# SATS: Signature Analyzer for Targeted Sequencing

## **User Guide**

DongHyuk Lee<sup>1</sup>, William Wheeler<sup>2</sup> and Bin Zhu<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Statistics, Pusan National University, Busan, Korea

<sup>2</sup> Information Management Services (IMS), Inc. Rockville, MD, USA

<sup>3</sup> Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD, USA

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#### 1 Introduction

For the targeted sequenced tumors, applying the existing mutational signature analysis tools is challenging because they are developed for whole-exome or whole-genome sequencing (WES or WGS). Since the sequenced genomic sizes and contexts of targeted panels differ from WES or WGS, not all mutational signatures detected by WES or WGS can be found using the targeted sequencing panels. On the other hand, panel-based signatures may include *de novo* presence of signatures. To identify mutational signatures accurately, we developed a new method, SATS (Signature Analyzer for Targeted Sequencing), for targeted sequenced tumors. In this guide, we present a step-by-step guide to detecting mutational signatures in targeted sequenced tumors, using the **R** package *SATS*.

The SATS procedure comprises four steps, which encompass the detection of *de novo* signatures, mapping the *de novo* signatures to the reference TMB signatures, the estimation of signature activities, and the calculation of reference signature expectancies. In cases where a sufficiently large number of tumors are sequenced, the complete set of SATS steps can be effectively deployed (as detailed in Section 4). Conversely, in situations where access to only a limited number of tumors, or even a single tumor, is possible, the signature refitting steps involving the estimation of signature activities and expectancies remain applicable (as discussed in Section 5).

## 2 Installation

To install from Github directly, one can use the **R** package *devtools*:

Alternatively, SATS\_0.0.7.tar.gz (for Unix) or SATS\_0.0.7.zip (for Windows, R version >= 4.1) from the Github page<sup>1</sup> can be installed using the following commands:

```
install.packages("SATS_0.0.7.tar.gz", repos = NULL, type = "source")
install.packages("SATS_0.0.7.zip", repos = NULL, type = "win.binary")
```

Once installed, SATS can be loaded on R by calling

```
> library(SATS)
```

## 3 Example data

For illustrative purposes, we simulated a  $96 \times 10027$  mutation catalog matrix  $\mathbf{V}$ , which contains 10027 targeted sequenced tumors for 96 single base substitution (SBS) types. Each element of the matrix is generated from the Poisson distribution (rpois()) function) with the mean corresponding to each element of  $\mathbf{L} \circ \mathbf{W}_T \mathbf{H}_T$ , where  $\circ$  is elementwise multiplication,  $\mathbf{L}$  is a given panel size matrix with the same  $96 \times 10027$  size of  $\mathbf{V}$ ,  $\mathbf{W}_T$  is the profile matrix of the tumor mutation burden (TMB, in the unit of the number of mutations per million base pairs) based signatures of size  $96 \times 6$  for 6 SBS signatures (SBS1, SBS2/13, SBS4, SBS5, SBS40, SBS89) and  $\mathbf{H}_T$  is the signature activity matrix of size  $6 \times 10027$ . All 4 matrices are stored in SimData with corresponding names:  $\mathbf{V}$  (SimData\$TrueH),  $\mathbf{W}_T$  (SimData\$TrueH),  $\mathbf{W}_T$  (SimData\$TrueW TMB).

<sup>1</sup>https://github.com/binzhulab/SATS

```
A[C>A]T
             0
                     0
                             0
                                     0
C[C>A]A
             2
                     0
                             0
                                     0
                                             1
C[C>A]C
             1
                     0
                                             0
                                                     0
                             0
                                     0
```

## 4 SATS procedures

The primary purpose of the SATS algorithm is to conduct mutational signature analysis for targeted sequenced tumors, summarized in Figure 1. Somatic mutations (e.g., single base substitutions [SBS]) detected by the targeted sequencing are summarized into the mutation type matrix **V** based on the mutation and its genomic context. Given the mutation type matrix **V**, *de novo* tumor mutation burden (TMB) signatures are discovered by SigneR (Rosales et al., 2017), adjusting the panel sizes (Section 4.2). Next, we map the *de novo* signature obtained by signeR to the reference SBS TMB signatures (found in RefTMB\$SBS\_W; Section 5) using the penalized non-negative least squares (Tibshirani, 2011; Section 4.3). Then given the mutation type matrix (**V**), panel size of each tumor (**L**) and the mapped reference TMB signature profiles, signature activities are estimated for every tumor by the Expectation-Maximization (EM) algorithm simultaneously (Section 4.4). Finally, we computed the expected number of mutations due to each signature, called signature expectancy, for all tumors simultaneously (Section 4.5).

