5 Confidence Interval and Bootstrapping

Now, we’re going to move on from the sampling distribution, and develop the notion of a Confidence Intervals (CI). First, we will show that the formula for the CI for the population mean actually does what it is designed to do. Recall that the formula for the confidence interval (CI) for the population mean is given by:

$$x \pm z^* \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$$  \hspace{1cm} (1)

and it is designed to cover the population mean in 95% of samples taken from the population. One nontrivial part of this formula is the $\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$, also called the standard error (std err) of the sample mean. It's nontrivial because, first we have to approximate the population std (σ) with sample std, but more importantly, we have to use math to derive it. For many statistics (other than the sample mean), the std error is difficult to derive mathematically. The other nontrivial part of the CI formula is the $z^*$, because it is based on the fact that the sample mean has a normal distribution. Some statistics do not.

The second task is to show that we can actually get similar answers, WITHOUT using the formula for the std err of the mean, nor the assumption of normality. This is important when simple formulas for the std err do not exist, e.g., for sample median. The main idea is called The Bootstrap. We basically treat the single sample that we have in a realistic situation as if it were the population! So, instead of sampling from the population (i.e., what we did above), bootstrap re-samples from the sample.* It's like magic, but you'll see how it works below.

There are different kinds of CI, e.g., 1-sample, 2-sample, 1-sided, 2-sided, large-sample, small-sample, etc. And yet other kinds of CI will be covered as we proceed forward into chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11. In the following, you will also come across words like "p-value," or "hypothesis." For now, you may simply ignore them. Chi8 will introduce that method, which is equivalent to the CI method.

5.1 Confidence Interval for Population Mean

```r
# Create a normal population.
rm(list = ls(all = TRUE))
set.seed(1)
N <- 100000  # Sample size = 100000.
pop <- rnorm(N, 1, 2)  # Draw N samples from a normal distribution with
# mu = 1 and sigma = 2.
pop.mean <- mean(pop)
pop.sd <- sd(pop)
pop.median <- median(pop)
c(pop.mean, pop.sd, pop.median)
[1] 0.9955 2.0070 1.0016
hist(pop, breaks = 400)

sample.size <- 200  # Sample size.
sample.trial <- sample(pop, sample.size, replace = T)  # Here is a sample.
```
5.1.1 Calculating CI Using Formula

```r
sample.stat <- mean(sample.trial)  # Sample mean.
std.err <- sd(sample.trial) / sqrt(sample.size)  # Calculate the standard error.
sample.stat - abs(qnorm(.05 / 2)) * std.err  # Note z_star.
[1] 0.7895

sample.stat + abs(qnorm(.05 / 2)) * std.err  # Sign is correct!
[1] 1.32

# sample.stat - abs(qt(0.05 / 2, sample.size - 1)) * std.err  # For use later
# sample.stat + abs(qt(0.05 / 2, sample.size - 1)) * std.err
```

5.1.2 Calculating CI Using Built-in Function

```r
t.test(sample.trial, alternative = "two.sided", conf.level = 0.95)

One Sample t-test
data:  sample.trial
t = 7.8, df = 200, p-value = 4e-13
alternative hypothesis: true mean is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
  0.7878 1.3219
sample estimates:
  mean of x
  1.055
```
Note that answers from the two methods (by formula and by computer) are very similar. The interpretation of C.I. is that we can be 95% confident that the true mean resides in this interval.

### 5.2 Coverage of a Confidence Interval

In practice, you will have only one sample (samp) and not the population (pop), and so you will build only one CI. But here we want to confirm that the CI, the way we compute it (i.e., with our formulas or with `t.test()`) covers the population mean the correct percentage of time. **This is what a CI is designed to do: to have the correct coverage.**

