶ null W_j 's are symmetrically distributed.
- ▶ conditional on $|W_j|$, signs of null W_j 's are i.i.d. coin flips.

Define selection set

Model-X v -knockoffs [Janson and Su, 2016]

- ▶ Order the features according to the magnitudes of W_j 's:

$$|W_{\pi_1}| \geq |W_{\pi_2}| \geq \dots |W_{\pi_p}|.$$

- ▶ Define

$$T := \inf_{k \in [p]} \left\{ \sum_{j=1}^k \mathbf{1}_{\{W_{\pi_j} < 0\}} \geq v \right\}.$$

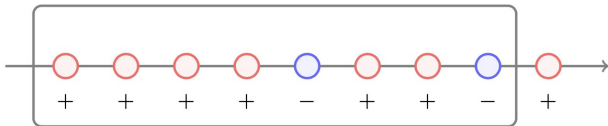
- ▶ Reject π_j such that $j \leq T$ and $W_{\pi_j} > 0$.

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- ▶ If $v = 2$, stop the procedure the first time seeing 2 “-”s.



Property

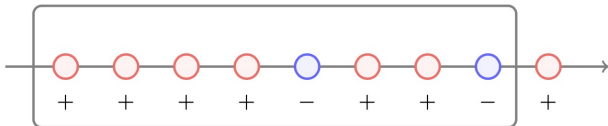
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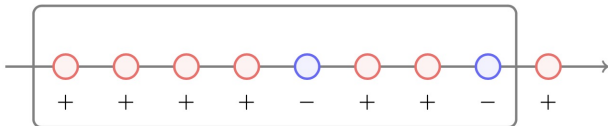
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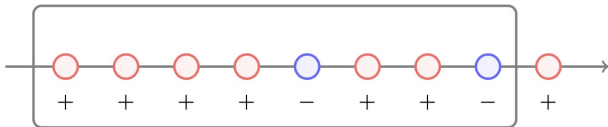
- ▶ $Z \sim NB(m, q)$ negative binomial random variable

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Lemma (Janson and Su, 2016)

The number of false discoveries V is stochastically dominated by $NB(v, 1/2)$.

- ▶ $\mathbb{E}[V] \leq v$.

Knockoffs framework (summary)

Three-step procedure:

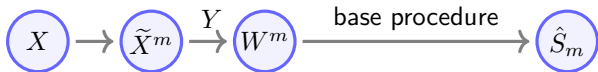
- ▶ Construct knockoff feature matrix $\tilde{X} \in^{n \times p}$.
- ▶ Define feature statistics $w_j([X, \tilde{X}, y])$ for each $j \in \{1, 2, \dots, 2p\}$.
- ▶ Decide selection set \hat{S} (v -knockoffs).

Derandomizing knockoffs

- ▶ Given (X, Y) , generate $m = 1, \dots, M$ realizations of knockoffs.

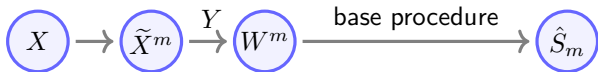
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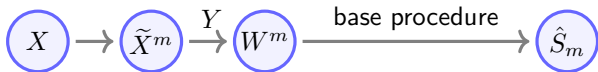


- ▶ For each feature j , define selection probability

$$\Pi_j := \frac{1}{M} \sum_{m=1}^M \mathbb{1}\{j \in \hat{S}_m\}.$$

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$$\Pi_j := \frac{1}{M} \sum_{m=1}^M \mathbb{1}\{j \in \hat{S}_m\}.$$

- ▶ For a threshold η , the final selection set S is

$$\hat{S} := \{j \in [p] : \Pi_j \geq \eta\}.$$

Theoretical guarantees

Theorem (R., Wei and Candès ('20))

Suppose the the base procedure is the v -knockoffs. If for every $j \in \mathcal{H}_0$,

$$\mathbb{P}(\Pi_j \geq \eta) \leq \gamma \mathbb{E}[\Pi_j], \quad (1)$$

then the PFER can be controlled as

$$\mathbb{E}[V] \leq \gamma v.$$

- ▶ Per family error rate (PFER): $\mathbb{E}[V]$ (V number of false discoveries)

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- ▶ Per family error rate (PFER): $\mathbb{E}[V]$ (V number of false discoveries)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[V] &= \mathbb{E} \left[\sum_{j \in \mathcal{H}_0} \mathbb{1}\{\Pi_j \geq \eta\} \right] = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{H}_0} \mathbb{P}(\Pi_j \geq \eta) \\ &\leq \sum_{j \in \mathcal{H}_0} \gamma \mathbb{E}[\Pi_j] = \gamma \mathbb{E}[V_1] \leq \gamma v \end{aligned} \quad 20$$

