

Probability of the sum of two independent variables

Let X and Y two independent random variables with possible values:

- $X = \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$
- $Y = \{0, 1, 2, 3\}$

with identical probabilities for all values $P(0) = P(1) = P(2) = P(3) = 0.25$

The possible values of the sum are: $Z = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$ and the probabilities are:

- $P(Z=0) = P(X=0) * P(Y=0)$
- $P(Z=1) = P(X=1) * P(Y=0) + P(X=0) * P(Y=1)$
- $P(Z=2) = P(X=2) * P(Y=0) + P(X=1) * P(Y=1) + P(X=0) * P(Y=2)$
- Etc.

In other words, $P(Z=k) = \text{Sum of all } P(X)*P(Y) \text{ where } X + Y = k$

In the continuous case

$P(Z=k) = \text{Sum of all } P(X)*P(Y) \text{ where } X + Y = k$

Becomes a convolution

$$f_Z(z) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f_X(z - y)f_Y(y)dy$$