### 4.1 Input data

For the mutation catalog matrix (**V**), it could be an **R** dataframe or matrix of which elements are non-negative counts. Each column of **V** corresponds to a tumor (or sample), while its row represents a mutation type. Although the selection of the number of signatures is independent of the order of mutation type, we specified the order of mutation type according to the COSMIC database (SBS signature<sup>2</sup>).

The element of the panel size matrix ( $\mathbf{L}$ ) represents the length of the trinucleotide contexts per million base pair to the corresponding sequencing panel. Similarly, each column of  $\mathbf{L}$  corresponds to a tumor (or sample) while its row represents a mutation type.

<sup>2</sup>https://cancer.sanger.ac.uk/signatures/sbs/

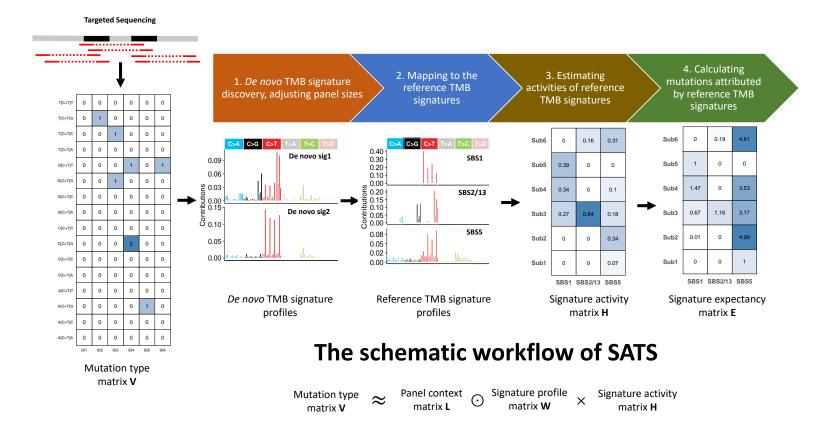


Figure 1: The schematic workflow of SATS (Signature Analyzer for Targeted Sequencing).

### 4.2 Application of the signeR algorithm

To estimate  $de\ novo\ SBS\ signatures\ \widehat{\textbf{W}}$ , we first apply signeR (need to reference) which finds an optimal solution  $\widehat{\textbf{W}}$  and  $\widehat{\textbf{H}}$  such that  $\textbf{V}\approx \textbf{L}\circ\widehat{\textbf{W}}\widehat{\textbf{H}}$ . Since signeR uses a Bayesian approach with Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC), it is computationally intensive and time-consuming if the entire  $96\times 10027$  matrices V and L are used.

Therefore, we used pooled tumor of 100 combined samples, noting that pooling would not change the TMB-based signature profile. We are first interested in estimating  $\mathbf{W}$ . In the codes below,  $v_{sum}$  and  $\mathbf{L}_{sum}$  are combined mutation count matrix and the sum of panel size for these corresponding combined samples used to create  $v_{sum}$ , respectively. Then they are main arguments,  $\mathbf{M}$  and  $\mathbf{Opport}$ 

of signeR() function as shown below. Note that the resulting  $\hat{\mathbf{H}}$  has a different dimension from the original matrix  $\mathbf{V}$  by pooling samples.

