

# CMPT 733

# Hypothesis Testing

Instructor                      Zhengjie Miao

Course website                <https://coursys.sfu.ca/2025sp-cmpt-733-gl/pages/>

Based on the slides by Jiannan Wang

# Why Hypothesis Testing?

We want to make a claim from our data

But, data is just a sample

How to prove our claim in this situation?

Using Hypothesis Testing

Example:

- Claim: A data scientist earns more money than a data engineer
- Data: A sample of 50 data scientists and 50 data engineers

- Result:  
100k vs. 70k



that our claim is correct?

# More examples

Example:

Send out surveys to MPCS students about the program. Are the survey results significant?

Design a new MPCS course on GenAI. 20 students take the course. Is the new course helpful?

# Hypothesis Testing

## Equivalent Terms

- Hypothesis  $\equiv$  Claim
- Hypothesis Testing  $\equiv$  Claim Proving

## Key Idea

- Prove by contradiction

## Analogy

- How to prove: There exists no smallest positive rational number.
- Hint: a rational number is any number that can be expressed as the fraction  $a/b$  of two integers

# Alternative and Null Hypotheses

## Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ )

- The claim that you want to prove it's correct (e.g., the new course is helpful)
- Example  $H_a$ :  $\mu \neq \mu_0$  (two-tailed),  $\mu < \mu_0$  (left-tailed),  $\mu > \mu_0$  (right-tailed)

## Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ )

- The opposite side of  $H_a$  (e.g., if our results are due to a random chance)
- Example  $H_0$ :  $\mu = \mu_0$ ,  $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

## Possible Outcomes

- Reject  $H_0$  (a contradiction is found)  $\rightarrow$  Accept  $H_a$
- Fail to reject  $H_0$  (no contradiction is found)

# Example

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ )

- A data scientist earns **more** money than a data engineer

NULL Hypothesis ( $H_0$ )

- A data scientist earns **less (or equal)** money than a data engineer

If  $H_0$  is true, what's the probability of seeing:

- ~~Data Scientist (100 K) vs. Data Engineer (70 K)~~
- $\text{Salary}(\text{Data Scientist}) - \text{Salary}(\text{Data Engineer}) \geq 30 \text{ K}$

This is called P-value

# Make a decision based on p-value

We hope that

- p-value is as low as possible so that we can reject  $H_0$  (i.e., accept  $H_a$ )

Level of Significance (e.g.,  $\alpha = 0.01, 0.05, 0.1$ )

- How low do we want p-value to be?
- P-value  $< \alpha$ : reject null hypothesis
- P-value  $> \alpha$ : not enough evidence to reject null hypothesis
  - does not mean we can accept null hypothesis

Level of Confidence (e.g.,  $c = 1 - \alpha = 99\%$ )

- How confident are we in our decision?

# How to calculate p-value

## 1. Select Alternative Hypothesis

- Two-tailed, Right-tailed, Left-tailed

## 2. Determine Test Statistic Distribution

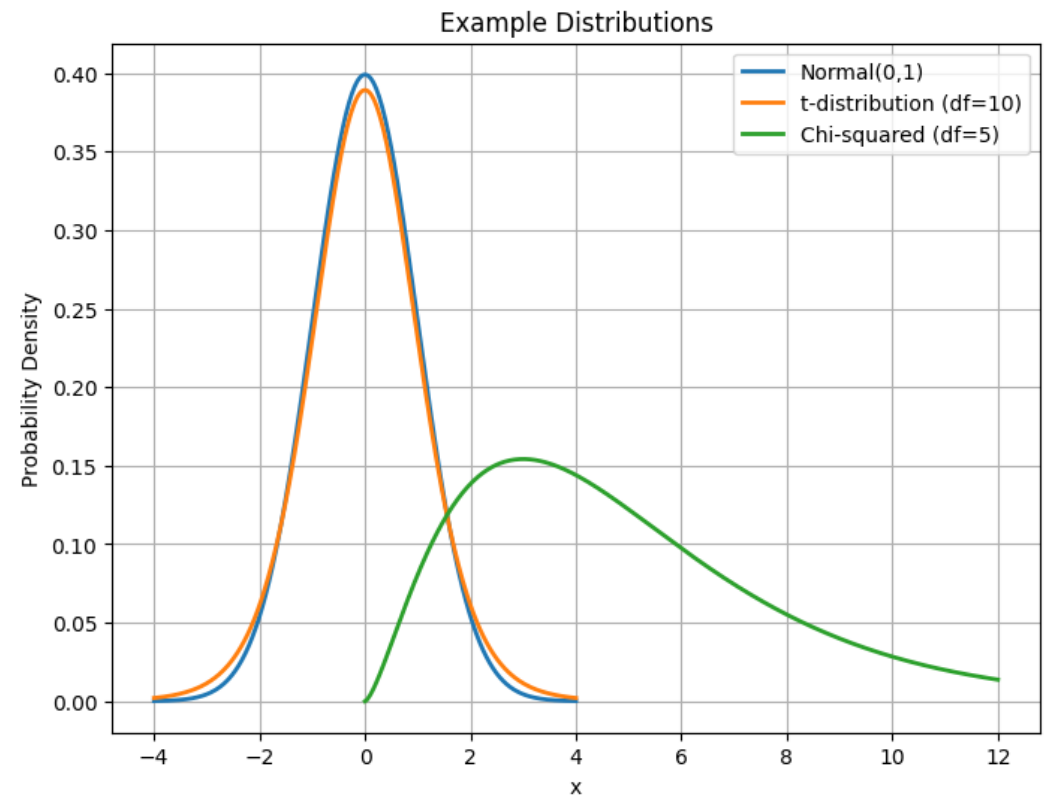
- e.g., Normal, Student's t, Chi-squared, etc.

