

Latent Space Modeling for Human Disease Network with Temporal Variations: Analysis of Medicare Data

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April 21, 2025

Outline

1 Introduction

- Background
- Motivation

2 Method

- Methodology
- Statistical Properties

3 Experiments

- Simulation Studies
- Real Data Analysis

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Background: Human Disease Network

In the HDN analysis, the concept of network analysis is adopted. One node corresponds to a disease, and two diseases are connected with a network edge if they are “interconnected”.

- gene-centric HDN [Goh et al., 2007]
- phenotypic HDN [Zhou et al., 2014, 2022]
- **clinical outcome** HDN [Yang et al., 2022, Mei et al., 2025]
 - Two diseases are defined as interconnected if their clinical treatments and/or outcomes – such as inpatient length-of-stay (LOS), number of outpatient visits, and treatment costs – are “correlated”.

Background: Latent Space Model

Our literature review suggests that one family of techniques, which has been widely adopted and shown as powerful in other contexts [Liu et al., 2024, Zhang et al., 2024a] but **limitedly examined for HDNs**, is latent space modeling [Hoff et al., 2002].

- Single layer network [Hoff et al., 2002, Ma et al., 2020]
- Multi-layer networks [Zhang et al., 2020]
- Time-varying networks [Sarkar and Moore, 2005, Liu et al., 2024]

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Limitation: Difficult to analyze the following sensible temporal structure

- There are time intervals within which network structures remain **constant** – they correspond to small and slow changes in disease diagnosis, treatment.
- Between those intervals, network structures are assumed to **change smoothly**.

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Data Exploration: Motivation

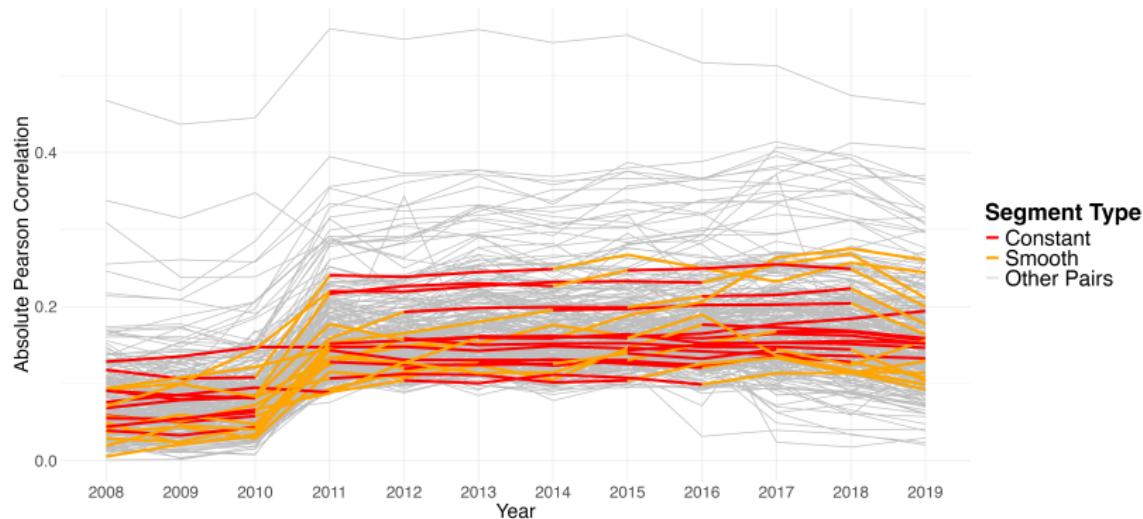


Figure: Pairwise interconnections: Pearson correlation

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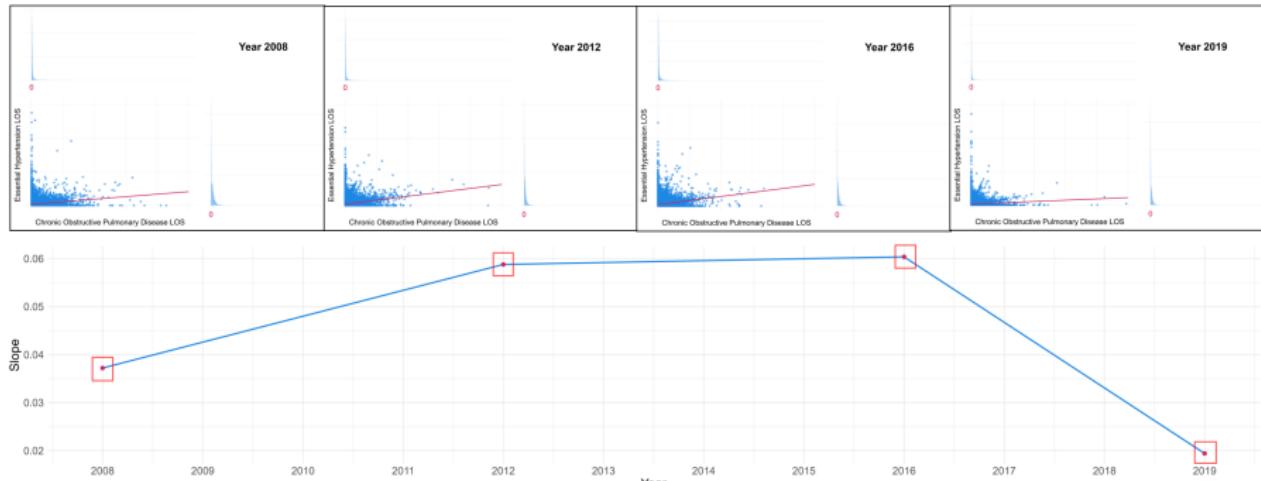
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Data and Modeling Framework

