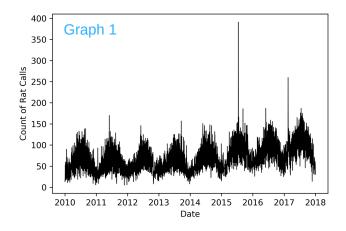
# **Predicting NYC Rodent Complaints**

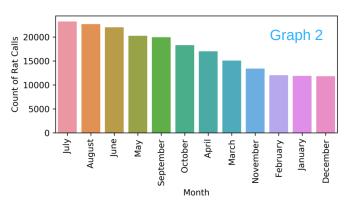
## Summary

The NYC 311 calls dataset consists of over 20 million complaints on civic issues made to the city government since 2010. Rodent is the number one complaint made to the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene, with >600,000 instances of the complaint. This report analyses trends in rodent complaints across zip codes and builds a model (Vector Auto-Regression) to predict future rodent complaints in each zip code using previous rodent complaints and related health and sanitation complaints. Rodent complaints are more likely to be made in the summer, show an upward trend, and display sharp peaks or outbreaks. Rodent complaints for the next month in each zipcode can be predicted effectively using rodent complaints and related sanitation calls in previous months. A csv file of average predicted complaints for the next five months with 95% confidence intervals is available online.

# Time trends

The data shows a strong seasonal trend over time as evident from the time series plot (Graph 1). The waves in the time series occur yearly and show an upward trend. Rat complaints are lodged more in the summer months than in the winter months (Graph 2). Table 1 shows the dates on which the number of calls were abnormally high (>185).





|   | Date     | Count of Rat Calls |
|---|----------|--------------------|
| 0 | 16/07/15 | 391                |
| 1 | 15/02/17 | 260                |
| 2 | 17/07/17 | 187                |
| 3 | 31/05/16 | 187                |
| 4 | 08/09/15 | 186                |

Table 1

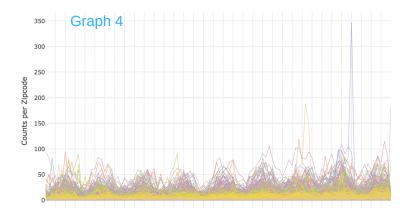
## Why zip codes?

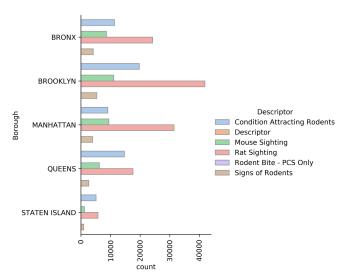
1) Small enough to be meaningful, large enough to have a sufficient number of complaints per month 2) Can be easily looked up by residents making housing decisions

Variation across zip codes: Zip-codes show large amounts of variance in number of rodent complaints per month. Graph 3 shows that Brooklyn, Manhattan and Bronx have the most rodent complaints in that order. The per-zipcode monthly trends are also strongly cyclical, as seen in Graph 4.

Auto-correlation Function (ACF): The autocorrelation function shows how counts for the current month are related to previous months. 'lag' on the x axis denotes the number of months before the current month. The plot shows that the time series is largely cyclical (every 6 months) and that predictions for rodent complaints can be made from previous month's complaints. (Graph 5 - next page)

Partial Autocorrelation Function (PACF): This shows how counts for the current month are related to previous months, but the effect for the previous months are removed. For example, the second lag does not include the effect of the first lag. This shows a more complex cyclical relationship that is not as clear as the autocorrelation function, showing that the effect of the previous month is very high. (Graph 6 - next page)



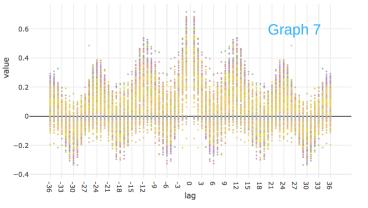


Graph 3 (Total borough-wise counts since

2010)

#### Model

We saw that rodent complaints for the next month are strongly related to number of complaints made in the previous month, and that the correlations follow a cyclical pattern that fades in importance after ~ 12 months. Rodent complaints are also related to other sanitation complaints. Graph 7 shows a Cross-Correlation Function plot for rodent complaints against the complaint category 'Dirty Conditions' (DC). There is a strong correlation between the two time series when the DC time series lagged. This is useful for building the prediction model. The other complaint categories that show a similar trend are: Sanitary Conditions (SC) and Litter baskets overflowing (LB).



