

Topic 3 – Discrete Distributions

ENVX1002 Introduction to Statistical Methods

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Outline – Discrete distributions

- Example
- What is a distribution
- Binomial distribution
- Poisson distribution

Learning outcomes

At the end of this topic students should be able to:

- Have a good understanding of what a distribution is
 - ➡ Definitions
 - ➡ Functions
 - ➡ Binomial and Poisson distributions
- Apply the correct model to describe data
- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of R and Excel for calculating probabilities

Types of data

Remember the types of data

Numerical

- Continuous: yield, weight
- Discrete: weeds per m^2

Categorical

- Binary: 2 mutually exclusive categories
- Ordinal: categories ranked in order
- Nominal: qualitative data

Example

- We have 5 insects which we spray with an insecticide, each insect has a 60% chance of being killed;
- $P(K) = 0.6$
- Possible questions:
 - ➡ What is the probability that all 5 insects will be killed?
 - ➡ What is the probability that at least 3 insects will be killed?
- The data is 'binary' and the events are mutually exclusive (either dead or alive unless it is zombie fly);
 - ➡ we can say the data is categorical or numeric discrete
 - ➡ we can use a binomial (discrete) distribution to "model" the data.



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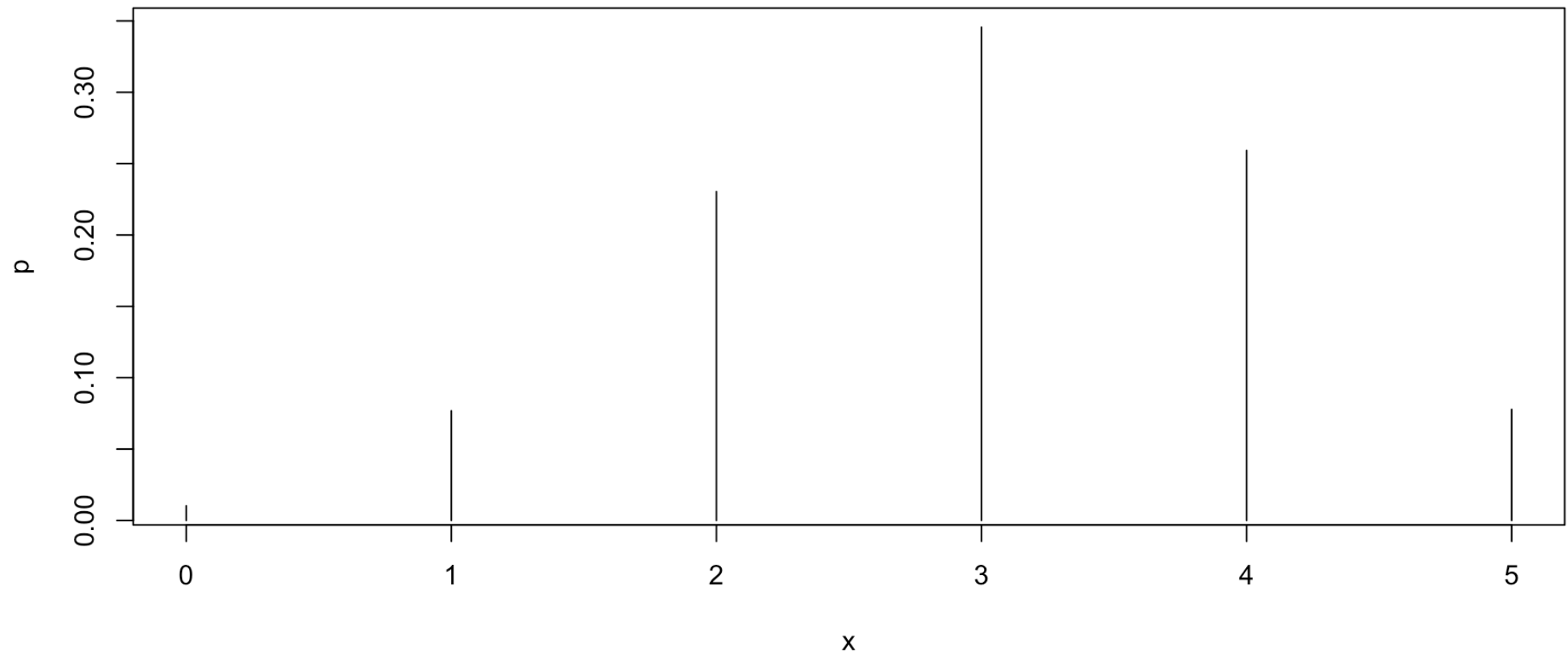
What is a distribution?

