# R for Biologists: a powerful statistical tool in research

## Afaf Saaidi, June 2021

**Objective of this training:** To introduce biologists to the use of R for their statistical analysis. We provide an overall review of statistical measurement tools (mean, median . . . ) and the appropriate hypothesis test to use when comparing samples.

#Time allocation: 4 sessions of 50' each.

# Table of contents

- 1. Get initiated to R
- 2. Descriptive statistics
- 3. Inferential Statistics

The article Ali and Bhaskar (2016) was used as the basis for the statistical content.

### 1. Get initiated to R

### Rstudio

**How to set-up Rstudio?** Rstudio is a friendly user environment when one can use R code. Two options are available to you to acquire it:

### Option1: Local installation:

- Install R software: https://cran.rstudio.com/
- Install RStudio: https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/#download

**Option2:** Use the cloud version (convenient for training but limited use per month):

• Create an account for free on RStudio cloud https://rstudio.cloud

Four windows appear: top left (code), bottom left console, top right (environment with every objects we create) and top bottom (plots) .

### Why R and principle of packages:

- -R is an open-source and \*freely\* available
- -R is a strong scripting language for statistical and quantitative analysis
- -R allows to import data from Excel, mysql...
- -R is flexible and grows quickly (As of November 2020, more than 16,000 free packages are available).

### Manipulate data

```
# comments appear like this in code
```

**Existing datasets** Several R Datasets are available at: https://stat.ethz.ch/R-manual/R-devel/library/datasets/html/00Index.html

```
###### We will use an existing database " PlantGrowth" that Results from an experiment to compare yiel

## assign the dataset to Mydata, 30 obs. with two variables
Mydata1 <- PlantGrowth

## Get first instances of the dataframe with the variable labels
head(Mydata1)</pre>
```

```
## weight group
## 1 4.17 ctrl
## 2 5.58 ctrl
## 3 5.18 ctrl
## 4 6.11 ctrl
## 5 4.50 ctrl
## 6 4.61 ctrl
```

```
## specify the file name, be sure to upload it to the working directory
filename="RmrpProfiling.csv"
## Assign content to Mydata2 dataframe
Mydata2<-read.csv(filename)
## Get first instances of the dataframe with the variable labels
head(Mydata2)</pre>
```

### Import files

```
Helix opening closing length frequency RNAprofile Nature
## 1 P12b
               122
                       184
                                7
                                          O NotSampled Native
## 2
       P7
                80
                       195
                                          O NotSampled Native
                                3
                                          O NotSampled Native
## 3
       P4
                75
                       247
                                5
               100
                                6
                                              Featured Native
       P9
                       115
                                       1000
                                              Featured Native
## 5
       H1
                3
                       263
                                9
                                       1000
                                        981
                                              Featured Native
## 6
      P3b
                37
                        52
                                5
```

```
# Assume that we have 6 experiments, for each we record the length and the color of the plant
LengthPlant <-c(25,54,23,29,24,NA) #create a variable LengthPlant with 6 obs.
ColorPlant <-c('red', 'brown', 'green',NA, 'brown', 'red') #create a variable ColorPlant with 6 obs. Heads
NewData<-data.frame(LengthPlant,ColorPlant)
##Obtain the structure of the newly created dataframe
str(NewData)
```

## Create new data frame

```
## 'data.frame': 6 obs. of 2 variables:
## $ LengthPlant: num 25 54 23 29 24 NA
## $ ColorPlant : chr "red" "brown" "green" NA ...
```

```
## Specify the dataframe in x, and specify the file name in file.
write.table(x = NewData, file = "5Experiments.csv")
```

Export files

# 2- Descriptive statistics

### Variables

We remind that the variables on which we can do statistical analysis are quantitative variables.

 Quantitative or numerical data are subdivided into discrete (counted integer) and continuous measurements.