## 3. Specify Degrees of Freedom (if applicable)

- e.g., t-distribution and Chi-squared tests

## 4. Calculate the test statistic from sample data

- Use the CDF to find the prob. of observing an extreme value under the null hypothesis
- For two-tailed tests, multiply the one-tail probability by 2





# Example

Suppose in the survey, 60% of 100 randomly sampled MPCCS alumni said CMPT 733 is helpful for their job

- Null hypothesis  $H_0$ : at most half of MPCCS students find CMPT 733 helpful
- Alternative hypothesis  $H_a$ : the majority of MPCCS students find CMPT 733 helpful
- p-value: the probability that 60% of 100 random students find CMPT 733 helpful *if* at most 50% of all students find it helpful

# Example

$p$  = probability that 60% of 100 random students respond CMPT 733 helpful

Population Mean  
(null hypothesis)

The **z-statistic** formula, using central limit theorem

Sample mean

Population  
Standard Deviation

$$z = \frac{\bar{X}_n - \mu}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}}$$

$$z \approx \frac{0.6 - 0.5}{0.5/\sqrt{100}} \approx 2.00$$

- What is the probability of drawing  $> 2.00$  from a standard normal distribution?

```
print(1-scipy.stats.norm.cdf(2.00))  
  
✓ 0.0s  
  
0.02275013194817921
```

- p-value is  $\sim 0.02$ , we reject the null hypothesis
- Strong support that majority of students find 733 helpful

# Smaller Example

$p$  = probability that 60% of **30** random students respond CMPT 733 helpful

The **z-statistic** formula, using central limit theorem

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_n - \mu}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}} \quad t \approx \frac{0.6 - 0.5}{0.5/\sqrt{30}} \approx 1.10$$

- What is the probability of drawing  $> 1.10$  from a standard normal distribution?

```
print(1-scipy.stats.norm.cdf(1.10))
```

✓ 0.0s

```
0.13566606094638267
```

- p-value is  $\sim 0.1357$ , prob under null hypothesis is  $\sim 13.57\%$
- We CANNOT reject null

# Example with unknown standard deviation

$p$  = probability that 60% of 100 random students respond CMPT 733 helpful

The **t-statistic** formula

Population Mean  
(null hypothesis)

Sample mean

Sample Standard  
Deviation

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_n - \mu}{\sigma / \sqrt{n}}$$

$$t \approx \frac{0.6 - 0.5}{0.49 / \sqrt{100}} \approx 2.04$$

- What is the probability of drawing  $> 2.04$  from a Student's t Distribution with  $n-1$  degrees of freedom?

```
print(1-scipy.stats.t.cdf(2.04, 99))
```

✓ 0.0s

```
0.022006777804037148
```

Degree of freedom  
=  $n-1$

- p-value is  $\sim 0.02$ , we reject the null hypothesis
- Strong support that majority of students find 733 helpful

# p-Hacking (Cheating on a p-Value)

## Common Mistakes

1. Collect data until the hypothesis testing is passed
2. Keep doing analysis on the same data until you find something significant

## Solution

- You should know what you're looking for ( $H_0$  and  $H_a$ ) before you start
- Decrease the level of significance (e.g.,  $\alpha/2$  for two hypothesis tests on the same data)

# Pairwise t- tests

Example: You have three treatment groups (A, B, C) and want to determine if the differences in their means are statistically significant

Pairwise Comparisons:

- Compare A vs. B
- Compare A vs. C
- Compare B vs. C

# Multiple Hypothesis Testing

- Multiple simultaneous statistical tests, each of which has a potential to produce a "discovery"
- A stated confidence level (e.g.,  $1-0.05$ ) generally applies only to each test considered individually
  - When running multiple tests simultaneously, the chance of at least one false positive increases, meaning the overall error rate is higher than 5%.
- Without adjustment, multiple tests can lead to false discoveries
  - Incorrectly identifying a statistically significant effect when there isn't one.

# Multiple Hypothesis Testing

- Example: Imagine a clinical trial where researchers evaluate the effectiveness of a new drug. Instead of testing just one outcome, they examine several outcomes simultaneously
  - e.g., Blood Pressure Cholesterol Levels, Heart Rate, Body Weight
- Each separate hypothesis test is performed to determine if the drug has a statistically significant effect at a 95% confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )
- However, because multiple tests are performed, the chance of making at least one false positive (a type I error) across all tests increases.



