FORECASTING HEART DISEASE RISKS

Seif Kungulio

October 25, 2025

Contents

1	Bus	siness Understanding	3			
	1.1	Introduction	3			
	1.2	Problem statement	3			
2	Dat	ta Understanding	4			
	2.1	Data description	4			
	2.2	Data dictionary	4			
	2.3	Initial observations	5			
3	Dat	ta Preparation	6			
	3.1	Data loading	6			
	3.2	Data preprocessing	8			
	3.3	Helper functions	10			
	3.4	Exploratory data analysis	11			
4	Мо	deling	26			
5 Evaluation						
6	5 Deployment					
7	7 Conclusion					
8	Ses	ssion Information	30			

This page was deliberately left blank

1 Business Understanding

1.1 Introduction

Cardiovascular diseases remain one of the leading causes of death worldwide, imposing significant clinical and financial burdens on individuals and organizations alike. Early identification of people at risk of developing heart disease is therefore a priority not only in healthcare but also in sectors such as insurance and public health policy. For insurance companies in particular, understanding the likelihood that a policyholder will develop heart disease is crucial for assessing health risks, pricing premiums, and designing preventive wellness programs that promote healthier lifestyles among clients.

This project applies predictive analytics and machine learning techniques to the Heart Disease dataset from the UCI Machine Learning Repository. The dataset contains a diverse range of patient attributes—including demographic, physiological, and clinical indicators—that are known to influence cardiovascular health. By systematically analyzing these variables, the project aims to uncover patterns and risk factors associated with the onset of heart disease.

The broader business objective is to build a data-driven decision support system that can fore-cast an individual's probability of developing heart disease. Such a model enables insurers to perform risk stratification, design personalized premium plans, and support preventive health initiatives that lower long-term costs. Through this analytical framework, the project demonstrates how data science can transform raw medical data into actionable business intelligence, fostering both economic efficiency and social impact.

1.2 Problem statement

Problem statement

To develop models for an insurance company using the Heart Disease dataset from the UCI Machine Learning Repository. The goal is to predict the likelihood of a person developing heart disease, which would help the insurance company estimate health risks and adjust premiums accordingly.

2 Data Understanding

The dataset contains various features related to patients' health and demographic information. We will explore the dataset to understand its structure and relationships between variables.

2.1 Data description

The Heart Disease dataset from the UCI Machine Learning Repository contains 303 instances and 14 attributes. These attributes include both numerical and categorical variables related to patients' health metrics and demographic information. The target variable indicates the presence or absence of heart disease. These attributes are:

- 1. age: Age of the patient (numeric)
- 2. sex: Gender of the patient (1 = male, 0 = female)
- 3. cp: Chest pain type (categorical: 1-4)
- 4. trestbps: Resting blood pressure (numeric)
- 5. cho1: Serum cholesterol (numeric)
- 6. fbs: Fasting blood sugar (1 = true, 0 = false)
- 7. restecg: Resting electrocardiographic results (categorical)
- 8. thalach: Maximum heart rate achieved (numeric)
- 9. exang: Exercise-induced angina (1 = yes, 0 = no)
- 10. oldpeak: ST depression induced by exercise (numeric)
- 11. slope: The slope of the peak exercise ST segment (categorical)
- 12. ca: Number of major vessels (0-3, numeric)
- 13. thal: Thalassemia (categorical: 1 = normal, 2 = fixed defect, 3 = reversible defect)
- 14. target: Heart disease (1 = disease, 0 = no disease)

2.2 Data dictionary

The dataset contains 14 key attributes that are either numerical or categorical.

Attribute	Type	Description	Constraints/ Rules
age	Numerical	The age of the patient in years	Range: 29-77 (based on dataset statistics)
sex	Categorical	The gender of the patient	Values: 1 = Male, 0 = Female
ср	Categorical	Type of chest pain experienced by the patient	Values: 1 = Typical angina, 2 = Atypical angina, 3 = Non-anginal pain, 4 = Asymptomatic
trestbps	Numerical	Resting blood pressure of the patient, measured in mmHg	Range: Typically, between 94 and 200 mmHg
chol	Numerical	Serum cholesterol level in mg/dl	Range: Typically, between 126 and 564 mg/dl
fbs	Categorical	Fasting blood sugar level > 120 mg/dl	Values: 1 = True, 0 = False

Attribute	Type	Description	Constraints/ Rules
restecg	Categorical	Results of the patient's resting electrocardiogram	Values: 0 = Normal, 1 = ST-T wave abnormality, 2 = Probable or definite left ventricular hypertrophy
thalach	Numerical	Maximum heart rate achieved during a stress test	Range: Typically, between 71 and 202 bpm
exang	Categorical	Whether the patient experiences exercise-induced angina	Values: 1 = Yes, 0 = No
oldpeak	Numerical	ST depression induced by exercise relative to rest (an ECG measure)	Range: 0.0 to 6.2 (higher values indicate more severe abnormalities)
slope	Categorical	Slope of the peak exercise ST segment	Values: 1 = Upsloping, 2 = Flat, 3 = Downsloping
ca	Numerical	Number of major vessels colored by fluoroscopy	Range: 0-3
thal	Categorical	Blood disorder variable related to thalassemia	Values: 3 = Normal, 6 = Fixed defect, 7 = Reversible defect
target	Categorical	Diagnosis of heart disease	Values: 0 = No heart disease, 1 = Presence of heart disease

2.3 Initial observations

- The dataset contains a mix of numerical and categorical variables.
- Some variables may require preprocessing, such as handling missing values and encoding categorical variables.
- Missing Values: Some fields like ca and thal may have missing values or unknown entries ('?').
- Data Types: Some categorical variables are encoded numerically and will need to be interpreted correctly during analysis.
- · Class Imbalance: Preliminary checks suggest the dataset is relatively balanced between presence and absence of disease, but this will be verified.
- Outliers: Numerical fields such as chol (cholesterol) and trestbps (blood pressure) may have outliers that need to be detected and considered in analysis.