#### Measurments

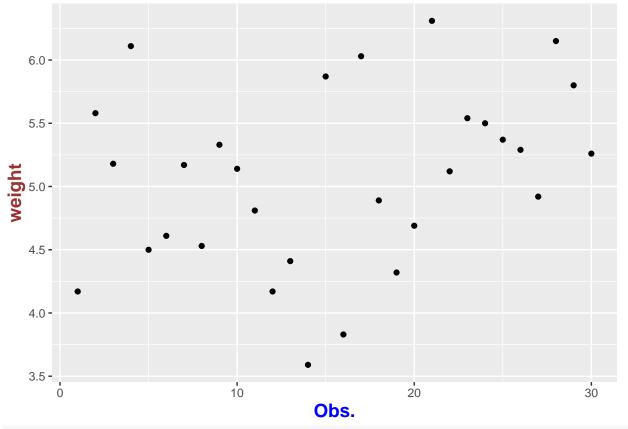
Descriptive statistics allow to describe the relationship between variables in a sample or in a population by measuring how the data is organized around a central location (central tendency) and the spread to extremes (degree of dispersion).

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of data in the form of mean, median, mode...

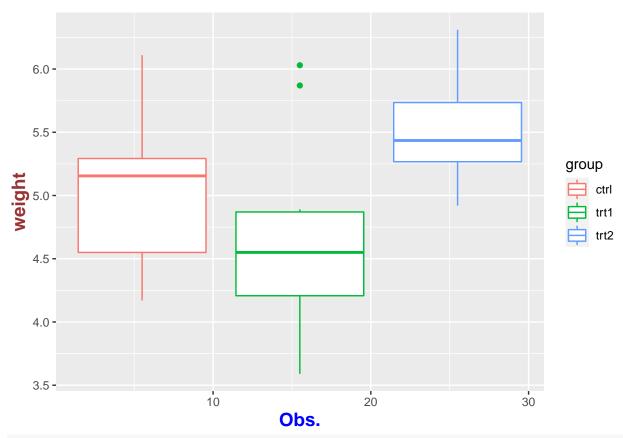
• R documentation:\* https://www.tutorialspoint.com/r/r\_mean\_median\_mode.htm

```
## Get statistics for all variables in the dataframe
summary(Mydata1)
##
        weight
                     group
  Min.
          :3.590
                    ctrl:10
## 1st Qu.:4.550
                    trt1:10
## Median :5.155
                    trt2:10
## Mean
           :5.073
## 3rd Qu.:5.530
## Max.
           :6.310
## Focus on the quantitative variable "weight":
Poids <- Mydata 1 $ weight
Poids
## [1] 4.17 5.58 5.18 6.11 4.50 4.61 5.17 4.53 5.33 5.14 4.81 4.17 4.41 3.59 5.87
## [16] 3.83 6.03 4.89 4.32 4.69 6.31 5.12 5.54 5.50 5.37 5.29 4.92 6.15 5.80 5.26
##1- Measures of the center:
#1-1 mean is the average of all values in the sample
mean(Poids, na.rm=TRUE) # na.rm: remove NA values
## [1] 5.073
# 1-2 median is the central value: arrange values in ascending or descending, get the middle value.
median(Poids)
## [1] 5.155
```