Another argument of signeR() function we used is nlim which specifies the range of possible number of optimal signatures. It needs much time to run the function if the upper bound of nlim is large. From our limited experience, the optimal number of signatures computed by signeR(), ranging between 2 to 5. Once signeR() is done, BICboxplot() can be used to visualize the number of optimal signatures by signeR (Figure 2).

```
> library(tidyverse)
> V_group <- as.data.frame(t(SimData$V))</pre>
> V_group$srting <- as.character((1:dim(V_group)[1])%/%100)</pre>
> V_sum <- V_group %>% group_by(srting) %>%
       dplyr::select('A[C>A]A':'T[T>G]T')%>%summarise_all(sum)
Adding missing grouping variables: `srting`
> V_sum=as.data.frame(V_sum[,-1])
> rownames(V_sum) = paste0("G", rownames(V_sum))
> L_group <- as.data.frame(t(SimData$L))</pre>
> L_group$srting <- as.character((1:dim(L_group)[1])%/%100)</pre>
> L_sum <- L_group %>% group_by(srting) %>%
       dplyr::select('A[C>A]A':'T[T>G]T')%>%summarise_all(sum)
Adding missing grouping variables: `srting`
> L_sum=as.data.frame(L_sum[,-1])
> rownames(L_sum) = paste0("G", rownames(L_sum))
> ## Extract W hat
> library(signeR)
> set.seed(4022022)
> signeR_re <- signeR(M=V_sum, Opport=L_sum, nlim=c(1,5))</pre>
Evaluating models with the number of signatures ranging from 1 to 5,
please be patient.
Evaluating 1 signatures.
EM algorithm:
|-----| 100%
Running Gibbs sampler for 1 signature...Done.
Evaluating 2 signatures.
EM algorithm:
|----| 100%
```

```
Running Gibbs sampler for 2 signatures...Done.
Evaluating 3 signatures.
EM algorithm:
|----| 100%
Running Gibbs sampler for 3 signatures...Done.
Evaluating 4 signatures.
EM algorithm:
|=======| 100%
Running Gibbs sampler for 4 signatures...Done.
Evaluating 5 signatures.
EM algorithm:
|----| 100%
Running Gibbs sampler for 5 signatures...Done.
The optimal number of signatures is 2.
Running Gibbs sampler for 2 signatures...Done.
>BICboxplot(signeR_re)
```

#### **Bayesian Information Criterion**

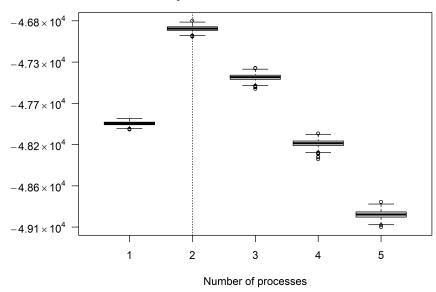


Figure 2: BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion) plot of signeR

## 4.3 Mapping *de novo* TMB-based signatures to reference TMB signatures

Because the targeted sequencing panels have limited somatic mutations compared with WGS or WES, signeR identifies a few *de novo* TMB-based signatures (adjusted by panel size matrix  $\mathbf{L}$ ; Figure 3), which could be a linear combination of reference TMB signatures. Therefore we could consider mapping *de novo* signeR signature matrix  $\widehat{\mathbf{W}}$  to reference TMB signature  $\mathbf{W}_0$  (stored in RefTMB\$SBS\_W).

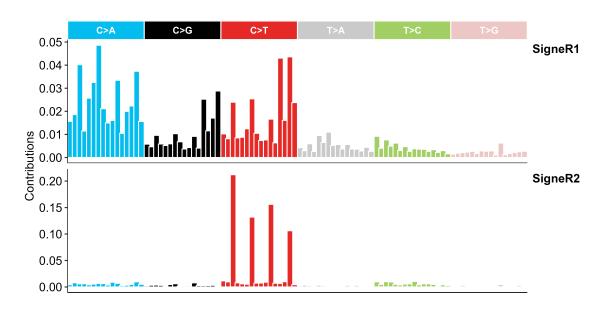


Figure 3: De novo TMB signature profiles identified by signeR (Section 4.2)

To this end, we applied penalized non-negative least squares (pNNLS) for selecting the reference TMB signatures. Specifically, we repeated pNNLS 100 times to reduce the randomness of cross-validation involved in pNNLS. Then reference TMB signatures are selected with a coefficient greater than 0.1 in more than 80 repeats.