- In our case we are generally referring to a distribution function
 - ➡ This is a function (or model) that describes the probability that a system will take on value or set of values $\{x\}$
- For any variable X , we describe probabilities by
 - ➡ Discrete variables: probability distribution function $P(X = x)$
 - ➡ Continuous variables: probability density function $f(x)$
 - ➡ Discrete and Continuous variables: cumulative density function $F(x) = P(X \leq x)$

Back to our example

- We spray 5 flies with insecticide which has 60% chance of killing each insect. If X is the number of flies that die, what is the distribution of X ?
- The set of possible values is $x = 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$
- The likelihood of each value is
- $P(X = 0) = P(\text{no insects die}) = 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 = 0.4^5 = 0.01024$
- $P(X = 1) = P(\text{one insects die}) = 0.6 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 + 0.4 \times 0.6 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 + 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.6 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 + 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.6 \times 0.4 + 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.4 \times 0.6 = 0.0768$
- $P(X = 2) = P(\text{two insects die}) = \dots 10 \text{ different combinations} = 0.2304$
- $P(X = 3) = P(\text{three insects die}) = \dots 10 \text{ different combinations} = 0.3456$
- $P(X = 4) = P(\text{four insects die}) = \dots 5 \text{ combinations} = 0.2592$
- $P(X = 5) = P(\text{all insects die}) = 0.6 \times 0.6 \times 0.6 \times 0.6 \times 0.6 = 0.6^5 = 0.07776$

Example plot



Example – properties of the distribution

- Remember we have a binomial (dead or alive) distribution here
- A key property of all (discrete) distributions is that all probabilities add to

$$\sum_{i=0}^5 P(X = i) = 0.01024 + 0.0768 + 0.2304 + 0.3456 + 0.2592 + 0.07776 = 1$$

- Note that all probabilities lie between 0 and 1

Binomial Distribution

- Why does a binomial distribution fit our insect data??
 - ➡ Basic element is a Bernoulli trial – each insect;
 - ➡ The outcome of each trial can be classified in precisely one of two mutually exclusive ways termed “success” (dead) and “failure” (alive);
 - ➡ We usually assign p to success and q to failure.
 - ➡ Binomial experiments consists of n Bernoulli (independent binary) trials (i.e. 5 insects);
 - ➡ The probability of a success, denoted by p , remains constant from trial to trial. The probability of a failure, $q = 1-p$;
 - ➡ $p = 0.6$ and $q = 0.4$
 - ➡ The trials are independent; that is, the outcome of any particular trial is not affected by the outcome of any other trial;
 - ➡ The number of successes, x , is a binomial variable.

Example

- How many combinations are there for exactly 2 flies to die out of 5 flies?

$$\binom{5}{2} = \frac{5!}{2!(5-2)!} = \frac{(5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1)}{(2 \times 1 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1)} = 10$$

- What is the probability that exactly 2 flies will die?

