

Statistical learning with high volume, high noise health data

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WAM 2022, Institute for Advanced Study
May 27, 2022

Today's roadmap

- Who I am
- How I got here
- What I work on
- Why my work matters

Who I am

Assistant Professor in Statistics, University of Toronto

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Assistant Professor in Statistics, University of Toronto

I develop statistical learning methods for
high volume, high noise health data

But first, how I got here

A very long time ago

I didn't think I would go to college

How I got here

Fired from my job as a line chef at El Azteco



How I got here

A very long time ago

I didn't think I would go to college

Berkeley, BA in Applied Mathematics

Harvard, PhD in Biostatistics with Tianxi Cai

Stanford, Postdoc in Biomedical Data Science with Lu Tian

Alphabet's Verily Life Sciences, Data Scientist

University of Toronto, Assistant Professor in Statistics

Now

How I figured it out

I took every opportunity in statistics that was given to me

How I figured it out

I took every opportunity in statistics that was given to me

- Baseball pitch classification
- Ballistic missile defense
- Electronic health records
- Mobile health
- COVID-19 testing strategies
- ...

What I learned: Part I

It's easier to take risks when you let your inhibitions go

What I learned: Part II

“The best thing about being a statistician is that you get to play in everyone's backyard.”

John Tukey

Where I'm playing now

I develop statistical learning methods for
high volume, high noise health data

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Where I'm playing now

I develop **statistical learning methods** for
high volume, high noise health data

- Machine learning (ML)

Development of models & algorithms from data

- Statistical learning

Branch of applied statistics that emerged in response to
ML focusing on statistical models & uncertainty
quantification

Very similar, but with different emphases.

Where I'm playing now

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Electronic health record (EHR) data

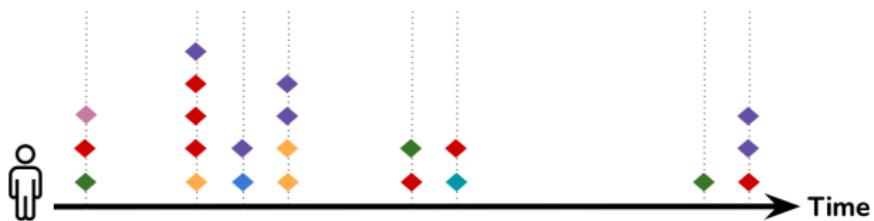
Where I'm playing now

I develop statistical learning methods for
high volume, high noise health data

Electronic health record (EHR) data

An EHR is an electronic record of a patient's interactions with a healthcare system

- ◆ Demographics
- ◆ Diagnoses
- ◆ Lab tests
- ◆ Medications
- ◆ Procedures
- ◆ Vital signs
- ◆ Clinical notes



EHR data is high in volume

Big Longitudinal records on large populations

Detailed Information on numerous fields

Representative Real-world patients

↑ **Available** Increasing EHR adoption worldwide

The dream: Use EHR data to provide better care



Healthcare professionals are beginning to tap the treasure trove of information locked in electronic health records to treat people in real time

A “Green Button” for patients like mine

“**a green patients like mine button** as a tool in the EHR would both **support patient care decisions** in the absence of published evidence and, as a byproduct, quantify and **prioritize unanswered clinical questions** for EHR-enabled randomization at the point of care”

Longhurst et al 2014



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This Green Button is still an aspiration

EHR data is high in noise

Finding “patients like mine” requires identifying patients with a similar phenotype

Phenotype: patient characteristic inferred from their EHR

- Presence of a disease
- Disease severity or subtype
- Time of disease onset
- Disease progression
- Treatment response
- ...