3 Data Preparation

3.1 Data loading

Load the dataset from the UCI website to memory

```
# Load the dataset
url <- "https://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/machine-learning-databases/heart-disease/processed.cleveland.dat
# Read the dataset into a dataframe
Heart.df <- read.csv(text = getURL(url), header = FALSE, na.strings = "?")</pre>
```

Rename the columns into a meaningful column names

Display dimensions of the dataset

```
dim(Heart.df)
```

```
## [1] 303 14
```

Display the first six rows of the dataset

```
head(Heart.df)
```

```
##
    age sex cp trestbps chol fbs restecg thalach exang oldpeak slope ca thal
## 1 63
        1 1
                  145 233 1
                                  2
                                        150
                                               0
                                                    2.3
                                                           3 0
                                  2
                                                           2 3
## 2 67
        1 4
                  160 286 0
                                        108
                                               1
                                                    1.5
                                                                  3
## 3 67
         1 4
                  120 229 0
                                  2
                                        129
                                                    2.6
                                                           2 2
                                                                  7
                                               1
## 4
    37
        1 3
                  130 250 0
                                  0
                                        187
                                               0
                                                    3.5
                                                           3 0
                                                                  3
                  130 204 0
                                  2
                                                                  3
## 5 41
        0 2
                                        172
                                               0
                                                    1.4
                                                           1 0
         1 2
                  120 236 0
                                        178
                                                    0.8
                                                           1 0
## 6 56
##
   target
## 1
        0
## 2
        2
## 3
        1
## 4
        0
## 5
        0
## 6
        0
```

Display the structure of the dataframe

glimpse(Heart.df)

```
<dbl> 1, 4, 4, 3, 2, 2, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 2, 3, 2, 3, 3, 2, 4, 3, 2, 1~
## $ trestbps <dbl> 145, 160, 120, 130, 130, 120, 140, 120, 130, 140, 140, 140, 1~
             <dbl> 233, 286, 229, 250, 204, 236, 268, 354, 254, 203, 192, 294, 2~
## $ chol
             <dbl> 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
## $ fbs
             <dbl> 2, 2, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 2, 0, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2~
## $ restecg
## $ thalach
             <dbl> 150, 108, 129, 187, 172, 178, 160, 163, 147, 155, 148, 153, 1~
## $ exang
             <dbl> 0, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1~
## $ oldpeak <dbl> 2.3, 1.5, 2.6, 3.5, 1.4, 0.8, 3.6, 0.6, 1.4, 3.1, 0.4, 1.3, 0~
## $ slope
             <dbl> 3, 2, 2, 3, 1, 1, 3, 1, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 3, 1, 1, 1, 2~
## $ ca
             <dbl> 0, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
## $ thal
             <dbl> 6, 3, 7, 3, 3, 3, 3, 7, 7, 6, 3, 6, 7, 7, 3, 7, 3, 3, 3, 3
             <int> 0, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 3, 0, 2, 1, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0~
## $ target
```

Display the statistical summary of the dataframe

summary(Heart.df)

```
##
        age
                        sex
                                          ср
                                                       trestbps
##
   Min.
          :29.00
                   Min.
                         :0.0000
                                    Min.
                                          :1.000
                                                    Min. : 94.0
   1st Qu.:48.00
                                    1st Qu.:3.000
##
                   1st Qu.:0.0000
                                                    1st Qu.:120.0
   Median :56.00
                   Median :1.0000
                                    Median :3.000
                                                    Median :130.0
##
##
   Mean :54.44
                   Mean :0.6799
                                    Mean :3.158
                                                    Mean :131.7
                                    3rd Qu.:4.000
   3rd Qu.:61.00
                   3rd Qu.:1.0000
##
                                                    3rd Qu.:140.0
##
   Max. :77.00
                   Max. :1.0000
                                    Max.
                                           :4.000
                                                    Max.
                                                           :200.0
##
##
        chol
                        fbs
                                       restecg
                                                        thalach
##
          :126.0
                          :0.0000
                                           :0.0000
                                                     Min. : 71.0
   Min.
                   Min.
                                    Min.
   1st Qu.:211.0
                   1st Qu.:0.0000
                                    1st Qu.:0.0000
                                                     1st Qu.:133.5
##
   Median :241.0
                   Median :0.0000
                                    Median :1.0000
                                                     Median :153.0
##
   Mean :246.7
                   Mean :0.1485
                                    Mean :0.9901
                                                     Mean :149.6
##
   3rd Qu.:275.0
                   3rd Qu.:0.0000
                                    3rd Qu.:2.0000
                                                     3rd Qu.:166.0
                   Max. :1.0000
##
   Max. :564.0
                                    Max. :2.0000
                                                     Max. :202.0
##
##
       exang
                       oldpeak
                                       slope
                                                         ca
##
                    Min. :0.00
   Min.
         :0.0000
                                   Min. :1.000
                                                   Min.
                                                         :0.0000
   1st Qu.:0.0000
                    1st Qu.:0.00
                                   1st Qu.:1.000
                                                   1st Qu.:0.0000
   Median :0.0000
                    Median:0.80
                                   Median :2.000
                                                   Median :0.0000
##
##
   Mean
         :0.3267
                    Mean
                          :1.04
                                   Mean :1.601
                                                   Mean
                                                         :0.6722
##
   3rd Qu.:1.0000
                    3rd Qu.:1.60
                                   3rd Qu.:2.000
                                                   3rd Qu.:1.0000
##
   Max.
         :1.0000
                    Max.
                           :6.20
                                   Max. :3.000
                                                   Max.
                                                          :3.0000
##
                                                   NA's
                                                          :4
##
        thal
                       target
          :3.000
                          :0.0000
   Min.
                   Min.
   1st Qu.:3.000
                   1st Qu.:0.0000
##
##
   Median :3.000
                   Median : 0.0000
## Mean
         :4.734
                   Mean :0.9373
   3rd Qu.:7.000
                   3rd Qu.:2.0000
          :7.000
                   Max. :4.0000
##
   Max.
## NA's
           :2
```