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Theorem (R., Wei and Candès ('20))

Suppose the the base procedure is the v -knockoffs. If for every $j \in \mathcal{H}_0$,

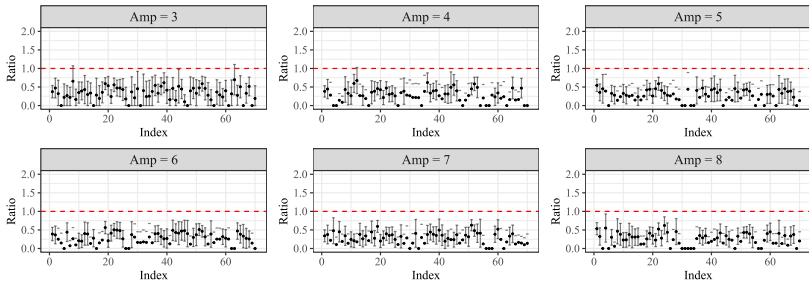
$$\mathbb{P}(\Pi_j \geq \eta) \leq \gamma \mathbb{E}[\Pi_j], \quad (1)$$

then the PFER can be controlled as

$$\mathbb{E}[V] \leq \gamma v.$$

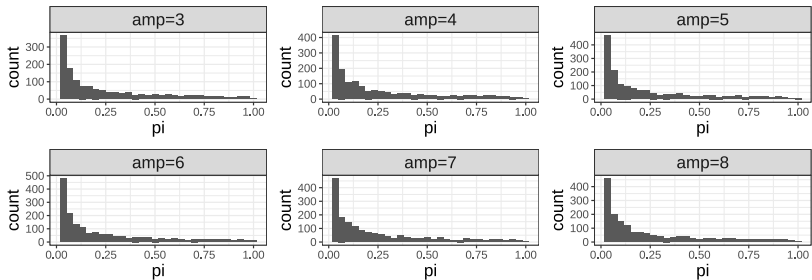
- ▶ Per family error rate (PFER): $\mathbb{E}[V]$ (V number of false discoveries)
- ▶ With $\eta = 1/2$, Markov's inequality gives $\gamma = 2$

Plotting the ratio for $\eta = 1/2$



Realized ratio of $\mathbb{P}(\Pi_j \geq 1/2)/\mathbb{E}[\Pi_j]$ with the 95% confidence interval, estimated from 1,000 repetitions.

How to tighten γ ? An observation...



Pooled histogram of all nonzero null Π_j 's.

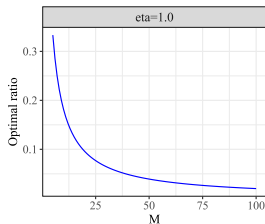
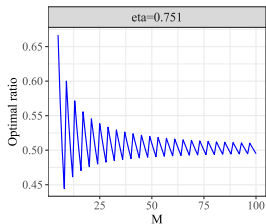
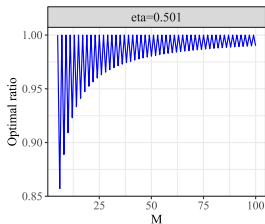
A sharper guarantee

- ▶ If the pmf of Π_j is monotonically non-increasing for each $j \in \mathcal{H}_0$

$$\gamma = \max \sum_{m \geq M\eta} y_m,$$

$$s.t. \quad y_m \geq 0, \quad y_{m-1} \geq y_m, \quad m \in [M],$$

$$\sum_{m=0}^M y_m \cdot \frac{m}{M} = 1.$$



Theoretical guarantees

- ▶ k family-wise error rate (k -FWER): $\mathbb{P}(V \geq k)$.
- ▶ $Z \sim \text{NB}(m, q)$ negative binomial random variable.