# Multiple Hypothesis Testing

Example: There are 20 options we are interested in as independent (predictor) features for your model. For each feature, we use a hypothesis test with level of significance 0.05

What's the probability of having one significant result just due to chance? (Recall that probability of making a type I error is  $\alpha$ )

$$1 - (1 - 0.05)^{20} = 0.64$$

# P-hacking: Pairwise t- tests

```
num_datasets, sample_size = 100, 100
samples = np.random.normal(loc=0, size=(num_datasets, sample_size))
```

```
total_pairs, total_significant = 0, 0
for i in range(num_datasets):
    for j in range(i+1, num_datasets):
        p_value = scipy.stats.ttest_ind(samples[i,:], samples[j,:])[1]
        total_pairs += 1
        if p_value < 0.05:
            total_significant += 1
print(total_significant, total_pairs)
```

✓ 3.6s

286 4950

# Useful `scipy.stats` functions

## Independent Sample Tests

Independent sample tests are typically used to assess whether multiple samples were independently drawn from the same distribution or different distributions with a shared property (e.g. equal means).

Some tests are specifically for comparing two samples.

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<code>ttest_ind_from_stats</code> (mean1, std1, nobs1, ...)	T-test for means of two independent samples from descriptive statistics.
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---

<code>poisson_means_test</code> (k1, n1, k2, n2, *[, ...])	Performs the Poisson means test, AKA the "E-test".
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<code>ttest_ind</code> (a, b, *[, axis, equal_var, ...])	Calculate the T-test for the means of <i>two independent</i> samples of scores.
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<https://docs.scipy.org/doc/scipy/reference/stats.html>

# Permutation Test

- Resampling Data: Repeatedly “permute” the labels or values in your dataset
  - E.g., if comparing two groups, shuffle the group labels
- Computing a Test Statistic: For each permutation, calculate a test statistic (e.g., the difference in means between groups)
- Estimating the p-value: compare the observed test statistic from the actual data to this permutation distribution
- When to use: does not require the assumptions of normality or equal variances

# Permutation Test

<https://youtu.be/lq9DzN6mvYA?t=8m9s>

**Sneeches:  
Stars and  
Intelligence**

Test Scores			
★		×	
84	72	81	69
57	46	74	61
63	76	56	87
99	91	69	65
		66	44
		62	69

★ mean: 73.5  
× mean: 66.9  
difference: 6.6

ROSE CITY  
**PYCON 2016**  
PORTLAND, OREGON  
MAY 28<sup>TH</sup> - JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>

2025-03-11 8:51 / 40:44 Steven Bergner, Zhengjie Miao - CMPT 733

# Hypothesis Test Using Simulation

- Generate a large number of datasets under the null hypothesis
  - E.g., drawing samples from a known distribution or resampling (as in permutation testing)
- Calculate the test statistic for observed data
- P-value is the empirical probability of seeing a test statistic as extreme as the observed statistic in the simulated datasets
- Recall Monte Carlo methods / Bootstrap
- **When to use:** no assumptions of normality or equal variances; small sample sizes

# Hypothesis Test Using Simulation

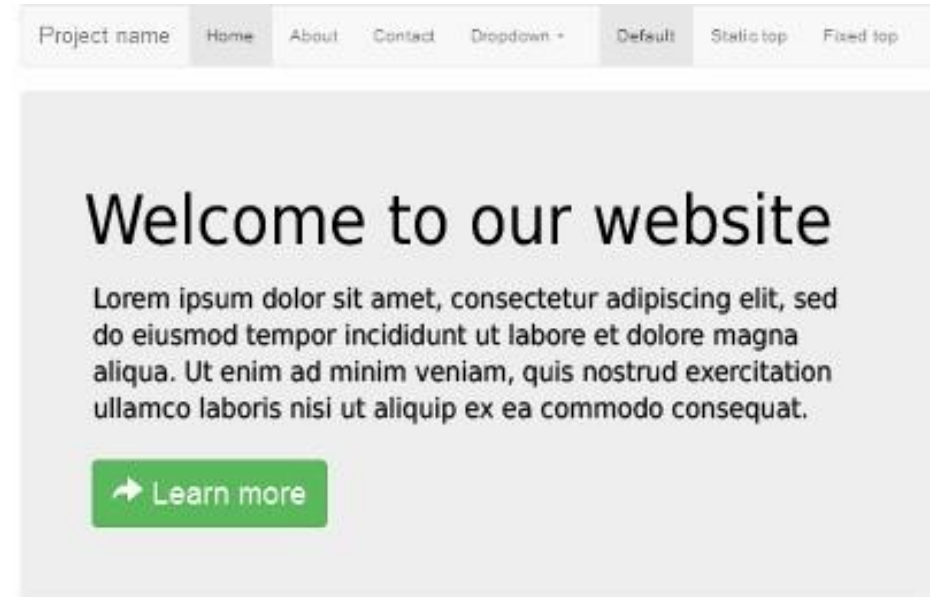
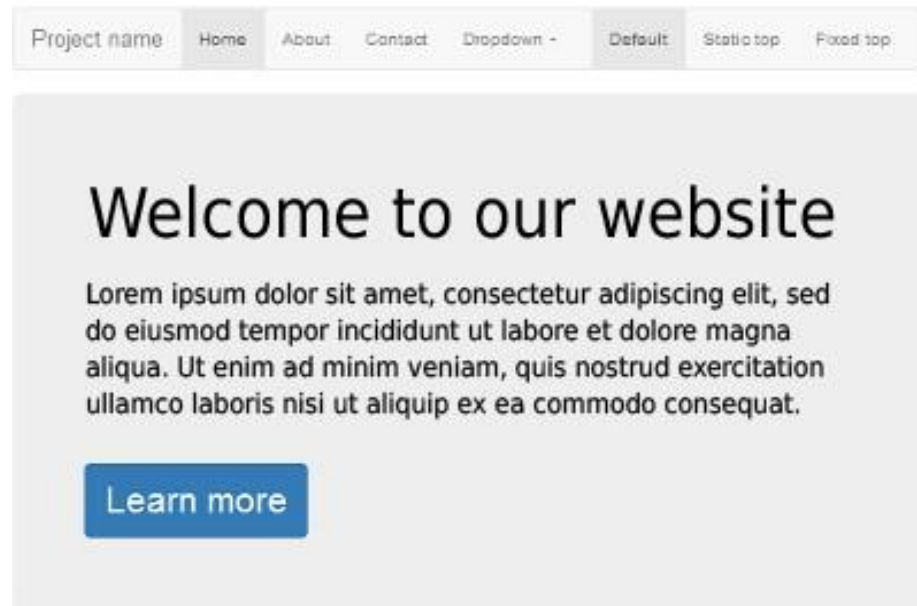
- Generate a large number of datasets under the null hypothesis
  - E.g., drawing samples from a known distribution or resampling (as in permutation testing)
- Calculate the test statistic for observed data
- P-value is the empirical probability of seeing a test statistic as extreme as the observed statistic in the simulated datasets
- Recall Monte Carlo methods / Bootstrap

```
num_simulation, sample_size = 1000000, 100
samples = np.random.choice([0, 1], size=(num_simulation, sample_size), replace=True)
sample_means = np.mean(samples, axis=1)
p_value_estimate = np.sum(sample_means >= 0.6) / num_simulation
print(p_value_estimate)
```