$$P(X = x) = \binom{n}{x} p^x (1 - p)^{n-x} = \binom{5}{2} 0.6^2 (1 - 0.6)^{5-2}$$

$$= 10 \times 0.36 \times 0.064 = 0.2304$$



- `dbinom(2, 5, 0.6)`

[1] 0.2304



- `=BINOM.DIST(2, 5, 0.6, FALSE)`

Point, cumulative or interval probabilities

- We have already calculated a point probability i.e. the probability of exactly 2 flies dying.
- But what about if we wanted to know the probability of 2 or more flies dying $P(X \geq 2)$ or between 2 and 4 flies $P(2 \leq X \leq 4)$ dying??
- So how can we calculate these?
 - ➡ One way is to calculate all the point probabilities from 0-5 and add the probabilities cumulatively or in the interval

| x | P |
|-----|---------|
| 0 | 0.01024 |
| 1 | 0.0768 |
| 2 | 0.2304 |
| 3 | 0.3456 |
| 4 | 0.2592 |
| 5 | 0.07776 |
| SUM | 1 |

Point, cumulative or interval probabilities

$$P(X \geq 2) = (X = 2) + (X = 3) + (X = 4) + (X = 5) = 0.2304 + 0.3456 + 0.2592 + 0.07776 = 0.91296$$

- You guys try to calculate the following

$$P(2 \leq X \leq 4) = ??$$

| x | P |
|-----|---------|
| 0 | 0.01024 |
| 1 | 0.0768 |
| 2 | 0.2304 |
| 3 | 0.3456 |
| 4 | 0.2592 |
| 5 | 0.07776 |
| SUM | 1 |

Cumulative

$$P(X \geq 2)$$



```
[1] 0.91296
```

```
[1] 0.91296
```



```
=1-BINOM.DIST(1,5,0.6,TRUE)
```

Interval

$$P(2 \leq X \leq 4)$$



```
[1] 0.8352
```



```
=BINOM.DIST(4,5,0.6,TRUE)-BINOM.DIST(1,5,0.6,TRUE)
```

Mean and variance of the binomial distribution

- Mean binomial distribution

$$\mu_x = np$$

$$= 5 \times 0.6 = 3 \text{ On average 3 flies die in 5 trials}$$

- Variance binomial distribution

$$\sigma_x^2 = np(1 - p)$$

$$= 5 \times 0.6(1 - 0.6) = 1.2 \text{ with a variance of 1.2 flies}$$

Count Data

- Often we are interested in count data such as the number of events occurring in an interval;
- We generally model this data using the Poisson distribution (Described by Simeon-Denis Poisson) where we use λ denotes the average number of events occurring in an interval



- We often write this as

$$X \sim Po(\lambda)$$

- Where X is the number of discrete and independent events in the interval
 - ➡ e.g. number of plants of a certain species along transect
 - ➡ e.g. occurrence of disease in a period of time

Horse kick deaths in the Prussian Army

| Year | GC | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 | C11 | C14 | C15 |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1875 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1876 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1877 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 1878 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1879 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1880 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| 1881 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1882 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 1883 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 1884 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1885 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 1886 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Horse kick deaths in the Prussian Army

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ladislaus_Bortkiewicz

| Deaths | n | Total_Deaths | Probability |
|--------|-----|--------------|-------------|
| 0 | 144 | 0 | ? |
| 1 | 91 | 91 | ? |
| 2 | 32 | 64 | ? |
| 3 | 11 | 33 | ? |
| 4 | 2 | 8 | ? |

- What is the Probability in any month of
 - ➡ 0 injuries by horse kick
 - ➡ 1 injuries by horse kick
 - ➡ 2 injuries by horse kick
 - ➡ 3 injuries by horse kick
 - ➡ 4 injuries by horse kick
- λ "Lambda" is the mean

Horse kick deaths in the Prussian Army

| n | sum_Total_Deaths |
|-----|------------------|
| 280 | 196 |

Poisson Distribution

$$X \sim Po(\lambda)$$

$$P(X = x) = \frac{\lambda^x e^{-\lambda}}{x!} \quad x = 0, 1, 2, \dots \quad \lambda > 0$$

