MODULE 9: Spatial Statistics in Epidemiology and Public Health Lecture 9: Disease Ecology

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Disease Ecology: What do we want to do? Pattern and Process

Point Processes: Chagas Disease in Peru

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Spatial Regression: Raccoon Rabies Statistical estimation of landscape barriers Wombling Spatially varying coefficients

Disease Ecology

- Interactions between virus, host, landscape.
- Landscape epidemiology (Pavlovsky, 1967), landscape ecology (Manel et al. 2003, TrEE), spatial epidemiology (Osfeld et al. 2005, TrEE), landscape genetics (host and virus) (Biek et al. 2006, Science), conservation medicine (Aguirre et al. 2002).
- People, animals, diseases, ecology, environment!
- Spatio-temporal data, mathematical models, genetic sequences, missing data, GIS!

Pattern and Process

Epizoology and Epidemiology

- Most emergent infectious diseases have animal reservoir (WNV, Ebola, Avian influenza, Monkeypox, SARS, HIV/SIV).
- History of animal/human disease (Torrey and Yolken, 2005, Beasts of the Earth).
- Interesting intersection of modelers, ecologists, statisticians, medical geographers, ecological geneticists, public health researchers, epidemiologists.
- One Health.

Pattern and Process

The "big picture"



Pattern and Process

Pattern and Process

- Our ultimate goal is understanding the ecological processes driving the patterns we see in our observations.
- When linking process (model or reality) to pattern (data), typically:
 - Ecology focus: Process to pattern
 - Emphasis on mathematical model, link to available data
 - Statistics: Pattern to process
 - Collected data, hypothesis test or analytic (e.g., regression) model.

Pattern and Process

Ultimately futile exercise?

- Process may not yield unique pattern (e.g., chaos, stochasticity).
- Pattern may not reveal unique process without additional information (e.g., spatial point patterns, Bartlett (1964)).
- But the real question is, "Can we learn more than we already know?"
- If not, what additional data do we need?

Pattern and Process

The whirling vortex



Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Point Processes in Disease Ecology: Chagas disease in Peru

- Joint work with Michael Levy (Fogarty International Center, NIH)
- Chagas disease: Vector borne disease (infection with *T. cruzi*).
- ▶ Vector (in southern Peru): *Triatoma infestans*.
- Study area: Guadalupe, Peru (peri-urban).
- Fields surrounding rocky hilltops with houses.
- GPS all household locations.
- Spraying campaign, identify house locations, houses with vectors ("infested"), and houses with infected vectors ("infected").

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

How to find a cluster?

- Consider two approaches: scan statistic and intensity estimators.
- Spatial scan statistic:
 - Define set of potential clusters (elements of scanning window).
 - Assign "score" to each potential cluster.
 - Find "most likely cluster" (MLC) as potential cluster with extreme score.
 - Evaluate significance of most likely cluster via Monte Carlo simulation.
 - Compare observed "score" of MLC to distribution of scores MLCs (regardless of location) under random assignment.
 - SaTScan software (www.satscan.org).

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

SaTScan, Infested among households, Most likely cluster (p=0.002)



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Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

SaTScan, Infected among infested, Most likely cluster (p=0.181)



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Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Chagas SaTScan conclusions

- Statistically significant cluster of infested households among all households.
- No statistically significant cluster of infected households among infested households.
- Note circular most likely cluster may include gaps (top of hill).
- What about non-circular clusters?

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Kernel intensity estimates, infested vs. all households



Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Ratio of kernel intensity estimates, infested vs. all households



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Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Kernel intensity estimates, infected vs. infested households



Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Ratio of kernel intensity estimates, infected vs. infested



Longitude

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Cluster conclusions

- Relative risk surface adds more geographical precision to patterns initially revealed by SaTScan.
- Large risk of infestation in the south.
- Within this some pockets of increased risk of infection.
- Area of lower risk missed by circular scan statistic, due to its irregular shape.
- Identifies areas for future studies.

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Chagas conclusions

- Significant cluster of infested households, but no clusters of infected households (circular clusters).
- Relative risk surface also suggests area of low risk (both infestation and infection) in northeast.
- K functions suggest significant *clustering* of *infected* but not *infested* households.
- Taken together, results reveal different aspects of the underlying process.
- A single cluster does not define clustering, nor does clustering imply a single cluster.

Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Chagas conclusions

- Infestation: pockets of higher and lower relative risk, but level of clustering not different between cases and controls.
- Infection: More clustered at small distances than infestation, but resulting clusters are smaller and more diffuse.
- Scale of clustering different between infestation and infection, and larger than typical range of individual vectors.
- Scale of clustering useful in targeted surveillance for human cases (Levy et al., 2007, *PLoS NTD*).

Outline

Disease Ecology: What do we want to do? Point Processes: Chagas Disease in Peru Spatial Regression: Raccoon Rabies Cluster detection Spatial relative risk

Questions?

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Raccoon rabies



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What is rabies?

- Virus in family of Lyssa ("frenzy") virus.
- Reportable disease.
- Various strains associated with primary host (bat, dog, coyote, fox, skunk, and raccoon).
- Host cross-over, typically transmitted via bite/scratch.
- Most human infection from bat strains.

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Raccoon rabies

- Endemic in Florida and South Georgia.
- ► Translocation of rabid animal(s) to VA/WV border circa 1977.
- Wave-like spread since.
- Connecticut first appearance 1991-1996.
- Ohio 2005.
- Joint work with Leslie Real's lab in Population Biology, Evolution, and Ecology (David Smith, Colin Russell, Roman Biek, Scott Duke-Sylvester).

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Barrier estimation: What do we want?