- p : number of diseases
- T : number of time periods
- n : number of subjects
- $\{y_{ij}^{(t)}\}_{i \in [n], j \in [p], t \in [T]}$: clinical treatment measurement

As noted in the literature and can be seen from Figure 1, the marginal distributions of disease-specific LOS are highly zero-inflated.



Time-varying Latent Space Modeling

- We adopt a two-part modeling approach for the estimation of network adjacency matrices [Mei et al., 2025].
 - $\mathbf{A} = \left[\left(A_{jk}^{(1)} \right)_{j,k=1}^p; \dots; \left(A_{jk}^{(T)} \right)_{j,k=1}^p \right] \in \{0,1\}^{T \times p \times p}$: a tensor for the time-varying adjacency matrices.
- We develop the latent space modeling based on the estimated \mathbf{A} .

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- We develop the latent space modeling based on the estimated \mathbf{A} .
- Overall, the model is defined as:

$$A_{jk}^{(t)} \sim \text{Bernoulli} \left(P_{jk}^{(t)} \right), \text{logit} \left(P_{jk}^{(t)} \right) := \Theta_{jk}^{(t)} = \alpha_j^{(t)} + \alpha_k^{(t)} + \mathbf{z}_j^\top \boldsymbol{\Lambda}^{(t)} \mathbf{z}_k,$$

where $\text{logit}(x) = \log[x/(1 - x)]$, $P_{jk}^{(t)}$ represents the connection probability between diseases j and k , and $\alpha_j^{(t)}$ is disease j 's heterogeneity parameter for period t .

Identifiability

Proposition

Suppose that two sets of parameters $\left(\left\{\boldsymbol{\alpha}^{(t)}\right\}_{t=1}^T, \left\{\boldsymbol{\Lambda}^{(t)}\right\}_{t=1}^T, \mathbf{Z}\right)$ and $\left(\left\{\boldsymbol{\alpha}_\dagger^{(t)}\right\}_{t=1}^T, \left\{\boldsymbol{\Lambda}_\dagger^{(t)}\right\}_{t=1}^T, \mathbf{Z}_\dagger\right)$ satisfy the following conditions:

1. $\mathbf{J}_p \mathbf{Z} = \mathbf{Z}, \mathbf{J}_p \mathbf{Z}_\dagger = \mathbf{Z}_\dagger$, where $\mathbf{J}_p = \mathbf{I}_p - \frac{1}{p} \mathbf{1}_p \mathbf{1}_p^\top$;
2. $\mathbf{Z}^\top \mathbf{Z} = p \mathbf{I}_r$ and $\mathbf{Z}_\dagger^\top \mathbf{Z}_\dagger = p \mathbf{I}_r$;
3. At least one of $\boldsymbol{\Lambda}^{(t)}$'s, $t = 1, 2, \dots, T$, is full rank.

Then,

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha}^{(t)} \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \boldsymbol{\alpha}^{(t)\top} + \mathbf{Z} \boldsymbol{\Lambda}^{(t)} \mathbf{Z}^\top = \boldsymbol{\alpha}_\dagger^{(t)} \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \boldsymbol{\alpha}_\dagger^{(t)\top} + \mathbf{Z}_\dagger \boldsymbol{\Lambda}_\dagger^{(t)} \mathbf{Z}_\dagger^\top,$$

for $t = 1, \dots, T$, which implies that there exists an orthonormal matrix $\mathbf{O} \in \mathbb{R}^{r \times r}$ where $\mathbf{O}^\top \mathbf{O} = \mathbf{O} \mathbf{O}^\top = \mathbf{I}_r$, such that

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha}_\dagger^{(t)} = \boldsymbol{\alpha}^{(t)}, \mathbf{Z}_\dagger = \mathbf{Z} \mathbf{O}, \boldsymbol{\Lambda}_\dagger^{(t)} = \mathbf{O}^\top \boldsymbol{\Lambda}^{(t)} \mathbf{O}$$

for $t = 1, \dots, T$.