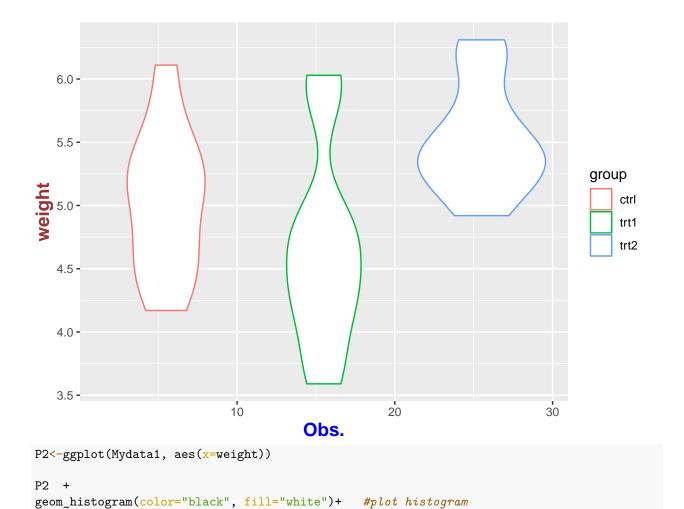
```
# 1-3 mode is the most common value
#install.packages("modeest")
                                             # Install modeest package
library(modeest)
                                      # Load modeest package
mfv(Poids) # mfv is the function to compute the mode from the package modeest.
## [1] 4.17
mfv(c(3, 3, 3, 9, 16, 16, 16, 27, 37, 48)) #Bimodal
## [1] 3 16
mfv(c(3, 3, 3, 9, 16, 16, 16, 27,27,27, 37, 48)) #multimodal
## [1] 3 16 27
##2-Measures of the spread
#2-1 Range =max-min
range(Poids)
## [1] 3.59 6.31
#2-2 Quartiles devide your dataset into 4 parts. Q1 (25%),Q2 (50%)...
quantile(Poids)
      0%
           25%
                 50%
                       75% 100%
## 3.590 4.550 5.155 5.530 6.310
##Xth percentile of an observation variable is the value that cuts off the first X % of the data values
\#Let\ us\ Find\ the\ 33rd\ and\ 98th\ percentiles\ of\ variable\ "Poids"
quantile(Poids, c(.33, .98))
      33%
##
             98%
## 4.7584 6.2172
Let us plot the variable "Poids":
## We will be using ggplot2 package for plots, first we should install it than call it:
#install.packages("qqplot2")
                                                    # Install ggplot2 package
library("ggplot2")
                                                   # Load qqplot2
## Warning: replacing previous import 'vctrs::data_frame' by 'tibble::data_frame'
## when loading 'dplyr'
## Let s create a variable P1 that will contain the plot parameters
P1 <- ggplot(Mydata1, aes(x = 1:nrow(Mydata1), y =weight))  # We are in the presence of an unidimens
P1<-P1+ xlab("Obs.")+ theme(
plot.title = element_text(color="red", size=14, face="bold.italic"),
axis.title.x = element_text(color="blue", size=14, face="bold"),
axis.title.y = element_text(color="#993333", size=14, face="bold")
) # theme() http://www.sthda.com/french/wiki/ggplot2-titres-titre-principal-titre-des-axes-et-legendes
P1 + geom_point()
                     # plot dots
```



P1+ geom\_boxplot(aes(y=weight,color=group)) # plot boxplot

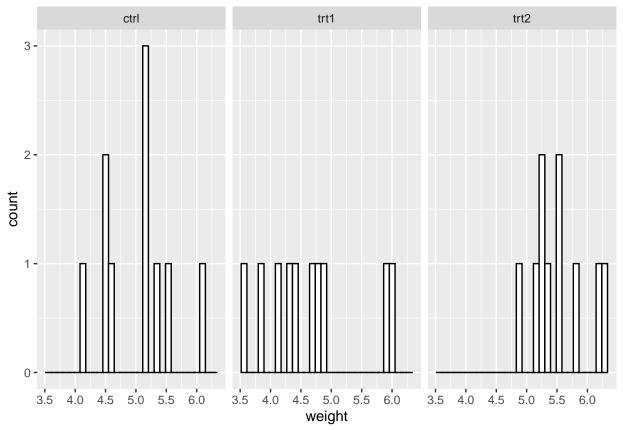


P1+geom\_violin(aes(y=weight,color=group)) # a more fancy boxplot showing more the points density



```
facet_wrap(~group) # group by group

## `stat_bin()` using `bins = 30`. Pick better value with `binwidth`.
```



### Dealing with ouliers

## ##

filter, lag

## The following objects are masked from 'package:base':

2 extreme values figure in trt1 box-plot distribution. What will happen if we discard them from the analysis?

```
P1 <- ggplot(Mydata1, aes(y=weight,color=group)) +
geom_boxplot()
summary(Mydata1[Mydata1$group=="trt1",])
##
        weight
                     group
##
           :3.590
                    ctrl: 0
    Min.
##
    1st Qu.:4.207
                    trt1:10
##
    Median :4.550
                    trt2: 0
##
    Mean
           :4.661
##
    3rd Qu.:4.870
    Max.
           :6.030
Mydata1filtered<- Mydata1[ Mydata1$group == "trt1" & Mydata1$weight>5.5, ]
 #install.packages("dplyr")
library(dplyr)
##
## Attaching package: 'dplyr'
##
  The following objects are masked from 'package:stats':
```

```
##
##
      intersect, setdiff, setequal, union
Mydata1 <- Mydata1 %>% anti_join(Mydata1filtered)
## Joining, by = c("weight", "group")
P1 <- ggplot(Mydata1, aes(y=weight,color=group)) +
geom_boxplot()
summary(Mydata1[Mydata1$group=="trt1",])
##
       weight
                    group
   Min.
##
          :3.590
                   ctrl:0
   1st Qu.:4.085
##
                  trt1:8
## Median :4.365
                   trt2:0
## Mean
         :4.339
## 3rd Qu.:4.720
          :4.890
## Max.
```