It can be done by calling MappingSignature (W\_hat, W\_ref=NULL, niter=100, cutoff.I2=0.1, min.repeats=80) in the SATS package. W\_hat is a de novo signatures from signeR (or any other signature analysis tool). W\_ref is for the reference signature profiles, which will be mapped to. And the default is NULL with RefTMB\$SBS\_W used. The remaining nIter, cutoff.I2 and min.repeats

specifies the number of pNNLS repetitions (the default is 100), cutoff coefficient value to select signatures (the default is 0.1) and the minimum number of repetitions greater than cutoff coefficient value (the default is 80), respectively.

As a result, the mapped reference TMB signatures are SBS1, SBS2/13, SBS4, SBS5, SBS40, and SBS89 with 100 frequencies. Their profiles are drawn in Figure 4.

They are the same as signatures used to generate data (colnames (SimData\$TrueW\_TMB)).

```
> W_hat <- signeR_re$Phat
> MappedSig <- MappingSignature(W_hat = W_hat, W_ref = RefTMB$SBS_W)</pre>
> MappedSig
 Reference freq
      SBS1 100
2 SBS2_13 100
3
      SBS4 100
4
     SBS40 100
5
      SBS5 100
     SBS89 100
> colnames(SimData$TrueW_TMB)
[1] "SBS1" "SBS2 13" "SBS4"
                                 "SBS5"
                                           "SBS40"
                                                    "SBS89"
```

## 4.4 Estimation of signature activities by an expectation-maximization algorithm

Let  $\mathbf{W}^*$  be the mapped reference TMB signature profiles. Then given the original mutation catalog matrix  $\mathbf{V}$ , the panel size matrix  $\mathbf{L}$ , and  $\mathbf{W}^*$ , we can extract the signature activities  $\widehat{\mathbf{H}}$  with the function <code>EstimateSigActivity(V, L, W, n.start=50, iter.max=5000, eps=1e-5)</code> in the SATS package. The three main input matrices are  $\mathbf{V}$ ,  $\mathbf{L}$ , and  $\mathbf{W}^*$  (or any signature profiles).

Because the EM algorithm is used to estimate signature activities, n.start, iter.max and eps control EM part. Because the convergence to a local saddle point can be an issue of the EM algorithm, it would be good practice to try multiple initial values (n.start, the default is 50). For each initial value, the default value

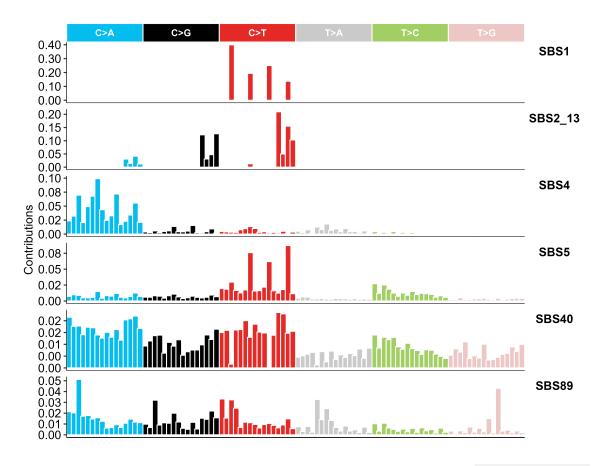


Figure 4: The mapped reference SBS TMB signatures obatined by MappingSigna ture() function

of the maximal iteration of the EM algorithm (iter.max) is 5000 and the stopping tolerance (eps) is set to  $10^{-5}$ .