To do so, we will draw `n.trial = 100` samples of size `sample.size = 90` from the normal population, above. For each sample, we will construct the 95% CI and we will make a plot that shows all 100 CIs then count how many of them cover the population mean.

```R
rm(list = ls(all = TRUE))
set.seed(1)
N <- 100000
pop <- rnorm(N, 1, 2)
pop.mean <- mean(pop)
pop.sd <- sd(pop)
pop.median <- median(pop)
c(pop.mean, pop.sd, pop.median)
[1] 0.9955 2.0070 1.0016
hist(pop, breaks = 400, main = 'Histogram of Population')

n.trial <- 100  # Number of samples to draw from population.
sample.size <- 90  # Size of each sample = 90.
CI <- matrix(nrow = n.trial, ncol = 2)  # Create space to store n.trial CIs.

for (i in 1:n.trial) {
  sample.trial <- sample(pop, sample.size)  # For each sample/trial,
  CI[i, ] <- t.test(sample.trial)$conf.int[1:2]  # compute (and keep) only CI.
}

count <- 0  # Count number of CIs that cover mu.
for (i in 1:n.trial) {
  if (CI[i, 1] <= pop.mean & & CI[i, 2] >= pop.mean) {
    count <- count + 1
  }
}
count
[1] 96
5.2.1 Confidence Interval for Small Samples

We know that the sampling distribution of the sample mean is the normal distribution if the sample size is large. However, for small samples, the sampling distribution is a t-distribution with \( n - 1 \) degrees of freedom where \( n \) is the sample size. To find the confidence interval, all we need to know is how to compute areas under the t-distribution between two numbers, just like what we did with the normal distribution. In R, we can replace `qnorm(0.05 / 2)` with `qt(0.05 / 2, sample.size - 1)`. The results will be very similar if the sample size is large since the t-distribution converges to normal as the sample size \( n \to \infty \). But for small samples (e.g., 20), the confidence interval calculated using a t-distribution will cover the population mean the correct number of times (if the population is normal), while the normal confidence interval will not. For small samples taken from non-normal populations, we do not have any formulas. We should use the bootstrap method instead.

5.3 Two-Sample, Two-Sided Confidence Interval

The following is data from a Statistics class, when students were asked their gender, and what percentage of time they attend class. We will assume percentage is normally distributed, although it is not.

attendance <- dat[, 1]
gender <- dat[, 2]
pa.boy <- attendance[gender == 0]  # Percent of time attending class for boys.
pa.girl <- attendance[gender == 1]  # Percent of time attending class for girls.
n.boys <- length(pa.boy) # Number of boys. Same as sum(y == 0).
n.girls <- length(pa.girl) # Number of girls. Same as sum(y == 1).

# The sample mean of these attendance rates is higher for boys than girls:
mean(pa.boy)
[1] 87.57

mean(pa.girl)
[1] 86.4

Suppose you wonder if the two true/population means (of attendance rate) are different, then, you need to build a 2-sample, 2-sided CI. We will first start by computing 1-sample, 2-sided CIs for each mean:

t.test(pa.boy)$conf.int[1:2]
[1] 79.95 95.19

t.test(pa.girl)$conf.int[1:2]
[1] 81.93 90.87

Given the huge overlap between these two confidence intervals, (and given that the two groups - boys and girls - are independent), we can conclude that the data does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the attendance rates of boys and girls are different.

Comparing two CIs is not the most elegant way of answering the question. If the comparison of two means (or proportions) is all we care about, then we should compute the CI for the difference between the population means (or proportions), i.e., a 2-sample CI for the difference between means.

t.test(pa.boy, pa.girl, alternative = "two.sided") # Default conf.level = 0.95.

Welch Two Sample t-test
data:  pa.boy and pa.girl
t = 0.27, df = 51, p-value = 0.8
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:  
-7.559 9.891
sample estimates:
mean of x mean of y  
87.57 86.40

There are two interpretations:
1. We can be 95% confident that the difference between the true/population means is between -7.559 and 9.891.

2. There is a 95% probability that a 95% CI for the difference between the true means, computed from a random sample, will include the difference between the true/pop means.
Corollary:
The fact that the 2-sided CI, (-7.555, 9.891), includes zero implies that we CANNOT tell if there is a difference between the two proportions. We just cannot say anything. Note, it would be WRONG to conclude that there is NO difference between the true/population means.

5.4 Two-Sample, One-Sided Confidence Interval

Suppose you are NOT interested in whether there is a difference between the attendance rates of boys and girls. Instead you are interested in a “weaker” question, namely, is the attendance rate for boys higher than that of girls? Denote $\mu_1 =$ true/pop mean attendance rate for boys. $\mu_2 =$ true/pop mean attendance rate for girls. Then you must build the lower confidence bound for $\mu_1 - \mu_2$. (Or equivalently an upper confidence bound for $\mu_2 - \mu_1$).

