R for STATA Users

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Introduction

R for STATA Users is a book designed to take researchers that are already is profecient in STATA, and show them how to do the same analyses in R. The hope is that by starting with what the reader is already comfrotable and showing how to replicate their code in R, the transition to open source software will be gentle. After covering the basics, the book then moves on to more R specific lessons that may introduce techniques that aren't commonly seen in STATA.

This book will show snipets of STATA code, such as:

```
reg dep_var ind_var control_var1 control_var3
```

followed by the corresponding R code to produce the same result. In this case:

```
lm(dep_var ~ ind_var + control_var1 + control_var2,
    data = example.data)
```

There will also be addition answer and explanations. For example, the linear model above can be written differently in R.

```
lm(example.data$dep_var ~ example.data$ind_var +
        example.data$control_var1 + example.data$control_var2)
```

These models are exactly the same. They all run OLS regression In R, you can either write the variables by themselves and then specifly which dataframe they come from, or you can write the dataframe, and \$ symbol, and then the variable name, making wure there are no spaces between them. More on this later.

1.1 Who is this book for?

This book is for anyone that is already profecient in STATA that would like to learn how to conduct statistical analyses in R. It is primarily written for researchers, educations, and students in quatitative fields.

1.2 Who isn't this book for?

This books assumes that you are already comfortable with STATA and statistics. If you don't already know STATA, this book will not make a lot of sense as the underlying concepts will not be explained. If you are not already familiar with the math and intuition behind statistical models, this book will not be of much use. In fact, there will be no pure math covered what so ever. The point of this book is not to explain why you should do something statistically, only to show you how to do something you're already familiar with in STATA using R.

1.3 Setting up R

There are already a number of great tutorials on how install and setup R. As this book is unlikely to provide an even better tutorial, instead of taking up space with redundant information, I instead recommend checking out one of these tutorials:

- R for Data Science, by Hadley Wickham & Garrett Grolemund: 1.4 Prerequisites

Why switch to R

If you've gotten this far, I'm assuming that you're already profeccint in STATA. Maybe you're a seasoned researcher with scores of publications on you CV. Maybe you're a grad student, recently emerged from the gauntlet of stats class after stats class, having learned STATA along the way. Perhaps you're asking yourself, Why would I re-learn how to do something I already know?

The answer for many of you is: You shouldn't. Some people don't need to leard R, especially considering that they've already learned how to do everything they need to do in STATA. For everyone else, here are some good reasons to make the switch (or at least learn *some* R).

2.1 R advantages

1. R is free

R is an open source programing language available for Windows, Mac, and Linux operating systems. This means that anyone can download it, use it, publish results, develop packages, and other fun stuff without spending any money. Seriously, it's 100% free. 100%. All versions, updates, extra packages, even some books, free. No need for temporary lisences, shelling out for perpetual lisences, buyng new versions, getting your institution to buy it for you, or borrowing that sketchy thumb drive that one person has (not that any reader every pirated anything). It's all free.

2. R is free

Seriously, though. It's free. Even if this doesn't matter to you, if you teach, it likely matters to your students. College is expensive, especially if you go for a

really long time, like getting a Ph.D. Even for students with scholarships and funding, the financial burden can be tough. Not having to by software, on top of buying an overpriced statistics textbook (the latest edition only!), can make a big difference.

3. R is the preferred language of statisticians and methodologists in many fields

If you want to be at the forefront of statistics or your chosen field, there's a good chance that the latest developments are going to come in the form of new R packages before they spreads to any other language. Even before R packages are published, people often post their work on GitHub to be downloaded and used as you will.

4. R is a programing language

Getting comfortable in R means learning some fundanamentals of how to write basic code. While with can be extended to developing entire programs in R, learning a bit about functions and loops may mean suffering through a bit of a learning curve, but it will make you life easier down the road. Especially when it come to tedious repetitive tasks, learning a bit about coding can save you lots of time and energy. Learning R means getting comfortable with some of the more basic coding principals.

This also means that learning other prograing languages will be easier. All languages employ the same basic logic, with some variation. Understading how one languages works, means it will be a lot easier to learn another. With maching learning, text analysis, and web development becoming increasingly popular in Python, this techniques may be some you'll need to learn down the road. Learning the fundamentals in this book can serve at the floaties in the shallow end before diving in the deep end.