3.2 Data preprocessing

We will preprocess the data by handling missing values, encoding categorical variables, and scaling numerical features.

Convert binary variables to (0, 1)

According to the data dictionary, the following attributes should be binary variables: sex, fbs, exang, and target. But, some shows to have values besides 0's and 1's. Let's convert binary variables to (0, 1)

```
Heart.df$target <- ifelse(Heart.df$target > 0, 1, 0)
Heart.df$sex <- ifelse(Heart.df$sex > 0, 1, 0)
Heart.df$fbs <- ifelse(Heart.df$fbs > 0, 1, 0)
Heart.df$exang <- ifelse(Heart.df$exang > 0, 1, 0)
```

Handle missing values

Handle missing values in ca and that variables using mean/mode imputation.

```
Heart.df$ca[is.na(Heart.df$ca)] <- median(Heart.df$ca, na.rm = TRUE)
Heart.df$ca[Heart.df$ca == "?"] <- median(Heart.df$ca, na.rm = TRUE)
Heart.df$thal[is.na(Heart.df$thal)] <- median(Heart.df$thal, na.rm = TRUE)
Heart.df$ca[Heart.df$thal == "?"] <- median(Heart.df$thal, na.rm = TRUE)</pre>
```

Check for missing values if still exist

```
sapply(Heart.df, function(x) sum(is.na(x)))
##
        age
                  sex
                             cp trestbps
                                              chol
                                                         fbs
                                                              restecg thalach
##
                    0
                              0
                                        0
                                                 0
                                                           0
                                                                     0
          0
##
      exang
             oldpeak
                          slope
                                       ca
                                              thal
                                                      target
##
          0
                    0
                                        0
                                                 0
```

Handle duplicate entries

Check for duplicate entries and print them if they exist.

Convert categorical variables to factor.

Define a list of categorical columns with their levels and labels

```
"Asymptomatic")),

fbs = list(levels = c(0, 1), labels = c("False", "True")),

restecg = list(levels = c(0, 1, 2), labels = c("Normal", "Wave-abnormality", "Probable")),

exang = list(levels = c(0, 1), labels = c("No", "Yes")),

slope = list(levels = c(1, 2, 3), labels = c("Upsloping", "Flat",

"Downsloping")),

thal = list(levels = c(3, 6, 7), labels = c("Normal", "Fixed Defect", "Reversible")),

target = list(levels = c(1, 0), labels = c("Yes", "No"))
)
```

Apply the factor transformation using a for-loop.

Handle outliers in numerical variables

Apply multiple filters to identify and handle outliers in numerical variables.

This section of the analysis performs a crucial data-cleaning step aimed at refining the quality of the dataset before modeling and visualization. The filtering operation applies a set of logical conditions to remove extreme or biologically implausible values from key continuous health indicators such as age, blood pressure, cholesterol, heart rate, and ST depression. By doing so, it ensures that the dataset reflects realistic patient characteristics and minimizes the influence of outliers that could distort statistical interpretation or predictive accuracy.

The first filter, Heart.df\$age > 40, narrows the focus to patients over 40 years of age. This decision is grounded in clinical reasoning—heart disease is relatively uncommon in younger individuals, and including them could introduce noise rather than insight into cardiovascular risk patterns. The next condition, Heart.df\$trestbps < 170, restricts resting blood pressure to physiologically typical values, removing excessively high readings that may result from measurement error or rare hypertensive crises.

Similarly, cholesterol values are filtered using two constraints: Heart.df\$chol < 340 and Heart.df\$chol > 150. This dual boundary ensures that cholesterol readings fall within a realistic clinical range, excluding both unusually low and excessively high values. Extremely high cholesterol levels (above 340 mg/dl) could be outliers due to lab errors or rare genetic conditions, while very low levels (below 150 mg/dl) are equally atypical for this patient population.

The condition Heart.df\$thalach > 115 retains only those patients whose maximum heart rate achieved during exercise falls within a normal performance range. Extremely low thalach values often suggest incomplete stress tests or data entry errors, which could bias the interpretation of cardiovascular efficiency. Finally, Heart.df\$oldpeak < 2.4 removes extreme ST depression values. In clinical terms, oldpeak measures the degree of ST segment depression during exercise,

and values beyond 2.4 are uncommon and may represent atypical cardiac events that do not align with general population patterns in the dataset.

Overall, these filters collectively enhance the integrity of the data and the reliability of subsequent analysis. By trimming implausible extremes, the dataset becomes more homogeneous, improving the clarity of boxplots, histograms, and scatterplots generated during exploratory data analysis. Moreover, this targeted filtering supports more stable and interpretable model outcomes by preventing a few extreme observations from disproportionately influencing trends or coefficients. The result is a dataset that better represents realistic health profiles, ultimately strengthening the credibility of insights drawn from the heart disease risk modeling process.