Estimation

The negative log-likelihood is:

$$L_{\text{NLL}}(\mathbf{Z}, \boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\Lambda}) = - \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{j,k=1}^p \left\{ A_{jk}^{(t)} \Theta_{jk}^{(t)} + \log \left(1 - \sigma \left(\Theta_{jk}^{(t)} \right) \right) \right\},$$

As discussed above, we consider the temporal structure with “**piecewise constant + smoothly varying**” properties. To achieve this, we propose a penalty built on the combination of ℓ_1 and ℓ_2 norms. Following Tibshirani [2014] and other literature, we refer it to as the **Mixed Trend Filter (MTF)** penalty, which has the form:

$$\begin{aligned} Q(\boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\Lambda}) = & \lambda_1 \left(\left\| \mathbf{D}^{(1)} \boldsymbol{\alpha} \right\|_{\ell_1} + \sum_{t=1}^{T-1} \left\| (\mathbf{D}^{(1)} \boldsymbol{\Lambda})^{(t)} \right\|_F \right) \\ & + \frac{\lambda_2}{2} \left(\left\| \mathbf{D}^{(3)} \boldsymbol{\alpha} \right\|_F^2 + \left\| \mathbf{D}^{(3)} \boldsymbol{\Lambda} \right\|_F^2 \right), \end{aligned}$$

where λ_1, λ_2 are data-dependent tuning parameters, and $D^{(k)} \in \mathbb{R}^{(T-k) \times T}$ is the discrete difference operator of order k .