5. Graphics

R's libraies from visualization – ggplot2 in particular – can produce everything from publication ready graphs, to maps, to animated 3D graphs. The possibilites are vast with other programing builing libraries to imitate the R's. While a web developer creating data visulizations may prefer something such as D3.js that easily runs in a browser, for most researcher, it's hard to beat R when it comes to visualizing you datasets and results.

6. Boredom

Sometimes we just want to do things a bit different. Tired of using STATA all the time, use R?

7. To be condescending to your collegues

- Oh, you use STATA? That's cute. I use R, like a real statistician.

2.2 In conclusion...

As you can see, some of these reasons are better than others. Maybe they all fit your situation, maybe none do. For those that are committed, let write some R code.

Going Through a Project from Start to Finish

To start off, we're going to look at an example analysis. This will go step-by-step through loading data, exploring the dataset, running a regression, and commuicating the results. You may not understand everything and this point, but you'll start to get familiar with R's syntax and won't have to wait 100 pages before trying out something useful. The following chapters will look at each step in detail to explain exactly what is happening, how it relates to STATA commands, and why we're doing it this way.

3.1 Loading packages

Once R is installed, you now have what is called base-R. Base-R comes ready to go with a number of statistical functions, visualizations, and even some sample datasets. There is, however, plenty more that can be done by loading additional packages. Packages are developed by the comunity of R users and typically hosted on CRAN (The Comprehensive R Archive Network). For effeciency, additional packages have to be installed and then called when you want to use them. R doesn't automatically installing or loading additional package as this would take up a lot of memory with with packages that you'll never use.

If a package exists on CRAN, it can be installed by writing install.packages("package.name"). Most packages that you'll want to use will be hosted on CRAN, but occasionally, new packages that are being developed are only on GitHub. If this is the case, the authos will include instructions on how to install the package in the README.md file of the GitHub repository.

You only have to intall a package once, but you have to call it everytime you open up R. It's the norm to list all of the packages that you'll be us-

ing at the very top of you R script. You call a package with the command library(package.name). For this example, were going to use the packages gt, kableExtra, and modelsummary for making regression tables, dplyr for data manipulation and pipes (%>%) which allow us to string commands together, tidyr for datat cleaning and wrangling, and ggplot2 for making graphs. We can import dplyr. tidyr, and ggplot2, by calling tidyverse¹, which automatically loads a collection of packages. So starting out, our script should look like this:

```
library(gt)
library(kableExtra)
library(modelsummary)
library(tidyverse)
```

3.2 Loading and prepping the data

For this example, we are going to use one of the preloaded datasets that comes with R. While you'll never use one of these datasets for actual research, it's easier to use something that everyone already has to get started with an example. The next chapter will show you how to load data that in STATA's .dta format, as well as other common formats.

For this example, we'll use the *Titanic* dataset. This will be obnoxiously familiary for anyone that has done some tutiorials on machine learning. For those unfamiliar, it contains variables on the age, gender, and ticket class for those that were on the titanic, as well as whether or not they survived. To access the data, we type data("Titanic"). You should now see Titanic in the Enivronment tab in RStudio. It's not quite ready yet, however, as it is not in a data.frame or tibble format. If we typw class(Titanic), we see that it's table. This can be converted with the commands data.frame(Titanic) or as_tibble(Titanic)

For this example, let's convert the table into a data frame. If you simple type data.frame(Titanic), the table will be converted to a data frame, and then printed into the console. We don't want this. We want to store the data fame as an object that we can analyze. In R, you stare and object by first typing an object name of you choosing, followed by the assignment operation (<-) and then what you want to be stored in the object. It best to choose descriptive names for objects, so it's easy to remember what they are. Let's use titanic.data. The code should hten look like this:

 $^{^{-1}}$ For more information on the tidy verse and how to use the various packages, see R for Data Science, by Hadley Wickham & Garrett Grolemund.

```
data("Titanic")
titanic.data <- data.frame(Titanic)</pre>
```

You should now see an object called titanic.data in you Environment with 32 observations or 5 variables. If we want to look at the entire dataset, we can type view(titanic.data). If we only want to see the first few rows, we can type head(titanic.data) and the last few can be seen with tail(titanic.data). A frequency table can be seen with table(titanic.data). Let's check that out.

table(titanic.data)

