

Assume that the likelihood function is Binomial with parameter N, θ and the prior is beta with parameter a, b . We want to prove that the posterior is also a beta distribution.

① likelihood: $P(X=m | N, \theta) = \binom{N}{m} \theta^m (1-\theta)^{N-m}$

② prior: $P(\theta | a, b) = \frac{1}{\beta(a, b)} \theta^{a-1} (1-\theta)^{b-1}$

③ marginal: Since the support of a beta distribution is $[0, 1]$,

$$\begin{aligned} P(X | \theta \in [0, 1]) &= \int_0^1 P(X=m | N, \theta) \cdot P(\theta | a, b) d\theta \\ &= \frac{\binom{N}{m}}{\beta(a, b)} \int_0^1 \theta^{m+a-1} (1-\theta)^{N-m+b-1} d\theta = \frac{\binom{N}{m}}{\beta(a, b)} \cdot \beta(m+a, N-m+b) \\ &\quad \left(\because \int_0^1 \frac{1}{\beta(m+a, N-m+b)} \theta^{m+a-1} (1-\theta)^{N-m+b-1} d\theta = 1 \right) \end{aligned}$$

By ① & ②, the posterior of θ is $P(\theta | X) = \frac{P(X=m | N, \theta) \cdot P(\theta | a, b)}{P(X | \theta \in [0, 1])}$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{\binom{N}{m} \theta^m (1-\theta)^{N-m} \frac{1}{\beta(a, b)} \theta^{a-1} (1-\theta)^{b-1}}{\frac{\binom{N}{m}}{\beta(a, b)} \beta(m+a, N-m+b)} \\ &= \frac{1}{\beta(m+a, N-m+b)} \theta^{m+a-1} (1-\theta)^{N-m+b-1} \end{aligned}$$

$\Rightarrow P(\theta | X=m) \sim \text{Beta}(m+a, N-m+b)$