Computation

Algorithm 1 Coordinate-Proximal-Projected Gradient Descent for MTF-LSM

Require: $A \in \mathbb{R}^{T \times p \times p}$; initial estimates: Z_0, α_0, Λ_0 ; step sizes $\eta_z, \eta_\alpha, \eta_\lambda$; tunings: λ_1, λ_2 ;

```

1: while not convergent do
2:   for  $t$  in  $1:T$  do
3:      $\Lambda^{(t)} \leftarrow \Lambda^{(t)} + \eta_\lambda Z^\top (A^{(t)} - \sigma(\Theta^{(t)})) Z - \eta_\lambda \frac{\lambda_1}{2} \nabla_{\Lambda^{(t)}} \|D^{(3)} \Lambda\|_F^2$ 
4:      $\Lambda^{(t)} \leftarrow \text{Prox}(\Lambda^{(t)}) = \arg \min_{\beta} \frac{1}{2} \|\beta - \Lambda^{(t)}\|_F^2 + \frac{\lambda_1}{2} (\|\beta - \Lambda^{(t-1)}\|_F + \|\beta - \Lambda^{(t+1)}\|_F)$ 
5:   end for
6:   for  $t$  in  $1:T$  do
7:      $\alpha^{(t)} \leftarrow \alpha^{(t)} + 2\eta_\alpha (A^{(t)} - \sigma(\Theta^{(t)})) 1_p - \eta_\alpha \frac{\lambda_2}{2} \nabla_{\alpha^{(t)}} \|D^{(3)} \alpha\|_F^2$ 
8:      $\alpha^{(t)} \leftarrow \text{Prox}(\alpha^{(t)}) = \arg \min_{\beta} \frac{1}{2} \|\beta - \alpha^{(t)}\|_2^2 + \frac{\lambda_1}{2} (\|\beta - \alpha^{(t-1)}\|_1 + \|\beta - \alpha^{(t+1)}\|_1)$ 
9:   end for
10:   $Z \leftarrow Z + 2\eta_z \sum_{t=1}^T (A^{(t)} - \sigma(\Theta^{(t)})) Z \Lambda^{(t)}$ 
11:   $Z \leftarrow J_p Z, Z \leftarrow ZW$  for  $W \in \mathbb{R}^{r \times r}$  s.t.  $Z^\top Z = pI_r, \Lambda^{(t)} \leftarrow W^{-1} \Lambda^{(t)} (W^{-1})^\top$ 
12: end while
  
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Conditions and Assumptions

Definition 1. For $p, T, r \in \mathbb{N}$, $\mu_1, \mu_2, \mu_3 \in \mathbb{R}_+$, the feasible parameter space is defined as:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{F} &= \mathcal{F}_{p,T,r}(\mu_1, \mu_2, \mu_3) \\ &= \left\{ \mathcal{T} = \left[\Theta^{(1)}; \Theta^{(2)}; \dots; \Theta^{(T)} \right] \in \mathbb{R}^{T \times p \times p} : \right. \\ &\quad \Theta^{(t)} = \alpha^{(t)} \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \alpha^{(t)\top} + \mathbf{Z} \Lambda^{(t)} \mathbf{Z}^\top; \\ &\quad \mathbf{Z} \in \mathbb{R}^{p \times r}, \mathbf{Z}^\top \mathbf{Z} = p \mathbf{I}_r, \mathbf{J}_p \mathbf{Z} = \mathbf{Z}, \alpha^{(t)} \in \mathbb{R}^p \\ &\quad \Lambda^{(t)} \in \mathbb{S}^{r \times r}, \left\| \Theta^{(t)} \right\|_{\max} \leq \mu_1, t = 1, 2, \dots, T \\ &\quad \left. \left\| \alpha \right\|_{\max} \leq \mu_2, \left\| \Lambda^{(t)} \right\|_{\max} \leq \mu_3, t = 1, 2, \dots, T \right\},\end{aligned}$$

