

Heterogeneous variances and weighting

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By default, the Linear Mixed Models fitted with *breedR* assume *homoscedasticity*. Meaning that given all the fixed and random effects, the unexplained variation follow a Normal distribution with residual variance σ^2 .

Mathematically, that $\varepsilon \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \mathbf{I}\sigma^2)$ in the model equation

$$y = X\beta + Zu + \varepsilon$$

Sometimes this is obviously wrong, and we need models where some observations are observed with more or less residual variability than others

Here are a few common situations where heterogeneous variances is needed:

- The observations are actually derived or calculated from real measurements, such as an average. Thus, the variance depends on the number of averaged measurements (e.g. Daughter Yield Deviation measures).
- The observations are spread in time, and you want to model the residual variance as a function of time (e.g. longitudinal models).

Using weights

If the relative variation in the residual variances is know or can be estimated, it can be specified as a vector of *weights* w , such that

$$\varepsilon \sim \mathcal{N}(0, (w^{-1/2})' \mathbf{I} w^{-1/2} \sigma^2).$$

In other words, the residual variance for the observation i is σ^2/w_i .

Here is a simulation example of how to specify weights.

```
set.seed(123)

n <- 1e3 # n obs
sigma2 <- 4 # true residual variance (for a weight of 1)
w = runif(n, min = .5, max = 2) # vector of weights

dat <-
  transform(
    data.frame(
      e = rnorm(n, sd = sqrt(sigma2))
    ),
    y = 10 + e/sqrt(w) # simulated phenotype
  )
```

```
res <- remlf90(
  y ~ 1,
  data = dat,
  weights = w # specification of weights
)
```

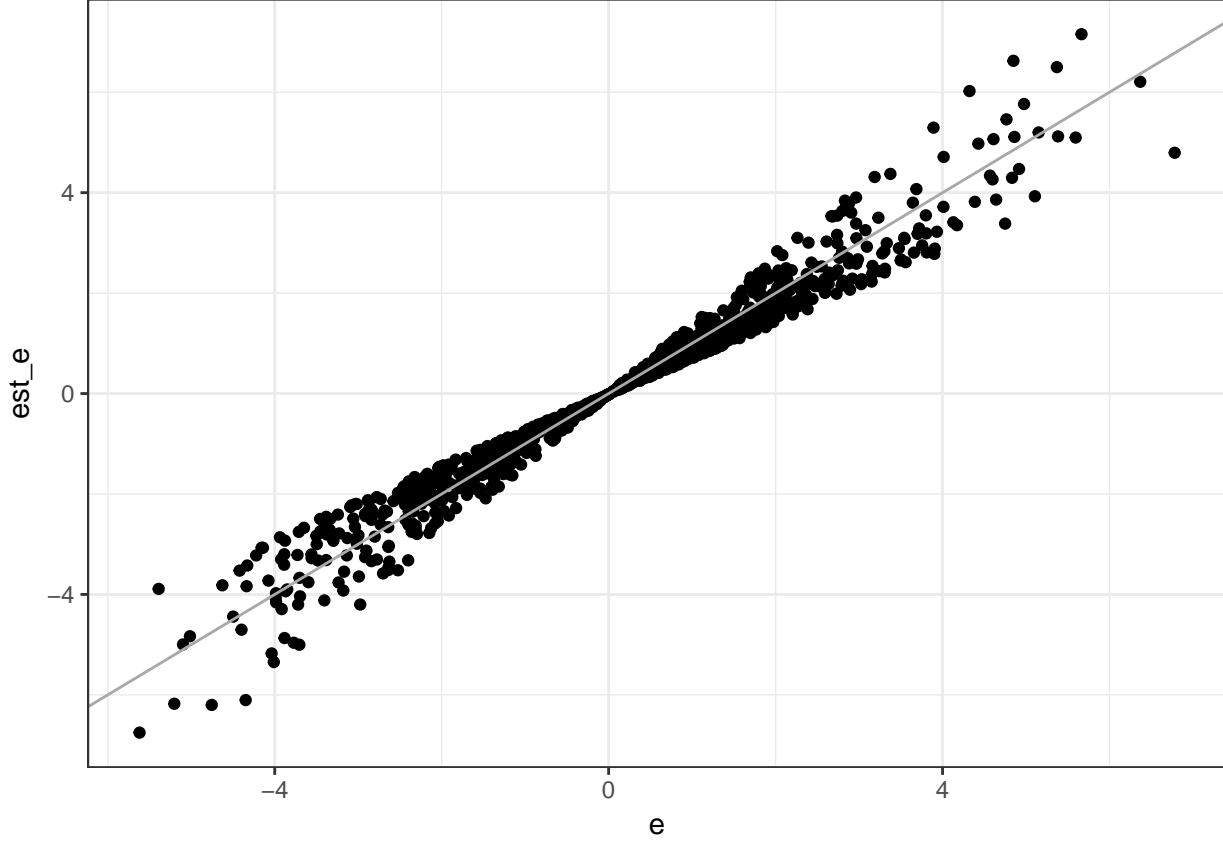
```
## No specification of initial variances.
##      Using default value of 1 for all variance components.
##      See ?breedR.getOption.
```

Note that the estimated residual variance is close to the true value. On the other hand, the residual prediction-error are expected to have non-constant variance.

```
summary(res)
```

```
## Linear Mixed Model with pedigree and spatial effects fit by AI-REMLF90 ver. 1.122
##      Data: dat
##      AIC  BIC logLik
## 4080 4085 -2039
##
## Parameters of special components:
##
##
## Variance components:
##      Estimated variances    S.E.
## Residual                4.012 0.1618
##
## Fixed effects:
##      value    s.e.
## Intercept 10.016 0.0567
```

```
ggplot(transform(dat, est_e = residuals(res)), aes(e, est_e)) +
  geom_point() +
  geom_abline(intercept = 0, slope = 1, color = "darkgray")
```



Estimating residual variance heterogeneity

This is currently not available in `breedR`.

Different group-wise residual variances (e.g. multi-site) can be easily induced by using group-specific random effects.

For the general case, here are some notes to allow for some manual hacking if needed.

In general, we need to estimate a residual variance parameter as a function of some other variable x . We then write the residual variance as a linear combination of a few base functions:

$$\sigma^2(x) = \sum_{k=0}^K \psi_k(x) r_k = \mathbf{\Psi} \mathbf{r},$$

where the parameters σ_k are to be estimated.

This covers the case both for group-wise residual variances (such as multi-site, using a categorical variable x) or a continuously varying residual variance.

For the first case, the variable x is categorical, taking a finite number of values K , and we define ψ_k as the corresponding indicator functions.

For the continuous case, the variable x is continuous (e.g. age, temperature) and the base functions can be Legendre polynomials, splines, etc. up to some arbitrary order K .

We need to manually build the matrix $\mathbf{\Psi}$, and exploit the PROGSF90 options `hetres_pos` and `hetres_pol` (see documentation).