Multivariate Skew-Normal Mixture Model for Infant Development Clustering

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Abstract

We propose a novel Bayesian model for infant development patterns that addresses primary research questions in this area while allowing for skewness and correlation of outcomes. Our model is based on finite mixtures of multivariate skew normal (MSN) distributions, where covariates are allowed on both the multivariate outcomes and probability of latent class membership. We also allow for missing outcome data by imputing missing outcomes from their conditional multivariate normal distributions. We demonstrate our method using data from the Nurture study.

Introduction

A primary goal in infant development research is to identify **latent development classes** and explain class membership in relation to covariates of interest. It is often also of interest to relate covariates to mean longitudinal growth patterns. Infant development data are inherently correlated longitudinally, often skewed, and frequently missing due to longitudinal attrition and standard practices are ill-suited for such analyses because they fail to account for one or more of these features of the data.

Motivation

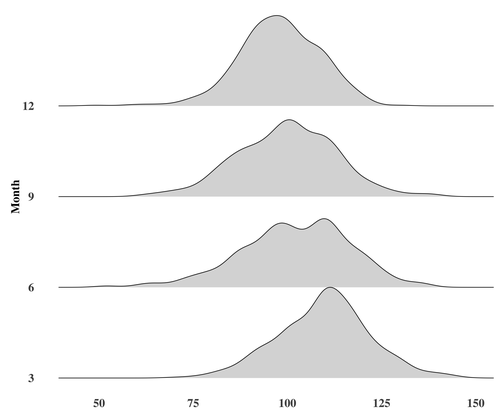

Figure 1: Residuals of repeated measures model of Bayley motor development scores for infants at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months of age.

Clustering

A primary concern of our model is with identification of latent infant development clusters. We accomplish this via multinomial logit regression model on cluster membership, which utilizes Pólya-Gamma data-aumentation to allow for updating of all parameters using Gibbs sampling. The multinomial logit model is as follows for $l = 1, ..., h$.

$$P(Z_i = l|w_i) = \pi_{il} = \frac{e^{w_i^T \delta_l}}{\Sigma_{r=1}^{h} e^{w_i^T \delta_r}}$$

where Z_i is a latent clustering indicator, w_i is the vector of class probability covariates for subject i $(i = 1, ..., n)$, δ_l contains the multinomial regression parameters for class l, and h is the number of putative clusters specified *a priori*. During MCMC estimation, class labels Z_i are updated from used as class assignments in the remaining MCMC steps.

Conditional Imputation

We allow for missingness of outcomes in the MSN mixture model by imputing missing values from their conditional multivariate normal distributions. We note that

$$Y_i|X_i, t_i, \boldsymbol{\beta}, \psi \sim N_k(X_i\boldsymbol{\beta} + t_i\psi, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$$

This allows us to appeal to standard conditional forms of the multivariate normal distribution. Let $Y_i = [Y_{i_{q\times1}}^{miss}|Y_{i_{k-q\times1}}^{obs}]^T$. We have

$$Y_i^{miss}|Y_i^{obs}, X_i, t_i, \boldsymbol{\beta}, \psi \sim N(\mu^{miss}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}^{miss})$$

where μ^{miss} and Σ^{miss} take standard forms. Each missing outcome is imputed "online", i.e. once per MCMC iteration. This provides more opportunities to explore the parameter space than multiple imputation and avoids multiplicative run-time scaling in m, the number of imputations.

Important Results

We developed a novel Bayesian MSN mixture model, and showed superior performance compared to standard approaches. We applied the MSN mixture model to data from the Nurture study and discovered three distinct development classes characterized by differences in development trajectories and demographics.

MSN Regression

We model the effect of covariates on longitudinal development outcomes through the use of a MSN regression model. The MSN distribution can be represented as a multivariate normal random variable with a latent truncated normal random effect, t. Let $\mathbf{y}_i$ be the $k \times 1$ outcome vector for subject i.

$$\mathbf{y}_i = \boldsymbol{\beta}^T\mathbf{x}_i + t_i\boldsymbol{\psi} + \boldsymbol{\epsilon}_i$$

where $\mathbf{x}_i$ is the $p \times 1$ vector of covariate values for subject i, $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ is the $p \times k$ vector of fixed effects coefficients , $t_i \overset{iid}{\sim} N_{[0,\infty)}(0, 1)$ is a conditional truncated normal random effect, ψ_l is the vector containing cluster-specific skewness parameters for each timepoint, and $\boldsymbol{\epsilon}_i \sim N_k(0, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{k\times k})$ is the correlated error term.

Simulation Study

Table 1: Parameter estimates for n = 1000, k = 4, p = 2, h = 3, v = 3 simulation.

