

# Stochastic Optimisation - Problem Sheet 2

Dom Hutchinson

November 12, 2020

## Question 1.

Consider a bandit with two independent arms, where the rewards from arm  $i$  are i.i.d. with a  $\text{Normal}(i, i)$  distribution,  $i \in \{1, 2\}$ . In other words, rewards from arm  $i$  are normally distributed with mean  $i$  and variance  $i$ , so that the second arm has the larger mean reward.

Fix a time horizon  $T$ , and consider the heuristic which first plays each arm exactly  $n$  times, and subsequently plays the arm with the higher sample mean reward.

## Question 1. (a)

Let  $\hat{\mu}_{1,n}$  and  $\hat{\mu}_{2,n}$  denote the sample means of the first  $n$  plays of arm 1 and 2 respectively. Using the answer to Problem Sheet 1 Q6 (b), obtain an upper bound on

$$\mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{1,n} \geq \hat{\mu}_{2,n})$$

## Answer 1. (a)

Let random variables  $X_i(t)$  in  $\text{Normal}(i, i)$  for  $i \in \{1, 2\}$  model the reward received from arm  $i$  at time  $t$  and  $\hat{\mu}_{i,n}$  denote the sample mean from the first  $n$  times arm  $i$  is played.

Define random variable  $X(t) := X_1(t) - X_2(t)$  which has distribution  $\text{Normal}(1 - 2, 1 + 2) = \text{Normal}(-1, 3)$  and  $\hat{\mu}_n := \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n X(t) = \hat{\mu}_{1,n} - \hat{\mu}_{2,n}$ . Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{1,n} \geq \hat{\mu}_{2,n}) &= \mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{1,n} - \hat{\mu}_{2,n} \geq 0) \\ &= \mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_n \geq 0) \\ &= \mathbb{P}\left(\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n X_i \geq 0\right) \\ &= \mathbb{P}\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \geq 0\right) \end{aligned}$$

Problem Sheet 1 Q6 b) states that for IID random variables  $X_1, X_2, \dots$  with distribution  $\text{Normal}(\mu, \sigma^2)$  and for  $\gamma > \mu$ , the following bound exists.

$$\mathbb{P}\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \geq n\gamma\right) \leq \exp\left(-n \frac{(\gamma - \mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$$

By defining  $\gamma = 0$  and noting that  $\gamma > \mu = -1$  we can apply this result to the inequality above.

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i \geq 0\right) &\leq \exp\left(-n \frac{(0 - (-1))^2}{2 \cdot 3}\right) \\ &= \exp\left(-\frac{n}{6}\right) \\ \implies \mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{1,n} \geq \hat{\mu}_{2,n}) &\leq \exp\left(-\frac{n}{6}\right) \end{aligned}$$

**Question 1. (b)**

Using the answer to the last part, find an upper bound on the regret,  $\mathcal{R}(T)$ , of this heuristic. Optimize this upper bound over  $n$ , treating  $n$  as if it were a real number, and approximating quantities like  $T - n$  by  $T$ , on the assumption that  $n$  is much smaller than  $T$ .

**Answer 1. (b)**

The algorithm here can be considered to have two stages: learning; and post-learning. During the learning phase we are guaranteed to play the sub-optimal arm  $n$  times, but we play the same arm throughout the post-learning phase and thus regret only increases if the wrong arm is made (ie if  $\hat{\mu}_{1,n} \geq \hat{\mu}_{2,n}$ ).

Note that the post-learning phase consists of  $(T - 2n)$  rounds and the loss incurred from playing the sub-optimal arm is  $2 - 1 = 1$ .

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{R}_T &= \underbrace{1 \cdot n}_{\text{learning}} + \underbrace{1 \cdot (T - 2n)\mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{1,n} \geq \hat{\mu}_{2,n})}_{\text{wrong choice made}} \\ &= n + (T - 2n)\mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{1,n} \geq \hat{\mu}_{2,n}) \\ &\leq n + (T - 2n)e^{-n/6} \text{ by 1.} \quad (\mathbf{a})\end{aligned}$$

Since  $n \ll T$  we can approximate  $(T - 2n) \simeq T$  giving

$$\mathcal{R}_T \leq n + Te^{-n/6}$$

We want to find the  $n$  which minimises this expression.