The CCF shows that both time-series are related to each other across time periods, whether moving backward (-36 to -1) or forward (1 to 36). This shows that both time series can be used for predicting each other in the future. The time series do not display a clear cause-effect relationship from past to future.

Hence, I decided to fit a Vector Auto-Regression (VAR) model to the problem. A VAR model does not assume any cause-effect relationships between the variables, and fits lagged regressions on each of the time series, treating them as both predictors and dependent variables. I fitted the VAR model on one to 12 month lags for all four time series - Rodent Complaints (RC), DC, SC and LB. The VAR model was fitted after first differencing the model to remove the dependence on the first lag (and ensure stationarity). Hence, the predicted values show the changes from the previous month.

Pros of VAR model:

- 1) No cause-effect relationship assumed
- 2) Allows for exogenous time series and lags at the same time

The only disadvantage of the model is that it is fairly complicated.

Appendix A has a sample VAR model for the Columbia university zip-code: 10027.

(The predictions fit reasonably well for time series RC and SC and not that well for the LB and DC series. It is notable that this model performs better on other zipcodes.)

The model was fitted for the 175 zipcodes to generate average predictions for the next five months and 95% confidence intervals. These are available as a csv file at: https://github.com/kalyani-subbiah/nyc-311-public-health/blob/master/var-zip-predictions.csv

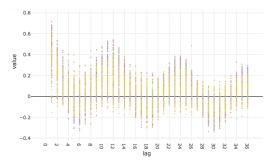
## Conclusion

The top 311 complaint categories on public health and sanitation exhibit strong time/cyclical trends which can be used for prediction. After exploratory analysis, a VAR model was fitted on four time series: Rodent Complaints (RC), Litter Baskets Overflowing (LB), Dirty Conditions (DC) and Sanitary Conditions (SC). These time series are from 2010 to present and were fitted on monthly data. One model was fitted for each zip-code in order to enable actionable predictions for government, and for homeowners to be aware of sanitation issues in their area.

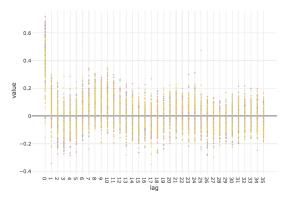
The VAR model can also be used for predicting RC, DC and SC complaints, and to a lesser extent, the LB category. A sample model for zip-code 10027 is presented in Appendix A. The predictions can be downloaded as a csv file from: https://github.com/kalyani-subbiah/nyc-311-public-health/blob/master/var-zip-predictions.csv

## **Data**

https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/311-Service-Requests/fvrb-kbbt



Graph 5



Graph 6

# Appendix A

#### VAR Estimation Results:

\_\_\_\_\_

Endogenous variables: rats, litter, dirty, sanitary

Deterministic variables: const Sample size: 94

Log Likelihood: -932.531

Roots of the characteristic polynomial:

1.012 1.012 0.9986 0.9921 0.9921 0.9858 0.9858 0.985 0.985 0.9763 0.9763 0.9639 0.9639 0.9622 0.9622 0.951 0.951 0.9445 0.9445 0.9414 0.9414 0.936 0.936 0.9289 0.9289 0.915 0.915 0.91 0.91 0.8982 0.8982 0.8984 0.8985 0.8885 0.8845 0.8845 0.8786 0.8786 0.851 0.851 0.8244 0.8244 0.5941 0.5941 0.455 0.3785 0.3785

Call:

VAR(y = mat1, p = 12)

Estimation results for equation Rodent Complaints:

 $\begin{array}{l} {\rm rats} = {\rm rats.} 11 + {\rm litter.} 11 + {\rm dirty.} 11 + {\rm sanitary.} 11 + {\rm rats.} 12 + {\rm litter.} 12 + {\rm dirty.} 12 + {\rm sanitary.} 12 + {\rm rats.} 13 + {\rm litter.} 13 + {\rm dirty.} 13 + {\rm sanitary.} 13 + {\rm rats.} 14 + {\rm litter.} 14 + {\rm dirty.} 14 + {\rm sanitary.} 14 + {\rm rats.} 15 + {\rm litter.} 15 + {\rm dirty.} 15 + {\rm sanitary.} 15 + {\rm rats.} 16 + {\rm litter.} 16 + {\rm dirty.} 16 + {\rm sanitary.} 16 + {\rm rats.} 17 + {\rm litter.} 17 + {\rm dirty.} 17 + {\rm sanitary.} 18 + {\rm sanitary.} 18 + {\rm rats.} 19 + {\rm litter.} 19 + {\rm dirty.} 19 + {\rm rats.} 10 + {\rm litter.} 10 + {\rm dirty.} 10 + {\rm sanitary.} 10 + {\rm rats.} 111 + {\rm litter.} 111 + {\rm dirty.} 111 + {\rm sanitary.} 111 + {\rm rats.} 112 + {\rm litter.} 112 + {\rm dirty.} 112 + {\rm sanitary.} 112 + {\rm const.} \end{array}$ 

Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|) rats.l1 0.37044 0.15252 2.429 0.0192 \* litter.l1 -0.89747 1.59443 -0.563 0.5763 dirty.l1 -0.04122 0.12876 -0.320 0.7504 rats.12 0.13362 0.16427 0.813 0.4203 litter.l2 -0.08336 1.49678 -0.056 0.9558 dirty.12 -0.28297 0.12151 -2.329 0.0244 \* 0.02790 0.16957 0.165 0.8700 rats.I3 0.11843 1.59685 0.074 0.9412 litter.13 dirty.I3 0.23230 0.13570 1.712 0.0938 sanitary.I3 0.35225 0.34407 1.024 0.3114 rats.l4 -0.11186 litter.14 1.54594 -0.072 0.9426 dirty.14 -0.10308 0.13711 -0.752 0.4561 rats.l5 0.20157 0.18027 1.118 0.2694 0.70932 1.58998 0.446 0.6577 litter.I5 -0 18970 0 14657 -1 294 0 2022 dirty 15 sanitary.I5 0.08452 0.37197 0.227 0.8213 -0.38844 0.17029 -2.281 0.0273 \* rats.16 litter.16 2.55553 1.51167 1.691 0.0978. 0.10361 0.14746 0.703 0.4859 dirtv.16 rats.17 -0.03079 0.17887 -0.172 0.8641 -2.77876 1.40789 -1.974 0.0546. litter.17 dirty.17 -0.08217 0.15484 -0.531 0.5983 rats I8 0.32195 0.17818 1.807 0.0775 litter.18 -0.72686 1 55871 -0 466 0 6432 -0.03638 0.14953 -0.243 0.8089 dirty.18 rats.19 -0.11128 0.18215 -0.611 0.5443 litter 19 0.01030 1.50986 0.007 0.9946 dirty.19 0.07146 0.14081 0.507 0.6143 rats.l10 -0.86795 1.43075 -0.607 0.5471 litter.l10 dirtv.l10 0.07249 0.14341 0.505 0.6157 -0.01600 0.19397 -0.082 0.9346 litter.l11 -1.50024 1.45769 -1.029 0.3089 dirty.l11 -0.05819 0.13892 -0.419 0.6773 sanitary.I11 0.25253 0.33430 0.755 0.4540 -0.07477 0.17155 -0.436 0.6650 rats.l12 litter.l12 0.82989 1.34725 0.616 0.5410 0.09256 0.15434 0.600 0.5517 dirty.l12 2.66336 8.42898 0.316 0.7535

Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 8.924 on 45 degrees of freedom Multiple R-Squared: 0.7671, Adjusted R-squared: 0.5186 F-statistic: 3.088 on 48 and 45 DF, p-value: 0.0001064

Estimation results for equation Litter Baskets:

 $\label{eq:litter} \begin{array}{l} \text{litter} = \text{rats.} 11 + \text{litter.} 11 + \text{dirty.} 11 + \text{sanitary.} 11 + \text{rats.} 12 + \\ \text{litter.} 12 + \text{dirty.} 12 + \text{sanitary.} 12 + \text{rats.} 13 + \\ \text{litter.} 13 + \text{dirty.} 13 + \\ \text{rats.} 14 + \text{litter.} 14 + \text{dirty.} 14 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 14 + \\ \text{rats.} 15 + \\ \text{litter.} 15 + \text{dirty.} 15 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 15 + \\ \text{rats.} 16 + \\ \text{litter.} 16 + \\ \text{dirty.} 16 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 17 + \\ \text{rats.} 18 + \\ \text{litter.} 18 + \\ \text{dirty.} 18 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 18 + \\ \text{rats.} 19 + \\ \text{litter.} 10 + \\ \text{dirty.} 10 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 110 + \\ \text{rats.} 111 + \\ \text{litter.} 111 + \\ \text{dirty.} 111 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 111 + \\ \text{rats.} 112 + \\ \text{litter.} 112 + \\ \text{dirty.} 112 + \\ \text{sanitary.} 112 + \\ \text{const} \end{array}$ 

Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>ltl) -0.010144 0.014581 -0.696 0.49018 rats I1 litter.l1 -0.048488 0.152422 -0.318 0.75187 dirty.l1 -0.015324 0.012309 -1.245 0.21959 0.089234 0.030292 2.946 0.00509 \*\* sanitary.l1 rats.l2 -0.003779 0.015703 -0.241 0.81090 litter.12 0.112687 0.143087 0.788 0.43509 -0.002699 0.011616 -0.232 0.81728 dirty.12 0.030065 0.016210 1.855 0.07020. rats.I3 -0.112972 0.152654 -0.740 0.46311 litter.I3 dirty.I3 rats.l4 -0.234314 0.147787 -1.585 0.11986 litter.14 0.015265 0.013107 1.165 0.25031 dirty.14 sanitary.l4 0.064118 0.032143 1.995 0.05215 -0.035747 0.017233 -2.074 0.04380 \* rats.I5 litter.I5 0.180947 0.151997 1.190 0.24011 -0.011051 0.014011 -0.789 0.43440 dirty.15 rats.l6 0.020455 0.016279 1.257 0.21542 litter.16 0.114197 0.144511 0.790 0.43354 dirty.16 rats.17 -0.030846 0.017100 -1.804 0.07794 litter.17 -0.174660 0.134589 -1.298 0.20099 -0.003587 0.014802 -0.242 0.80964 dirty.17 0.003670 0.017033 0.215 0.83040 rats.I8 litter.18 -0.187605 0.149008 -1.259 0.21451 -0.005397 0.014295 -0.378 0.70756 dirty.18 sanitary.l8 0.039952 0.034524 1.157 0.25328 rats.I9 0.018491 0.017413 1.062 0.29393 litter.19 -0.023083 0.144338 -0.160 0.87365 dirty.l9 sanitary.l9 0.070410 0.037122 1.897 0.06430. rats.l10 0.019084 0.018405 1.037 0.30534 litter.l10 -0.048975 0.136775 -0.358 0.72196 dirtv.l10 -0.002749 0.013709 -0.200 0.84200 sanitary.l10 0.029741 0.033822 0.879 0.38390 -0.021858 0.018543 -1.179 0.24467 litter.l11 -0.106759 0.139350 -0.766 0.44761 dirtv.l11 -0.017220 0.013281 -1.297 0.20138 rats.l12  $-0.006522 \quad 0.016400 \quad -0.398 \quad 0.69274$ -0.111282 0.128793 -0.864 0.39215 dirty.l12 -0.009948 0.014754 -0.674 0.50359 const 2.408549 0.805783 2.989 0.00452 \*\* Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 0.8531 on 45 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-Squared: 0.5824, Adjusted R-squared: 0.137 F-statistic: 1.308 on 48 and 45 DF, p-value: 0.1832

