Missing Data Basics

Utrecht University Winter School: Missing Data in R



Kyle M. Lang

Department of Methodology & Statistics Utrecht University

Outline

Missing Data Descriptives

Missing Data Mechanisms

Missing Data Treatments



What are Missing Data?

Missing data are empty cells in a dataset where there should be observed values.

 The missing cells correspond to true population values, but we haven't observed those values.



What are Missing Data?

Missing data are empty cells in a dataset where there should be observed values.

 The missing cells correspond to true population values, but we haven't observed those values.

Not every empty cell is a missing datum.

- Quality-of-life ratings for dead patients in a mortality study
- Firm profitability after the company goes out of business
- Self-reported severity of menstrual cramping for men
- Empty blocks of data following "gateway" items

A Little Notation

 $Y := An N \times P$ Matrix of Arbitrary Data

 $Y_{mis} := \text{The } missing \text{ part of } Y$

 $Y_{obs} :=$ The *observed* part of Y

 $R := An N \times P$ response matrix

 $M := An N \times P$ missingness matrix

The R and M matrices are complementary.

- $r_{np} = 1$ means y_{np} is observed; $m_{np} = 1$ means y_{np} is missing.
- $r_{np} = 0$ means y_{np} is missing; $m_{np} = 0$ means y_{np} is observed.
- M_p is the *missingness* of Y_p .

MISSING DATA DESCRIPTIVES



Missing Data Pattern

Missing data (or response) patterns represent unique combinations of observed and missing items.

• P items $\Rightarrow 2^P$ possible patterns.

	Χ	Υ
1	Х	У
2	Χ	
3		У
4	•	

Patterns for P = 2

	Χ	Υ	Z
1	Х	У	Z
2	Χ	У	
3	Χ		Z
4		У	Z
5	Χ		
6			Z
7		У	
8	•		

Patterns for P = 3

Missing Data Pattern

The concept of a "missing data pattern" can also be used to classify the spatial arrangement of missing cells on a data set.

- Univariate
 - Missing data occur on only one variable
- Monotone
 - The proportion of complete elements, in both rows and columns, decreases when traversing the data set.
 - The observed cells can be arranged into a "staircase" pattern.
- Arbitrary
 - Missing values are "randomly" scattered throughout the data set.

Example Missing Data Patterns

	Χ	Υ	Z			Χ	Υ	Z			Χ	Υ	Z
1	Х	У	Z		1	Х	У	Z		1	Х		Z
2	Χ	У	Z		2	Χ	У	Z		2	Χ	У	Z
3	Χ	У	Z		3	Χ	У	Z		3	Χ	У	Z
4	Χ	У	Z		4	Χ	У			4	Χ		Z
5	Χ	У	Z		5	Χ	У			5	Χ	У	Z
6	Χ		Z		6	Χ	У			6	Χ		Z
7	Χ		Z		7	Χ				7		У	Z
8	Χ		Z		8	Χ				8	Χ	У	Z
9	Χ		Z		9	Χ				9	Χ		
10	Х		Z		10		•	•		10	Х	У	•
Univa	Univariate Pattern		Monotone Pattern			Arbitrary Pattern							

Nonresponse Rates

PROPORTION MISSING

- · The proportion of cells containing missing data
- Good early screening measure
- Should be computed for each variable, not for the entire dataset

ATTRITION RATE

 The proportion of participants that drop-out of a study at each measurement occasion

Nonresponse Rates

PROPORTION OF COMPLETE CASES

- The proportion of observations with no missing data
- Often reported but nearly useless quantity

FRACTION OF MISSING INFORMATION

- Associated with an estimated parameter, not with an incomplete variable
- Like an R^2 for the missing data
- Most important diagnostic value for missing data problems
- Can only be computed after treating the missing data

COVARIANCE COVERAGE

$$CC_{jk} = N^{-1} \sum_{n=1}^{N} r_{nj} r_{nk}$$

- The proportion of cases available to estimate a given pairwise relationship (e.g., a covariance between two variables)
- Very important to have adequate coverage of the parameters you want to estimate

