In most research problems where regression analysis is applied, more than one independent variable is needed in the regression model. The complexity of most scientific mechanisms is such that in order to be able to predict an important response, a **multiple regression model** is needed. When this model is linear in the coefficients, it is called a **multiple linear regression model**. For the case of k independent variables $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_k$, the mean of $Y|x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_k$ is given by the multiple linear regression model

$$\mu_{Y|x_1,x_2,\ldots,x_k} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \cdots + \beta_k x_k,$$

and the estimated response is obtained from the sample regression equation

$$\hat{y} = b_0 + b_1 x_1 + \cdots + b_k x_k,$$

where each regression coefficient β_i is estimated by b_i from the sample data using the method of least squares. As in the case of a single independent variable, the multiple linear regression model can often be an adequate representation of a more complicated structure within certain ranges of the independent variables.

Similar least squares techniques can also be applied for estimating the coefficients when the linear model involves, say, powers and products of the independent variables. For example, when $k = 1$, the experimenter may believe that the means $\mu_{Y|x}$ do not fall on a straight line but are more appropriately described by the **polynomial regression model**

$$\mu_{Y|x} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x + \beta_2 x^2 + \cdots + \beta_r x^r,$$

and the estimated response is obtained from the polynomial regression equation

$$\hat{y} = b_0 + b_1 x + b_2 x^2 + \cdots + b_r x^r.$$