The function EstimateSigActivity() returns the signature activities matrix estimate  $\widehat{\mathbf{H}}$ , convergence status (1 for converged and 0 for not converged), and the largest log likelihood among n.start initial values.

```
SBS1 295.42 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.00
SBS2 13 0.00
              0.0
                   11.7
                          28.3
                               18.40
SBS4 180.96
              0.0
                   0.0
                         0.0 20.52
      4.22
SBS5
              0.0
                   0.0
                         93.3
                               3.03
SBS40
      44.64
            85.5
                   0.0
                         21.7 72.39
SBS89
      0.00
            52.6
                   0.0
                         0.0 0.00
> H_hat$converged
[1] 1
> H_hat$loglike
[1] -0.2172882
```

## 4.5 Calculation of signature expectancy

The final step is to compute the expected number of mutations attributed by reference TMB signatures (i.e., signature expectancy) given matrices  $\mathbf{L}$ ,  $\mathbf{W}^*$  (the mapped reference TMB signature profiles; see Section 4.3) and  $\widehat{\mathbf{H}}$  (the signature activities matrix estimate; see Section 4.4). The signature expectancy can be computed via  $\mathtt{CalculateSigExpectancy}(\mathtt{L}, \mathtt{W}, \mathtt{H})$  in the SATS package. It decomposes mutations of a tumor into mutations due to the identified signatures. For example, Sample 1 has 14 mutations, about 4.8 caused by signature 1, 7 by signature 4, about 0.2 by signature 5 and two by signature 40.

```
> SigExp <- CalculateSigExpectancy(L = SimData$L, W = W_star, H = H_hat$H)</pre>
> round(SigExp[,1:5], 2)
     Sample1 Sample2 Sample3 Sample4 Sample5
       4.79 0.00
                       0 0.00 0.00
SBS1
SBS2_13
        0.00 0.00
                         1 1.08 0.82
        7.04 0.00
                         0
SBS4
                             0.00 0.77
SBS5
        0.21 0.00
                         0
                             2.93 0.07
        1.95
               3.87
                        0
                             0.99
                                    3.34
SBS40
SBS89
        0.00
               2.13
                             0.00
                                   0.00
> colSums(SimData$V[,1:5])
Sample1 Sample2 Sample3 Sample4 Sample5
                  1
```

## 5 Signature refitting of SATS

An additional benefit of the SATS algorithm is its capability to estimate signature activities and expectancies, even when working with a single tumor sample, as long as the set of signatures specific to a particular cancer type is known. It becomes possible to estimate their signature activities and expectancies by utilizing the pancancer repertoire of SBS and DBS TMB signatures. A detailed illustrative example is provided in Section 5.2 for clarification