INBOUND STATISTIC

$$I_{jk} = \frac{\sum_{n=1}^{N} (1 - r_{nj}) r_{nk}}{\sum_{n=1}^{N} (1 - r_{nj})}$$

ullet The proportion of missing cases in Y_i for which Y_k is observed

OUTBOUND STATISTIC

$$O_{jk} = \frac{\sum_{n=1}^{N} r_{nj} (1 - r_{nk})}{\sum_{n=1}^{N} r_{nj}}$$

• The proportion of observed cases in Y_i for which Y_k is missing

INflux Coefficient

$$I_{j} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{P} \sum_{n=1}^{N} (1 - r_{nj}) r_{nk}}{\sum_{k=1}^{P} \sum_{n=1}^{N} r_{nk}}$$

- The proportion of observed cells in Y that exists in cases for which Y_i is missing
- How well the missing values in Y_j connect to the observed values in \mathbf{Y}_{-i}

OUTFLUX COEFFICIENT

$$O_{j} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{P} \sum_{n=1}^{N} r_{nj} (1 - r_{nk})}{\sum_{k=1}^{P} \sum_{n=1}^{N} (1 - r_{nk})}$$

- The proportion of missing cells in Y that exists in cases for which Y_i is observed
- How well the observed values in Y_j connect to the missing values in Y_{-j}

MISSING DATA MECHANISMS



Missing Data Mechanisms

Missing Completely at Random (MCAR)

- $P(R|Y_{mis}, Y_{obs}) = P(R)$
- Missingness is unrelated to any study variables.

Missing at Random (MAR)

- $P(R|Y_{mis}, Y_{obs}) = P(R|Y_{obs})$
- Missingness is related to only the observed parts of study variables.

Missing not at Random (MNAR)

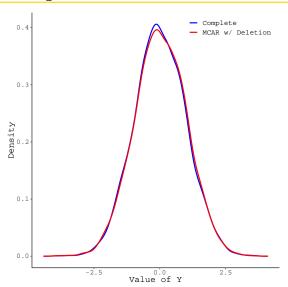
- $P(R|Y_{mis}, Y_{obs}) \neq P(R|Y_{obs})$
- Missingness is related to the *unobserved* parts of study variables.

Simulate Some Toy Data

```
library(mvtnorm)
library(dplyr)
library(magrittr)
nObs <- 5000 # Sample Size
pm <- 0.3 # Proportion Missing
sigma \leftarrow matrix(c(1.0, 0.5, 0.3,
                   0.5. 1.0. 0.0.
                   0.3, 0.0, 1.0),
                 ncol = 3)
dat0 \leftarrow rmvnorm(nObs, c(0, 0, 0), sigma) \%\% data.frame()
colnames(dat0) <- c("x", "y", "z")
dat0 %$% cor(y, x)
[1] 0.5001822
```

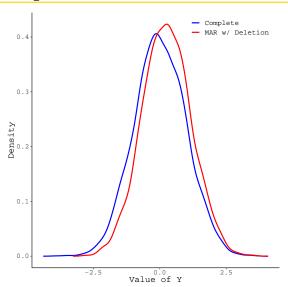
MCAR Example

MCAR Example



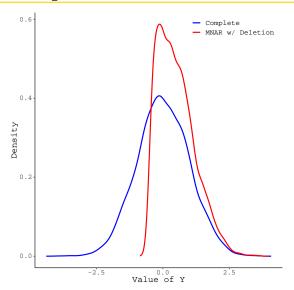
MAR Example

MAR Example



MNAR Example

MNAR Example



In our previous MAR example, ignoring the predictor of missingness actually produces *Indirect MNAR*.

In our previous MAR example, ignoring the predictor of missingness actually produces *Indirect MNAR*.