Theorem (R., Wei and Candès (20'))

Suppose condition (1) holds with γ . For $k \geq 2$, suppose that

$$\sum_{u=1}^{k-1} \mathbb{P}(V \in [k-u, k)) \geq \sum_{u=1}^k \mathbb{P}(V \in [k, k+u)),$$

then the k -FWER can be controlled as

$$\mathbb{P}(V \geq k) \leq \frac{\gamma v}{2k}.$$

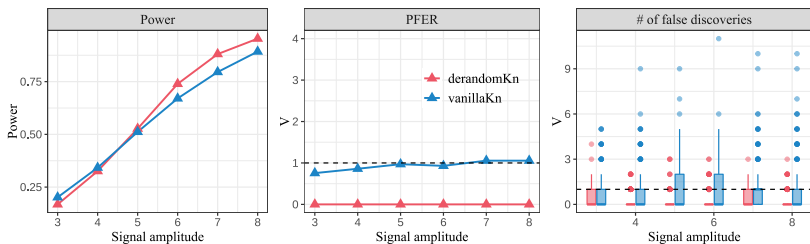
Theoretical guarantees (extensions)

- ▶ Under similar partial sum conditions, we can derive similar bounds using other types of inequality.

$$\mathbb{P}(V \geq k) \leq \min \left\{ \frac{v}{2k}, \frac{\mathbb{E}[(2Z)^\alpha]}{2k^\alpha}, \frac{\mathbb{E}[\exp(\lambda(2Z))]}{2 \exp(\lambda k)} \right\}$$

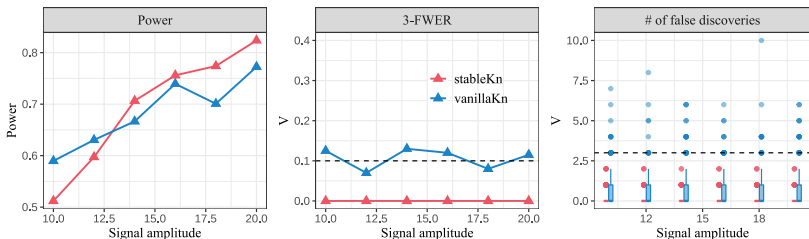
- ▶ The minimum is also taken over $\alpha \in [k - 1], \lambda \in (0, 1)$.

Simulation studies: PFER control



Settings: $n = 200$, $p = 100$, $X \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \Sigma)$ with $\Sigma_{ij} = 0.6^{|i-j|}$, and $Y | X \sim$ a linear model with 30 non-zero coefficients. Each nonzero coefficient β_j takes value A/\sqrt{n} where A ranges in $\{3, 4, \dots, 8\}$ and the sign is determined by i.i.d. coin flips. The locations of the non-zero signal are randomly chosen from $[p]$. We show the averaged results over 200 trials.

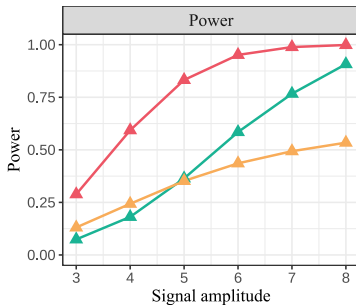
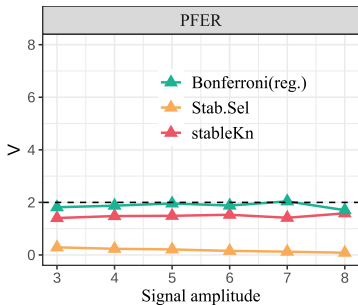
Simulation studies: k -FWER control



Settings: $n = 300$ and $p = 50$, $X \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \Sigma)$ with $\Sigma_{ij} = 0.1^{|i-j|}$. $Y | X \sim$ logistic model with 20 non-zero entries in β . These nonzero entries take values A/\sqrt{n} where A ranges in $\{10, 12, \dots, 20\}$ and the sign is determined by i.i.d. coin flips. Parameters $\eta = 0.5$ and $v = 0.6$.

Simulation studies: more comparisons

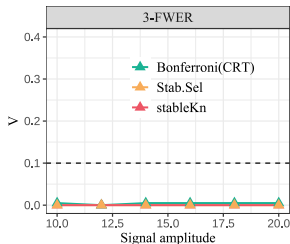
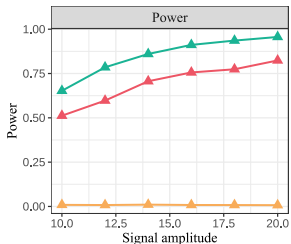
Compared to other methods: PFER



Settings: $n = 2000$, $p = 1000$ and $\Sigma_{ij} = 0.5^{|i-j|}$. $Y | X \sim$ a linear model with 60 non-zero coefficients. Target PFER level is $v = 2$.