Estimation results for equation Dirty Conditions:

dirty = rats.11 + litter.11 + dirty.11 + sanitary.11 + rats.12 + litter.12 + dirty.12 + sanitary.12 + rats.13 + litter.13 + dirty.13 + sanitary.13 + rats.14 + litter.14 + dirty.14 + sanitary.14 + rats.15 + litter.15 + dirty.15 + sanitary.15 + rats.16 + litter.16 + dirty.16 + sanitary.16 + rats.17 + litter.17 + dirty.17 + sanitary.17 + rats.18 + litter.18 + dirty.18 + sanitary.18 + rats.19 + litter.10 + dirty.10 + sanitary.10 + rats.111 + litter.111 + dirty.111 + sanitary.111 + rats.112 + litter.112 + dirty.112 + sanitary.112 + const

 Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)

 rats.l1
 -0.116893
 0.181062
 -0.646
 0.52182

 litter.l1
 -2.651311
 1.892761
 -1.401
 0.16814

 dirty.l1
 0.277034
 0.152855
 1.812
 0.07660

sanitary.l1 0.464954 0.376166 1.236 0.22286 rats.l2 -0.319600 0.195004 -1.639 0.10820 -2.537602 1.776844 -1.428 0.16015 dirty.l2 -0.042731 0.144244 -0.296 0.76841 sanitary.l2 0.755398 0.400979 1.884 0.06605. rats.l3 0.356270 0.201296 1.770 0.08352. litter.l3 -0.001567 1.895642 -0.001 0.99934 dirtv.l3 -0.044612 0.161088 -0.277 0.78309 sanitary.l3 -0.253030 0.408447 -0.619 0.53872 rats I4 -0.335568 0.218845 -1.533 0.13219 litter.l4 2.801183 1.835205 1.526 0.13392 0.017603 0.162767 0.108 0.91436 dirty.14 sanitary.14 -0.059180 0.399151 -0.148 0.88280 rats.l5 0.046662 0.214000 0.218 0.82838 -0.864532 1.887489 -0.458 0.64913 litter 15 0.110900 0.173992 0.637 0.52710 dirty.15 sanitary.l5 -0.377261 0.441571 -0.854 0.39743 rats.l6 -0.199697 0.202153 -0.988 0.32851 litter.l6 1.153795 1.794523 0.643 0.52352 dirty.16 0.156278 0.175052 0.893 0.37674 sanitary.16 -0.125469 0.426148 -0.294 0.76979 0.195952 0.212340 0.923 0.36102 -0.190988 1.671317 -0.114 0.90953 litter.17 -0.301048 0.183816 -1.638 0.10844 dirty.17 sanitary.I7 -0.362640 0.456056 -0.795 0.43069 -0.039221 0.211520 -0.185 0.85373 litter.l8 1.275540 1.850368 0.689 0.49415 -0.062723 0.177510 -0.353 0.72547 dirty.18 rats.19 0.101853 0.216231 0.471 0.63989 0.212263 1.792377 0.118 0.90626 dirty.l9 -0.096395 0.167160 -0.577 0.56704 sanitary.l9 0.428896 0.460980 0.930 0.35713 litter.l10 -1.843223 1.698455 -1.085 0.28360 0.149354 0.170239 0.877 0.38497 dirty.I10 sanitary. I10 0.168599 0.420004 0.401 0.69001 rats.l11 -0.058933 0.230261 -0.256 0.79916 litter.l11 -0.903892 1.730436 -0.522 0.60399 dirty.l11 -0.382537 0.164917 -2.320 0.02496 \* sanitary.l11 1.240162 0.396856 3.125 0.00311 \*\* rats.l12 -0.158735 0.203651 -0.779 0.43980 litter.l12 -1.303774 1.599337 -0.815 0.41925 dirty.l12 -0.053458 0.183216 -0.292 0.77180 sanitary.112 -0.177394 0.425232 -0.417 0.67854 21.998270 10.006135 2.198 0.03310 \*

Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 10.59 on 45 degrees of freedom Multiple R-Squared: 0.6435, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2632 F-statistic: 1.692 on 48 and 45 DF, p-value: 0.0388