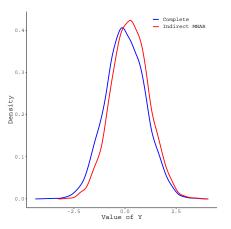
QUESTION: What happens if we ignore the predictor of missingness, but that predictor is independent of our study variables?

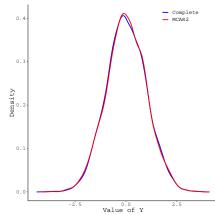
In our previous MAR example, ignoring the predictor of missingness actually produces *Indirect MNAR*.

QUESTION: What happens if we ignore the predictor of missingness, but that predictor is independent of our study variables?

ANSWER: We get back to MCAR:)

The missing data mechanisms are not simply characteristics of an incomplete dataset; we also need to account for the analysis.





Testing the Missing Data Mechanism

We cannot fully test the MAR or MNAR assumptions.

- To do so would require knowing the values of the missing data.
- We can find observed predictors of missingness.
 - \circ Use classification algorithms to predict missingness from Y_{obs} .
 - We can never know that we have discovered all MAR predictors.
- In practice, MAR and MNAR live on the ends of a continuum.
 - Our missing data problem exists at some unknown point along this continuum.
 - We can do a lot to nudge our problem towards the MAR side.

Testing the Missing Data Mechanism

We can (partially) test the MCAR assumption.

- With MCAR, the missing data and the observed data should have the same distribution.
- We can test for MCAR by testing the distributions of *auxiliary* variables, **Z**.
 - Use a t-test to compare the subset of Z_p that corresponds to Y_{mis} to the subset corresponding to Y_{obs} .
 - The Little (1988) MCAR test is a multivariate version of this.

These procedures actually test if the data are *observed* completely at random.

MISSING DATA TREATMENTS



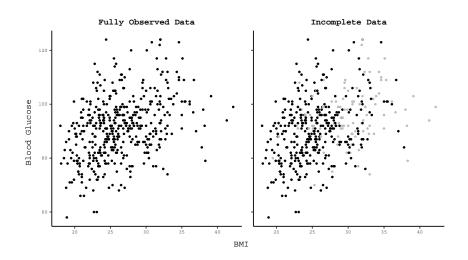
Bad Methods (These almost never work)

Listwise Deletion (Complete Case Analysis)

- Use only complete observations for the analysis
 - Very wasteful (can throw out lots of useful data)
 - Loss of statistical power

Pairwise Deletion (Available Case Analysis)

- Use only complete pairs of observations for analysis
 - Different samples sizes for different parameter estimates
 - Can cause computational issues



```
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.38868 0.3954109
glu 0.3886800 1.00000 0.3904300
bp 0.3954109 0.39043 1.0000000
diabetes2 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor(use = "complete")
         bmi
              glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.3604305 0.3997773
glu 0.3604305 1.0000000 0.3637283
bp 0.3997773 0.3637283 1.0000000
```

```
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.38868 0.3954109
glu 0.3886800 1.00000 0.3904300
bp 0.3954109 0.39043 1.0000000
diabetes2 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor(use = "pairwise")
         bmi
              glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.3604305 0.3954109
glu 0.3604305 1.0000000 0.3637283
bp 0.3954109 0.3637283 1.0000000
```

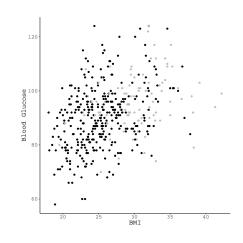
```
mean(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 91.26018
mean(diabetes2$glu, na.rm = TRUE)
[1] 89.90379
var(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 132.1657
var(diabetes2$glu, na.rm = TRUE)
[1] 133.4907
```

```
s1 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = diabetes1) %>% summary()
s2 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = diabetes2) %>% summary()
s1$r.squared
[1] 0.2450996
s2$r.squared
[1] 0.2136414
```

```
s1$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 47.6809340 3.76076018 12.678536 1.351038e-31
bmi
            0.6940756 0.11782779 5.890594 7.676778e-09
bp
            0.1876015 0.03926201 4.778194 2.417752e-06
            0.1549222 0.03871817 4.001279 7.396263e-05
age
s2$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 48.0030439 4.57313149 10.496756 1.663883e-22
bmi
            0.7015139 0.16074778 4.364066 1.697139e-05
            0.1784960 0.04713994 3.786512 1.806709e-04
bp
            0.1539327 0.04570276 3.368128 8.438564e-04
age
```