Simulation studies: more comparisons

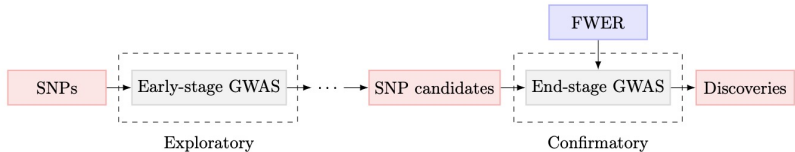
Compared to other methods: k-FWER



Settings: $n = 300$ and $p = 50$, $X \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \Sigma)$ with $\Sigma_{ij} = 0.1^{|i-j|}$. $Y | X \sim$ logistic model with 20 non-zero entries in β . These nonzero entries take values A/\sqrt{n} where A ranges in $\{10, 12, \dots, 20\}$ and the sign is determined by i.i.d. coin flips. Parameters $\eta = 0.5$ and $v = 0.6$.

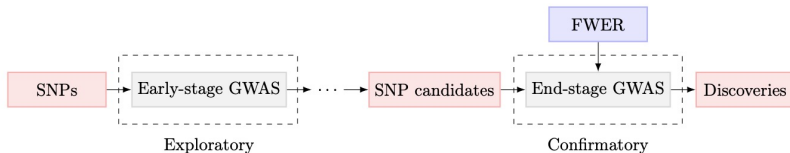
Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS)

A typical workflow of multi-stage GWAS:



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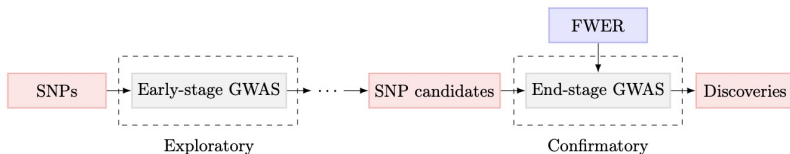


Potential problem:

- ▶ Suppose a subset of candidate SNPs \mathcal{C} is selected in stage one.
- ▶ Conduct data analysis on Y and $X_{\mathcal{C}}$.
- ▶ Answering question about $Y | X_{\mathcal{C}}$ instead of $Y | X$?

Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS)

A typical workflow of multi-stage GWAS:



Conditional knockoffs:

- ▶ suppose a subset of candidate SNPs \mathcal{C} is selected in stage one
- ▶ construct a conditional knockoff copy *only* for $X_{\mathcal{C}}$

$$(X_{\mathcal{C}}, \tilde{X}_{\mathcal{C}})_{\text{swap}(g)} \mid X_{-\mathcal{C}} \stackrel{d}{=} (X_{\mathcal{C}}, \tilde{X}_{\mathcal{C}}) \mid X_{-\mathcal{C}}$$

A real data example

Procedures

- ▶ **Data:** The UK biobank dataset 161k unrelated British male individuals and their disease status (prostate cancer)

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Procedures

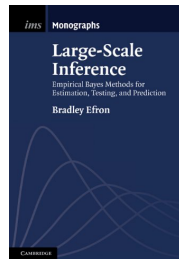
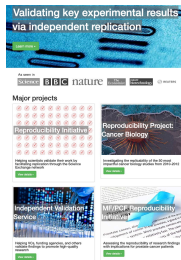
- ▶ **Data:** The UK biobank dataset 161k unrelated British male individuals and their disease status (prostate cancer)
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- ▶ Partition the SNPs into clusters at a level of resolution 2% and the resulting average length of the clusters is 0.226 Mb.
- ▶ Apply derandomized knockoffs with target FWER level 0.1 (ten runs of conditional group HMM knockoffs)

Results

Lead SNP	Chromosome	Position range (Mb)	Size	Confirmed by?
rs12621278	2	173.28-173.58	68	[Wang et al. (2015)]
rs1512268	8	23.39-23.55	48	[Wang et al. (2015)]
rs1016343	8	128.07-128.24	45	[Hui et al. (2014)]
rs6983267	8	128.40-128.47	37	[Wang et al. (2015)]
rs7121039	11	2.18-2.31	40	[Wang et al. (2015)]*
rs10896449	11	68.80-69.02	62	[Wang et al. (2015)]
rs7501939	17	36.05-36.18	55	[Elliott et al. (2010)]
rs1859962	17	69.07-69.24	40	[Wang et al. (2015)]

Discoveries at 2% resolution and the target FWER level set to 0.1 and $\eta = 1$ and $M = 10$.

Concluding remarks



Future directions

- ▶ Adapt to other base procedures.
- ▶ Characterize the power.
- ▶ False discovery rate or false discovery exceedence.

— “Derandomizing Knockoffs,” Zhimei Ren, Yuting Wei, and Emmanuel Candès, in preparation, 2020