As you can see, it's hard to glean any information from this as frequency is already a variable, with the other variables being collapsed. We can treate a subset without frequency by typing titanic.subset <- titanic.data[(1:4)]. This creates a new data frame called titanic.subset with only contains the first four columns of the titanic.data data frame. Now trying table(titanic.subset), we see everything has a ferequency of one. To use this data for a regression, let's expand it so that we have one observation for everyone that was on board. We can do this using the tidyr function uncount(). This function takes a data frame, and a variable, and then replicated each row so there are as many duplicate rows as the number of the variable supplied. The syntax is

```
uncount(data, weights, .remote = TRUE, .id = NULL)
```

where data is the data frome weights is the variable that has the count of rows to duplicate, .remove deletes the variable supplied to weights (TRUE by defalut) and .id creates a new ID for each row. For our data, let's type:

```
titanic.expanded <- uncount(titanic.data, Freq)</pre>
```

Now let's explore our expanded data. We already used view() to look at the full dataset, but with 2201 observations, it can be hard to tell much about what going on. Instead, we're going to generate summary statistics with summary(titanic.expanded). This shows of the level of each variable, the number of ovservations at the level, and, implicitly, that there are no missing values. If there were missing values, the last row of each variable would read NA's: followed by the number of rows for which that variable didn't have a value.

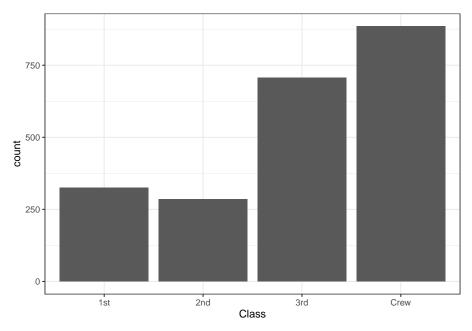
Now were have a data frame that we can analyze, we no longer need the original data, or the subset we created. We can get rid of these with rm(list = c('Titanic', 'titanic.data', 'titanic.subset')). R can use a lot of memory on your computer, so it's best to get rid of any objects that you're no longer using.

3.3 Visualization

Let's look at our data using some plots. First, we're going to check the distribution of our variables. Given that all of our variables are factors, a histogram it the was to go. Using ggplot2, we can do this:

```
ggplot() +
  geom_histogram(data = titanic.expanded,
     aes(x = Class), stat = 'count') +
  theme_bw()
```

Warning: Ignoring unknown parameters: binwidth, bins, pad



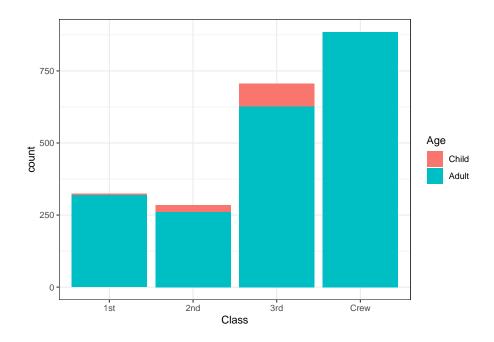
The above calls a plot (ggplot()) and then says that we're going to make a histogram (geom_histogram()). We're going to use the titanic.expanded data, and we're want to see the variable Class. aes() is responsible for creating the mapping, in other words, with the variables that are being plotting. We include stat = 'count' as we're looking at the frequency of each level of the variable Class. Finally, theme_bw() styles the graph. This part is optional, and there are plent of other themes you can choose from,in including custom themes that you can make yourself. ggplot2 uses the grammar of graphics which layers different aspects of a vizualization on top of each other. Each layer is connected with a +. While you could keep everything on one line and the code will still run, it is best to end each line with a + and the start on the next line with an indent. This keeps the code organized and easy to read.

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Now say you also wanted to see how may within each class were chilren and how many were adults. This could be done by changing the fill.

```
ggplot() +
   geom_histogram(data = titanic.expanded,
       aes(x = Class, fill = Age), stat = 'count') +
   theme_bw()
```

Warning: Ignoring unknown parameters: binwidth, bins, pad



3.4 Modeling

We're going to build a model to predict whether or not someone would survive bacsed on the variables we have. Survived is a binary variable, so we'll estimate a logit model.

```
##
## Call:
```

```
## glm(formula = Survived ~ Class + Sex + Age, family = "binomial",
##
       data = titanic.expanded)
##
## Deviance Residuals:
##
      Min
                 1Q
                      Median
                                   3Q
                                           Max
## -2.0812 -0.7149 -0.6656
                               0.6858
                                        2.1278
##
## Coefficients:
##
               Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|)
                 0.6853
                            0.2730
                                     2.510
                                             0.0121 *
## (Intercept)
## Class2nd
                -1.0181
                            0.1960 -5.194 2.05e-07 ***
## Class3rd
                -1.7778
                            0.1716 -10.362 < 2e-16 ***
## ClassCrew
                -0.8577
                            0.1573 -5.451 5.00e-08 ***
                 2.4201
                            0.1404 17.236 < 2e-16 ***
## SexFemale
## AgeAdult
                -1.0615
                            0.2440 -4.350 1.36e-05 ***
## ---
## Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
##
## (Dispersion parameter for binomial family taken to be 1)
##
##
       Null deviance: 2769.5 on 2200 degrees of freedom
## Residual deviance: 2210.1 on 2195 degrees of freedom
## AIC: 2222.1
##
## Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 4
```