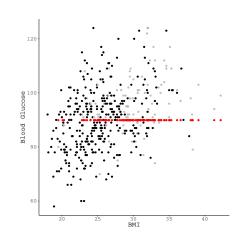
(Unconditional) Mean Substitution

- Replace Y_{mis} with \bar{Y}_{obs}
 - Negatively biases regression slopes and correlations
 - Attenuates measures of linear association



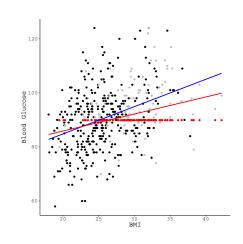
(Unconditional) Mean Substitution

- Replace Y_{mis} with \bar{Y}_{obs}
 - Negatively biases regression slopes and correlations
 - Attenuates measures of linear association



(Unconditional) Mean Substitution

- Replace Y_{mis} with \bar{Y}_{obs}
 - Negatively biases regression slopes and correlations
 - Attenuates measures of linear association



```
imputed <- diabetes2</pre>
imputed[m, "glu"] <- mean(imputed$glu, na.rm = TRUE)</pre>
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.38868 0.3954109
glu 0.3886800 1.00000 0.3904300
bp 0.3954109 0.39043 1.0000000
imputed %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.2738956 0.3954109
glu 0.2738956 1.0000000 0.3115963
bp 0.3954109 0.3115963 1.0000000
```

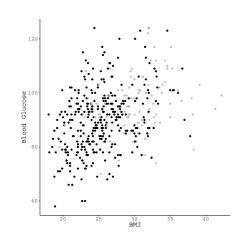
```
mean(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 91.26018
mean(imputed$glu, na.rm = TRUE)
[1] 89.90379
var(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 132.1657
var(imputed$glu, na.rm = TRUE)
[1] 103.5234
```

```
s1 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = diabetes1) %>% summary()
s2 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = imputed) %>% summary()
s1$r.squared
[1] 0.2450996
s2$r.squared
[1] 0.1534748
```

```
s1$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 47.6809340 3.76076018 12.678536 1.351038e-31
bmi
            0.6940756 0.11782779 5.890594 7.676778e-09
bp
            0.1876015 0.03926201 4.778194 2.417752e-06
            0.1549222 0.03871817 4.001279 7.396263e-05
age
s2$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 60.0427717 3.52460653 17.035312 2.684999e-50
bmi
            0.3851960 0.11042889 3.488181 5.354970e-04
            0.1355205 0.03679658
                                 3.682964 2.593574e-04
bp
            0.1416906 0.03628689
                                 3.904732 1.092045e-04
age
```

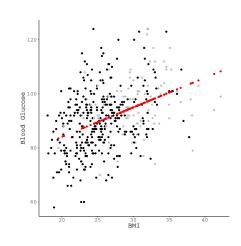
Deterministic Regression Imputation (Conditional Mean Substitution)

- Replace Y_{mis} with \widehat{Y}_{mis} from some regression equation
 - Positively biases regression slopes and correlations
 - Inflates measures of linear association



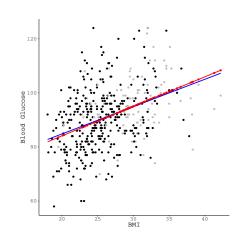
Deterministic Regression Imputation (Conditional Mean Substitution)