Estimation results for equation Sanitary Conditions:

sanitary = rats.l1 + litter.l1 + dirty.l1 + sanitary.l1 + rats.l2 + litter.l2 + dirty.l2 + sanitary.l2 + rats.l3 + litter.l3 + dirty.l3 + sanitary.l3 + rats.l4 + litter.l4 + dirty.l4 + sanitary.l4 + rats.l5 + litter.l5 + dirty.l5 + sanitary.l5 + rats.l6 + litter.l6 + dirty.l6 + sanitary.l6 + rats.l7 + litter.l7 + dirty.l7 + sanitary.l7 + rats.l8 + litter.l8 + dirty.l8 + sanitary.l8 + rats.l9 + litter.l9 + dirty.l9 + sanitary.l9 + rats.l10 + litter.l10 + dirty.l10 + sanitary.l10 + rats.l11 + litter.l11 + dirty.l11 + sanitary.l11 + rats.l12 + litter.l12 + dirty.l12 + sanitary.l12 + const

Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|) rats.l1 0.142555 0.072080 1.978 0.0541. 0.183366 0.753503 0.243 0.8088 litter I1 dirty.l1 0.037510 0.060851 0.616 0.5407 sanitary.l1 0.336393 0.149751 2.246 0.0296 \* -0.105957 0.077630 -1.365 0.1791 -1.535659 0.707357 -2.171 0.0352 \* litter.l2 dirtv.l2 -0.034130 0.057423 -0.594 0.5552 sanitary.l2 0.313960 0.159629 1.967 0.0554 . rats 13 -0.013696 0.080136 -0.171 0.8651 0.535240 0.754651 0.709 0.4818 0.011517 0.064129 0.180 0.8583 dirtv.l3 sanitary.l3 0.268891 0.162602 1.654 0.1052 rats.l4 0.013805 0.087122 0.158 0.8748 -0.069466 0.730591 -0.095 0.9247 -0.067802 0.064797 -1.046 0.3010 sanitary.l4 -0.240549 0.158901 -1.514 0.1371 -0.059521 0.085193 -0.699 0.4884 rats.I5  $0.105778 \ 0.751405 \ 0.141 \ 0.8887$ dirty.l5 0.001641 0.069266 0.024 0.9812 sanitary.I5 -0.177056 0.175788 -1.007 0.3192 rats.l6 -0.086052 0.080476 -1.069 0.2906 litter.l6 -0.486865 0.714395 -0.682 0.4990 dirty.l6 0.083794 0.069688 1.202 0.2355 rats.l7 0.036866 0.084532 0.436 0.6648 dirty.l7 -0.085853 0.073177 -1.173 0.2469 sanitary.17 -0.057856 0.181555 -0.319 0.7515 rats.l8 0.070345 0.084205 0.835 0.4079 litter.l8 1.573738 0.736627 2.136 0.0381 \* sanitary.l8 -0.365561 0.170669 -2.142 0.0376 \* rats.l9 -0.183120 0.086081 -2.127 0.0389 \* litter.l9 -0.289041 0.713541 -0.405 0.6873 dirty.l9 -0.056871 0.066546 -0.855 0.3973 sanitary.l9 -0.155681 0.183515 -0.848 0.4007 litter.I10 -0.238594 0.676151 -0.353 0.7258 sanitary.I10 0.228912 0.167203 1.369 0.1778 rats.l11 0.024505 0.091666 0.267 0.7904 dirty.l11 -0.153582 0.065653 -2.339 0.0238 \* sanitary.l11 0.336738 0.157987 2.131 0.0386\* litter.l12 -0.921663 0.636692 -1.448 0.1547 dirty.l12 -0.063362 0.072938 -0.869 0.3896 const 4.425820 3.983418 1.111 0.2724 Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 4.218 on 45 degrees of freedom Multiple R-Squared: 0.7526, Adjusted R-squared: 0.4888 F-statistic: 2.852 on 48 and 45 DF, p-value: 0.0002749

Covariance matrix of residuals: rats litter dirty sanitary rats 79.6458 0.8206 -14.075 11.6873 litter 0.8206 0.7279 -1.375 0.8463 dirty -14.0754 -1.3750 112.240 2.6238 sanitary 11.6873 0.8463 2.624 17.7879

Correlation matrix of residuals: rats litter dirty sanitary rats 1.0000 0.1078 -0.14887 0.31051 litter 0.1078 1.0000 -0.15212 0.23521 dirty -0.1489 -0.1521 1.00000 0.05872 sanitary 0.3105 0.2352 0.05872 1.00000