- Note that e denotes the exponential function such that

$$\Rightarrow e^0 = 1$$

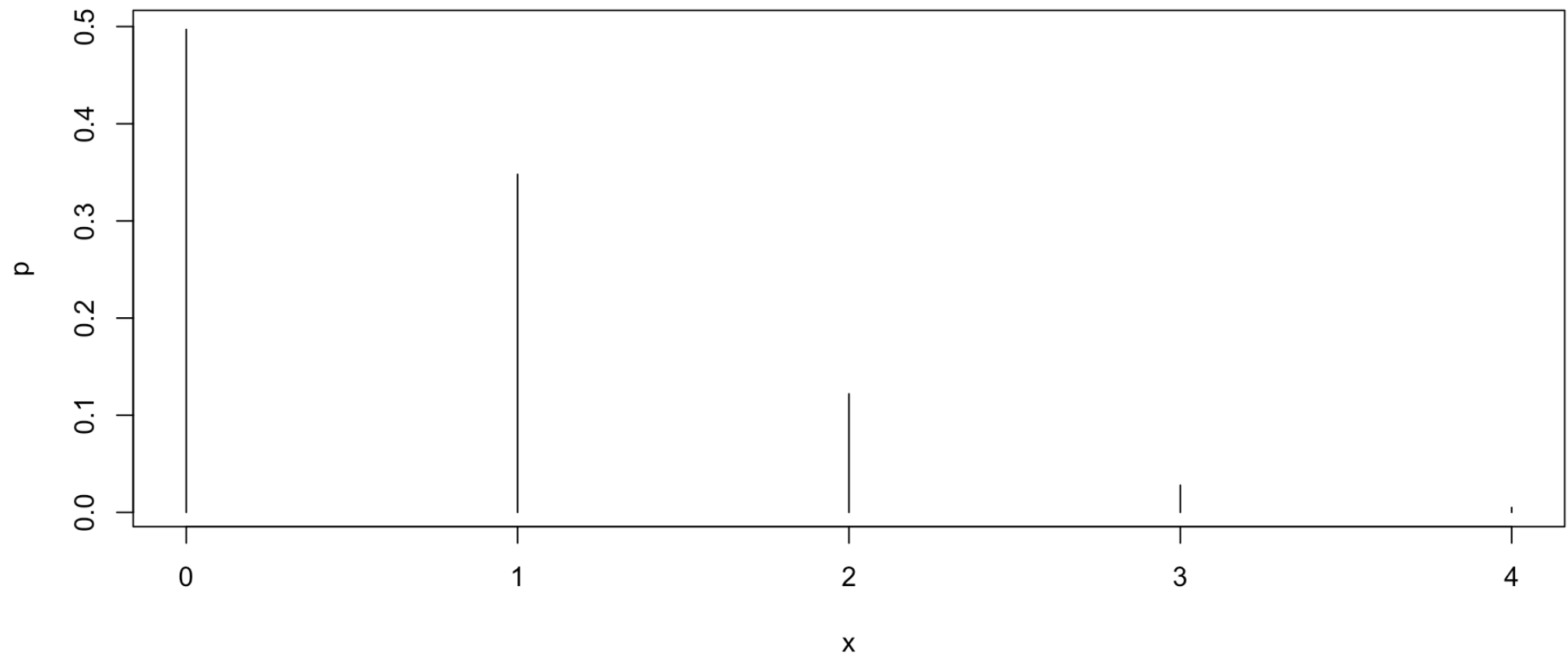
$$\Rightarrow e^{-2} = 0.135(3 \text{ d.p.})$$

$$\Rightarrow e^{-10} = 4.540 \times 10^{-5}(3 \text{ d.p.})$$

Example with kick deaths

- We first identify the model
 - ➡ X = the number of soldiers injured by horse kick $\sim Po(\lambda)$ where λ = the average number of deaths = $196/280 = 0.7$. We can now calculate the probability of having exactly 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 deaths
- $P(X = 0) = \frac{0.7^0 e^{-0.7}}{0!} = \frac{1e^{-0.7}}{1} = 0.497(3 \text{ d.p.})$
- $P(X = 1) = \frac{0.7^1 e^{-0.7}}{1!} = \frac{0.7e^{-0.7}}{1} = 0.348(3 \text{ d.p.})$
- $P(X = 2) = \frac{0.7^2 e^{-0.7}}{2!} = \frac{0.49e^{-0.7}}{2 \times 1} = 0.122(3 \text{ d.p.})$
- $P(X = 3) = \frac{0.7^3 e^{-0.7}}{3!} = \frac{0.343e^{-0.7}}{3 \times 2 \times 1} = 0.028(3 \text{ d.p.})$
- $P(X = 4) = \frac{0.7^4 e^{-0.7}}{4!} = \frac{0.2401e^{-0.7}}{4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1} = 0.005(3 \text{ d.p.})$