3.3 Helper functions

Function to create Box plots

Function to create Bar plots

```
HeartDiseaseBar <- function(var) {
    ggplot(Heart.df, aes(x = .data[[var]], fill = target)) +
        geom_bar(position = "dodge") +
        labs(title = paste("Distribution of Heart Disease by", var),
            x = var, fill = "Heart Disease")
}</pre>
```

Function to create Histograms

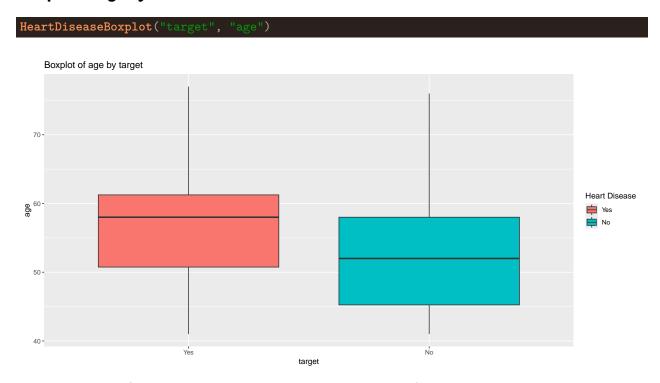
Function to create Scatter plots

3.4 Exploratory data analysis

3.4.1 Boxplots for numerical variables

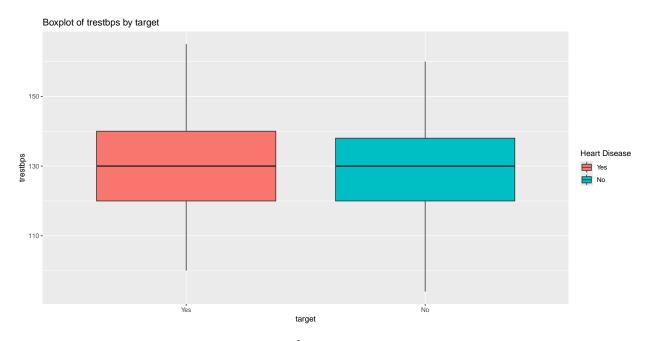
I used boxplots to visually examine the distribution of key continuous health indicators — such as age, resting blood pressure (trestbps), cholesterol (chol), maximum heart rate (thalach), and ST depression (oldpeak) — across the binary target variable (Heart Disease: Yes / No). Boxplots were chosen because they efficiently highlight differences in central tendency (median), variability (IQR), and the presence of potential outliers between patients with and without heart disease.

Boxplot of Age by Heart Disease

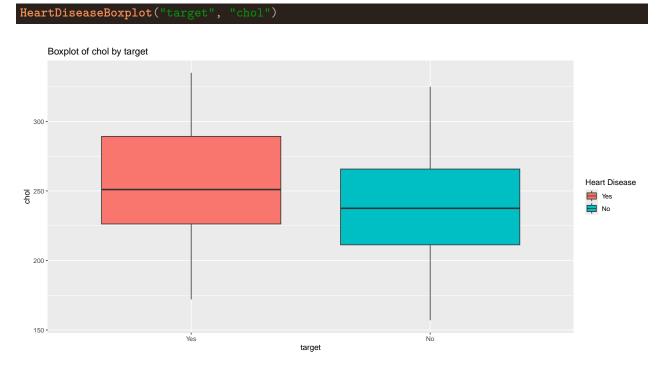


Boxplot of Resting Blood Pressure (trestbps) by Heart Disease

HeartDiseaseBoxplot("target", "trestbps")

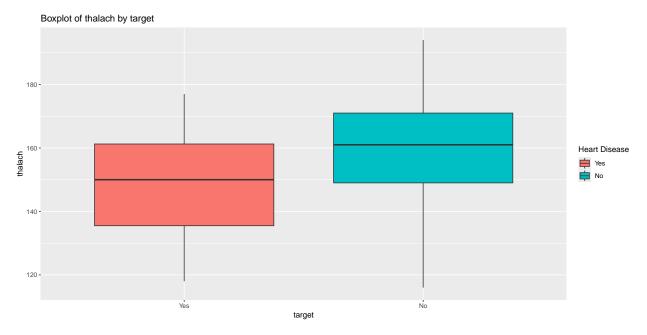


Boxplot of Cholesterol (chol) by Heart Disease

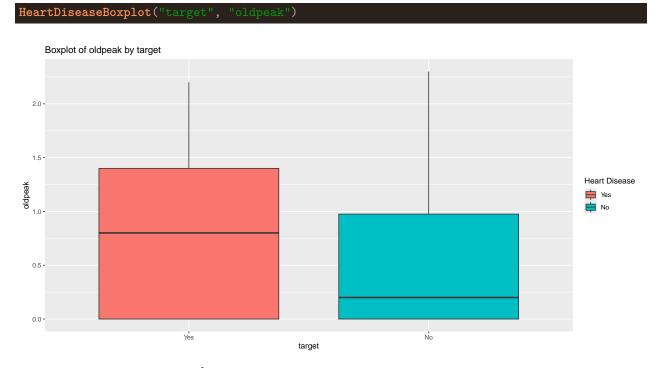


Boxplot of Maximum Heart Rate Achieved (thalach) by Heart Disease

HeartDiseaseBoxplot("target", "thalach")