✓ 0.9s

# A/B Testing

What UI is better?

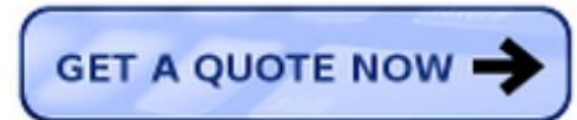




# Surprising A/B Tests

- A. Get \$10 off the first purchase. Book online now!
- B. Get an additional \$10 off. Book online now.

Control Button



Experiment Button



<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2012/09/25/a-b-testing>

# A/B Testing

- A method to compare two versions (A and B) of a variable to determine which performs better
  - Optimize website design, marketing campaigns, user experience, etc.
- Split users randomly between the two versions and measure the differences in performance

# Why A/B Testing?

- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Replace guesswork with statistical evidence
- **Improved Conversion Rates:** Identify changes that boost user engagement
- **Reduced Risk:** Test ideas on a small scale before full implementation
- **Continuous Improvement:** Iteratively refine products and strategies

# A/B Testing Steps

## 1. Metrics identification

1. Invariant metrics (e.g., # users, user demographics, etc.)
2. Evaluation metrics (what you want to optimize, e.g., CTR, # Orders)

## 2. Hypothesis definition

	H0 is True	H0 is False
Reject H0	Type I error (False Positive) Prob = $\alpha$	True Positive Prob = $1-\beta$
Fail to reject H0	True Negative Prob = $1-\alpha$	Type II error (False Negative) Prob = $\beta$

- Usually target  $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $\beta = 0.8$

# A/B Testing Steps

## 3. Determine sample size & duration

$$n = \frac{16\sigma^2}{\delta^2}$$

Duration: If the daily active users is greater than  $2n$ , can we finish A/B testing in one day?

- Usually not, because:
  - Bug in your new version
  - Other variants like weekends/holidays/discounts

# A/B Testing Steps

5. Distribute users

6. Invariance test / sanity check

- Metrics that should not change between variant A & variant B
- User demographics, traffic sources, device types, ...
- When it fails:
  - Review randomization
  - External factors
  - Drill down to segments

# What can/cannot be A/B Tested?

- New feature of a product
- UI changes
- Backend changes

Question: can we A/B test to decide if ChatGPT should be released?

Question: can we A/B test the new UI of a house selling website

- when the evaluation metric is traffic volume?
- when the evaluation metric is # of transactions?

# Conclusion

- Hypothesis Testing
  - Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ )
  - P-value and P-hacking
  - A/B Testing



# CMPT 733

# Causal Inference

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Based on the slides by Yi Xie, Nathan Yan, and Jiannan Wang

# Outline

Why Should Data Scientists Care?

Basic Concepts

Causal Inference

# Questions Data Scientists Can Answer

Is This A or B?	Classification
How much or How Many?	Regression
Is This Weird?	Anomaly Detection
How Is This Organized?	Clustering
What if?	Causal Inference

# From Prediction to Causation

Predicting user activity for Xbox

- $Y$  = logins in next month
- $X$  = logins in past month, number of friends,...

What if we increase the number of friends?

- Would it increase user activity?