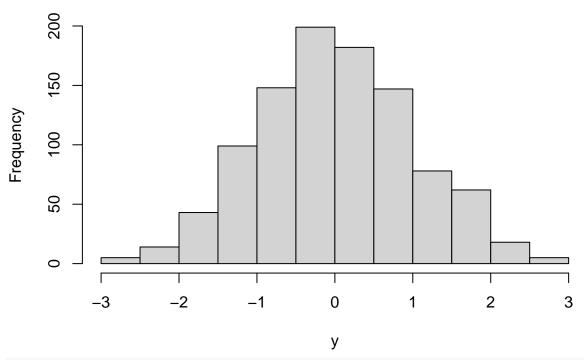
### Normal distribution

Biological variables are likely to be clustered around a central value (=mean).

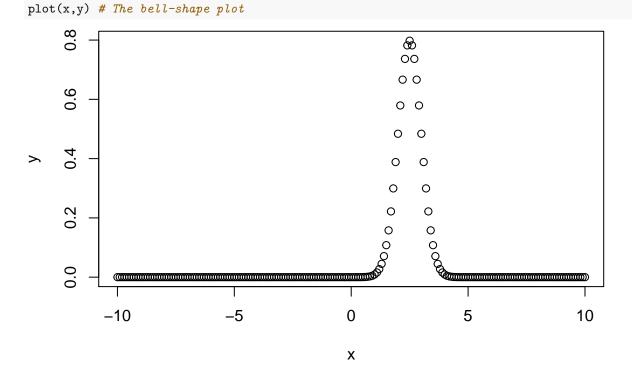
The standard normal distribution curve is a curve that is shaped like a bell where the data is symmetrically distributed around the central value.

```
## rnorm()
# Generate random numbers whose distribution is normal. It takes the sample size as input and generates
y <- rnorm(1000) # Create a sample of 1000 numbers which are normally distributed.
hist(y, main = "Normal Distribution") # Plot the histogram for this sample.</pre>
```

# **Normal Distribution**



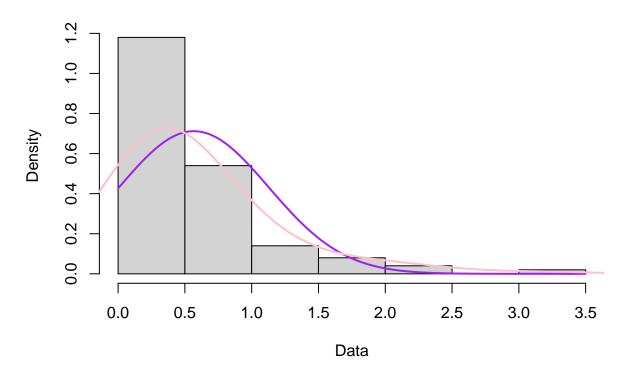
##dnorm()
#This function gives height of the probability distribution at each point for a given mean and standard  $x \leftarrow seq(-10, 10, by = .1)$  # Create a sequence of numbers between -10 and 10 incrementing by 0.1.  $y \leftarrow dnorm(x, mean = 2.5, sd = 0.5)$  # Choose the mean as 2.5 and standard deviation as 0.5.



### Skewed distribution

It is a distribution with an asymmetry of the observations about its mean. We count negatively skewed distribution (longer left tail) and positively skewed distribution (longer right tail).

# **Skewed distribution**



### 2-Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics are useful when it is not possible to examine every individual in a population. Inferential statistics make use a random sample to describe and make inferences about the entire population.

The objective is to test the hypotheses where a hypothesis is a suggested explanation for a given phenomenon. This test is performed by measuring the likelihood of the hypothesis to happen.

Null hypothesis (H0) stipulates that there is **no difference** between the studied population variables.

Alternative hypothesis (H1) stipulates that there is a difference between the studied population variables.

When performing test-hypothesis we make use of the P-value computed probability). The P value is the

probability of the event occurring by chance if the null hypothesis is true. It has values in [0,1] and in function of a significant level chosen by the researcher, the null hypothesis is either retained or rejected.