EHR data is high in noise

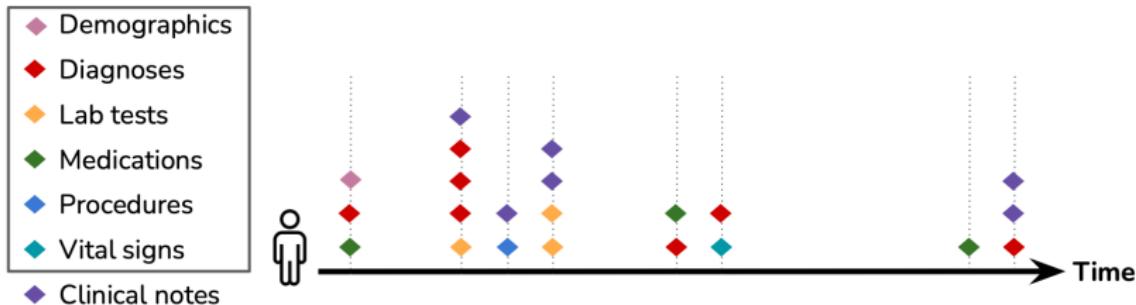
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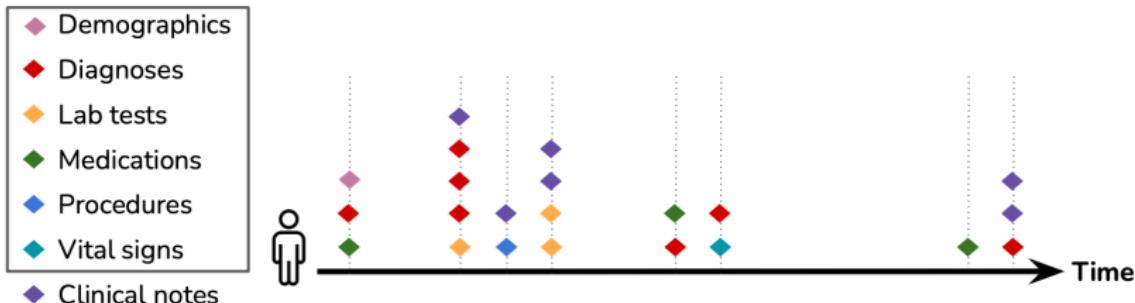
EHRs do not have explicit information on phenotypes

The two flavors of EHR data



1. **Structured data:** Easy to extract, but lack context

The two flavors of EHR data

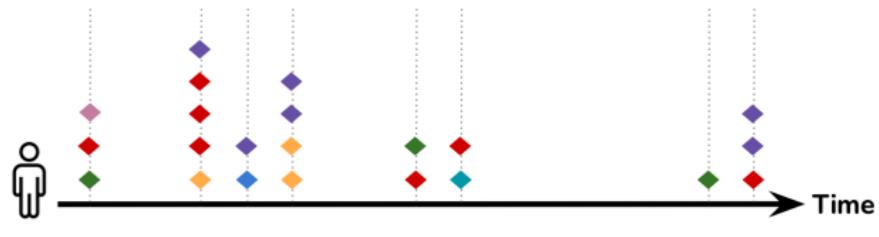


1. Structured data: Easy to extract, but lack context

eg. ICD diagnosis code: Upcoding

The two flavors of EHR data

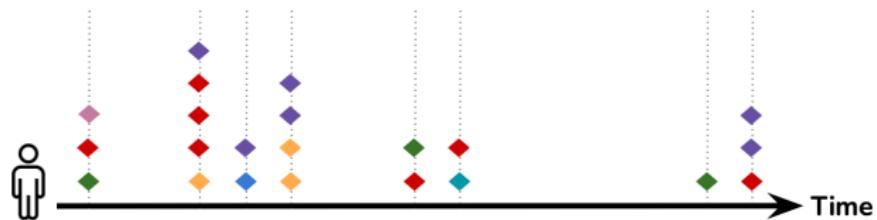
- Demographics
- Diagnoses
- Lab tests
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2. **Unstructured data:** Detailed, but requires NLP

The two flavors of EHR data

- ◆ Demographics
- ◆ Diagnoses
- ◆ Lab tests
- ◆ Medications
- ◆ Procedures
- ◆ Vital signs
- ◆ Clinical notes



phenotype \approx structured + unstructured data

Potential solution: Statistical/ML models

Derive **features** from EHRs



Manually review EHRs to obtain the **label**



Train a supervised statistical/ML model to
infer the phenotype

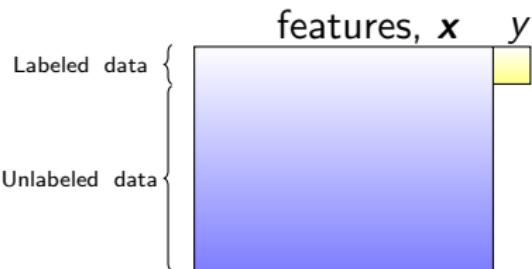
Challenge: Obtaining labeled data

Labeling health records is the worst thing I have done at Alphabet.