Component	Parm.	Class 1 True	Class 1 Est. (95% CrI)	Class 2 True	Class 2 Est. (95% CrI)	Class 3 True	Class 3 Est. (95% CrI)
MSN Reg.	β_{11}	-0.54	-0.51 (-0.61, -0.41)	-0.19	-0.22 (-0.35, -0.09)	1.84	1.81 (1.65, 1.99)
	β_{12}	-1.06	-1.07 (-1.15, -0.98)	-0.16	-0.13 (-0.25, -0.02)	2.03	2.09 (1.93, 2.23)
	β_{13}	-1.28	-1.22 (-1.32, -1.11)	0.59	0.58 (0.46, 0.69)	1.8	1.74 (1.58, 1.9)
	β_{14}	-1.91	-1.83 (-1.92, -1.74)	-0.2	-0.12 (-0.25, -0.01)	1.43	1.37 (1.22, 1.52)
	σ_{11}^2	1	0.9 (0.78, 1.03)	1	1.04 (0.88, 1.26)	1	1.39 (1.08, 1.76)
	σ_{12}^2	-0.1	-0.12 (-0.22, -0.02)	-0.32	-0.31 (-0.44, -0.18)	0.08	0.27 (0.04, 0.52)
	σ_{13}^2	-0.18	-0.17 (-0.28, -0.08)	-0.52	-0.5 (-0.66, -0.38)	0.78	1.19 (0.87, 1.54)
	σ_{14}^2	0.39	0.31 (0.22, 0.43)	0.04	0.05 (-0.07, 0.22)	0.41	0.72 (0.47, 0.99)
	σ_{22}^2	1	0.97 (0.84, 1.12)	1	0.94 (0.77, 1.14)	1	1.18 (0.91, 1.5)
	ψ_1	-0.33	-0.28 (-0.4, -0.18)	0.67	0.64 (0.5, 0.78)	-1	-0.91 (-1.12, -0.68)
	ψ_2	-0.33	-0.21 (-0.34, -0.09)	0.67	0.7 (0.55, 0.84)	-1	-0.96 (-1.16, -0.76)
	ψ_3	-0.33	-0.27 (-0.39, -0.14)	0.67	0.72 (0.58, 0.86)	-1	-0.91 (-1.14, -0.69)
	ψ_4	-0.33	-0.18 (-0.3, -0.07)	0.67	0.73 (0.6, 0.87)	-1	-0.93 (-1.13, -0.73)
Multi. Logit	δ_{11}	-0.53	-0.5 (-0.74, -0.24)	-0.53	-0.5 (-0.74, -0.24)	-0.53	-0.5 (-0.74, -0.24)
	δ_{12}	0.44	0.28 (0.02, 0.56)	0.44	0.28 (0.02, 0.56)	0.44	0.28 (0.02, 0.56)
	δ_{21}	0.34	0.38 (0.09, 0.63)	0.34	0.38 (0.09, 0.63)	0.34	0.38 (0.09, 0.63)
Clust.	π_l	0.41	0.41 (0.4, 0.42)	0.36	0.36 (0.35, 0.37)	0.23	0.23 (0.22, 0.24)

Application Results

Table 2: Estimated effects of sex and race on odds of cluster membership relative to the reference cluster.

Variable	Class 2 ÔR (95% CrI)	Class 3 ÔR (95% CrI)
(B,F)	0.87 (0.62, 1.16)	0.91 (0.68, 1.22)
(W,M)	1.12 (0.80, 1.68)	1.04 (0.70, 1.55)
(W,F)	0.79 (0.53, 1.14)	1.81 (1.54, 2.20)

In Table 2, we demonstrate the capability of estimating the effect of covariates (race and sex here) on posterior odds of cluster membership.

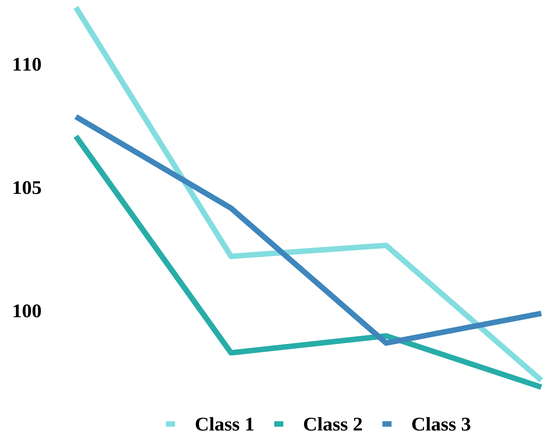

Figure 2: Mean development patterns in each estimated class

Above is a plot of the mean Bayley score for each of the fitted clusters. We observe similar development patterns but different baseline development between clusters 1 and 2, and a qualitatively different development pattern in cluster 3 than in the clusters 1 and 2.

Further Resources

https://carter-allen.github.io/MVSN-FMM

(1) Fruhwirth-Schnatter, S and Pyne, S. (2010). Bayesian inference for finite mixtures of univariate and multivariate skew-normal and skew-t distributions. Biostatistics. 2010 Jan 27;11(2):317- 36.

(2) Benjamin-Neelon SE, Ostbye T, Bennett GG, et al. Cohort profile for the Nurture Observational Study examining associations of multiple caregivers on infant growth in the Southeastern USA. BMJ open. 2017 Feb 1;7(2):e013939.

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