```r
t.test(pa.boy, pa.girl, alternative = "greater")
# "greater" = LOWER conf. bound.
# "less" = UPPER conf. bound.
```

Interpretations:

1. We are 95% confident that $\mu_1 - \mu_2$ is larger than -6.11.

2. There is a 95% probability that a random 95% lower confidence bound for the difference will be lower than the true difference.

Corollary: This “interval” still includes zero. So, there is no evidence for $\mu_1$ being greater than $\mu_2$.

Recall that you can compute a lower confidence bound for each of $\mu_1$ and $\mu_2$ separately:

```r
t.test(pa.boy, alternative = "greater")$conf.int[1:2]
[1] 81.24 Inf

t.test(pa.girl, alternative = "greater")$conf.int[1:2]
[1] 82.67 Inf
```

Example

We will compare the grades on a statistics midterm of those who pick up their tests within the first one or two weeks after the test to those who do not pick it up in that period of time. We use this as a proxy for attendance. The following analysis is conducted to see if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups. Data can be found at:

http://www.stat.washington.edu/marzban/390/attend_grades.dat.txt

```r
attend <- c(9.0, 14.0, 15.0, 12.5, 13.5, 14.5, 12.5, 8.5, 17.5, 9.5, 12.0, 11.0, 14.0, 14.5, 14.0, 21.5, 12.5, 10.5, 17.5, 5.0, 10.5, 17.5, 16.5, 19.0, 18.0, 15.5, 13.5, 21.5, 10.5, 17.0, 18.5, 12.0, 15.0, 17.5, 11.5, 15.5, 17.0, 17.0, 20.0, 15.5, 12.0, 13.0, 23.0, 11.5, 14.0, 13.0, 22.5, 8.5, 11.0, 9.5, 11.5, 17.0, 11.5, 17.5, 7.5, 8.0, 14.5, 9.5, 19.0, 16.5, 18.5, 10.5, 16.5, 14.5, 13.5, 14.5, 12.0, 17.0, 13.0, 11.0, 12.5, 9.0, 19.0, 15.0, 16.0, 11.0, 7.0, 22.0, 13.0, 7.5, 14.5, 13.0, 18.5, 13.0, 18.5, 10.0, 20.5, 10.5, 17.5, 13.0, 19.5, 10.0, 13.0, 19.5, 10.5, 14.5, 11.0, 14.5, 7.0, 7.0, 9.0, 16.0, 13.0, 19.5, 15.0, 17.0, 18.0, 10.5, 15.0, 8.5, 10.0, 14.0, 16.0, 12.5, 13.5, 17.0)
non.attend <- c(3.0, 12.5, 8.5, 18.5, 5.5, 18.5, 7.5, 13.5, 6.5, 17.0, 11.5, 13.0, 13.0)
```
To see if the data provide evidence for the claim that \( \mu_1 = \text{mean of attend} \) is higher than \( \mu_2 = \text{mean of non-attend} \), the appropriate CI is a lower confidence bound for \( \mu_1 - \mu_2 \), which is equivalent to testing

\[
H_0 : \mu_1 - \mu_2 \leq 0 \\
H_1 : \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0
\]

\[t.test(\text{attend, non.attend, alternative = "greater", conf.level = 0.95})\]

Welch Two Sample t-test

data: attend and non.attend
\( t = 1.8, \ df = 14, \ p-value = 0.05 \)
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means is greater than 0
95 percent confidence interval:
0.04549 Inf
sample estimates:
mean of x mean of y
13.98 11.42

This means that we can be 95% confident that the true (i.e., population) mean grade of the attending students is higher than that of the non-attending students by at least 0.045. Because 0 is not included in the CI, the “corollary” conclusion is that the mean grade of attending students is higher than that of the non-attending students. One often says that the difference is “statistically significant.” (The same conclusion follows from the p-value; it’s smaller than \( \alpha = 0.05 \), and so we can reject \( H_0 : \mu_1 \leq \mu_2 \) in favor of \( H_1 : \mu_1 > \mu_2 \).)

The result is statistically significant, but is it physically significant? That’s a different question! In other words, how much higher is the mean of the attendees, and do we care? To answer that, look at the sample means of the two groups (last line of the output). The attending students’ grade is \( \frac{13.98 - 11.42}{11.42} \cdot 100 \approx 22\% \) higher than that of the non-attending students. That’s big enough to be considered physically significant.

It’s important to note that statistical significance and physical significance are two different concepts. The difference between the two means may be statistically significant, but it may be so small that no one really cares about it, i.e., it may be physically non-significant.

5.5 Bootstrap: CI without formulas

We have confirmed in 4.2 that the CI computed with the formula \( \bar{x} \pm z^* \cdot \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \) has the correct coverage property (about 95% of such CIs cover the true mean). But that conclusion is based on several assumptions:

1. We know what \( z^* \) to use in the formula.

2. We can approximate \( \sigma \) with the sample standard deviation.

But for some statistics (e.g., sample mean) we don’t even have a formula for a CI. One solution to that problem is Bootstrapping.

Example: Producing the Correct CI for Mean

Instead of using the formula \( \frac{s(\text{sample})}{\sqrt{n}} \) for the standard deviation of the sampling distribution of the sample mean, we can actually build (though approximately) the sampling distribution itself. This is
done by taking multiple samples - called bootstrap samples - from the single observed sample! The theory behind bootstrap argues that the std dev of this “sampling distribution” is a pretty good estimate of the standard dev of the sampling distribution of the sample mean. Armed with this approximation to the sampling distribution, we can take its appropriate quantiles to give us CI: after all, $\bar{x} \pm 1.96 \cdot \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$ mark quantiles of the true sampling distribution). So, that’s the idea: to build a histogram of the sample statistic of interest by treating the sample as if it were the population.

Now, when it comes to testing the coverage properties of a CI for some parameter, recall that we take multiple samples from a population already. So, in the bootstrap approach, we will have to take multiple (bootstrap) samples from each of the samples taken from the population. For technical reasons that we won’t go into, the bootstrap samples must be taken with replacement.