## 5.1 The pan-cancer repertoire of reference signatures

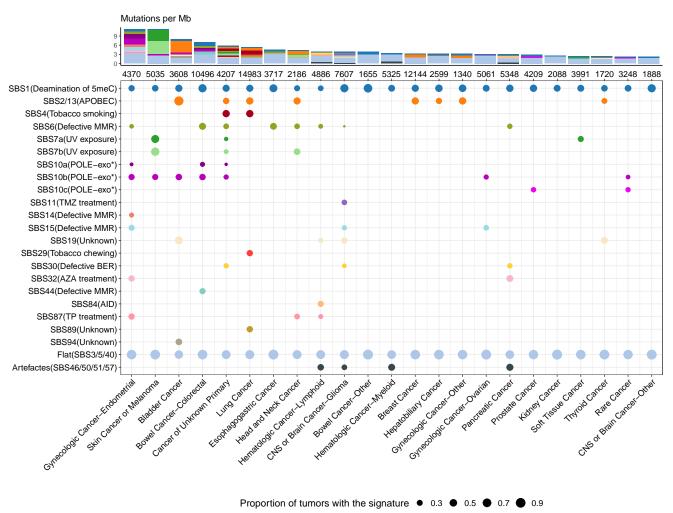


Figure 5: Repertoire of SBS mutational signatures in the AACR Project GENIE

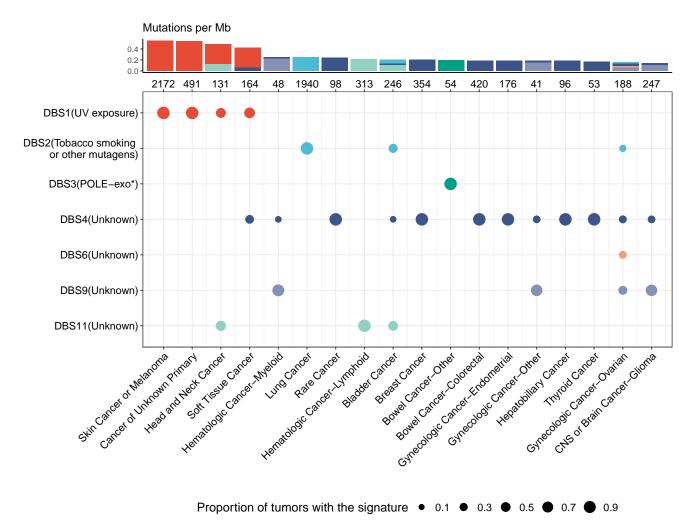


Figure 6: Repertoire of DBS mutational signatures in the AACR Project GENIE

In most practical applications, medical practitioners usually have only a few or even just a single tumor sample for a specific caner type. While it is not feasible to derive *de novo* signatures from these limited set of tumors, it is possible to obtain estimates of mutational activities for the tumor in question. This can be achieved by utilizing predefined reference TMB signatures through the refitting process. To this end, a pan-cancer repertoire of mutational signatures applied to the targeted sequenced tumors from the AACR Project GENIE is obtained by SATS procedure and presented in Figures 5 and 6.

The COSIMC reference TMB signature profiles and cancer specific signature

information for both SBS and DBS are stored in RefTMB: RefTMB\$SBS\_W and RefTMB\$SBS\_refSigs contain the SBS TMB signature profiles of size 96 by 76 and the list of cancer specific SBS signature names, respectively. Similarly, RefTMB\$DBS\_W and RefTMB\$DBS\_refSigs contain the COSMIC DBS TMB signature and the list of cancer specific DBS signature names.

```
> data(RefTMB, package = "SATS")
> dim(RefTMB$SBS_W)
[1] 96 76
> RefTMB$SBS_W[1:6, 1:6]
           SBS1 SBS2_13 SBS3 SBS4
                                          SBS5
A[C>A]A 1.21e-04 6.84e-04 0.0155 0.0236 7.22e-03 9.37e-05
A[C>A]C 5.40e-04 5.64e-04 0.0213 0.0322 9.81e-03 1.99e-04
A[C>A]G 1.94e-04 9.48e-04 0.0104 0.0697 8.88e-03 9.14e-05
A[C>A]T 2.19e-04 2.09e-04 0.0114 0.0206 4.97e-03 4.96e-05
C[C>A]A 4.66e-05 6.58e-04 0.0183 0.0492 4.87e-03 4.37e-04
C[C>A]C 3.73e-04 6.08e-04 0.0287 0.0679 5.62e-03 1.37e-03
> head(RefTMB$SBS_refSigs, 8)
               cancerType COSMIC
1
         Bladder Cancer SBS1
2
          Bladder Cancer SBS10b
         Bladder Cancer SBS19
          Bladder Cancer SBS2_13
          Bladder Cancer SBS5
          Bladder Cancer SBS94
7 Bowel Cancer-Colorectal SBS1
8 Bowel Cancer-Colorectal SBS10a
```

These resources can be readily applied to the refitting process on a daily basis in the clinic as elaborated in the subsequent section.

## 5.2 An analysis of a single tumor with the reference TMB signatures

The basic procedure follows a similar structure as detailed in the previous sections (Sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6). However, the mapped reference TMB signature profiles,  $\mathbf{W}^*$  (Sections 4.2 and 4.3), are not accessible due to the limited sample size. In such cases, we can substitute the mapped reference TMB signatures with those provided