where $\mathbf{J}_p = \mathbf{I}_p - \frac{1}{p} \mathbf{1}_p \mathbf{1}_p^\top$, $\mathbb{S}^{k \times k}$ includes all symmetric $k \times k$ matrices, and $\|\cdot\|_{\max}$ calculates the maximum absolute value of entries for a matrix. For the estimator $\hat{\mathcal{T}} = \arg \min_{\mathcal{T} \in \mathcal{F}} L(\mathcal{T})$ and the true parameter $\mathcal{T}_* \in \mathcal{F}$ associated with α_* and Z_* . Theorem 1 establishes the error bound.

Statistical Properties of $\widehat{\mathcal{T}}$

Theorem

Assume that $\sigma_{\min}(\Lambda_\star^{(t)}) \geq \kappa$, $t = 1, 2, \dots, T$, for some constant $\kappa > 0$.

Further assume that $\lambda_1 + 32\lambda_2\mu_3r \leq \frac{\kappa^2 p}{32\mu_3 r M_{\mu_1} \sqrt{T}}$, where $b(x) = \log(1 + \exp(x))$, $M_{\mu_1} = \frac{2}{\min_{|v|<\mu_1} b''(v)}$. Then, there exist constants $c_1, c_2 > 0$, such that with probability at least $1 - T \exp(-c_1 p) - \exp(-c_2(2p + T))$,

$$\left\| \widehat{\mathcal{T}} - \mathcal{T}_\star \right\|_F^2 \leq C_1 pT + C_2(2p + T) + C_3 T$$

where positive constants C_1 and C_2 depend solely on (μ_1, μ_2, μ_3, r) , while positive constant C_3 additionally depends on (λ_1, λ_2) .

- The term $C_1 pT$ is induced by $\{\alpha^{(t)}\}_{t=1}^T$.
- The second term $C_2(2p + T)$ is induced by $\{Z\Lambda^{(t)}Z^\top\}_{t=1}^T$.
- The third term $C_3 T$ is induced by the mixed trend penalty.

Statistical Properties of $\hat{\alpha}$

Corollary

Assume that the conditions of Theorem 1 are satisfied and there exists a constant $\delta > 0$ such that $T \leq \delta p$. Then, there exist constants $c_1, c_2 > 0$, such that with probability at least $1 - T \exp(-c_1 p) - \exp(-c_2(2p + T))$,

$$\frac{1}{T} \|\hat{\alpha} - \alpha_*\|_F^2 \leq \tilde{C}_1 + \tilde{C}_2 T^{-1}$$

where positive constant \tilde{C}_1 depends solely on (μ_1, μ_2, μ_3, r) , while positive constant \tilde{C}_2 additionally depends on (λ_1, λ_2) .