Example with kick deaths



Example with kick deaths

| Deaths | n | Total_Deaths | Probability | Observed_Probability |
|--------|-----|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 0 | 144 | 0 | 0.497 | 0.5142857 |
| 1 | 91 | 91 | 0.348 | 0.3250000 |
| 2 | 32 | 64 | 0.122 | 0.1142857 |
| 3 | 11 | 33 | 0.028 | 0.0392857 |
| 4 | 2 | 8 | 0.005 | 0.0071429 |

- note that observed probability is n divided by the total number of observations (280). For example, for 0 deaths there were 144 observed out of a total of 280 observations i.e. the observed probability of 0 deaths in a cavalry corps over 20 years of observations was 0.51 or 51%

Example with kick deaths

- So now you all can calculate what the probability is, as an example, the of having less than 2 deaths across all cavalry corps for the period of 1875-1894 $P(X < 2)$.



```
[1] 0.844195
```



```
=POISSON(1,0.7,TRUE)
```

Example with kick deaths

- Another example, is having exactly 2 deaths across all cavalry corps for the period of 1875-1894 $P(X = 2)$.



```
[1] 0.1216634
```

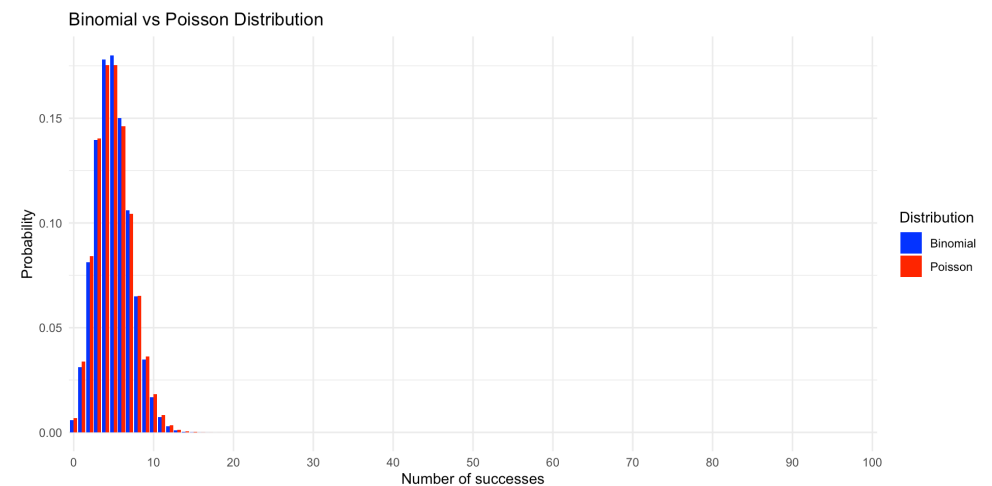


```
=POISSON(2,0.7,FALSE)
```

Interesting results with the binomial and Poisson distributions

- For large n and small p the Binomial distribution $X \sim \text{Bin}(n, p)$ can be approximated by the Poisson distribution $Y \sim \text{Po}(\lambda = np)$
 - ➡ The general rule is if $n > 20$ and $np < 5$
- We often say that the Poisson Distribution models rare events

Interesting results with the binomial and Poisson distributions



Further reading

- Quinn & Keough (2002)
 - ➡ Chapter 1. Sections 1.5, p. 9-13
- Mead et al. (2002)
 - ➡ Chapter 14. Sections 14.4-14.5, p. 339-377

Thanks!

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