

Poisson Regression and Applications

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Introduction: Main Project Questions

- ▶ What is the Poisson Regression and what are its applications?
- ▶ Can we fit the Poisson regression to our data set and use it to make any inferences about the relationships we see?

Introduction: Our Data Set

- ▶ “Contact with Medical Doctors”
 - ▶ Cross-Sectional data collected in North Carolina between 1977-78
 - ▶ Examines 20186 observations of individuals
 - ▶ Randomly selected subset of 2000 observations for ease of computation
 - ▶ Collected from RAND Health Insurance Experiment (RHIE), which is the longest and largest socially controlled experiment regarding medical care (Price, D. 2002)
 - ▶ Our Response Variable of interest is mdu, which captures the number of times an individual visited a medical health profession during the study
 - ▶ Data Set also contains 14 other variables of interest

Introduction: Our Research Question

- ▶ How is the number of doctor visits impacted by various factors in an individual's life?
 - ▶ Specifically, we want see how one's age, sex, income, physical limitations, and present diseases influence their ability to seek out medical care.
- ▶ Use the Poisson Regression to model the data and see what relationships, if any, exist in between our variables.

Methodology: The Poisson Distribution

- ▶ A probability function which is especially useful for count data
 - ▶ Y is a variable with discrete outcomes $(0, 1, 2, \dots)$ where high counts for Y are rare
 - ▶ $f(Y) = \frac{\mu^Y * e^{-\mu}}{Y!}$
 - ▶ $E[Y] = \mu$
 - ▶ $P(Y = y) = \frac{\mu^y * e^{-\mu}}{y!}$
 - ▶ μ also sometimes noted as λ

Methodology: Necessary Conditions for the Poisson Distribution

- ▶ The Mean and Variance of Y are equal
 - ▶ $E[Y] = V[Y] = \mu$
- ▶ Independence
 - ▶ An event A occurring does not impact event B from occurring
- ▶ Each observation is recorder over the same fixed period of time.
- ▶ Data Set is not overloaded with zero counts.

Methodology: The Poisson Regression

- ▶ Poisson Regression finds estimates for the linear equation relating the log of a response variable to predictors.

- ▶ $\log(\hat{\mu}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_p X_p$

- ▶ $\hat{\mu} = e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_p X_p}$

- ▶ Allows us to see how a marginal change in our predictor variable impacts the estimated count of our variable.
- ▶ Coefficients found using the Maximum Likelihood Estimate process
- ▶ Coefficients evaluated for statistical significance using z-statistic and corresponding p-value
- ▶ We can use R glm function where we indicate the family to be “poisson” in order to obtain our fitted equation and coefficient estimates.

Results and Conclusion: An Introduction to our Data

- ▶ Observational Units: Individuals in North Carolina
- ▶ Overall, we have chosen five predictor variables to estimate our response variable
- ▶ Response Variable:
 - ▶ mdu measures the number of doctors visits one person attends in a year: Count
- ▶ Predictor Variables used:
 - ▶ Linc denotes a person's yearly log(income): Quantitative
 - ▶ Age denotes a person's age at the time of the study: Quantitative
 - ▶ Physlim denotes if a person has any sort of physical limitation: Categorical, Binary
 - ▶ ndiseases denotes the number of diagnosed diseases a person has at the time of the study: Quantitative
 - ▶ Sex denotes the sex of the patient: Categorical, Binary (Male == 1, Female == 0)

Results and Conclusions: An Introduction to our Data continued

count	st.dev	sample_mean	med	min	max
2000	4.56	2.87	1	0	65

- ▶ $\mu = 2.87, \sigma^2 = 4.56$
 - ▶ Over-disperion present

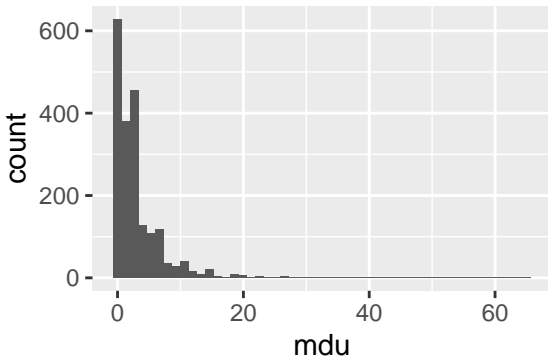


Figure 1: Count of an Individual's Doctors Visits in a Year

- ▶ Histogram shows a distribution skewed to the right
 - ▶ A high number of 0 counts in our data set

Results and Conclusions: Forward Selction:Step 1

```
regmod1<-glm(mdu~physlim, Doc_sample, family=poisson)
regmod2<-glm(mdu~ndisease, Doc_sample, family=poisson)
regmod3<-glm(mdu~linc, Doc_sample, family=poisson)
regmod4<-glm(mdu~age, Doc_sample, family=poisson)
regmod5<-glm(mdu~sex, Doc_sample, family=poisson)
p.physlim <- summary(regmod1)$coefficients[2,4]
p.disease <- summary(regmod2)$coefficients[2,4]
p.linc <- summary(regmod3)$coefficients[2,4]
p.age <- summary(regmod4)$coefficients[2,4]
p.sex <- summary(regmod5)$coefficients[2,4]
```

Results and Conclusions: Forward Selection: Step 1

```
##                                [,1]  
## p.physlim 9.880857e-95  
## p.disease 2.247778e-151  
## p.linc    1.925348e-25  
## p.age     5.061433e-39  
## p.sex     1.898671e-38
```