Boxplot of ST Depression (oldpeak) by Heart Disease



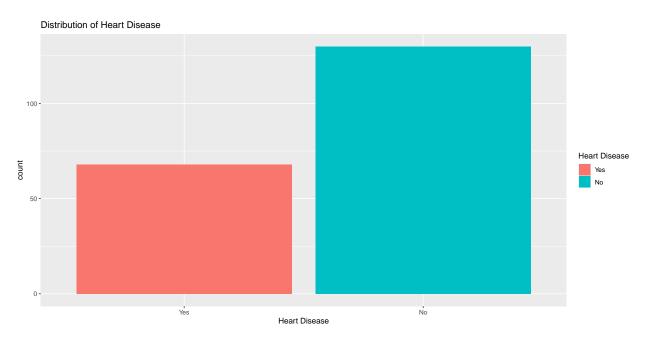
Overall boxplots observations:

3.4.2 Barplots for categorical variables

Heart disease distribution

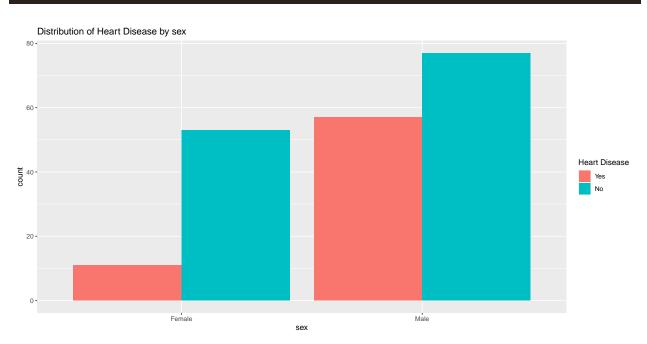
```
ggplot(Heart.df, aes(x=target, fill=target))+
  geom_bar() +
```



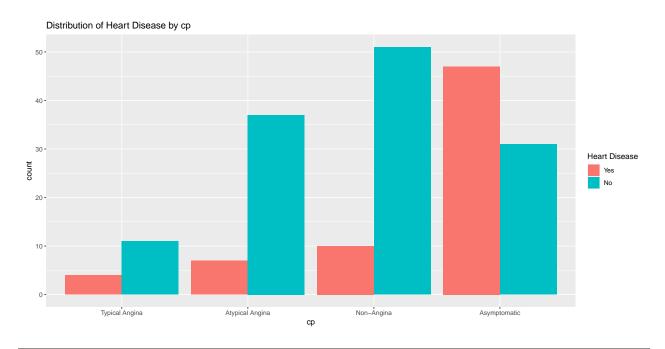


Visualize distribution of categorical variables by heart disease presence.

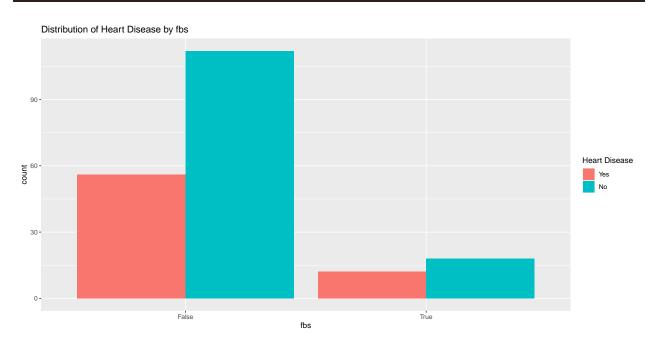
HeartDiseaseBar("sex")



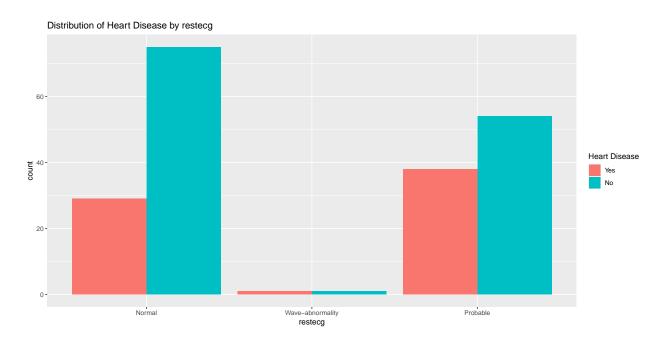
HeartDiseaseBar("cp")



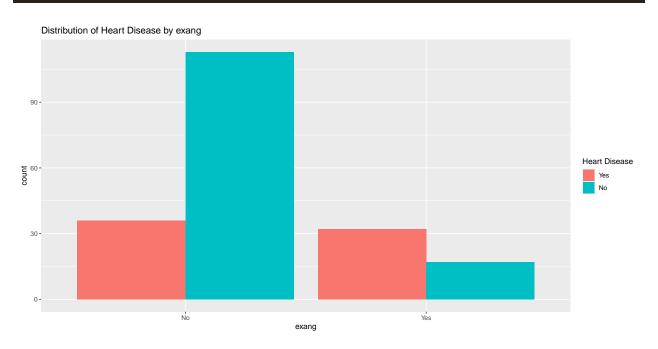
HeartDiseaseBar("fbs"



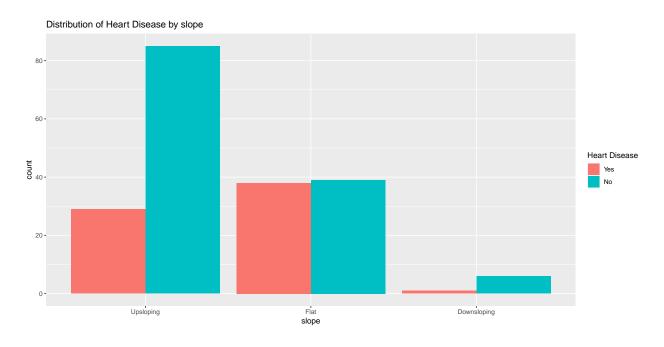
HeartDiseaseBar("restecg")