- A physician colleague

My work: Learning with limited/noisy labeled data

1. Semi-supervised learning



2. Weakly-supervised learning

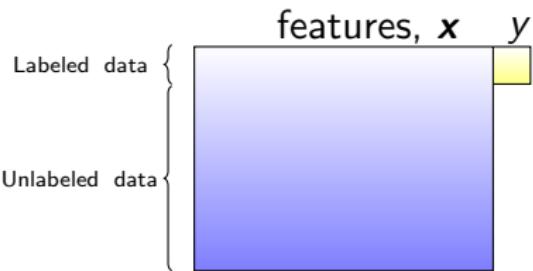


Utilize labeled and unlabeled data to improve statistical learning

Utilize noisy labels automatically extracted from EHRs to guide learning in place of true labels

My work: Learning with limited/noisy labeled data

1. Semi-supervised learning



2. Weakly-supervised learning



Utilize labeled and unlabeled data to improve statistical learning

Utilize noisy labels automatically extracted from EHRs to guide learning in place of true labels

Enable accurate statistical learning with very little labeled data

Why my work matters

We can't use EHR data in an impactful way without accurate phenotypes that are easy to obtain

Example: EHR-based registry for rare diseases

ORIGINAL
ARTICLES

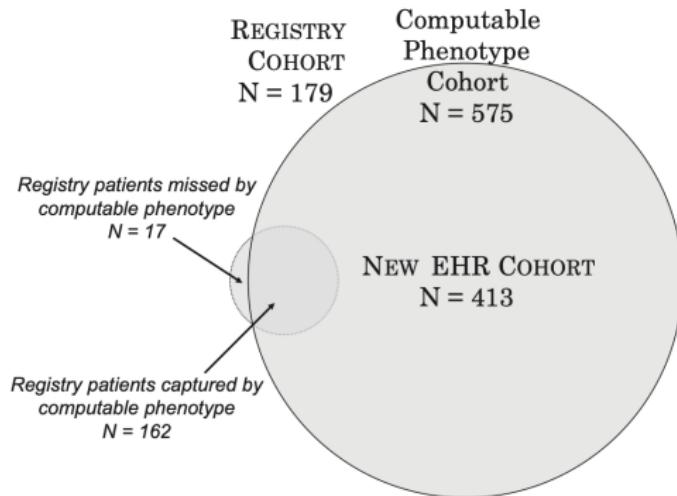
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A Computable Phenotype Improves Cohort Ascertainment in a Pediatric Pulmonary Hypertension Registry

Alon Geva, MD, MPH^{1,2,3}, Jessica L. Gronsbell, BA⁴, Tianxi Cai, ScD⁴, Tianrun Cai, MD⁵, Shawn N. Murphy, MD, PhD^{6,7,8},
Jessica C. Lyons, MS⁸, Michelle M. Heinz, BS¹, Marc D. Natter, MD^{1,9}, Nandan Patibandla, MS¹⁰,
Jonathan Bickel, MD, MS^{1,9,10}, Mary P. Mullen, MD, PhD^{9,11}, and Kenneth D. Mandl, MD, MPH^{1,8,9}, for the Pediatric Pulmonary
Hypertension Network and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Pediatric Pulmonary Vascular Disease Outcomes
Bioinformatics Clinical Coordinating Center Investigators*

Example: EHR-based registry for rare diseases



Identify large cohorts of patients for clinical studies
in a fraction of the time and cost

None of this is possible without a team!

- Tianxi Cai (Harvard)
- Lu Tian (Stanford)
- Paul Varghese (Verily)
- Katherine Liao (Brigham and Women's Hospital)
- Chuan Hong (Duke)
- Molei Liu (Harvard)
- Jessica Minnier (OHSU)

Thanks!

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