

(3) Real roots

Let A , B and C be independent random variables, uniformly distributed on $(0, 1)$.

(a) What is the probability that the quadratic equation $Ax^2 + Bx + C = 0$ has real roots?

(b) Consider the following code in R.

What does it do and how is it related to your solution in part (a)?

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n=10000
a=runif(n)
b=runif(n)
c=runif(n)
sum(b^2 > 4*a*c)/n
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Hint: In HW2/ex. 3(b) we showed that if X has uniform $(0, 1)$ distribution then $-\log X$ has exponential distribution $\exp(1)$. In an analogue way, one can prove that $-s \log X \sim \exp(\frac{1}{s})$ for any $s > 0$. Also, in HW4/ex. 2(b) we proved that the sum of two independent exponential distributions is a gamma distribution. Namely, if $X \sim \exp(1)$ and $Y \sim \exp(1)$ are independent then $X + Y \sim \text{Gamma}(2, 1)$.

a) $Ax^2 + Bx + C = 0 \Leftrightarrow x = \frac{-B \pm \sqrt{B^2 - 4AC}}{2A}$, hence the quadratic equation has real roots if and only if $B^2 - 4AC \geq 0$.

$$\begin{aligned} P(B^2 - 4AC \geq 0) &= P(B^2 \geq 4AC) = P(\log(B^2) \geq \log(4AC)) = P(\log(B^2) \geq \log(4) + \log(AC)) \\ &= P(\log(B^2) - \log(AC) \geq \log(4)) = P(-\log(AC) \geq -\log(B^2) + \log(4)) \end{aligned}$$

$$-\log(A) \sim \exp(1), \quad -\log(C) \sim \exp(1), \quad -\log(AC) = (-\log(A)) + (-\log(C)) \sim \text{Gamma}(2, 1)$$

$$g: (0, 1) \rightarrow (0, \infty): x \mapsto -\log(x^2) \text{ has got the inverse } h: (0, \infty) \rightarrow (0, 1): y \mapsto e^{-\frac{y}{2}}$$

$$f_B(x) = \mathbb{1}_{(0,1)}(x) \Rightarrow f_{-\log(B^2)}(x) = \mathbb{1}_{(0,1)}(e^{-\frac{x}{2}}) e^{-\frac{x}{2}} = \mathbb{1}_{(0,1)}(x) \frac{1}{2} e^{-\frac{x}{2}}, \text{ hence } -\log(B^2) \sim \exp\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)$$

Clearly, $-\log(B^2)$ and $-\log(AC)$ are independent and we conclude

$$\begin{aligned} P(-\log(AC) \geq -\log(B^2) + \log(4)) &= \int_{\log(4)}^{\infty} \int_0^{y - \log(4)} f_{-\log(AC)}(y) f_{-\log(B^2)}(x) dx dy \\ &= \int_{\log(4)}^{\infty} y e^{-y} \int_0^{y - \log(4)} \frac{1}{2} e^{-\frac{x}{2}} dx dy \\ &= \int_{\log(4)}^{\infty} y e^{-y} \left(1 - \exp\left(-\frac{\log(4) - y}{2}\right)\right) dy \\ &= \int_{\log(4)}^{\infty} y e^{-y} dy - \int_{\log(4)}^{\infty} 2y e^{-\frac{3y}{2}} dy \\ &= \frac{1}{4} (1 + \log(4)) - \frac{1}{9} (1 + \log(8)) \approx 0,2544 \end{aligned}$$

b) The code gives an approximation of the probability that was calculated in (a).