# Maybe or Maybe not (!)

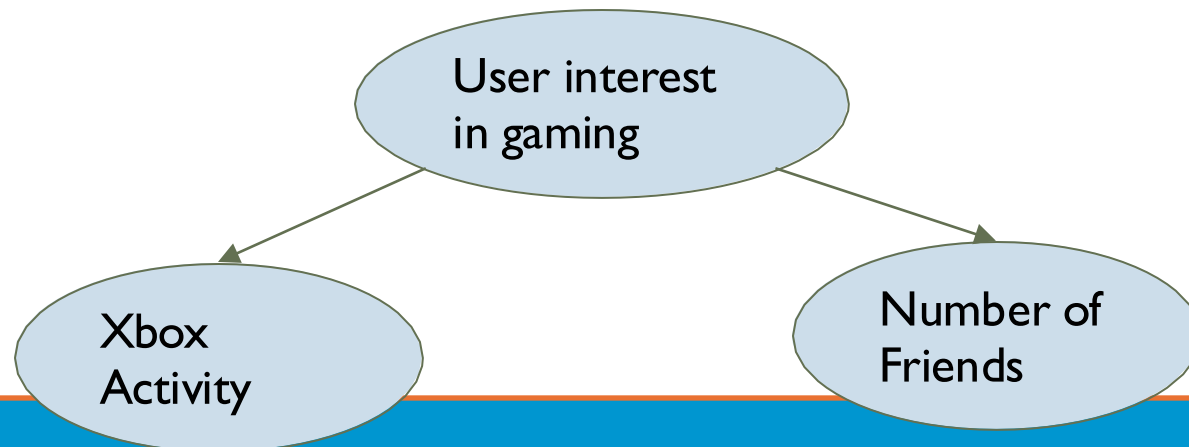
A causes B



B causes A



C causes A and B



# A/B Testing Helps!

## Treatment Group

- A random sample of users
- Launch a campaign to increase friends
- Average activity next month

## Control Group

- A random sample of users
- **Not** Launch a campaign to increase friends
- Average activity next month



Hypothesis  
Testing

# A/B Testing Does **Not** Work

- It is infeasible to do A/B testing
  - What if you went to UBC rather than SFU, would it help you land a better job?
- It is unethical to do A/B testing
  - What if subscription price is set to \$69 rather than \$99, would it increase revenue?

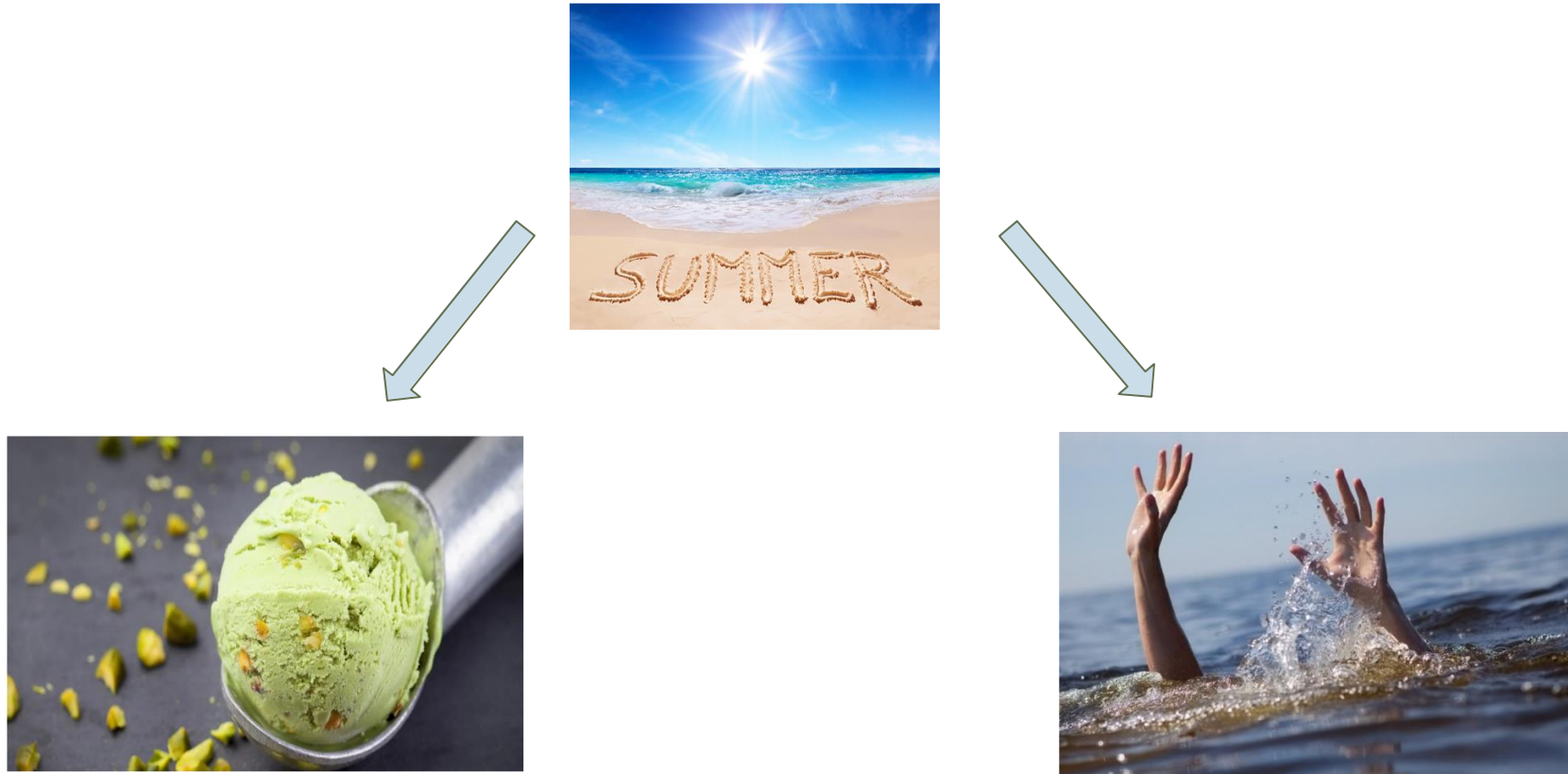
# Example 1: Causality $\neq$ Correlation