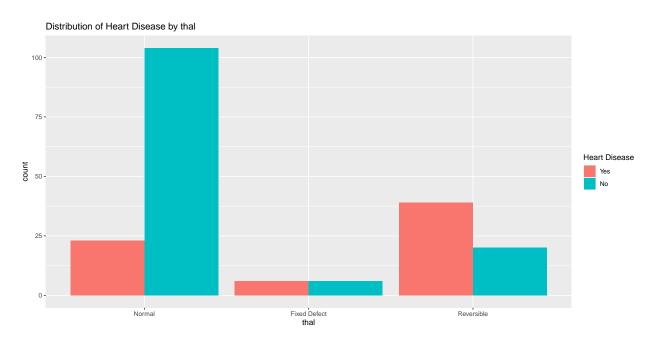
HeartDiseaseBar("exang")



HeartDiseaseBar("slope")

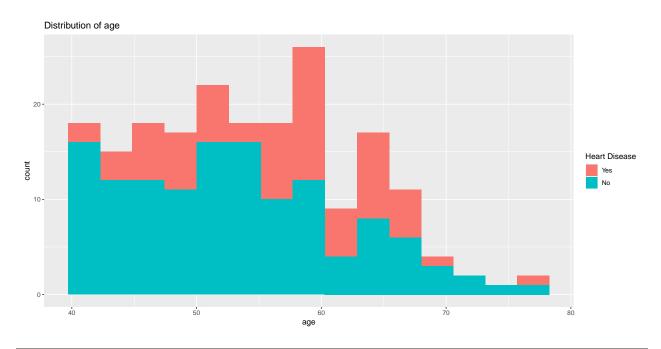




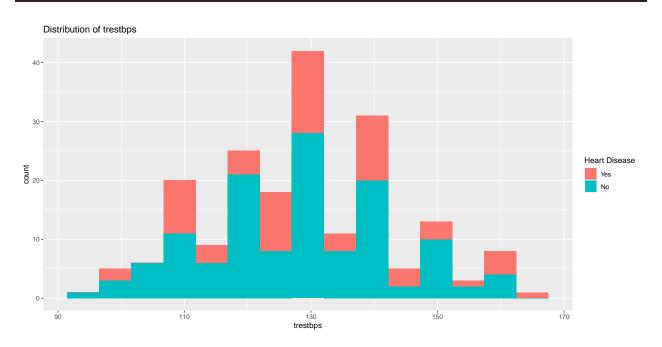


3.4.3 Histograms for Numerical Variables

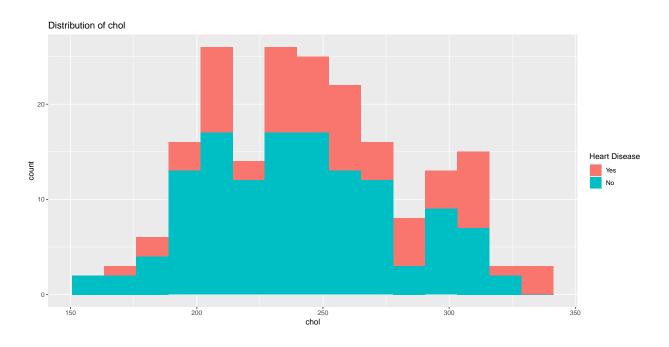
HeartDiseaseHist("age")



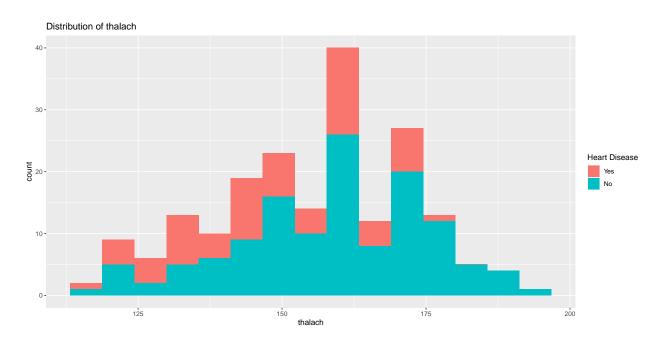
HeartDiseaseHist("trestbps")



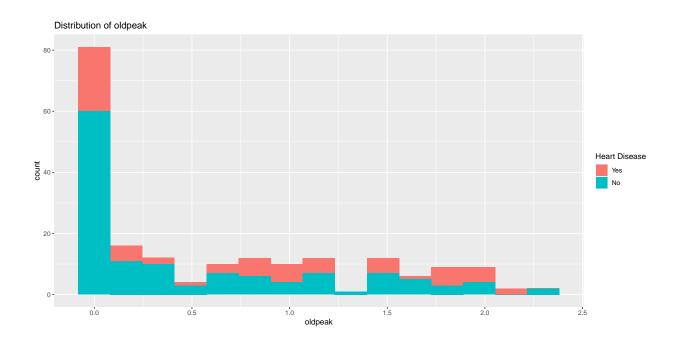
HeartDiseaseHist("chol")



