# Point-by-point reply to the reviewer comments

“Support Vector Machines for Survival Analysis with R”

## Main Reviewer

> For the description of SVM they wondered if a couple of the usual fit/margin diagrams > could be useful to facilitate understanding of the approach.

We absolutely agree with the reviewer. On the top of page 2, the figure 1 is inserted and commented to facilitate understanding of the SVM approach described above.

> Also, in describing survival models in general they suggest that it would be useful to have a > simple real world example with sample data to describe the task: "This would make it > simpler to gain an understanding of the problem and the algorithm."

Agreed. The veteran’s administration study (Kalbfleisch and Prentice, 2002) now appears in the first paragraph of the introduction. Referring to it when describing survival analysis, we make it easier to the reader to understand our description.

> They would very much have liked to replicate the experiments that you presented. Is a > script available to replicate the “Real data application. . . ” including downloading the > datasets and generating the results table and plots? That would be useful.

We thank the reviewer for evoking this important point. An R script file named “fouodo-koenig-weihs-ziegler-wright.R” including the code to replicate all the results presented in the paper was included in the first submission. May be the Reviewer did not get it. To address his concern, supplementary materials including the R script stay now online: https://github.com/imbs-hl/survivalsvm-paper

> On Page 4 , Section “Example of usage”: they ask about the choice 120 as the size of the > training dataset and if it is better to choose a specified proportion instead? They have > familiarity with the common choice of round(0.7\*n) and believe mentioning that or > motivating your choice is important.

Agreed. We actually use round(0.7\*n) of the sample size as training data set.

> They installed from

> CRAN <https://cloud.r-project.org/src/contrib/survivalsvm_0.0.3.tar.gz> and got different

> output from the print() at the botoom of page 4. You should list your version number so that > people can play at home, should they choose.

We agree and thank the reviewer for this important remark. The actual version of the survivalsvm package is now included in the survivalsvm objects and the user can get the version when printing the object.

> Further, the have "In fact, I think the output here is not actually generated from the same > model you just built - it says subset=NULL yet the call actually has subset=train.index, > which is correctly reported when I run the commands.  Also, I do not see [sgf.sv](http://sgf.sv/)= onwards

> reported from the print()."

We are grateful to the reviewer for raising this point. The correct output is now printed.

> On Page 5: They point out that `print(ored.survsvm.reg)` should add an extra “\n” after the > predicted risk ranks to place the R prompt on a new line, not at the end of the line listing the > ranks. Also, they ask how significant is the precision of the numbers printed by default.

> Suggesting it would be less distracting to round these to perhaps just 2 significant digits in

> printing, unless the default precision is significant?

We fully agree. Just 2 significant digits are printed when listing the ranks.

> They thought Figure 1 layout could be improved - 3x2?

Agreed. We first try the 3x2 layout proposed by the reviewer, and then the 2x3 layout that we find better. We gain a little more space when adopting this last one.

## Minor Grammatical suggestions

> Page 1, Section“Introduction”, Para 1, Line 1, insert “the” in “event as the dependent > variable”.

Agreed.

> Page 1, Section“Introduction”, Para 1, Line 4, replace “and” with “or”.

Agreed.

> Page 1, third to last line of text, would it be better to replace “right” with “correct”? I > thought left/right at first!

Agreed.

> Page 2, Para 2, Line 4, insert “the” into “as the ranking”.

Agreed.

> Page 4, Section “Example of usage”, Line beginning “First, we split”: replace “in” with “into”.

Agreed.