- Even in the worst-case scenario (without any constant-smooth trends), the penalty does not significantly increase the error.
- Under general conditions, the penalty may further reduce the optimization error, although this effect is not considered in the theoretical analysis.

Statistical Properties of $\hat{\mathbf{Z}}$

Theorem

Assume that the conditions of Theorem 1 are satisfied and there exists a constant $\delta > 0$ such that $T \leq \delta p$. Then, there exist constants $c_1, c_2 > 0$, such that with probability at least $1 - T \exp(-c_1 p) - \exp(-c_2(2p + T))$,

$$\min_{\mathbf{O} \in \mathbb{S}^{r \times r}} \left\| \mathbf{Z}_* \mathbf{O} - \hat{\mathbf{Z}} \right\|_F^2 \leq C_4 + C_5 T^{-1} + C_6 p^{-1}$$

where positive constants C_4 and C_5 depend solely on (μ_1, μ_2, μ_3, r) , while positive constant C_6 additionally depends on (λ_1, λ_2) .

- Our approach maintains the same order of complexity as other relevant models [Ma et al., 2020, Zhang et al., 2020].

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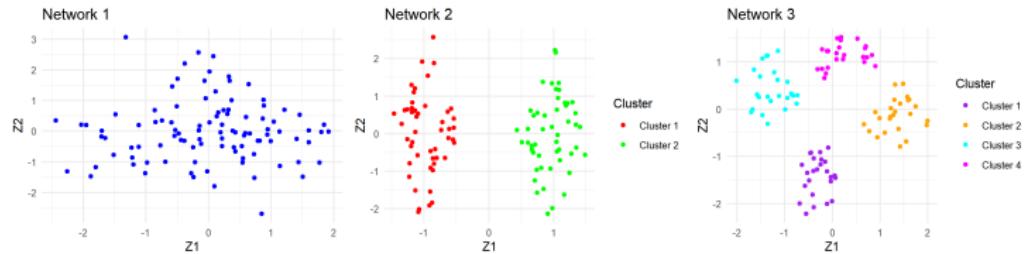
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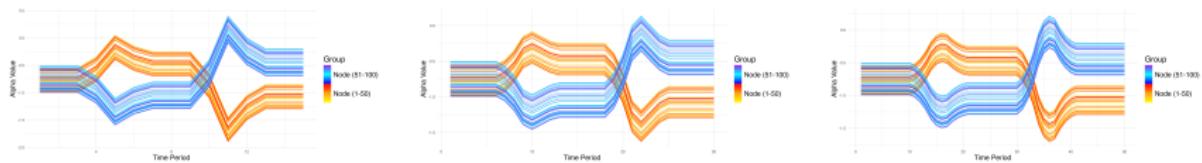
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Data generation

We conduct simulations with three network structures and various parameter settings: $p = 100, 200$, $T = 15, 30, 50$ and $r = 2, 4$.



(a) Latent space Z under different network structures ($r = 2$)



(b) Temporal trends of α ($T = 15$) (c) Temporal trends of α ($T = 30$) (d) Temporal trends of α ($T = 50$)

Figure: Simulated Data Generation

Alternative methods

- **LSM** [Ma et al., 2020]: $\Theta^{(t)} = \alpha^{(t)} \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \alpha^{(t)\top} + \mathbf{Z}^{(t)} \mathbf{Z}^{(t)\top}$
- **TDCPD** [Zhang et al., 2024c]: $\Theta^{(t)} = \mathbf{Z}^{(t)} \text{diag}(\beta^{(t)}) \mathbf{Z}^{(t)\top}$
- **LCSC-LSM** [Liu et al., 2024]: $\Theta^{(t)} = \alpha^{(t)} \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \alpha^{(t)\top} + \mathbf{Z} \mathbf{Z}^\top$
- **KCN-LSM** [Zhang et al., 2024b]: $\Theta^{(t)} = \alpha \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \alpha^\top + \mathbf{Z}^{(t)} \mathbf{Z}^{(t)\top}$
- **PLSM** [Zhang et al., 2024a]:

$$\Theta^{(t)} = \alpha \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \alpha^\top + \left(\text{diag}(\beta^{(t)}) \mathbf{Z} \right) \left(\text{diag}(\beta^{(t)}) \mathbf{Z} \right)^\top$$

- **FlexMn** [Zhang et al., 2020]: (Does not incorporate any penalty)

$$\Theta^{(t)} = \alpha^{(t)} \mathbf{1}_p^\top + \mathbf{1}_p \alpha^{(t)\top} + \mathbf{Z} \Lambda^{(t)} \mathbf{Z}^\top$$

- **Oracle**: Assume that the constant segments are known in advance for the proposed method.

Evaluation metrics

When evaluating and comparing different methods, we first consider the relative errors defined as:

$$RE_{\Theta} := \frac{\sum_{t=1}^T \left\| \widehat{\Theta}^{(t)} - \Theta_{\star}^{(t)} \right\|_F^2}{\sum_{t=1}^T \left\| \Theta_{\star}^{(t)} \right\|_F^2}, \quad RE_{\alpha} := \frac{\sum_{t=1}^T \left\| \widehat{\alpha}^{(t)} - \alpha_{\star}^{(t)} \right\|_F^2}{\sum_{t=1}^T \left\| \alpha_{\star}^{(t)} \right\|_F^2}.$$

We also consider the special relative error of Z based on the identifiability:

$$RE_Z := \frac{\min_{O \in \mathbb{S}^{r \times r}, OO^\top = I_r} \left\| \widehat{Z} - Z_{\star} O \right\|_F^2}{\|Z_{\star}\|_F^2}.$$

Finding the optimal O is known as the orthogonal Procrustes problem, which can be solved by singular value decomposition (SVD). In particular, if we denote the SVD of $\widehat{Z}^\top Z_{\star}$ by $S \Sigma V^\top$, then the optimal O is given by $V S^\top$.

Results: Tables

Table: Simulation results for **Network 3, $p = 200$, $T = 50$ and $r = 4$** . In each cell, mean (sd) based on 100 replicates. The bold and underlined values indicate the smallest and the second smallest, respectively.

T	Method	RE_{Θ}	RE_{α}	RE_Z
50	LSM	0.2133(0.0161)	0.1587(0.0113)	0.1156(0.0072)
	TDCPD	0.6141(0.0167)	-	0.8716(0.0005)
	LCSC-LSM	0.0348(0.0028)	0.0627(0.0019)	0.0194(0.0040)
	KCN-LSM	0.1502(0.0128)	8.1669(0.1833)	0.0953(0.0062)
	PLSM	0.0706(0.0027)	8.1836(0.2248)	0.2781(0.0029)
	FlexMn	0.0348(0.0028)	0.0627(0.0019)	0.0018(0.0001)
	Proposed	<u>0.0102(0.0004)</u>	0.0253(0.0009)	0.0017(0.0001)
	Oracle	<u>0.0100(0.0004)</u>	0.0265(0.0008)	<u>0.0016(0.0001)</u>

Results: Figures of temporal trends

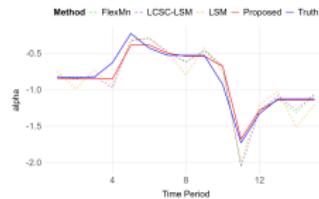
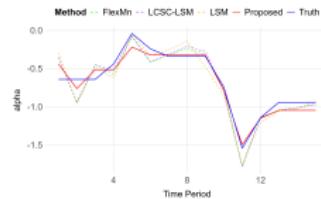