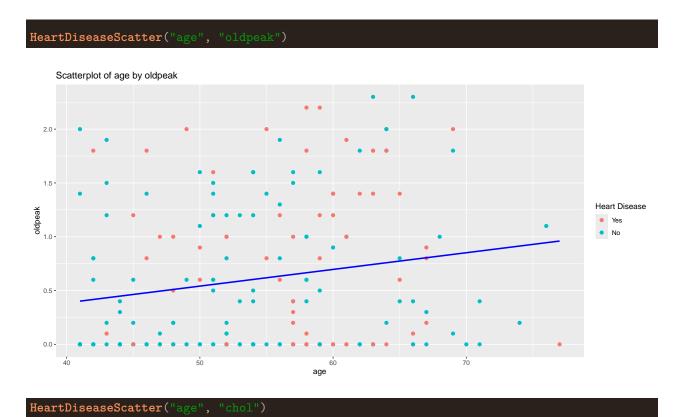
HeartDiseaseHist("thalach"

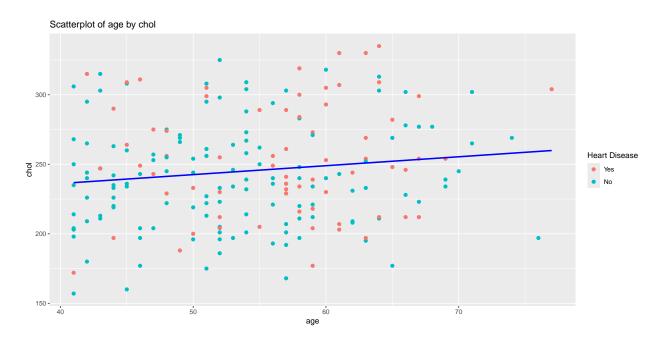


HeartDiseaseHist("oldpeak")

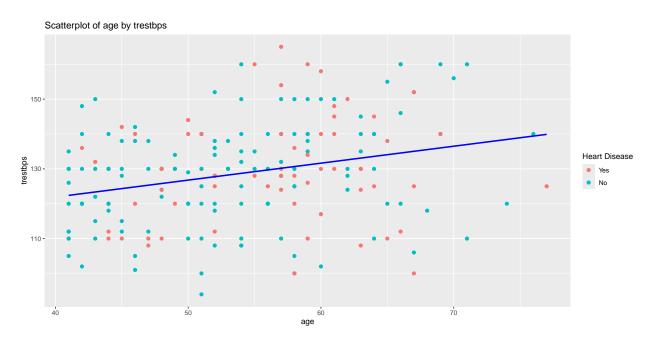


3.4.4 Scatterplots for numerical variables

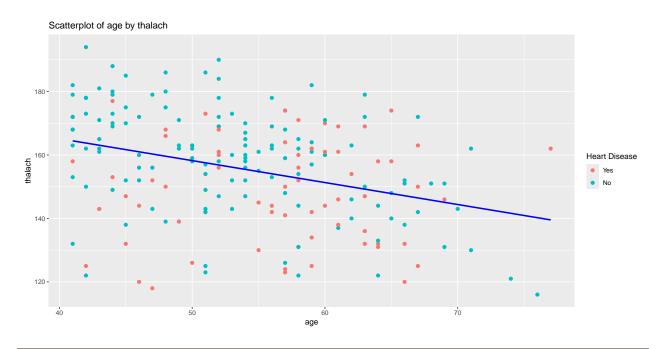




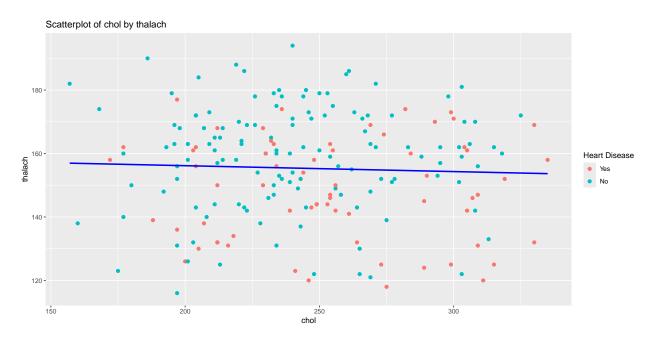




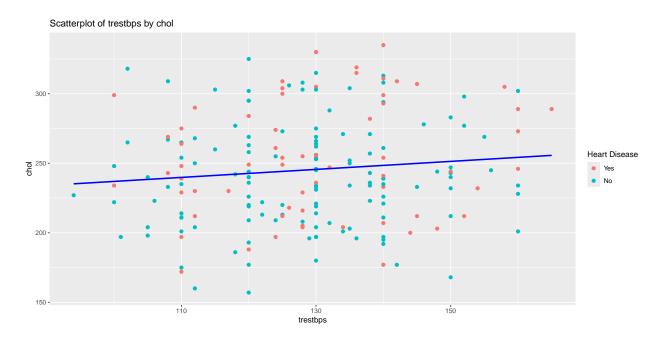
HeartDiseaseScatter("age", "thalach")



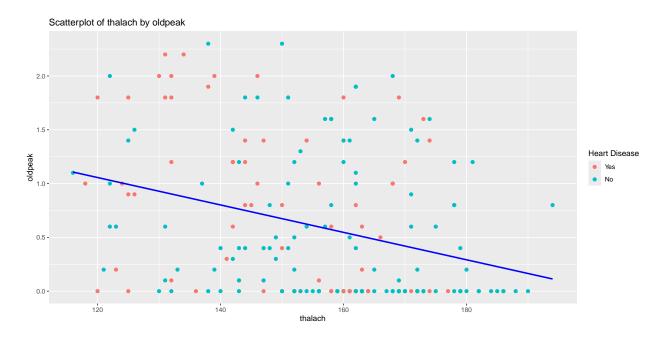
HeartDiseaseScatter("chol", "thalach")



HeartDiseaseScatter("trestbps", "chol")