- Goal: Measure effect of landscape features, (e.g., mountains and rivers) on the speed of raccoon rabies diffusion.
- Elevation, river or road presence significantly related to raccoon rabies counts (Recuenco et al. 2007) and transmission time (Russell et al. 2004).
- Landscape features may serve as either barriers or gateways to the spread of infectious disease.
- Find and visualize barriers: Do they align with certain landscape features?

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Data: What do we have?

- Time in months to first reported raccoon rabies case in 428 contiguous counties in the Eastern US (CDC).
 - 0 for origin county: Pendleton, WV.
- Mean elevation by county (USGS Geographic Names Information System).
- Indicator for major river presence in county (ESRI data and a geographic information system (GIS)).
- Population density by county (US Census and ESRI).
- Distance between origin county and all counties.

Disease Point

Data



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Wombling

- Joint work with David Wheeler (Wheeler and Waller, JABES, 2008).
- Wombling: determine boundaries on a map by finding where local spread (change) is slower than elsewhere (Womble, 1951 Science).
- ► William H. Womble a bit of an elusive figure...

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William H. Womble (?)



Statistical estimation of landscape barriers Wombling Spatially varying coefficients

Google search: W.H. Womble Professor Robert Stencel



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Which leads to ...



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Are you weady to womble?

- Consider a set of potential boundaries and decide if each is a "real" boundary or not.
- Many algorithmic approaches both deterministic and "fuzzy".
- Adopt a Bayesian hierarchical model for wombling (Lu and Carlin 2005).
- Bayesian approach provides a direct estimate of the probability that a line segment between two adjacent areas is a barrier (fuzzy boundary) in contrast to algorithmic versions based on thresholds, etc.

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Bayesian areal wombling

▶ Model time to first reported raccoon rabies case Y_i:

$$Y_i | \mu_i, \tau \sim N(\mu_i, 1/\tau)$$

where

$$\mu_i = \alpha + \phi_i$$

is the expected value of time to first case per county.

Spatial random effects follow a conditionally autoregressive (CAR) prior φ ~ CAR(η) with a mean random effect determined by its neighboring values.

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Bayesian areal wombling

Boundary likelihood value (BLV) assigned to each potential boundary (here, edge between two counties), based on difference in expected (modeled) time to first appearance.

$$\Delta_{ij} = |\mu_i - \mu_j|$$

- Use MCMC to draw sample from posterior [Δ_{ij}|y] based on draws from posteriors [μ_i|y] and [μ_j|y].
- This assigns a posterior probability for each edge, then display edges with with $p(\Delta_{ij} > c | \mathbf{y})$ for some threshold probability c.

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Wombling boundaries: $p(\Delta_{ij} > c | \mathbf{y})$





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Linking to local covariates

- Bayesian areal wombling provides estimates of barriers but does not allow direct inference regarding the impact of particular landscape barriers on the evidence for barriers.
- We could expand our fixed effect α to X'β to include local covariates (e.g., elevation, boundary based on a river).
- However, what it if the effect of elevation or presence of river varies from place to place?
- Russell et al. (2003, PNAS) suggest that river effect depends on direction of movement of the wave (perpendicular? Slower. Parallel? Faster.)

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Spatially varying coefficients

We consider a spatially varying coefficient model with CAR priors on the covariate effects β, i.e.,

$$Y_i | \mu_i, \tau \sim N(\mu_i, 1/\tau)$$

where

$$\mu_i = \mathbf{X}'_i \boldsymbol{\beta}_i + \phi_i$$

- Spatial priors on elements of β_i .
- More specifically, assign a multivariate CAR prior on the set of β (Banerjee et al. 2004).

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MultiCAR details

$$\beta_{i} = (\beta_{i1}, \beta_{i2}, \dots, \beta_{ip})'$$

$$\beta_{i} | (\beta_{(-i),1}, \beta_{(-i),2}, \dots, \beta_{(-i),p}) \sim N(\bar{\beta}_{i}, \Omega/m_{i})$$
where

$$\bar{\beta}_{i} = (\bar{\beta}_{i1}, \bar{\beta}_{i2}, \dots, \bar{\beta}_{ip})'$$

and

$$\bar{\beta}_{i1} = \sum_{k \in \kappa_i} \beta_{k1} / m_i$$

where κ_i = neighbor set for region *i*, and $|\kappa_i| = m_i$.

• $\Omega \sim \text{Inverse-Wishart}(\nu, 0.02 \cdot I_{p \times p}).$

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Including covariates

- Include effects of (mean) elevation, presence of a major river, and the natural log of the (human) population density.
- Best fitting (via DIC) model includes spatial variation in all three (and intercept).

 $E[Y_i] = \beta_{i1} + \beta_{i2} (\text{mean elev}) + \beta_{i3} (\text{river}) + \beta_{4i} (\log(\text{pop dens}))$

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β_1 : int, β_2 : elev, β_3 : river, β_4 : log pop



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Findings/interpretations

- Map of posterior mean (MU): shows the overall wave or spread.
- Random intercept reveals local adjustments.
- River effect indicates increases in time until first appearance across Potomac and Susquehanna Rivers, decreases time for Hudson River and others.
- Elevation is not difference in elevation so not directly informing on elevation gradients as barriers, simply elevation impact on time until appearance.

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SVC wombled boundaries: $p(\Delta_{ij} > c | \mathbf{y})$



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Including covariates \rightarrow better wombling?



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Overall Conclusions

- Much to be done to link mathematical models to statistical ideas.
- Disease ecology offers great setting for exploration.
- Models of transmission, interaction, observation.
- Mathematical models can inform statistics, statistics can inform models.
- Room to move past "ad-hockery".
- Linking landscape features in a more meaningful (inferential) and spatial way.

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Closing

"... Nature's dice are always loaded, ... in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results." Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*.

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References

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