If the P-value is low as the significant level (usually set to 0.05) => reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis testing workflow:

- 1- State the Hypotheses: null and alternative hypothesis
- 2- Formulate the analysis: what is the appropriate test to use. what is the significante level to decide.
- 3- Analyse data: calculate the test statistic
- 4- Interepret results

### PARAMETRIC TESTS

Data that is **normally** distributed is analyzed with **parametric tests**. Two assumptions should be verified:

- The assumption of **normality**: the means of the samples and of the population are normally distributed.
- The assumption of **equal variance** which specifies that the variances of the samples and of their corresponding population are equal.

### How to test for normality?

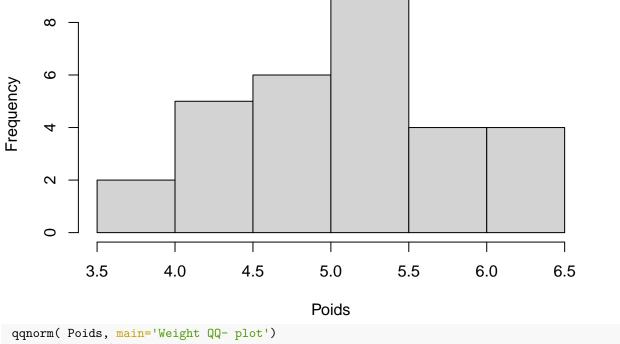
The most used tool to check for data normality is the quantile-quantile (QQ) plot. We want to compare a sample with a theoretical sample that comes from a normal distribution.

```
#qqnorm() : function plots your sample against a normal distribution.
#qqline : line that allows you to ocularly assess whether you see a clear deviation from normality.

#x <- rnorm(100)
#x <- rgamma(100, 1)
#hist(x)
#qqnorm( x, main='QQ- plot')
#qqline( x)

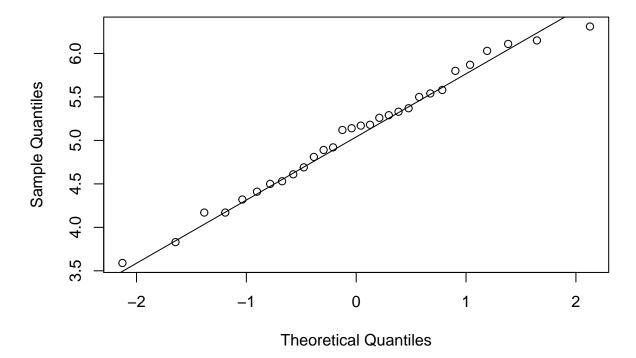
hist(Poids)</pre>
```

# **Histogram of Poids**



qqline( Poids )

# Weight QQ- plot

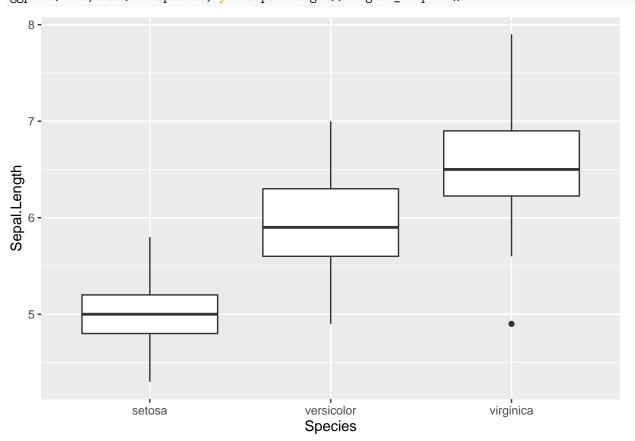


Student's t-test: Used to test the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the means of 2 groups.