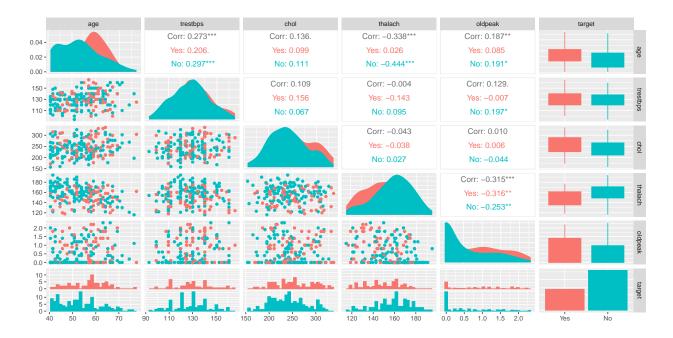


3.4.5 Pairwise correlation plots

Pairwise correlation plot for numerical variables

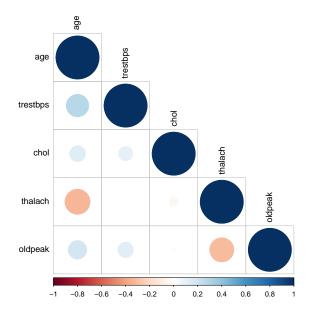
`stat_bin()` using `bins = 30`. Pick better value `binwidth`.

```
## `stat_bin()` using `bins = 30`. Pick better value `binwidth`.
## `stat_bin()` using `bins = 30`. Pick better value `binwidth`.
## `stat_bin()` using `bins = 30`. Pick better value `binwidth`.
## `stat_bin()` using `bins = 30`. Pick better value `binwidth`.
```



3.4.6 Correlation matrix

Correlation matrix for numerical variables



3.4.7 Class imbalance

Heart.df %>% count(target) %>% mutate(pct = n/sum(n))

```
## 1 target n pct
## 1 Yes 68 0.3434343
## 2 No 130 0.6565657
```

4 Modeling

5 Evaluation

6 Deployment

7 Conclusion

8 Session Information

sessionInfo()

```
## R version 4.5.1 (2025-06-13 ucrt)
## Platform: x86_64-w64-mingw32/x64
## Running under: Windows 11 x64 (build 26100)
## Matrix products: default
    LAPACK version 3.12.1
##
##
## locale:
## [1] LC_COLLATE=English_United States.utf8
## [2] LC_CTYPE=English_United States.utf8
## [3] LC_MONETARY=English_United States.utf8
## [4] LC_NUMERIC=C
## [5] LC_TIME=English_United States.utf8
##
## time zone: America/Chicago
## tzcode source: internal
## attached base packages:
                graphics grDevices utils
## [1] stats
                                               datasets methods
                                                                    base
##
## other attached packages:
## [1] pROC_1.19.0.1
                             GGally_2.4.0
                                                  corrplot_0.95
## [4] rpart_4.1.24
                             e1071_1.7-16
                                                  formatR_1.14
## [7] randomForest_4.7-1.2 caret_7.0-1
                                                  lattice_0.22-7
## [10] RCurl_1.98-1.17
                             lubridate_1.9.4
                                                  forcats_1.0.1
## [13] stringr_1.5.2
                             dplyr_1.1.4
                                                  purrr_1.1.0
## [16] readr_2.1.5
                             tidyr_1.3.1
                                                  tibble_3.3.0
## [19] ggplot2_4.0.0
                             tidyverse_2.0.0
##
## loaded via a namespace (and not attached):
## [1] tidyselect 1.2.1
                             timeDate 4051.111
                                                  farver 2.1.2
## [4] S7_0.2.0
                             bitops_1.0-9
                                                  fastmap_1.2.0
## [7] digest_0.6.37
                             timechange_0.3.0
                                                  lifecycle_1.0.4
## [10] survival_3.8-3
                             magrittr_2.0.4
                                                  compiler_4.5.1
## [13] rlang_1.1.6
                             tools_4.5.1
                                                  yaml_2.3.10
## [16] data.table_1.17.8
                             knitr_1.50
                                                  labeling_0.4.3
## [19] plyr_1.8.9
                             RColorBrewer_1.1-3
                                                  withr_3.0.2
## [22] nnet_7.3-20
                             grid_4.5.1
                                                  stats4_4.5.1
## [25] future_1.67.0
                             globals_0.18.0
                                                  scales_1.4.0
## [28] iterators_1.0.14
                             MASS_7.3-65
                                                  cli_3.6.5
## [31] rmarkdown_2.30
                             generics_0.1.4
                                                  rstudioapi_0.17.1
## [34] future.apply_1.20.0
                                                  tzdb_0.5.0
                             reshape2_1.4.4
## [37] proxy_0.4-27
                             splines_4.5.1
                                                  parallel_4.5.1
## [40] vctrs_0.6.5
                             hardhat_1.4.2
                                                  Matrix_1.7-4
## [43] hms_1.1.4
                             listenv_0.9.1
                                                  foreach 1.5.2
## [46] gower_1.0.2
                             recipes_1.3.1
                                                  glue_1.8.0
## [49] parallelly_1.45.1
                             ggstats_0.11.0
                                                  codetools 0.2-20
## [52] stringi_1.8.7
                             gtable_0.3.6
                                                  pillar_1.11.1
```

```
## [55] htmltools_0.5.8.1 ipred_0.9-15 lava_1.8.1
## [58] R6_2.6.1 evaluate_1.0.5 class_7.3-23
## [61] Rcpp_1.1.0 nlme_3.1-168 prodlim_2025.04.28
## [64] mgcv_1.9-3 xfun_0.53 pkgconfig_2.0.3
## [67] ModelMetrics_1.2.2.2
```