- Replace Y_{mis} with \widehat{Y}_{mis} from some regression equation
 - Positively biases regression slopes and correlations
 - Inflates measures of linear association



Deterministic Regression Imputation (Conditional Mean Substitution)

- Replace Y_{mis} with \widehat{Y}_{mis} from some regression equation
 - Positively biases regression slopes and correlations
 - Inflates measures of linear association





```
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi
            glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.38868 0.3954109
glu 0.3886800 1.00000 0.3904300
bp 0.3954109 0.39043 1.0000000
imputed %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi
              glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.3929998 0.3954109
glu 0.3929998 1.0000000 0.3948022
bp 0.3954109 0.3948022 1.0000000
```

```
mean(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 91.26018
mean(imputed$glu, na.rm = TRUE)
[1] 90.7196
var(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 132.1657
var(imputed$glu, na.rm = TRUE)
[1] 113.4771
```

```
s1 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = diabetes1) %>% summary()
s2 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = imputed) %>% summary()
s1$r.squared
[1] 0.2450996
s2$r.squared
[1] 0.2568307
```

```
s1$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value
                                              Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 47.6809340 3.76076018 12.678536 1.351038e-31
bmi
            0.6940756 0.11782779 5.890594 7.676778e-09
bp
            0.1876015 0.03926201 4.778194 2.417752e-06
            0.1549222 0.03871817 4.001279 7.396263e-05
age
s2$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 49.6479184
                       3.4575573 14.359247 1.365611e-38
            0.6474336
bmi
                       0.1083282 5.976594 4.726502e-09
            0.1713054
                       0.0360966
                                 4.745748 2.817137e-06
bp
            0.1603848
                       0.0355966
                                  4.505622 8.501341e-06
age
```

General Issues with Deletion-Based Methods

- Biased parameter estimates unless data are MCAR
- · Generalizability issues

General Issues with Simple Single Imputation Methods

- Biased parameter estimates even when data are MCAR
- Attenuates variability in any treated variables

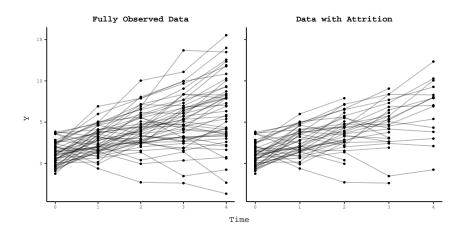
Averaging Available Items (Person-Mean Imputation)

- Compute aggregate scores using only available values
 - Missing data must be MCAR
 - Each item must contributes equally to the aggregate score

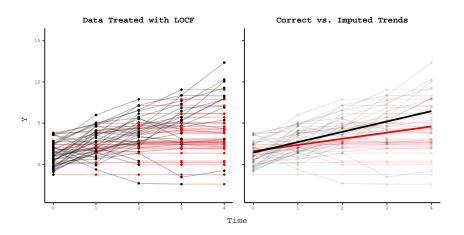
Last Observation Carried Forward (LOCF)

- Replace post-dropout values with the most recent observed value
 - Assume that dropouts would maintain their last known values
 - Attenuates estimates of growth/development

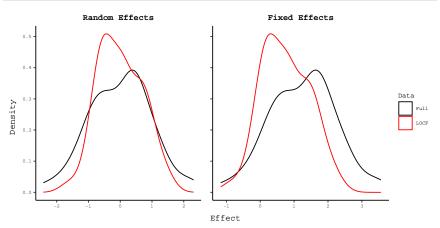
LOCF



LOCF

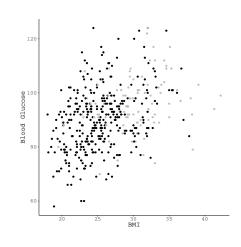


```
## Fit some multilevel regression models
fit1 <- lmer(y ~ t + (t | id), data = dat1) # Full data
fit2 <- lmer(y ~ t + (t | id), data = dat3) # LOCF data</pre>
```