- one-sample t-test: useful when comparing two populations X and Y. It tests if the mean of a sample from population X differs significantly from the given mean of population Y.
- unpaired t-test: two independent samples from one population. It tests if the population means estimated by two independent samples differ significantly.
- paired t-test: two dependent samples from one population. It tests if the population means estimated by two dependent samples differ significantly. (an example of dependent samples could be measurements made on the same subjects before and after a treatment)

```
library(dplyr)
head(iris)
              #iris dataset
##
     Sepal.Length Sepal.Width Petal.Length Petal.Width Species
## 1
              5.1
                           3.5
                                        1.4
                                                     0.2 setosa
## 2
              4.9
                           3.0
                                        1.4
                                                     0.2 setosa
## 3
              4.7
                           3.2
                                        1.3
                                                     0.2 setosa
## 4
              4.6
                           3.1
                                        1.5
                                                     0.2
                                                          setosa
## 5
              5.0
                           3.6
                                        1.4
                                                     0.2 setosa
              5.4
                           3.9
## 6
                                        1.7
                                                     0.4 setosa
## We would like to check if there is a "relationship" between the Sepal length and the specie? petal w
```

```
# Let us start with ploting a boxplot:
library(ggplot2)
ggplot(iris, aes(x = Species, y = Sepal.Length)) + geom_boxplot()
```



```
## No overlap between Box plots ==> Sepal.Length is a good predictor for the Species.
## stating t-test hypothesis
#HO: there is no difference between the observed Sepal.Length values for various Species.
#H1: there is a difference between the observed Sepal.Length values for various Species. in other words
x <- iris[iris$Species == "setosa", ]$Sepal.Length
y <- iris[iris$Species == "versicolor", ]$Sepal.Length
tt <- t.test(x, y, paired = FALSE, alternative = "two.sided", var.equal = FALSE) # use help to unders
##
##
      Welch Two Sample t-test
##
## data: x and y
## t = -10.521, df = 86.538, p-value < 2.2e-16
## alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
## 95 percent confidence interval:
## -1.1057074 -0.7542926
## sample estimates:
## mean of x mean of y
##
      5.006
                5.936
```

**Pearson correlation coefficient** Pearson correlation is the most frequent parametric test to assess the strength of association between two variables:

```
#install.packages("ggpubr")
library("ggpubr")
my_data <- mtcars
head(my_data, 6)
##
                    mpg cyl disp hp drat
                                            wt qsec vs am gear carb
## Mazda RX4
                    21.0 6 160 110 3.90 2.620 16.46
                                                      0
                                                        1
## Mazda RX4 Wag
                    21.0 6 160 110 3.90 2.875 17.02 0 1
## Datsun 710
                    22.8 4 108 93 3.85 2.320 18.61 1 1
                    21.4 6 258 110 3.08 3.215 19.44 1 0
## Hornet 4 Drive
                                                                  1
## Hornet Sportabout 18.7 8 360 175 3.15 3.440 17.02 0 0
                                                                  2
## Valiant
                    18.1 6 225 105 2.76 3.460 20.22 1 0
                                                                  1
ggscatter(my_data, x = "mpg", y = "wt",
         add = "reg.line", conf.int = TRUE,
         cor.coef = TRUE, cor.method = "pearson",
         xlab = "Miles/(US) gallon", ylab = "Weight (1000 lbs)")
```

## `geom\_smooth()` using formula 'y ~ x'

```
5
Weight (1000 lbs)
   2
    1
                        15
                                        20
                                                         25
                                                                          30
                                                                                          35
       10
                                        Miles/(US) gallon
res <- cor.test(my_data$wt, my_data$mpg,</pre>
                     method = "pearson")
res
##
##
    Pearson's product-moment correlation
##
## data: my_data$wt and my_data$mpg
## t = -9.559, df = 30, p-value = 1.294e-10
## alternative hypothesis: true correlation is not equal to 0
  95 percent confidence interval:
    -0.9338264 -0.7440872
## sample estimates:
##
          cor
## -0.8676594
     t is the t-test statistic value (t = -9.559),
#
     df is the degrees of freedom (df= 30),
     p-value is the significance level of the t-test (p-value = 1.29410^{-10}).
     conf.int is the confidence interval of the correlation coefficient at 95% (conf.int = [-0.9338, -0
     sample estimates is the correlation coefficient (Cor.coeff = -0.87).
### inverse (= negative) correlation ==> both variables move in the opposite direction
```

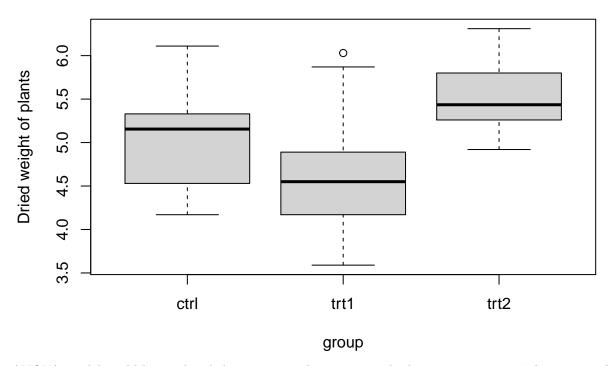
R = -0.87, p = 1.3e - 10

Analysis of variance (ANOVA): Used to test the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the means of 2 or more groups.