When a team was investigating the city death rate data, they found that reported cases of teenage drowning death increase while the sales of ice cream also increase.





# Example 1: Causality $\neq$ Correlation



# Example 2: Causality $\neq$ Correlation

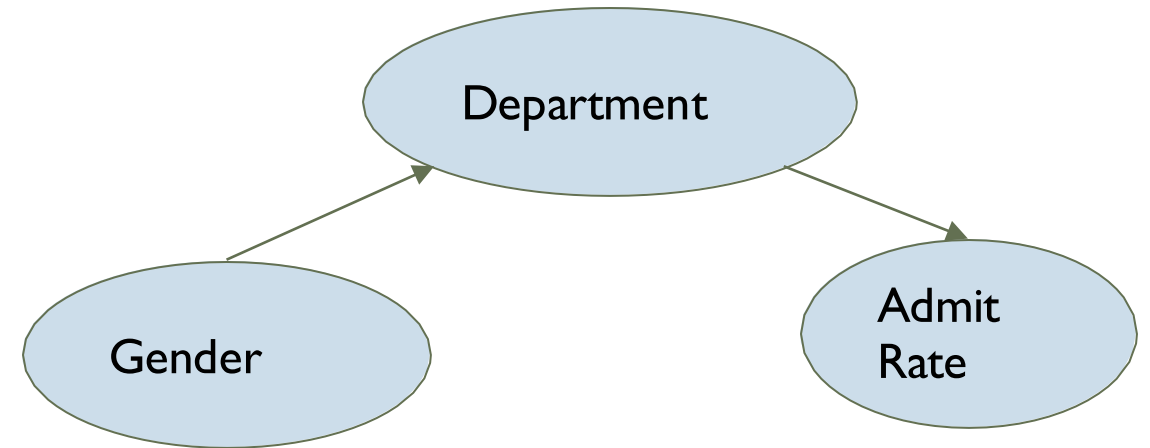
Is Berkeley gender biased?

	Applicants	Admitted
All	12,763	41%
Men	8,442	44%
Women	4,321	35%

Simpson's paradox

# Example 2: Causality $\neq$ Correlation

Department	Men		Women	
	Applicants	Admitted	Applicants	Admitted
A	825	62%	108	82%
B	560	63%	25	68%
C	325	37%	593	34%
D	417	33%	375	35%
E	191	28%	393	24%
F	373	6%	341	7%
Total	2691	45%	1835	30%



# Example 2: Causality $\neq$ Correlation



- In city areas with nearby trees and natural landscapes, there is less domestic violence.
- Apartment complexes with many trees had 52% fewer crimes.
- On tree-lined streets, people drive more slowly, reducing accident risk.

# Outline

Why Should Data Scientists Care?

Basic Concepts

- Outcome / Treatment Variables
- Intervention and Do Operation
- Counterfactual
- Causal Graph

Causal Inference

# Outcome / Treatment Variables

What if participating Study Program, would it improve Grade?

Treatment

Outcome

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Grade
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Terry	male	1	1	82
Mary	female	1	0	86
Sarah	female	2	1	83

# Intervention and Do Operation

- ❖ Do operator will signal the experimental intervention (invented by Judea Pearl)

$P(\text{grade} \mid \text{do}(\text{enrolled in study program}))$

represents the distribution of grad if the person is enrolled in study program

# Intervention and Do Operation

- ❖  $P(A \mid B = b)$ : probability of  $A$  being true given that  $B$  is observed as  $B = b$
- ❖  $P(A \mid \text{do}(B) = b)$ : probability of  $A$  being true given an intervention that sets  $B$  to  $b$



# Counterfactual

---

- ❖ What would have happened if I had changed “Treatment Variable”

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Actual Grade
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Terry	male	1	1	82
Mary	female	1	0	86
Sarah	female	2	1	83

# Counterfactual

---

❖ What would have happened if I had changed “Treatment Variable”

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Actual Grade	Counterfactual Grade (You cannot get it in reality)
Jacky	male	1	0	78	82
Terry	male	1	1	82	82
Mary	female	1	0	86	90
Sarah	female	2	1	83	85