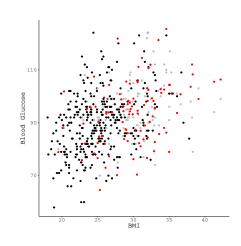
Stochastic Regression Imputation

- Fill Y_{mis} with \widehat{Y}_{mis} plus some random noise.
 - Produces unbiased parameter estimates and predictions
 - Computationally efficient
 - Attenuates standard errors
 - Makes CIs and prediction intervals too narrow



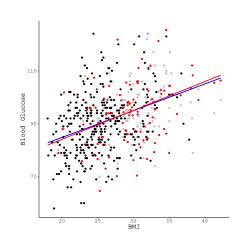
Stochastic Regression Imputation

- Fill Y_{mis} with \widehat{Y}_{mis} plus some random noise.
 - Produces unbiased parameter estimates and predictions
 - Computationally efficient
 - Attenuates standard errors
 - Makes CIs and prediction intervals too narrow



Stochastic Regression Imputation

- Fill Y_{mis} with \widehat{Y}_{mis} plus some random noise.
 - Produces unbiased parameter estimates and predictions
 - Computationally efficient
 - Attenuates standard errors
 - Makes CIs and prediction intervals too narrow





```
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi
             glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.38868 0.3954109
glu 0.3886800 1.00000 0.3904300
bp 0.3954109 0.39043 1.0000000
imputed %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi
              glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.3332384 0.3954109
glu 0.3332384 1.0000000 0.3591472
bp 0.3954109 0.3591472 1.0000000
```

```
mean(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 91.26018
mean(imputed$glu)
[1] 90.45699
var(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 132.1657
var(imputed$glu)
[1] 136.2282
```

```
s1 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = diabetes1) %>% summary()
s2 <- lm(glu ~ bmi + bp + age, data = imputed) %>% summary()
s1$r.squared
[1] 0.2450996
s2$r.squared
[1] 0.2152978
```

```
s1$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 47.6809340 3.76076018 12.678536 1.351038e-31
bmi
            0.6940756 0.11782779 5.890594 7.676778e-09
bp
            0.1876015 0.03926201 4.778194 2.417752e-06
            0.1549222 0.03871817 4.001279 7.396263e-05
age
s2$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 50.0419868 3.89275710 12.855153 2.586334e-32
bmi
            0.5625970 0.12196336 4.612836 5.222400e-06
            0.1696160 0.04064004 4.173617 3.617535e-05
bp
            0.1962653 0.04007711 4.897192 1.369940e-06
age
```

Nonresponse Weighting

- Weight the observed cases to correct for nonresponse bias
 - Popular in survey research and official statistics
 - Only worth considering with Unit Nonresponse
 - Doesn't make any sense with Item Nonresponse



Multiple Imputation (MI)

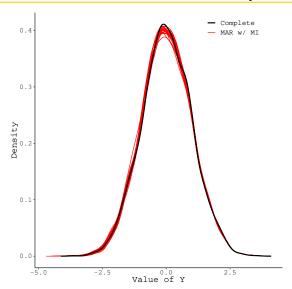
- Replace the missing values with M plausible estimates
 - Essentially, a repeated application of stochastic regression imputation (with a particular type of regression model)
 - Produces unbiased parameter estimates and predictions
 - Produces "correct" standard errors, Cls, and prediction intervals
 - Very, very flexible
 - Computationally expensive



What happens when we apply MI to our previous MAR example?

The MI-based parameter estimate looks good.

 MI produces unbiased estimates of the parameter when data are MAR.

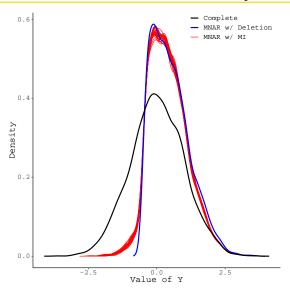


What about applying MI to our MNAR example?

