

When pivot-wider goes wrong

Packages

The inevitable:

```
library(tidyverse)
```

Some long data that should be wide

```
# A tibble: 6 x 3
  obs time      y
  <dbl> <chr> <dbl>
1     1 pre    19
2     2 post   18
3     3 pre    17
4     4 post   16
5     5 pre    15
6     6 post   14
```

- ▶ Six observations of variable *y*, but three measured before some treatment and three measured after.
- ▶ Really matched pairs, so want column of *y*-values for pre and for post.
- ▶ `pivot_wider`.

What happens here?

```
d %>% pivot_wider(names_from = time, values_from = y)
```

```
# A tibble: 6 x 3
```

	obs	pre	post
	<dbl>	<dbl>	<dbl>
1	1	19	NA
2	2	NA	18
3	3	17	NA
4	4	NA	16
5	5	15	NA
6	6	NA	14

- ▶ Should be *three* pre values and *three* post. Why did this happen?
- ▶ `pivot_wider` needs to know which *row* to put each observation in.
- ▶ Uses combo of columns *not* named in `pivot_wider`, here `obs` (only).

The problem

```
d %>% pivot_wider(names_from = time, values_from = y)
```

```
# A tibble: 6 x 3
```

	obs	pre	post
	<dbl>	<dbl>	<dbl>
1	1	19	NA
2	2	NA	18
3	3	17	NA
4	4	NA	16
5	5	15	NA
6	6	NA	14

- ▶ There are 6 different obs values, so 6 different rows.
- ▶ No data for obs 2 and pre, so that cell missing (NA).
- ▶ Not enough data (6 obs) to fill 12 ($= 2 \times 6$) cells.
- ▶ obs needs to say which subject provided which 2 observations.

Fixing it up

```
# A tibble: 6 x 3
  subject time      y
  <dbl> <chr> <dbl>
1      1 pre    19
2      1 post   18
3      2 pre    17
4      2 post   16
5      3 pre    15
6      3 post   14
```

- ▶ column subject shows which subject provided each pre and post.
- ▶ when we do `pivot_wider`, now only 3 rows, one per subject.

Coming out right

```
d2 %>% pivot_wider(names_from = time, values_from = y)
```

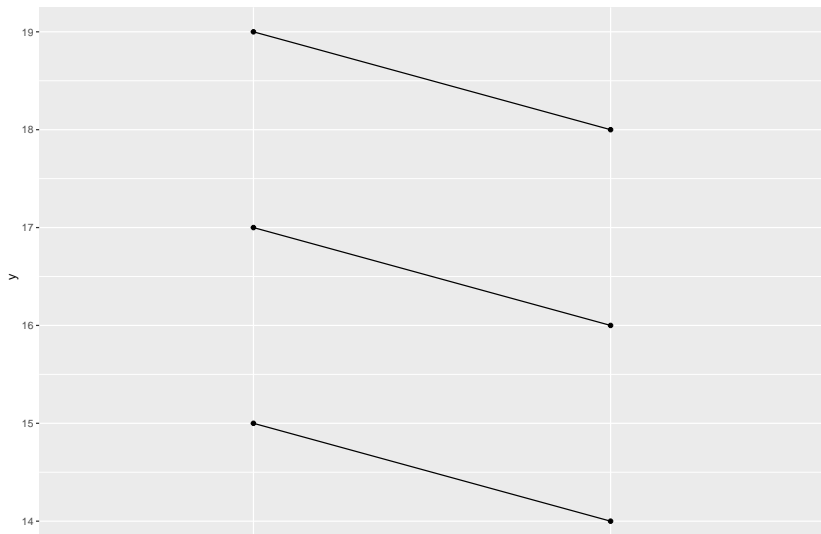
```
# A tibble: 3 x 3
```

	subject	pre	post
	<dbl>	<dbl>	<dbl>
1	1	19	18
2	2	17	16
3	3	15	14

- ▶ row each observation goes to determined by other column subject, and now a pre and post for each subject.
- ▶ right layout for matched pairs t or to make differences for sign test or normal quantile plot.
- ▶ “spaghetti plot” needs data longer, as d2.

Spaghetti plot

```
d2 %>% mutate(time = fct_inorder(time)) %>%  
  ggplot(aes(x = time, y = y, group = subject)) +  
    geom_point() + geom_line()
```



Another example

- ▶ Two independent samples this time

```
# A tibble: 8 x 2
```

```
  group      y
```

```
  <chr>    <dbl>
```

```
1 control      8
```

```
2 control     11
```

```
3 control     13
```

```
4 control     14
```

```
5 treatment    12
```

```
6 treatment    15
```

```
7 treatment    16
```

```
8 treatment    17
```

- ▶ These should be arranged like this
- ▶ but what if we make them wider?

Wider

```
d3 %>% pivot_wider(names_from = group, values_from = y)
```

```
# A tibble: 1 x 2  
  control treatment  
  <list>    <list>  
1 <dbl [4]> <dbl [4]>
```

- ▶ row determined by what not used for pivot_wider: nothing!
- ▶ everything smooshed into *one* row!
- ▶ this time, too *much* data for the layout.
- ▶ Four data values squeezed into each of the two cells: “list-columns”.

Get the data out

- ▶ To expand list-columns out into the data values they contain, can use `unnest`:

```
d3 %>% pivot_wider(names_from = group, values_from = y) %>%  
  unnest(c(control, treatment))
```

```
# A tibble: 4 x 2  
  control treatment  
    <dbl>      <dbl>  
1      8        12  
2     11        15  
3     13        16  
4     14        17
```

- ▶ in this case, wrong layout, because data values not paired.

A proper use of list-columns

```
d3 %>% nest_by(group) %>%  
  summarize(n = nrow(data),  
            mean_y = mean(data$y),  
            sd_y = sd(data$y))
```

```
# A tibble: 2 x 4
```

```
# Groups:   group [2]
```

	group	n	mean_y	sd_y
	<chr>	<int>	<dbl>	<dbl>
1	control	4	11.5	2.65
2	treatment	4	15	2.16

- ▶ another way to do group_by and summarize to find stats by group.
- ▶ run this one piece at a time to see what it does.