Unpacking the above command, glm() calls a generalized linear model, with Survived as the dependent variable, Class, Sex, and Age, as inependent variables, using the titanic.expanded data frame. family = 'binomial' declares that the model is a logit, and we save this as an object called titanic.logit. The summary() command gives us the statistical information we're want to know about the model.

3.5 Reporting

Now have results, we need to communicate them. Let's start with a nice table. Typing modelsummary(titanic.logit, stars = TRUE) gives us a basic table, but the variable names aren't formated nicely. We can change this by creating an object with new names, and adding coef_map = independent.var.names to modelsummary():

```
independent.var.names = c(
   'Class2nd' = 'Second Class',
   'Class3rd' = 'Third Class',
```

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```
'ClassCrew' = 'Crew',
'SexFemale' = 'Sex (Female)',
'AgeAdult' = 'Age (Adult)'
)
modelsummary(titanic.logit, stars = TRUE,
    coef_map = independent.var.names)
```

	Model 1
Second Class	-1.018***
	(0.196)
Third Class	-1.778***
	(0.172)
Crew	-0.858***
C (E 1)	(0.157)
Sex (Female)	2.420***
Age (Adult)	(0.140) -1.062***
Age (Addit)	(0.244)
	(0.244)
Num.Obs.	2201
AIC	2222.1
BIC	2256.2
Log.Lik.	-1105.031
* p < 0.1, ** p	o < 0.05, *** p
< 0.01	

And say we have multiple models, such as one for each independent variable plus our original model, we can report all of them like this:

```
'Class3rd' = 'Third Class',
'ClassCrew' = 'Crew',
'SexFemale' = 'Sex (Female)',
'AgeAdult' = 'Age (Adult)'
)
modelsummary(models, stars = TRUE,
    coef_map = independent.var.names)
```

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4		
Second Class	-0.856***			-1.018***		
	(0.166)			(0.196)		
Third Class	-1.596***			-1.778***		
	(0.144)			(0.172)		
Crew	-1.664***			-0.858***		
	(0.139)			(0.157)		
Sex (Female)		2.317***		2.420***		
		(0.120)		(0.140)		
Age (Adult)			-0.880***	-1.062***		
			(0.197)	(0.244)		
Num.Obs.	2201	2201	2201	2201		
AIC	2596.6	2339.0	2753.9	2222.1		
BIC	2619.3	2350.4	2765.3	2256.2		
Log.Lik.	-1294.278	-1167.494	-1374.948	-1105.031		
* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01						

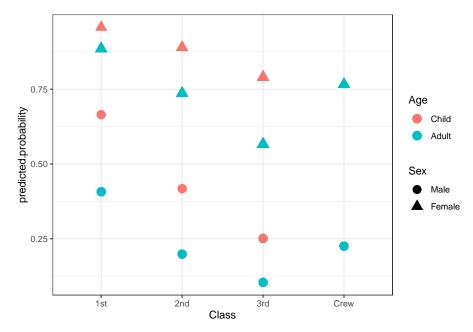
We can graph our results using ggplot2, but first we need to calculate the predicted probailities.

```
titanic.predictions <- cbind(titanic.expanded,
    predict(titanic.logit, newdata = titanic.expanded,
        type = 'link', se = TRUE))

titanic.predictions <- within(titanic.predictions, {
    predicted.probability <- plogis(fit)
    }
)