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial}{\partial n} (n + Te^{-n/6}) &= 1 - \frac{1}{6}Te^{-n/6} \\ \frac{\partial^2}{\partial n^2} (n + Te^{-n/6}) &= \frac{1}{36}Te^{-n/6} \geq 0 \quad \forall T, n \in \mathbb{N} \\ \text{Setting } \frac{\partial}{\partial n} (n + Te^{-n/6}) &= 0 \\ \implies 1 - \frac{1}{6}Te^{-\hat{n}/6} &= 0 \\ \implies e^{-\hat{n}/6} &= \frac{6}{T} \\ \implies \frac{-\hat{n}}{6} &= \ln(6) - \ln(T) \\ \implies \hat{n} &= 6[\ln(T) - \ln(6)] \\ &= 6 \ln\left(\frac{T}{6}\right)\end{aligned}$$

Since the second derivative is positive, this  $\hat{n}$  minimises the bound on regret. Giving

$$\mathcal{R}_T \leq 6 \ln\left(\frac{T}{6}\right) + T \exp\left(-\ln\left(\frac{T}{6}\right)\right) = 6 \ln\left(\frac{T}{6}\right) - \frac{T^2}{6}$$

**Question 2.**

Consider a bandit with two independent Bernoulli arms, with parameters  $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ . Consider the following simple heuristic for this problem:

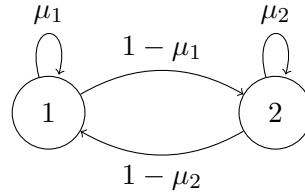
- Play arm 1 in the first round.
- If you obtained a reward of 1 in the previous round, play the same arm. Otherwise, switch to the other arm.

Obtain an approximate expression for the regret of this heuristic up to some large time  $T$ .

You do not need to be very precise in your calculations. I am looking for good intuition, and the correct scaling of the regret with  $T$  as  $T$  tends to infinity. Feel free to look up results you need, such as the means of well-known distributions. You do not need to calculate them from scratch.

**Answer 2.**

Let  $\mu_1 > \mu_2$  and note that this algorithm can be summarised by the following automata



and transition matrix

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} \mu_1 & 1 - \mu_1 \\ 1 - \mu_2 & \mu_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

A stationary distribution  $\pi$  of the transition matrix  $P$  gives the proportion of times each arm is played in the long run. Let  $\pi$  be a stationary distribution for  $P$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \pi &= \pi P \\
 \implies (\pi_1, \pi_2) &= (\pi_1, \pi_2) \begin{pmatrix} \mu_1 & 1 - \mu_1 \\ 1 - \mu_2 & \mu_2 \end{pmatrix} \\
 \implies (\pi_1, \pi_2) &= (\mu_1 \pi_1 + \pi_2(1 - \mu_2), \pi_1(1 - \mu_1) + \pi_2 \mu_2) \\
 \implies \pi_1 &= \mu_1 \pi_1 + \pi_2(1 - \mu_2) \\
 \implies \pi_1(1 - \mu_1) &= \pi_2(1 - \mu_2) \\
 \implies \pi_1 &= \pi_2 \frac{1 - \mu_2}{1 - \mu_1}
 \end{aligned}$$

By the definition of a stationary distribution  $\pi_1 + \pi_2 = 1 \implies \pi_2 = 1 - \pi_1$ . Substituting this result back in we can get explicit results for  $\pi_1$  and  $\pi_2$ .

$$\begin{aligned}
 \pi_1 &= (1 - \pi_1) \frac{1 - \mu_2}{1 - \mu_1} \\
 \implies \pi_1 \left( 1 + \frac{1 - \mu_2}{1 - \mu_1} \right) &= \frac{1 - \mu_2}{1 - \mu_1} \\
 \implies \pi_1 \left( \frac{2 - \mu_1 - \mu_2}{1 - \mu_1} \right) &= \frac{1 - \mu_2}{1 - \mu_1} \\
 \implies \pi_1 &= \frac{1 - \mu_2}{2 - \mu_1 - \mu_2} \\
 \pi_2 &= 1 - \pi_1 \\
 \implies \pi_2 &= 1 - \frac{1 - \mu_2}{2 - \mu_1 - \mu_2} \\
 &= \frac{1 - \mu_1}{2 - \mu_1 - \mu_2}
 \end{aligned}$$

We can now create an approximate expression for the regret  $\mathcal{R}_T$  over time horizon  $T$ .