in Figure 5, given that the cancer type of the particular tumor sample is known. For example, if a targeted sequenced tumor is obtained from breast cancer, then SBS1, SBS2\_13, SBS5, and SBS40 can be taken from the list of cancer specific SBS signature names RefTMB\$SBS\_refSigs as illustrated below. The signature repertoire from other cancer types is available by simply replacing "Breast Cancer" with the appropriate cancer type. A list of available cancer types can be found RefTMB\$SBS\_refSigs[, "cancerType"].

```
> unique(RefTMB$SBS_refSigs[, "cancerType"])
[1] "Bladder Cancer"
                                     "Bowel Cancer-Colorectal"
[3] "Bowel Cancer-Other"
                                     "Breast Cancer"
[5] "Cancer of Unknown Primary"
                                    "CNS or Brain Cancer-Glioma"
[7] "CNS or Brain Cancer-Other"
                                    "Esophagogastric Cancer"
[9] "Gynecologic Cancer-Endometrial" "Gynecologic Cancer-Other"
[11] "Gynecologic Cancer-Ovarian"
                                     "Head and Neck Cancer"
[13] "Hematologic Cancer-Lymphoid"
                                     "Hematologic Cancer-Myeloid"
[15] "Hepatobiliary Cancer"
                                     "Kidney Cancer"
[17] "Lung Cancer"
                                     "Pancreatic Cancer"
[19] "Prostate Cancer"
                                     "Rare Cancer"
                                     "Soft Tissue Cancer"
[21] "Skin Cancer or Melanoma"
[23] "Thyroid Cancer"
> RefTMB$SBS_refSigs[RefTMB$SBS_refSigs$cancerType == "Breast Cancer", ]
       cancerType COSMIC
15 Breast Cancer SBS1
16 Breast Cancer SBS2 13
17 Breast Cancer SBS40
18 Breast Cancer
                   SBS5
```

For the sake of illustration, we employ a single simulated tumor derived from a skin Cancer which is stored in SimData\$SingleTumorEx. This example dataset compromises mutation counts corresponding to 96 SBS categories (in the singleV column) and the associated sequencing context (in the singleL column). In this example, we provide a comprehensive walkthrough of the entire process using SBS counts. However, it's important to note that DBS mutation counts can be analyzed in a similar manner, leveraging the resources available in RefTMB\$DBS\_W and RefTMB\$DBS\_refSigs.

```
> head(SimData$SingleTumorEx)
      singleV singleL
A[C>A]A 0 0.051058
A[C>A]C
            1 0.039010
A[C>A]G
            0 0.013127
A[C>A]T
            0 0.042381
           0 0.062427
C[C>A]A
           0 0.051509
C[C>A]C
> RefTMB$SBS_refSigs[RefTMB$SBS_refSigs$cancerType == "Skin Cancer or Melanoma", ]
              cancerType COSMIC
110 Skin Cancer or Melanoma SBS1
111 Skin Cancer or Melanoma SBS10b
112 Skin Cancer or Melanoma SBS5
113 Skin Cancer or Melanoma SBS7a
114 Skin Cancer or Melanoma SBS7b
```

Subsequently, with signatures SBS1, SBS5, SBS7a, SBS7b, and SBS10b, which have been identified within a pan-cancer repertoire (as demonstrated in the code above), we can proceed to estimate mutational activities and signature expectancies as outlined follows.

In the subsequent code, the SBS.list constructs a new  $\mathbf{W}^*$ , which will serve as an input for the CalculateSigExpectancy(L, W, H) function. The estimated activity, denoted as  $\mathbf{H}_{hat}$ , is then employed to calculate the signature expectancy using the CalculateSigExpectancy(L, W, H) function.

```
SBS1 47.35763
SBS10b 322.13271
SBS5 234.46156
SBS7a 199.14687
SBS7b 311.48489
> H_hat$converged
[1] 1
> H_hat$loglike
[1] -0.3019976
> ## Estimate Expectancy
> SigExp <- CalculateSigExpectancy(L = L1, W = W_star, H = H_hat$H)</pre>
> round(SigExp, 2)
      singleL
      0.77
SBS1
SBS10b 5.86
SBS5 8.81
SBS7a
        7.52
SBS7b 12.05
> sum(V1)
[1] 35
> sum(SigExp)
[1] 35
```

## References

Rosales, R. A., Drummond, R. D., Valieris, R., Dias-Neto, E. and da Silva, I. T. (2017). signeR: an empirical Bayesian approach to mutational signature discovery. *Bioinformatics* **33**, 8–16.

Tibshirani, R. (2011). Regression shrinkage and selection via the lasso: a retrospective. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series B* **73**, 273–282.