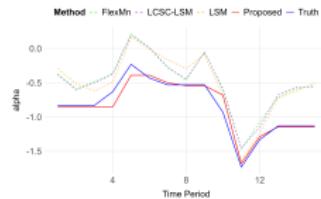
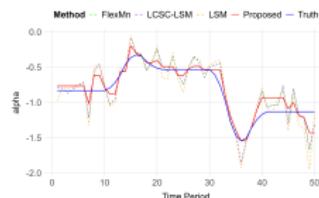
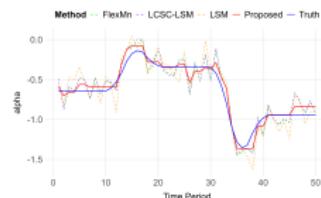
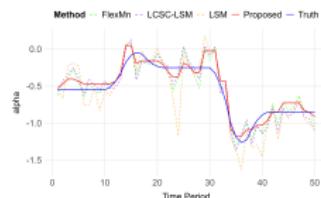
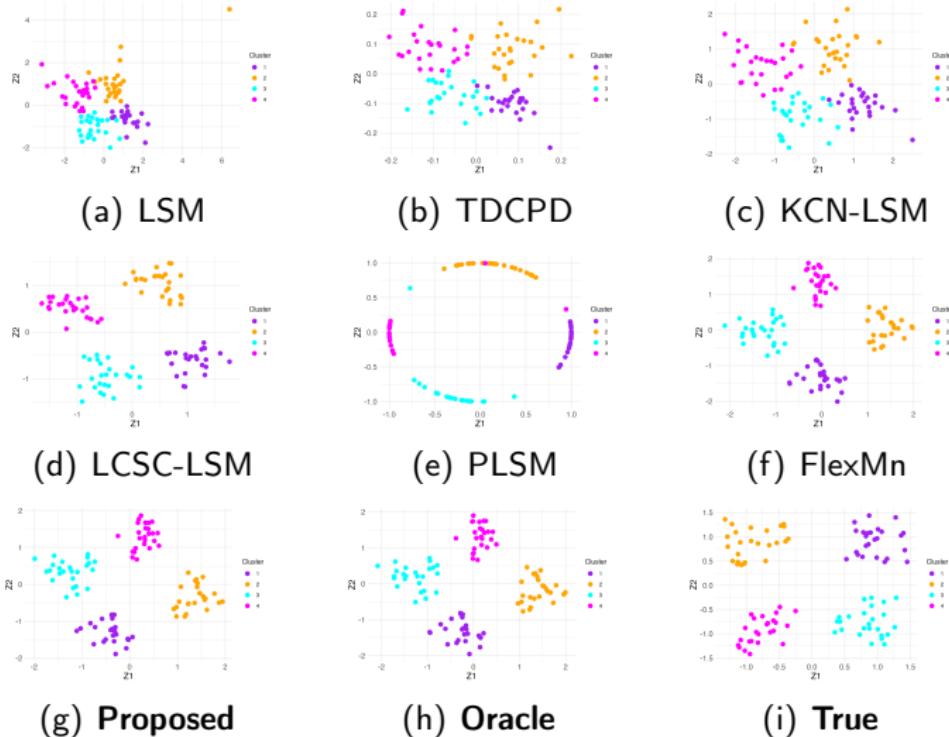
(a) Network 1, $T = 15$ (b) Network 2, $T = 15$ (c) Network 3, $T = 15$ (d) Network 1, $T = 50$ (e) Network 2, $T = 50$ (f) Network 3, $T = 50$

Figure: Simulation results: estimation of temporal trends ($r = 2$ and $p = 200$).

Results: Figures of latent spaces



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Medicare

- We first retrieve **133 million** Medicare inpatient records collected during the period from **January 2008 to December 2019**, representing service utilization of 35 million Medicare beneficiaries.
- As in the literature, we focus on subjects aged 65 years and above.
- Following the literature [Wei et al., 2017, Jiang et al., 2018], we extract the length-of-stay (LOS) information.
- The **final data** for analysis is a array containing the LOS measurements for each subject, each of the 108 diseases, and each of the 12 years.

Adopting the approach developed in Mei et al. [2023] to Medicare inpatient claims data from 2008 to 2019, **we first estimate the 12-year HDN adjacency matrices**.

Analysis of shared latent space

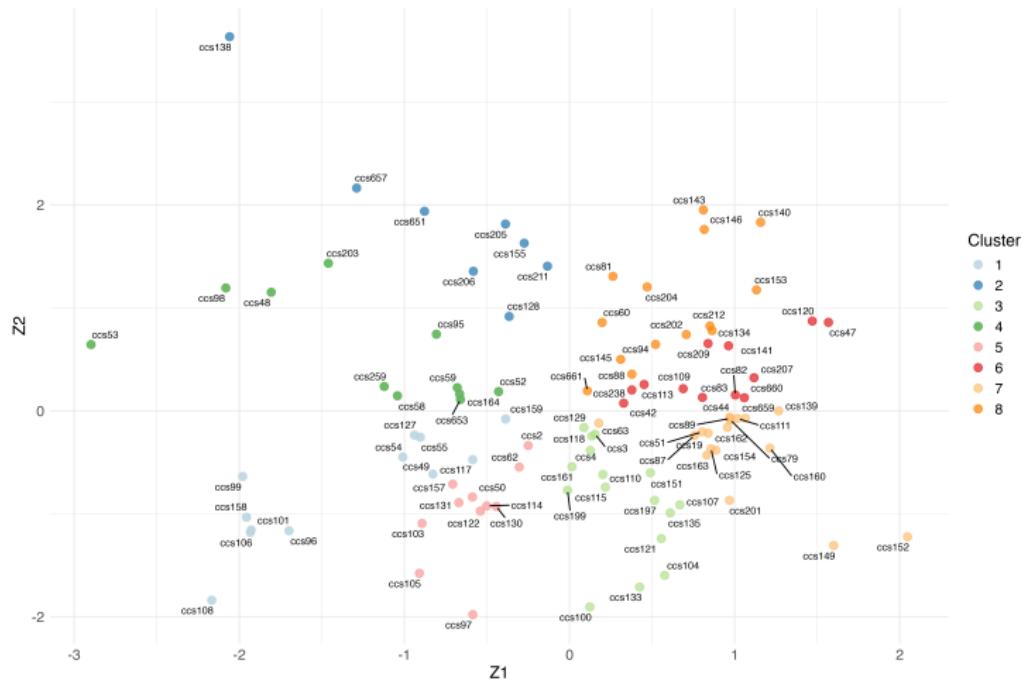
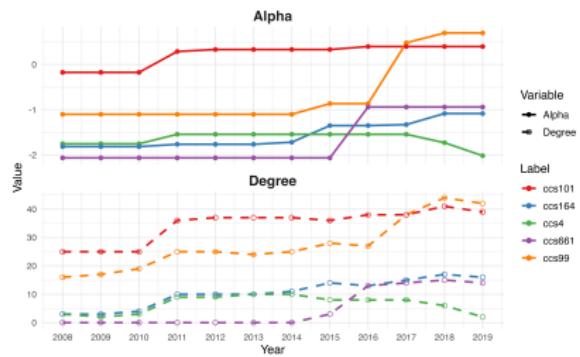
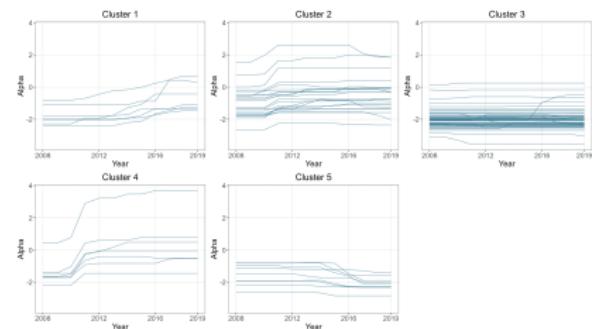


Figure: Clustering result of latent space ($r = 2$)

Analysis of temporal trends



(a) Trends of alpha v.s. degree for selected nodes



(b) Clustering result of $\{\alpha^{(t)}\}_{t=1}^T$ trends

Analysis using the alternative methods (e.g. LCSC-LSM)

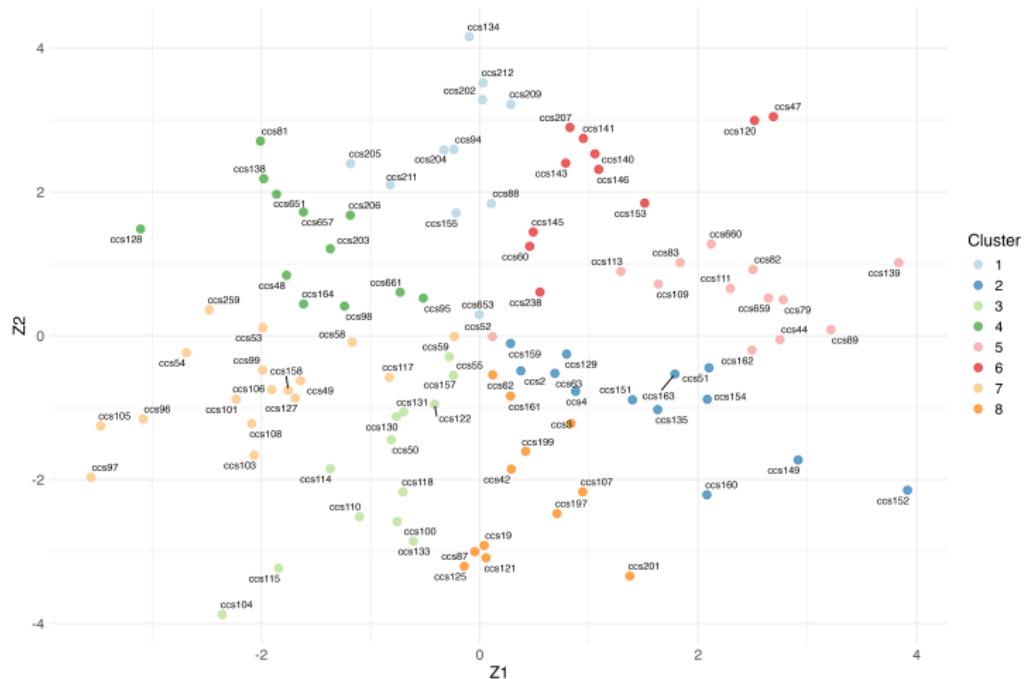
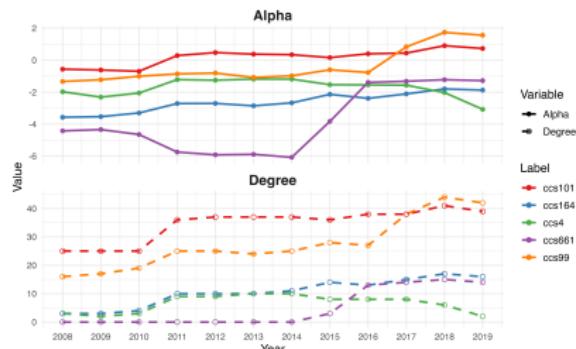
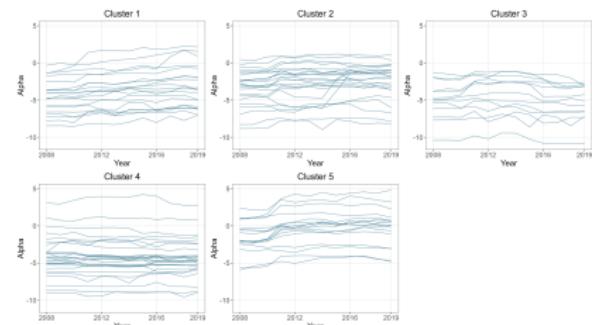


Figure: Clustering result of latent space ($r = 2$) by LCSC-LSM

Analysis using the alternative methods (e.g. LCSC-LSM)



(a) Trends of alpha v.s. degree for selected nodes by LCSC-LSM



(b) Clustering result of $\{\alpha^{(t)}\}_{t=1}^T$ trends by LCSC-LSM

- This **instability** in temporal patterns not only complicates trend interpretation but also limits the utility of clustering analysis.

THANKS!

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