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathcal{R}_T &= (\mu_1 - \mu_2) \mathbb{E}(\text{times arm 2 played}) \\
 &= (\mu_1 - \mu_2) [T \mathbb{P}(\text{arm 2 played})] \\
 &= (\mu_1 - \mu_2) T \pi_2 \\
 &= T(\mu_1 - \mu_2) \frac{1 - \mu_1}{2 - \mu_1 - \mu_2}
 \end{aligned}$$

**Question 3.**

Consider a bandit with two independent Bernoulli arms, with mean rewards  $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ . Define  $\Delta := \mu_1 - \mu_2$ . Let  $N_i(t)$  denote the number of times that arm  $i$  has been played in the first  $t$  rounds, where  $i \in \{1, 2\}$  and  $t \in \mathbb{N}$ . Let  $\hat{\mu}_{i,s}$  denote the empirical (or sample) mean reward obtained in the first  $s$  plays of arm  $i$ .

Suppose a genie tells you the value of  $\mu_1$ , the mean reward on arm 1 (but not that arm 1 is better). Then, the appropriate modification to the  $UCB(\alpha)$  algorithm is as follows:

- Play arm 2 in the first round.
- At the end of round  $t$ , calculate the index of arm 2, defined as

$$\iota_2(t) := \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(t)} + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2N_2(t)}}$$

The index of arm 1 is always  $\mu_1$ , which is known.

- In round  $t + 1$ , play the arm with the greater index, breaking ties in favour of arm 2.

Assume that  $\alpha > 1$

**Question 3. (a)**

Show that, if arm 2 is played by the above algorithm in round  $s + 1$  (i.e.  $I(s + 1) = 2$ ) then one of the following statements must be true.

- i).  $N_2(s) < \frac{2\alpha \ln(s)}{\Delta^2}$
- ii).  $\hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} \geq \mu_2 + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}}$

**Answer 3. (a)**

*This is a proof by contradiction.*

Suppose  $I(s + 1) = 2$  but that none of the statements above hold. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
 \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} &< \mu_2 && \text{by not ii)} \\
 &= \mu_1 - \Delta && \text{by def. of } \Delta \\
 &\leq \mu_1 - \sqrt{\frac{2\alpha \ln(s)}{N_2(s)}} && \text{by not i)} \\
 \implies \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} + \sqrt{\frac{2\alpha \ln(s)}{N_2(s)}} - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} &< \mu_1 \\
 \implies \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} + \left(\sqrt{2} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right) \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{N_2(s)}} &< \mu_1 \\
 \implies \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} &< \mu_1 \\
 \implies i_2(s) &< \mu_1
 \end{aligned}$$

This means  $I(s + 1) = 1$ , which is a contradiction. Thus at least one of i) or ii) must be true.

**Question 3. (b)**

Recall that  $N_2(t) = \sum_{s=1}^t \mathbb{1}\{I(s) = 2\}$ . For an arbitrary positive integer  $u$  and any  $t \in \mathbb{N}$  explain why

$$N_2(t) \leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t \mathbb{1}\{\{N_2(s-1) \geq u\} \text{ and } \{I(s) = 2\}\}$$

**Answer 3. (b)**

Fix  $t, u \in \mathbb{N}$ . We have two possibilities

*Case 1*  $N_2(t) \leq u$  (i.e. Arm two has not been played  $u$  times yet). The result trivially holds in this case.

*Case 2*  $\exists s \in [1, t]$  such that  $N(s) > u$  (i.e. Arm two has been played at least  $u$  times). Let  $s^*$  denote the smallest such  $s$ . Then it must be true that  $N(s^* - 1) = u$  and  $s^* \geq u + 1$ . Hence

$$\begin{aligned} N(t) &= \sum_{s=1}^{s^*-1} I(s) + \sum_{s=s^*}^t I(s) \\ &= N(s^* - 1) + \sum_{s=s^*}^t I(s) \underbrace{\mathbb{1}\{N(s-1) \geq u\}}_{\text{true for all in sum}} \\ &\leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t \mathbb{1}\{N(s-1) \geq u\} \quad \text{since } s^* \geq u + 1 \end{aligned}$$

Thus the result holds in all cases.