# Causality

## Causality Definition

- The difference between actual outcome and counterfactual outcome

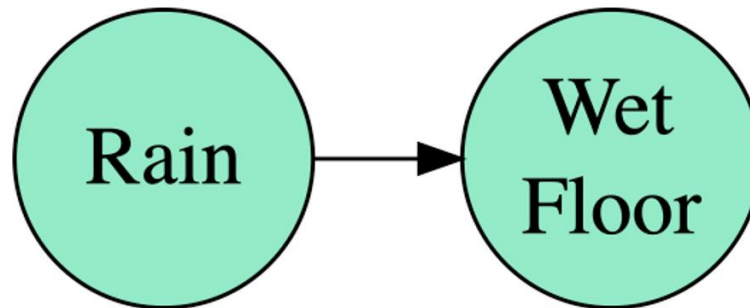
## The Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference

- We cannot observe the counterfactual outcome

# Causal Graph

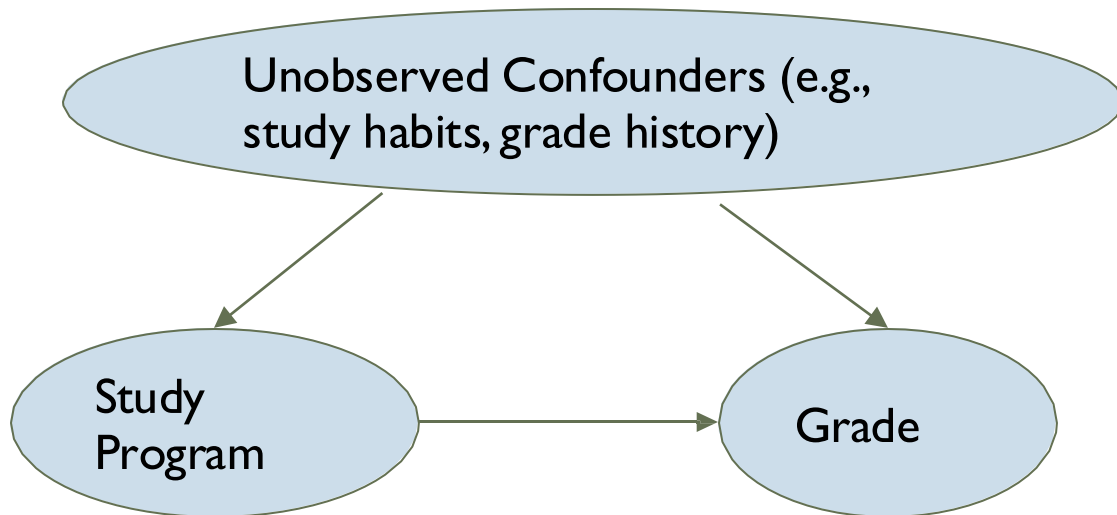
Causal graph is a **directed** graph

- Nodes: variables
- Directed Edges: X affects Y



# Causal Graph

- ❖ Confounding variables: common cause of treatment and outcome



## Why Causal Graph?

- Helpful to identify which variables to control for
- Make assumptions explicit

# Outline

Why Should Data Scientists Care?

Basic Concepts

Causal Inference

- Statistical Inference vs. Causal Inference
- Average Treatment Effect (ATE) Estimation
- Causal Inference in Practice

# Statistical vs. Causal Inferences

## Statistical inference

- Data is just a sample
- Your goal is to infer a population
- Think about how to go “backwards” from sample to population

## Causal inference

- Derive a treatment group from Data
- Derive a control group (i.e., without treatment) from Data
- Think about how to infer the actual effect of treatment from the derived treatment and control groups

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# Counterfactual

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❖ What would have happened if I had changed “Treatment Variable”

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Actual Grade	Counterfactual Grade (You cannot get it in reality)
Jacky	male	1	0	78	82
Terry	male	1	1	82	82
Mary	female	1	0	86	90
Sarah	female	2	1	83	85

# Individual Treatment Effect

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What is the grade difference between enrolling and not enrolling in the study program?

Student	Gender	Class	Enroll in Study Program	Not Enroll in Study Program	
Jacky	male	1	82	78	4
Terry	male	1	82	82	0
Mary	female	1	90	86	4
Sarah	female	2	83	85	-2

# Average Treatment Effect (ATE)

---

The average of all values for individual treatment effects

$$ATE = (4 + 0 + 4 + -2) / 4 = 1.5$$

Student	Gender	Class	Enroll in Study Program	Not Enroll in Study Program	
Jacky	male	1	82	78	4
Terry	male	1	82	82	0
Mary	female	1	90	86	4
Sarah	female	2	83	85	-2

# ATE: Estimation

## ATE estimation methods

- ❖ Matching based:
  - Perfect matching
  - Nearest neighbor matching
  - Propensity score matching
- ❖ ML based:
  - Regression method
  - Representation learning

# Perfect Matching

student	gender	class	Study program	grade
Terry	male	1	1	82
Sarah	female	2	1	83
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Mary	female	1	0	86

Find the “perfect matching in counterfactual world”

# Perfect Matching

student	gender	class	Study program	grade
Terry	male	1	1	82
Sarah	female	2	1	83
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Mary	female	1	0	86

4

Find the “perfect matching in counterfactual world”