In ANOVA, two variances are studied: – between-group variability - within-group variability Then, the two estimates of variances are compared using the F-test. F-statistics is computed as the ratio of the mean

squares between the groups and the mean squares within groups.

# PlantGrowth data



ANOVA model could be used to help us answer the question whether any group weight means differ from another. ANOVA does not specify which groups differ.

## p-value <0.05 => at least one group mean differs from another at the 0.05 level of significance and

Tukey's Honest Significant Differences (HSD) Documentation is available at https://bookdown.org/steve\_midway/DAR/understanding-anova-in-r.html.

## p-value >0.05 => no group means differ from each other we are done with te model.

In order to determine which groups significantly differ from each other, the analysis after ANOVA to quantify the differences between groups could be performed using HSD.

HSD runs a **pairwise comparison** of all possible combinations of groups and test these pairs for significant differences between their means.

```
### PlantGrowth dataset
aov.model <- aov(PlantGrowth$weight ~ PlantGrowth$group)</pre>
summary(aov.model)
                     Df Sum Sq Mean Sq F value Pr(>F)
## PlantGrowth$group 2 3.766 1.8832
                                        4.846 0.0159 *
## Residuals
                     27 10.492 0.3886
## Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
TukeyHSD(aov.model)
     Tukey multiple comparisons of means
##
##
       95% family-wise confidence level
##
## Fit: aov(formula = PlantGrowth$weight ~ PlantGrowth$group)
## $`PlantGrowth$group`
               diff
                           lwr
                                     upr
                                             p adj
## trt1-ctrl -0.371 -1.0622161 0.3202161 0.3908711
## trt2-ctrl 0.494 -0.1972161 1.1852161 0.1979960
## trt2-trt1 0.865 0.1737839 1.5562161 0.0120064
## 3 different pairwise comparisons to evaluate.
##diff column provides an estimate of the mean difference between the groups
##lwr and upr: lower and upper bound of the confidence interval on the difference.
## if the **confidence interval does not overlap 0** we do have evidence for a significant difference
## p-values <0.05 we have two groups combinations that differ: trt2-trt1. which matches the box-plot vi
```

### Non-PARAMETRIC TESTS

In case the distribution of the sample is skewed or unknown, Non-parametric tests are used.

```
library(dplyr)
head(iris) #iris dataset
```

### Chi-Square test of independence:

```
Sepal.Length Sepal.Width Petal.Length Petal.Width Species
## 1
              5.1
                          3.5
                                        1.4
                                                    0.2 setosa
## 2
              4.9
                          3.0
                                        1.4
                                                    0.2 setosa
## 3
              4.7
                          3.2
                                        1.3
                                                    0.2 setosa
                                                     0.2 setosa
## 4
              4.6
                          3.1
                                        1.5
## 5
              5.0
                          3.6
                                        1.4
                                                    0.2 setosa
## 6
              5.4
                          3.9
                                        1.7
                                                    0.4 setosa
```