**Question 3. (c)**

Define  $u = \lceil (2\alpha \ln(t))/\Delta^2 \rceil$ . Using the answers to parts (a) and (b), and relevant probability inequalities, show that

$$\mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t e^{-\alpha \ln(s)}$$

Use this to show that  $\mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \leq u + \frac{1}{\alpha - 1}$ .

**Answer 3. (c)**

We have

$$\mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t e^{-\alpha \ln(s)}$$

Taking expectations of both sides

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] &\leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t \mathbb{P}(\{N_2(s-1) \geq u\} \text{ and } \{I(s) = 2\}) \\ &\leq u + \sum_{s=u}^{t-1} \mathbb{P}(\{N_2(s) \geq u\} \text{ and } \{I(s+1) = 2\}) \end{aligned}$$

If  $N_2(s) \geq u$  and  $I(s+1) = 2$  then

$$\hat{\mu}_{2, N_2(s)} \geq \mu_2 + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} \text{ by a)}$$

Thus

$$\mathbb{E}(N_2(t)) \leq u + \sum_{s=u}^{t-1} \mathbb{P} \left( \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} \geq \mu_2 + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} \right) \quad (1)$$

Let  $X_1, \dots, X_{N_2}$  be the random variables for each time arm 2 was played. Consider

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P} \left( \hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} \geq \mu_2 + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} \right) &= \mathbb{P} \left( \frac{1}{N_2} \sum_{i=1}^{N_2} X_i \geq \mu_2 + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} \right) \\ &= \mathbb{P} \left( \sum_{i=1}^{N_2} (X_i - \mu_2) \geq N_2 \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}} \right) \\ &\leq \exp \left( -2 \cdot N_2 \cdot \frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)} \right) && \text{by Hoeffding's Ineq.} \\ &= \exp(-\alpha \ln(s)) \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow \mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t e^{-\alpha \ln(s)} \quad \text{by (1)}$$

Further

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] &\leq u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t e^{-\alpha \ln(s)} \\ &= u + \sum_{s=u+1}^t s^{-\alpha} \\ &\leq u + \int_u^\infty s^{-\alpha} ds \quad \text{since } \alpha > 1 \\ &= u + \left[ \frac{s^{-\alpha+1}}{-\alpha+1} \right]_u^\infty \\ &= u - \frac{u^{-\alpha+1}}{-\alpha+1} \\ &= u + \frac{u^{-\alpha+1}}{\alpha-1} \end{aligned}$$

By the definition of  $u$ ,  $u > 1$  thus  $u^{-\alpha+1} < 1$  since  $\alpha > 1$ . Giving us

$$\mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \leq u + \frac{1}{\alpha-1}$$

### Question 3. (d)

Use the answer to (c) to show that the regret of this algorithm is bounded above as

$$\mathcal{R}(T) \leq \frac{2\alpha \ln(T)}{\Delta} + \frac{\alpha}{\alpha-1} \Delta$$

### Answer 3. (d)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{R}(T) &:= \Delta \mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \\ &\leq \Delta \left( u + \frac{1}{\alpha-1} \right) && \text{by 3. (c)} \\ &\leq \Delta \left( \frac{2\alpha \ln(T)}{\Delta^2} + 1 + \frac{1}{\alpha-1} \right) && \text{by def. of } u \\ &= \frac{2\alpha \ln(T)}{\Delta} + \Delta \left( 1 + \frac{1}{\alpha-1} \right) \\ &= \frac{2\alpha \ln(T)}{\Delta} + \frac{\Delta\alpha}{\alpha-1} \end{aligned}$$

**Question 4.**

Consider a bandit with two independent Gaussian arms. Rewards on arm  $i$  constitute a sequence of iid  $N(\mu_i, 1)$  random variables.

**Question 4. (a)**

Let  $\hat{\mu}_{i,n}$  denote the sample mean reward on arm  $i$  after  $n$  plays of this arms. Using a resulting from Homework 1, show that

$$\mathbb{P}\left(\hat{\mu}_{i,n} < \mu_i + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}}\right) \leq \exp\left(-\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{4}\right)$$

Express the last quantity as power of  $t$ .

**Answer 4. (a)**

Let  $\hat{\mu}_{i,n}$  be the sample mean reward on arm  $i$  after  $n$  plays of that arms.

