#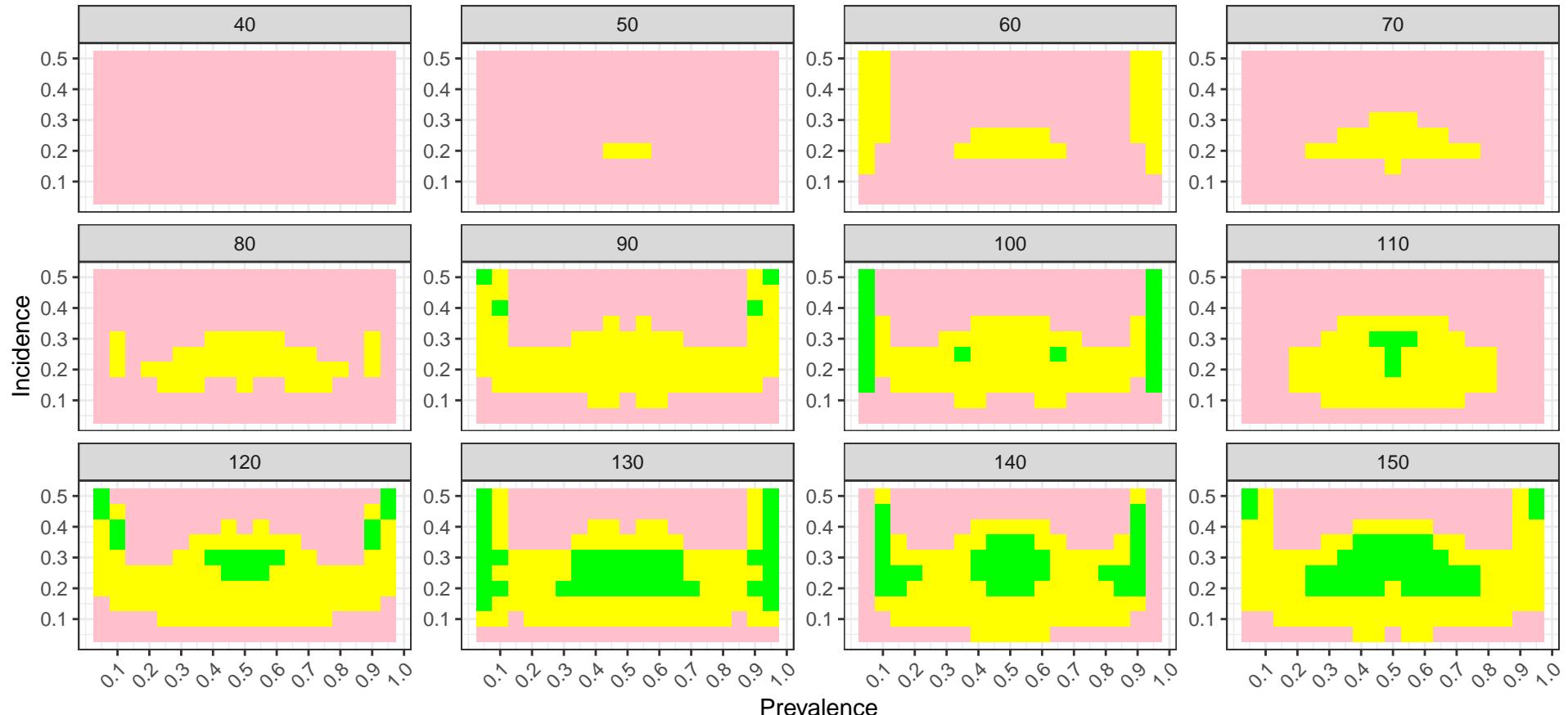 MLE estimator