## We would like to check if there is a "relationship" between the petal width and the specie? petal wi

```
summary(iris$Petal.Width) # statistics about Petal.Width
```

```
## Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
## 0.100 0.300 1.300 1.199 1.800 2.500
```

```
levels(iris$Petal.Width.Categorical) <- c("Small", "Big") # [0,mean]: "Small", ]mean,max]: "Big"
head(iris)
##
     Sepal.Length Sepal.Width Petal.Length Petal.Width Species
## 1
                          3.5
              5.1
                                        1.4
                                                    0.2 setosa
## 2
              4.9
                          3.0
                                        1.4
                                                    0.2 setosa
## 3
                                                    0.2 setosa
              4.7
                          3.2
                                        1.3
                                                    0.2 setosa
## 4
                          3.1
                                        1.5
              4.6
## 5
              5.0
                          3.6
                                        1.4
                                                    0.2 setosa
              5.4
## 6
                          3.9
                                        1.7
                                                    0.4 setosa
##
    Petal.Width.Categorical
## 1
                       Small
## 2
                       Small
## 3
                       Small
## 4
                       Small
## 5
                       Small
                       Small
## 6
## look foor interaction between Species and Petal.Width.Categorical.
##Since these two are categorical variables we will use a chi-square test.
## Start with contingency table (frequencies)
CT <- table(iris$Petal.Width.Categorical, iris$Species)</pre>
CT
##
##
           setosa versicolor virginica
##
               50
                          10
     Small
     Big
                                     50
##
                0
                          40
### Formulating hypothesis
#HO : The Petal.Width.Categorical has no affect on the Species
#H1 : The Petal.Width.Categorical has some affect on the Species
CHtest <- chisq.test(CT) ## chisq.test function , takes as argument the contingency table
CHtest
##
##
      Pearson's Chi-squared test
##
## data: CT
## X-squared = 116.67, df = 2, p-value < 2.2e-16
#p-value < 0.05 => reject the null hypothesis => We can say with confidence that Petal. Width. Categoric
####Kolmogorov-Smirnov test
```

## Let us choose the median as the threshold to define two categories ("Small", "Big")

iris\$Petal.Width.Categorical <- cut(iris\$Petal.Width, breaks =c(0,mean(iris\$Petal.Width),max(iris\$Petal

## create a new variable Petal. Width\_Categorical and add it the iris dataframe

####Itominogorov-binimov test

The two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test is used to test whether **two random samples**\* are drawn from the **same distribution**.

The null hypothesis is that both distributions are identical. The statistic of the KS test is a distance between the two empirical distributions (computed as the maximum absolute difference between their cumulative curves).

### Bootstraping techniques:

Useful to estimate the mean and the median for the population using statistics from the sample. Assuming that data is representative The Bootstrap population obsr. from the sample appear many times

1- build a bootstrap sample that is a random sample with replacement from and with the same size as the sample. 2- compute the bootstrap statistic (mean, median...) 3- Reapeat 1 and 2 to create the Bootstrap distribution

```
#https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/infer/infer.pdf
\#https://moderndive.github.io/moderndive\_labs/static/previous\_versions/v0.5.0/9-confidence-intervals.ht
#install.packages("infer")
library(infer)
bootstrap_distribution<-Mydata1 %>%
specify(response = weight) %>%
                                    #weight as variable of interest
                                                # generate bootstrap sample. reps: the number of resamp
generate(reps = 1000, type = "bootstrap") %>%
calculate(stat = "mean")
                                # Calculate mean of each bootstrap sample
bootstrap_distribution
## # A tibble: 1,000 x 2
##
      replicate stat
          <int> <dbl>
##
##
  1
             1 4.86
## 2
             2 5.10
##
   3
             3 5.03
  4
             4 5.06
##
## 5
             5 4.81
```

## # ... with 990 more rows bootstrap\_distribution %>% visualize()

## 6 ## 7

##

## 10

8 ##

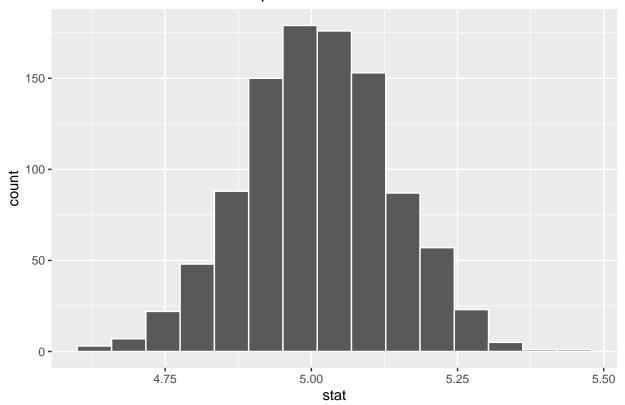
6 4.67

7 4.92

8 4.95

9 4.79 10 5.30

# Simulation-Based Bootstrap Distribution



# References

# Conclusion

R is a powerful tool for non-programmers to perform statistical tests.

Ali, Zulfiqar, and S Bala Bhaskar. 2016. "Basic Statistical Tools in Research and Data Analysis." *Indian Journal of Anaesthesia* 60 (9): 662.