From *Problem Sheet 1 6b*), for  $X_i \stackrel{\text{iid}}{\sim} \text{Normal}(\mu, \sigma^2)$  and  $\gamma > \mu_i$  we have that

$$\mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu} > \gamma) = \mathbb{P}\left(\sum_{i=1}^n X_i > n\gamma\right) \leq \exp\left(-n \frac{(\gamma - \mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$$

Applying this result to this scenario

$$\mathbb{P}(\hat{\mu}_{i,n} > \gamma) \leq \exp\left(-n \frac{(\gamma - \mu_i)^2}{2}\right)$$

By defining  $\gamma = \mu_i + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}}$  with  $\alpha > 0$ .

Note that  $\gamma > \mu_i$  so we can use the above inequality

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}\left(\hat{\mu}_{i,n} > \mu_i + \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}}\right) &\leq \exp\left(-\frac{n}{2} \cdot \frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}\right) \\ &= \exp\left(-\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{4}\right) \\ &= t^{-\alpha/4} \end{aligned}$$

**Question 4. (b)**

Explain in a few sentences why the same bound holds the probability of the event that  $\hat{\mu}_{i,n} < \mu_i - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}}$

**Answer 4. (b)**

The result from *Problem Sheet 1 6b*) is derived from the Chernoff Bound for IID random variables when  $\left\{\sum X_i \geq nc\right\}$  and considers  $\inf_{\theta > 0} e^{-n\theta c} (\mathbb{E}[e^{\theta X}])^n$ . The result requires  $c > \mu_i$  in order to fulfil the restriction on the infimum (i.e.  $\theta > 0$ ).

To derive a similar result to *Question 4. (a)* for the event  $\left\{\hat{\mu}_{i,n} < \mu_i - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}}\right\}$  we define

$c = \mu_i - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(t)}{2n}}$ , meaning  $c < \mu_i$  and thus  $\theta < 0$ , for the  $\theta$  in the infimum.

The Chernoff Bound for this complementary event considers the infimum of the same expression, except with the restriction that  $\theta < 0$  (rather than  $\theta > 0$ ). Given our definition of  $c$  and the resulting value of  $\theta$ , the same value for the infimum is found. Meaning the same bound is derived for both the event and its compliment.

**Question 4. (c)**

Replicate the analysis of the UCB algorithm to obtain a regret bound of the form  $\mathcal{R}(T) \leq c_1 + c_2 \ln(T)$  where  $c_1$  and  $c_2$  are constants that may depend on  $\alpha, \mu_1$  and  $\mu_2$ . Find explicit expressions for these constants.

The analysis will not work for all  $\alpha > 1$ . You will need  $\alpha$  to be bigger than some other number. Find that number.

**Answer 4. (c)**

Assume WLOG  $\mu_1 > \mu_2$  and define  $\Delta = \mu_1 - \mu_2$ . Let  $N_2(t)$  be the number of times arm 2 is played in the first  $t$  steps. Define  $u_t = \left\lceil \frac{2\alpha \ln(t)}{\Delta^2} \right\rceil$ . We have

$$N_2(t) \leq u + \sum_{s=u-1}^t \mathbb{1}(\{N_2(s-1) \geq u_t\} \text{ and } \{I(s) = j\})$$

Taking expectations of both side we get

$$\mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] \leq u_t + \sum_{s=u_t}^{t-1} \mathbb{P}(\{N_2(s-1) \geq u_t\} \text{ and } \{I(s) = j\})$$

By considering the two cases where the sub-optimal arm is played:  $\hat{\mu}_1$  is significantly lower than  $\mu_1$ ; or  $\hat{\mu}_2$  is significantly higher than  $\mu_2$ .