ggplot(titanic.predictions, aes(Class, predicted.probability)) +
    geom_point(aes(color = Age, shape = Sex), size = 4) +
    theme_bw()</pre>
```

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And there you have it. A complete project from start to finish in R. There are of course plently of other things we could have done, but this chapter is about getting a taste for R. In future chapters we'll go much futher in depth to each step and still only cover a portion of what's possible in R.

3.6 Exercises

- 1. We used geom_histogram() to look as the frequency of Class as well as the break down of Age within Class. Try to make more graphs that similarly describe the other variables.
- 2. Using fill =, we're able to change the color of the bars. We specified this within aes(). What happens if you move fill = outside of aes()?
- 3. One of the best ways to learn a programing language is to start with a script that works, and then play with the commands until you break it. Once broken, figue out what went wrong, and try to understand both why it didn't work and what should be done instead. If you got this script to run from beginning to end, try to break it. Import your own data set, explore different variables, and run different models. When domething doesn't work, try to see how it's different from this script, why that won't work, and discover what will.

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Dealing with .dta

There are multiple packages that can read and write .dta files, we're going to use haven. Haven is not part of base-R, so it has to be installed if you haven't done so before. With it installed, put library(haven) at the top of you R script.

library(haven)

4.1 Using haven to import STATA files

Now will import your data. This is done with the command <code>read_dta()</code>. As you probably want to actually load the data into the environment, and not just print the observations in the console, you'll have to assign the data a name. In R, names can contain uppercase and lowercase letter, numbers, underscores, and periods. An object name cannot, contain spaces, begin with a number, or contain symbols such as \$ or %. Also, names cannot be the same as a function in base-R or any of the packages you are using.

```
my.data <- read_dta('data.dta') # this works
MyDaTa <- read_dta('data.dta') # so does this

# this doesn't work, sum() is a function in base-R
sum <- read_dta('data.dta')

data2 <- read_dta('data.dat') # this is fine
2data <- read_dta('data.dat') # this isn't</pre>
```

Names are assigned by using <-, typically with a space before and after (though this isn't necessary, it keeps the code clean and easy to read). To load your

data, give it a name (that conforms with R's rules) followed by <- and then read_dta(). If your data is in your working directory, you can simply write the file name inside either single (") or double ("") quotes. To find you working directory, type getwd() into the console.

If your file is in a subdirectory of your workind directory, you can simple specify the subdirectiory. For example, if you keep all of your datasets in a folder 'data', and you have a file data.dta, you would type read_dta('data/data.dta'). If you data is outside of your working directory, you can specify the complete file path. for example read_dta('~/home/user/Desktop/datasets/data.dta').

4.2 Dealing with errors

The read_dta() function supports STATA versions 8-15. If you import your file and it doesn't look right, there may be an issue with interpreting the version. This can be fixed by adding a comma after the file name, followed by version = and then the version of STATA that wrote the file. For example, importing a file from STATA 10 would look like this:

```
stata.data <- read_dta('data/data.dta', version = 10)</pre>
```

If there's still an issue, it might be the econding. Before STATA 14, files relied on the default decoding of the system when writing a file. This means that a file written on Windows may not have the same encoding as one written on Mac or Linux. If you get the meggage "Unable to convert string to the requested encoding", it's probably because STATA saved the default Windows encoding, windows-1252. To fix this, add encoding = "latin1" after the version (again seperated with a comma).

Of course, if you saved the file on you own computer or the file was save using STATA 14 or newer, this shouldn't be a problem.

4.3 But there's still problems

If you're still having errors at this point, the best option is probably to quit. Unistall R, throw your laptop into the sea, fish it our because you're worried about pollution, chuck it in rice because you realize that you started learning R to save money.

Or, start practicing the single most important programming skill there is: looking up the answer on the internet. When something doesn't run, R prints an error message. Copy and paste this error message into the search engine of your choice, and it's likely that someone has already had the same issue, posted about it on Stack Overflow or GitHub, and found a solution.

4.4 Other data formats

While .dta may be the most common format for data files if you use STATA, there are plenty of other formats out there that you'll run into.

4.4.1 .Rdata

.Rdata is the simplest format to load as it is R's native data format. You simply type load() with with file name if the data is in your working directory. Just as with read_dta(), if the data isn't in your working directory, you have to specify either the subdirectory or the complete file path. Note, load() will import you data with the file name preceding .Rdata being the name of the data frame, so example_data.Rdata will become an object named example_data. You can of course change the name, by writing:

```
new_name <- example_data
rm(example_data)</pre>
```

4.4.2 .csv and other delimited files

One of the most common ways of saving data is with delimited text files. The readr package, which is part of the tidyverse, comes with three functions for differnt seperators, as well as a generic delimited file importer. read_csv() imports comma seperated files, read_csv2() imports semicolon seperated, and read_tsv() imports tab seperated files. read_delim() handles everying else as you can specify which the delimiter is. You do this with delim = 'delimiter'. For example:

```
# * delimited file
delimited.data <- read_delim(example_data.txt, delim = '*')</pre>
```

You can also read delimited files using base-R functions. For example, comma seperated files can be read with read.csv(). While using base-R eliminates the need to import a package, the readr functions run more quickly, and are therefore better if you have a large dataset.

4.4.3 Excel files

To read Excel files saved as .xls or .xlsx, use the package readxl. For .xls files, the command is read_xls(), and for .xlsx files, it's read_xlsx().

4.4.4 .json

For .json files, the package jsonlite is used. To import a dataset, use from JSON().

4.5 Using multiple dataframes

One advantage of R over STATA is that you can have multiple dataframes loaded into your environment. If you have one main dataset, data.dta, you can import it, and then divide it into subsets or variations. If you are running four models, each of which is using a different sample or transformed data, you can create four dataframes (ex: data1, data2, data3, data4) and then use each dataframe from each model. If you then want to remove one that you're no longer using, you can do so with rm().

This can be very usefull when merging. You can import your main dataset and the data you are going to merge in to compare. You can then save the merged data as a third dataframe to compare with the originals to make sure everything looks as it should.

Linear Regression

Now we'll look at plain old OLS. In STATA this is done using the command reg. In R, OLS is run using the command lm(). This is part of base-R, so there are no packages to install, you just start R and you're ready to go.

While STATA seperates each part of the regression with a space, R wraps everything in parentheses. You don't have to include any spaces between the elements inside the pathenses, but it best to do so, for readability. You do have to add \sim , +, and :. \sim goes between the dependent variabale, and the rest of the equation, + seperates the rest of the variables in an additive model, and : indicates a multiplicative interation. So $lm(y \sim x1 + x2 + x1:x2, data = stata.data)$ is the same as gen x1x2 = x1*x2 followed by reg y x1 x2 x1x2 in STATA.

This R code could also be written:

```
lm(stata.data$y ~ stata.data$x1 + stata.data$x2 +
    stata.data$x1:stata.data$x2)
```

And just to add even more variety, one could also write:

```
attach(stata.data)
lm(y ~ x1 + x2 + x1:x2)
```

5.1 Which way should you write your model?

Starting with attach(stata.data) is likely to be most comfortable for STATA users. This method loads a single dataframe into the environment (in this case stata.data) and now any variable you reference is assumed to belong to that dataframe. If you call a variable that doesn't exist in the dataframe, you see the

message Error in eval(predvars, data, env) : object 'variable' not found where 'variable is that name of the non-existant variable you tried to call.

If you want to switch to another dataframe, you simply write detach(stata.data) and then attach another dataframe (i.e. attach(stata.data2)). Note that detach() will not remove the data from the environment, it only removes it from being the default for calling variables. If you want to remove the data completly, type rm(stata.data).

While this may be the most similar to the way you're used to working with dataframes in STATA, one of the advantages of R is that you can work with various different dataframes at the same time. You can alsways indicate which dataframe a variable belongs to by writeing dataframe\$variable. This is seen in the second example above and is quite specific, but requires specifying the dataframe for every variable. This can be tedious. Adding data = dataframe is a nice balance where you only have to specify the data once per model, but you can still access different dataframes without constantly typing detach() and attach().

5.2 Viewing the results

(Intercept) 9.2725

If you simply run the lm() command without assigning it to an object, the results will print in the console. If you do assign you model to an object, you can access the results with the summary() command. Here's an example using the ToothGrowth dataset, which examines the role of vitimins in the rate of guinea pigs' tooth growth.

```
data("ToothGrowth")
dat <- data.frame(ToothGrowth)</pre>
model <- lm(len ~ supp + dose, data = dat)</pre>
summary(model)
##
## Call:
## lm(formula = len ~ supp + dose, data = dat)
##
## Residuals:
      Min
               1Q Median
                              3Q
                                    Max
## -6.600 -3.700 0.373 2.116 8.800
##
## Coefficients:
                Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
```

1.2824

7.231 1.31e-09 ***

```
## suppVC     -3.7000     1.0936     -3.383     0.0013 **
## dose     9.7636     0.8768     11.135     6.31e-16 ***
## ---
## Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
##
## Residual standard error: 4.236 on 57 degrees of freedom
## Multiple R-squared: 0.7038, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6934
## F-statistic: 67.72 on 2 and 57 DF, p-value: 8.716e-16
```

You can combine the results of numerous models into a single (publication ready) table. This will be covered in a later chapter.