```r
rm(list = ls(all = TRUE))
set.seed(1)
N <- 100000
pop <- rgamma(N, 2, 3) # Draw from gamma instead of normal.
pop.mean <- mean(pop)
pop.sd <- sd(pop)
pop.median <- median(pop)
c(pop.mean, pop.sd, pop.median)
[1] 0.6669 0.4705 0.6590
hist(pop, breaks = 400, main = 'Histogram of Population')
n.trial <- 100
sample.size <- 90
CI <- matrix(mrow = n.trial, ncol = 2)
for (i in 1:n.trial) {
  sample.trial <- sample(pop, sample.size) # Take a sample.
  # Now, the bootstrap block (which you have to type in):
  # For each sample, take a bootstrap sample (with replacement), and compute
  # the sampling distribution of the sample means. The appropriate quantiles
  # of this sampling distribution given the confidence interval.
  n.boot <- 100 # Number of bootstrap samples, from each sample.
  boot.stat <- numeric(n.boot)
  for (j in 1:n.boot) {
    boot.sample <- sample(sample.trial, sample.size, replace = T)
    # With replacement.
    boot.stat[j] <- mean(boot.sample) # Store the means.
  } # End of loop over bootstrap.
  CI[i, ] <- quantile(boot.stat, c(0.05 / 2, (1 - 0.05 / 2)))
  # CI[i, ] <- c(mean(sample.trial) + qnorm(0.05/2) * pop.sd / sqrt(sample.size),
  # mean(sample.trial) - qnorm(0.05/2)*pop.sd / sqrt(sample.size))
  # For small sample, replace qnorm(.05/2) with qt(.05/2, sample.size - 1).
  # CI[i, ] <- sort(boot.stat)[(n.boot + 1) * c(0.05/2, 0.95/2)] # See Geyer.
} # End of loop over samples.
count <- 0
for (i in 1:n.trial) {
  if (CI[i, 1] <= pop.mean & CI[i, 2] >= pop.mean)
    count <- count + 1
```
count
[1] 94

plot(c(1, 1), CI[1, ], ylim = c(0.3, 1.2), xlim = c(0, 101), ylab="CI", xlab = "", 
     type = "l")
for (i in 2:n.trial) {
  lines(c(i, i), CI[1, ])  # Draw CIs (vertically).
}
abline(h = pop.mean, col = "red", lwd = 2)  # Draw the population mean
  # (horizontally).

Histogram of Population

It may seem like the bootstrap method makes no assumptions, and that it will work all the time. However, it turns out that it does have some problems. Some of the problems are addressed by Schenker (1985). For example, he shows that the particular version we use above (called percentile bootstrap) gives CIs which cover the population parameter less frequently than they should, especially for small samples. For example, with a sample size of 20, a 90% CI will cover the pop mean around 78% of the time.

5.5.1 Confidence Interval for Sample Median

n.trial <- 100
sample.size <- 90
CI <- matrix(0, n.trial, 2)
for (i in 1:n.trial) {
  sample.trial <- sample(pop, sample.size, replace=FALSE)
  n.boot <- 100
  boot.stat <- numeric(n.boot)
  for (j in 1:n.boot) {
    boot.sample <- sample(sample.trial, sample.size, replace = TRUE)
    boot.stat[j] <- median(boot.sample)  # Median
Note that the number of times that the confidence interval covers the true median is close to 95. In other words, the way we are computing a confidence interval for a population median gives us confidence intervals that cover the population median the expected number of times. In practice, when you have a single sample, and no population, you can use this bootstrap method to build a confidence interval for the population median.

A quick partial fix to the problem of under-coverage is proposed by Charles Geyer:

http://www.stat.umn.edu/geyer/old/5601/examp/percent.html

and it involves revising the CI line just a bit. The commented line in in the above code will let you test this idea.
Reference