# Perfect Matching

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Grade
Terry	male	1	1	82
<b>Sarah</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>83</b>
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Mary	female	1	0	86

By perfect matching, we can't find ATE over the population, because for tuple Sarah, we can't find the perfect match in control group

# Nearest Neighbor Matching

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Grade
Terry	male	1	1	82
Sarah	female	2	1	83
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Mary	female	1	0	86

-3

Find the “nearest matching in counterfactual world”



# Nearest Neighbor Matching

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Grade	
Terry	male	1	1	82	4
Sarah	female	2	1	83	-3
Jacky	male	1	0	78	
Mary	female	1	0	86	

$$\text{ATE} = \frac{1}{2} [-3 + 4] = 0.5$$

# Propensity Score Matching

## Steps

- ❖ Using logistic regression to infer  $e(x) = Pr[T=1 | X=x]$
- ❖ Match users with treatment 0 with users with treatment 1 based on propensity score, using matching methods

# Propensity Score Matching

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Grade	PSE
Terry	male	1	1	82	0.7
Sarah	female	2	1	83	0.6
Jacky	male	1	0	78	0.7
Mary	female	1	0	86	0.55

Based on PSM derived by logistic regression, the match we'll find for Terry is Jacky, and the match we'll find for Sarah is Mary

ATE = 0.5, computation is similar with nearest neighbor matching

# Regression Method

Intuition: the distribution of  $Y$  given  $X$  is different when treatment is different

Train two separate regression models under Treatment = 0 or Treatment = 1, infer  $p(Y | T = 0, X)$  and  $p(Y | T = 1, X)$

# Regression Method

Student	Gender	Class	Study Program	Grade
Terry	male	1	1	82
Sarah	female	2	1	83
Jacky	male	1	0	78
Mary	female	1	0	86

Treat one regression model 1 on [Terry, Sarah] where Study Program = 1

Treat another regression model 2 on [Jacky, Mary] where Study Program = 0

Using model 1 to compute counterfactual outcome of [Jacky, Mary], same for model 2

# Other ML-based Methods

- ❖ Representation learning
- ❖ Intuition: transform dataset into a space where treatment assignment is more evenly distributed
- ❖ For other more techniques, please check latest publications

# Outline

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- Average Treatment Effect (ATE) Estimation
- Causal Inference in Practice

# Causal Inference Case Study

What if you went to UBC rather than SFU, would it help you land a better job?

1. What data to collect?
2. How to use data to answer this question?



# Allocating Policy for Homelessness

- ❖ Researchers allocate different interventions (like emergency shelter, rapid rehousing) for homelessness based on causal inference
- ❖ Report published in AAAI 2019

Amanda Kube, Sanmay Das, Patrick J. Fowler: [Allocating Interventions Based on Predicted Outcomes: A Case Study on Homelessness Services](#). AAAI 2019: 622-629

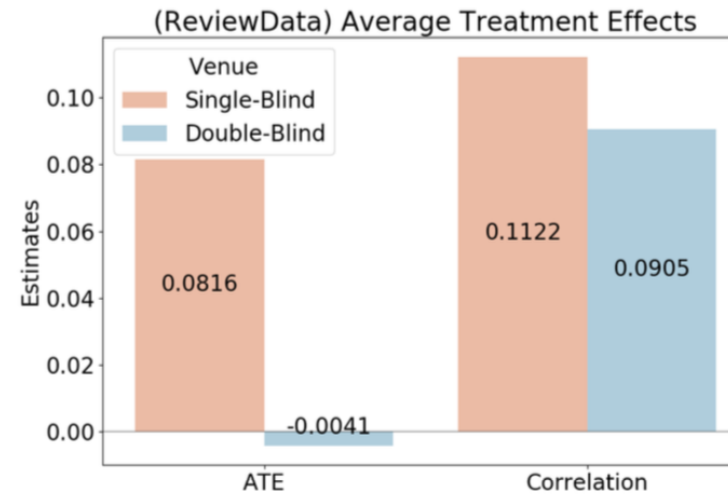
# Social Media

- ❖ For Twitter, the impact of race, gender and closeness on persuasion is studied using causal inference
- ❖ Result published in NeurIPS 2019

[https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.coecis.cornell.edu/dist/a/238/files/2019/12/Id\\_104\\_final.pdf](https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.coecis.cornell.edu/dist/a/238/files/2019/12/Id_104_final.pdf)

# Academic Paper Review

Are reviewers influenced by authors' prestige?



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Quantity  
(a)  
Causation vs. Correlation

High correlation in both single and double blind  
High causation only in single blind

# DoWhy Python Library

- ❖ DoWhy is a Python library for causal inference that supports explicit modeling and testing of causal assumptions, developed by Microsoft.
- ❖ DoWhy is based on a unified language for causal inference, combining causal graphical models and potential outcomes frameworks.

# Summary

## Why Should Data Scientists Care?

- “What if” Question ?
- Why not A/B testing?
- Causality  $\neq$  Correlation

## Basic Concepts

- Outcome / Treatment Variables
- Intervention and Do Operation
- Counterfactual
- Causal Graph

## Causal Inference

- Statistical Inference vs. Causal Inference
- Average Treatment Effect (ATE) Estimation
- Causal Inference in Practice