The MI-based parameter estimate is still biased.

 MI cannot correct bias in parameter estimates when data are MNAR.

Good Methods (These almost always work)





```
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cor()
         bmi glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.38868 0.3954109
glu 0.3886800 1.00000 0.3904300
bp 0.3954109 0.39043 1.0000000
pooledCorMat(miceOut, c("bmi", "glu", "bp"))
         bmi glu bp
bmi 1.0000000 0.3542062 0.3954109
glu 0.3542062 1.0000000 0.3597005
bp 0.3954109 0.3597005 1.0000000
```

```
mean(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 91.26018
with(miceOut, mean(glu)) analyses %>% unlist() %>% mean()
[1] 90.69377
var(diabetes1$glu)
[1] 132, 1657
with(miceOut, var(glu))$analyses %>% unlist() %>% mean()
[1] 136.3632
```

```
summary(fit1)$coef
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 47.6809340 3.76076018 12.678536 1.351038e-31
bmi
            0.6940756 0.11782779 5.890594 7.676778e-09
bp
          0.1876015 0.03926201 4.778194 2.417752e-06
            0.1549222 0.03871817 4.001279 7.396263e-05
age
pool(fit2) %>% summary() %>% select(-df)
               estimate std.error statistic
                                                 p.value
        term
  (Intercept) 49.8829305 4.45915598 11.186631 0.000000e+00
2
         bmi 0.6354555 0.15060220 4.219431 4.781634e-05
3
          bp 0.1732559 0.04826505 3.589676 4.478918e-04
4
         age 0.1577152 0.04704527 3.352414 9.983179e-04
```

Good Methods (These almost always work)

Bayesian Modeling

- Treat missing values as just another parameter to be estimated
 - Models can be directly estimated in the presence of missing data
 - Essentially, runs MI behind-the-scenes during model estimation
 - The predictors of nonresponse must be included in the model, somehow
 - Computationally expensive



Good Methods (These almost always work)

Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML)

- Adjust the objective function to only consider the observed parts of the data
 - Models are directly estimated in the presence of missing data
 - The predictors of nonresponse must be included in the model, somehow
 - Unless you write your own optimization program, FIML is only available for certain types of models
 - In linear regression models, FIML cannot treat missing data on predictors (if the predictors are taken as fixed)

```
fit <- diabetes2 %>%
    select(bmi, glu, bp) %>%
    lavCor(missing = "fiml", output = "sampstat")

mean(diabetes1$glu)

[1] 91.26018

fit$mean["glu"]
    glu
90.97132
```

```
diabetes1 %>% select(bmi, glu, bp) %>% cov()
        bmi glu bp
bmi 19.51980 19.74191 24.16288
glu 19.74191 132.16571 62.08191
bp 24.16288 62.08191 191.30440
fit$cov
   bmi
       glu bp
bmi 19.476
glu 20.517 137.896
bp 24.108 61.544 190.872
```

```
mod <- "glu ~ 1 + bmi + bp + age"
fit <- sem(mod, data = diabetes2, missing = "fiml")
summary(fit1)$r.squared
[1] 0.2450996
inspect(fit, "r2")
   glu
0.231</pre>
```

```
summary(fit1)$coef %>% round(3)
         Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)
           47.681 3.761 12.679
bmi
          0.694 0.118 5.891
bp
         0.188 0.039 4.778
         0.155 0.039 4.001
age
parameterEstimates(fit, ci = FALSE)[1:4, ]
 lhs op rhs est se
                         z pvalue
1 glu ~1 48.003 4.546 10.559 0.000
2 glu ~ bmi 0.702 0.160 4.390 0.000
3 glu ~ bp 0.178 0.047 3.809 0.000
4 glu ~ age 0.154 0.045 3.388 0.001
```

References

Little, R. J. A. (1988). A test of missing completely at random for multivariate data with missing values. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *83*(404), 1198–1202. doi: 10.1080/01621459.1988.10478722