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[N_2(t)] &\leq u_t + \sum_{s=u_t}^{t-1} \left[ \mathbb{P}\left(\hat{\mu}_{1,N_1(s)} \leq \mu_1 - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}}\right) + \mathbb{P}\left(\hat{\mu}_{2,N_2(s)} > \mu_2 - \sqrt{\frac{\alpha \ln(s)}{2N_2(s)}}\right) \right] \\ &\leq u_t + \sum_{s=u_t}^{t-1} 2t^{-\alpha/4} \text{ by Question 4. (a)} \\ &\leq u + \int_{u_t-1}^{\infty} 2t^{-\alpha/4} dt \\ &= u_t + 2 \left[ \frac{t^{-\frac{\alpha}{4}+1}}{1-\frac{\alpha}{4}} \right]_{u_t-1}^{\infty} \\ &= u_t - \frac{2(u_t-1)^{-\frac{\alpha}{4}+1}}{-\frac{\alpha}{4}+1} \\ &\leq u_t + \frac{2}{\frac{\alpha}{4}-1} \\ &= u_t + \frac{8}{\alpha-4} \\ &\leq \frac{2\alpha \ln(t)}{\Delta^2} + 1 + \frac{8}{\alpha-4} \text{ by def. of } u_t \\ &= \frac{2\alpha \ln(t)}{\Delta^2} + \frac{\alpha+4}{\alpha-4} \end{aligned}$$

In this scenario  $\mathcal{R}(T) = \Delta \mathbb{E}[N_2(T)]$ . Thus, using the results above

$$\mathcal{R}(T) \leq \frac{2\alpha \ln(T)}{\Delta} + \Delta \frac{\alpha+4}{\alpha-4}$$



This requires  $\alpha > 4$ .

**Question 5.**

Let  $X \sim \text{Bern}(p)$  and  $Y \sim \text{Bern}(q)$  with  $p, q \in [0, 1]$ . Recall that the KL-Divergence of a  $\text{Bern}(q)$  distribution wrt a  $\text{Bern}(p)$  distribution is defined as

$$KL(q; p) := q \ln \left( \frac{q}{p} \right) + (1 - q) \ln \left( \frac{1 - q}{1 - p} \right)$$

with  $x \ln(x)$  defined to be zero if  $x$  is zero. Recall also that the total variation distance between these distributions, denoted  $d_{TV}(\text{Bern}(q), \text{Bern}(p)) := |q - p|$ . Prove *Pinsker's Inequality* which states

$$KL(q; p) \geq 2(\text{Bern}(q), \text{Bern}(p))^2$$

**Answer 5.**

Fix the value of  $p$  and define the consider the following function

$$\begin{aligned} f(q) &:= KL(q; p) - 2(q - p)^2 \\ &= q \ln \left( \frac{q}{p} \right) + (1 - q) \ln \left( \frac{1 - q}{1 - p} \right) - 2(q - p)^2 \text{ by def of } KL \end{aligned}$$

I will show that this function is convex

$$\begin{aligned} f'(q) &= \ln \left( \frac{q}{p} \right) + q \cdot \frac{1/p}{q/p} - \ln \left( \frac{1 - q}{1 - p} \right) + (1 - q) \frac{-1/(1 - p)}{(1 - q)/(1 - p)} - 4(q - p) \\ &= \ln \left( \frac{q}{p} \right) - \ln \left( \frac{1 - q}{1 - p} \right) - 4(q - p) \\ f''(q) &= \frac{1/p}{q/p} - \frac{-1/(1 - p)}{(1 - q)/(1 - p)} - 4 \\ &= \frac{1}{q} + \frac{1}{1 - q} - 4 \\ &= \frac{1}{q(1 - q)} - 4 \end{aligned}$$

Note  $\min_{q \in (0,1)} \frac{1}{q(1 - q)} = \frac{1}{\frac{1}{2}(1 - \frac{1}{2})} = 4$ . Thus  $\frac{1}{q(1 - q)} \geq 4 \forall q \in (0, 1)$ . Further,  $f''(q) \geq 0$  for the whole domain  $q \in (0, 1)$ , meaning  $f(q)$  is convex.

Now note that  $f'(p) = 0$  (ie the minimum occurs when  $q = p$ ) and that  $f(p) = 0$  (ie  $\min_{q \in (0,1)} f(q) = 0$ ), this means  $f(q) \geq f(p) = 0 \forall q \in (0, 1)$ .

Using this inequality we can finally derive *Pinsker's Inequality* for Bernoulli random variables

$$\begin{aligned} f(q) &\geq 0 \\ \implies KL(q; p) - 2(q - p)^2 &\geq 0 \\ \implies KL(q; p) &\geq 2(q - p)^2 = 2|q - p|^2 \\ &= 2d_{TV}(\text{Bern}(q), \text{Bern}(p))^2 \end{aligned}$$

This is *Pinsker's Inequality* for Bernoulli random variables.