Results and Conclusions: Forward Selction:Step 2

```
regmod11<-glm(mdu~ndisease+physlim, Doc_sample,  
              family=poisson)  
regmod12<-glm(mdu~ndisease+linc, Doc_sample,  
              family=poisson)  
regmod13<-glm(mdu~ndisease+age, Doc_sample,  
              family=poisson)  
regmod14<-glm(mdu~ndisease+sex, Doc_sample,  
              family=poisson)  
p.dp <- summary(regmod11)$coefficients[3,4]  
p.dli <- summary(regmod12)$coefficients[3,4]  
p.da <- summary(regmod13)$coefficients[3,4]  
p.ds <- summary(regmod14)$coefficients[3,4]
```

```
##                [,1]  
## p.dp  1.037162e-39  
## p.dli 1.220258e-25  
## p.da  5.939466e-10  
## p.ds  9.587483e-18
```

Results and Conclusions: Forward Selction:Step 3

```
regmod21<-glm(mdu~ndisease+physlim+age,  
              Doc_sample, family=poisson)  
regmod22<-glm(mdu~ndisease+physlim+sex,  
              Doc_sample, family=poisson)  
regmod23<-glm(mdu~ndisease+physlim+linc,  
              Doc_sample, family=poisson)  
p.dpa <- summary(regmod21)$coefficients[4,4]  
p.dps <- summary(regmod22)$coefficients[4,4]  
p.dpl <- summary(regmod23)$coefficients[4,4]
```

```
##                [,1]  
## p.dpa 1.367631e-09  
## p.dps 2.372625e-16  
## p.dpl 4.288775e-29
```

Results and Conclusions: Forward Selction:Step 4

```
regmod31<-glm(mdu~ndisease+physlim+linc+sex,  
              Doc_sample, family=poisson)  
regmod32<-glm(mdu~ndisease+physlim+linc+age,  
              Doc_sample, family=poisson)  
p.dpls <- summary(regmod31)$coefficients[5,4]  
p.dpla <- summary(regmod32)$coefficients[5,4]
```

```
##                [,1]  
## p.dpls 2.339247e-19  
## p.dpla 7.851804e-09
```


Results and Conclusions: Summary Output of model

##

Call:

glm(formula = mdv ~ ndisease + physlim + linc + sex + age,

data = Doc_sample)

##

Deviance Residuals:

##	Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
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##	-4.1501	-1.9434	-0.8458	0.5508	16.8987
----	---------	---------	---------	--------	---------

##

Coefficients:

##		Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
----	--	----------	------------	---------	----------

##	(Intercept)	-1.0282135	0.1450822	-7.087	1.37e-12 ***
----	-------------	------------	-----------	--------	--------------

##	ndisease	0.0287146	0.0018776	15.293	< 2e-16 ***
----	----------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------------

##	physlimTRUE	0.4349585	0.0313656	13.867	< 2e-16 ***
----	-------------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------------

##	linc	0.1844135	0.0159876	11.535	< 2e-16 ***
----	------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------------

##	sexmale	-0.2448111	0.0279221	-8.768	< 2e-16 ***
----	---------	------------	-----------	--------	-------------

##	age	0.0042310	0.0007839	5.397	6.77e-08 ***
----	-----	-----------	-----------	-------	--------------

Results and Conclusions: Final Model

- ▶ From our knowledge on Poisson Distribution, we can write out the regression model like so

$$\log(MDU) = -1.03 + 0.029NDisease + 0.435PhysLim + 0.184linc - 0.245Male + 0.004Age$$

- ▶ Which is equivalent to $MDU = e^{-1.03+0.029NDisease+0.435PhysLim+0.184linc-0.245Male+0.004Age}$

Results and Conclusions: Another Application

- ▶ In addition to regression, we can use the poisson distribution to find probabilities of specific count occurrences or ranges of count occurrences in the data.

```
Probof4ormore = ppois(4,lambda=2.86, lower.tail=FALSE)  
Probof4ormore
```

```
## [1] 0.1617866
```

- ▶ This gives us the probability that a person will go to the doctor's office 4 or more times in a year. We can edit the lower.tail component of this code to give us the probability that a person will go to the doctor's office 4 or less times in a year

Discussion and Critiques: Model Assumptions

- ▶ We have good reason to question a few necessary assumptions of the Poisson Distribution in regards to our data set
- ▶ Mean and Variance are not equal $E[Y] = 2.8$ and $V[Y] = 4.5$
 - ▶ Over-dispersion, which could indicate that we should use a different model
- ▶ We have a large number of observations for which the count is 0
- ▶ Consider using a different model to fit to our data
 - ▶ Zero-Inflated Poisson Regression
 - ▶ accounts for large number of 0 counts in data set
 - ▶ Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Regression
 - ▶ helps with both larger number of 0s and over-dispersion

Discussion and Critiques: Inference

- ▶ With our data being so significant (perhaps abnormally), we were unsure of our ability to use the fitted equation with any confidence
- ▶ With a high number of possible predictors, we could have omitted some very significant variables from the regression, which could be vital in understanding what impacts utilization of healthcare.
- ▶ Data set is from the 1970s
 - ▶ Comprehensive, but outdated
 - ▶ If using data to enact policy shifts or structural changes, our data analysis might not be “in touch” enough with the current climate of health care.
- ▶ Data is collected from N.C. only, which limits the scope in which we can make inferences.
- ▶ Perhaps some cultural/societal impacts in N.C. region impacted our data

Conclusion

- ▶ Poisson Regression is useful for analyzing count data, but it is crucial to check the data set and see that conditions are met prior to analysis and inference
- ▶ Having a large sample size is helpful, but also must be aware of how that potentially impacts analysis.
- ▶ Working on real world data is tough and messy. Takes a lot more time and careful thought
 - ▶ No exact, clear path for analysis
- ▶ “One step forward, two steps back”

References

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