SISG Module 3 & SISMID Module 4

Introduction to R

Ken Rice
Tim Thornton

University of Washington

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Introduction: Course Aims

This is a first course in R. We aim to cover;

- Reading in, summarizing & managing data
- Use of functions in R – doing jobs by programming, not by using drop-down menus (much)
- Some standard functions for statistical analysis – but minimal statistics in this module
- How to use other people’s code, how to get help, what to learn next

We assume no previous use of R, also non-extensive programming skills in other languages. If this is not your level, please consider switching to a later module.
Introduction: Resources

Most importantly, the class site is

http://faculty.washington.edu/kenrice/rintro

Contains (or will contain);

- PDF copies of slides (in color, and contains a few hyperlinks)
- All datasets needed for exercises
- Exercises for you to try
- Our solutions to exercises (later!)
- Links to other software, other courses, book, and places to get R help
- Links to a few helpful websites/email list archives

Of course, search engines will find much more than this, and can be a useful start, when tackling analyses with R.
Introduction: About Tim

- Associate Prof, UW Biostat
- A useR and an instructoR
- Research in Genetic Epidemiology for Complex Human Traits
Introduction: About Ken

- Associate Prof, UW Biostat
- Author of a few R packages, useR, teacher
- Genetic/Genomic research in Cardiovascular Epidemiology

... and you?

(Briefly, who are you, what’s your genetics/infectious disease?)
Introduction: Course structure

10 sessions over 2.5 days

- Day 1; (Mostly RStudio) Data management, using functions
- Day 2; (Standard R) More about programming
- Day 2.5; More advanced ideas

Web page: http://faculty.washington.edu/kenrice/rintro/
Introduction: Session structure

What to expect in a typical session;

- 45 mins teaching (please interrupt!)
- 30 mins hands-on; please work in pairs
- 15 mins summary, discussion/extensions (interrupt again!)

There will also be one ‘take-home’ exercise, on Day 2; the final session will include in-depth discussion/evaluation.

Please note: the 2.5 day course moves quickly, and later material builds on earlier material. So, please interrupt!
1. Reading in data

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What is R?

R is a ‘programming environment for statistics and graphics’

- Does *basically* everything, can also be extended
- It’s the default when statisticians implement new methods
- Free, open-source

But;

- Steeper learning curve than e.g. Excel, Stata
- Command-line driven (programming, not drop-down menus)
- Gives only what you ask for!

To help with these difficulties, we will begin with RStudio, a graphical user interface (front-end) for R that is slightly more user-friendly than ‘Classic’ R’s GUI.

So *after* installing the latest version of R...
In your favorite web browser, download from rstudio.com;

• Select, download & install version for your system
• Default installation is fine
• Working in pairs highly recommended
RStudio

On first startup, RStudio should look like this; (up to version and Mac/PC differences)

If you’ve used it before, RStudio defaults to remembering what you were doing.
We’ll use the ‘Console’ window first – as a (fancy!) calculator

```
> 2+2
[1] 4
> 2^5+7
[1] 39
> 2^(5+7)
[1] 4096
> exp(pi)-pi
[1] 19.9991
> log(20+pi)
[1] 3.141632
> 0.05/1E6 # a comment; note 1E6 = 1,000,000
[1] 5e-08
```

- All common math functions are available; parentheses (round brackets) work as per high school math
- Try to get used to bracket matching. A ‘+’ prompt means the line isn’t finished – hit Escape to get out, then try again.
R stores data (and everything else) as objects. New objects are created when we assign them values;

```r
> x <- 3
> y <- 2 # now check the Environment window
> x+y
[1] 5
```

Assigning new values to existing objects over-writes the old version – and be aware there is no Ctrl-Z ‘undo’;

```r
> y <- 17.4 # check the Environment window again
> x+y
[1] 20.4
```

- Anything after a hash (#) is ignored – e.g. comments
- Spaces don’t matter
- Capital letters do matter
RStudio: Reading in data

To import a dataset, follow pop-ups from the Environment tab;
More on those options;

- **Name**: Name of the data frame object that will store the whole dataset

- **Separator**: what’s between items on a single line?

- **Decimal**: Usually a period ("." )

- **Quote**: Usually double – seldom critical

The defaults are sensible, but R assumes you *know* what your data *should* look like – and whether it has named columns, row names etc. *No* software is smart enough to cope with every format that might be used by you/your colleagues to store data.
RStudio: Reading in data

After successfully reading in the data;

- The environment now includes a `mammals` object – or whatever you called the data read from file
- A copy of the data can be examined in the Excel-like data viewer (below) – if it looks weird, find out why & fix it!

... we’ll return later, to `read.table` in the Console window
What’s a good name for my new object?

- Something memorable (!) and not easily-confused with other objects, e.g. \( x \) isn’t a good choice if you already have \( x \)
- Names must start with a letter or period ("."), after that any letter, number or period is okay
- Avoid other characters; they get interpreted as math ("-","*") or are hard to read (" _") so should not be used in names
- Avoid names of existing functions – e.g. `summary`. Some one-letter choices (c, C, F, t, T and S) are already used by R as names of functions, it’s best to avoid these too
Operating on data

To operate on data, type commands in the Console window, just like our earlier calculator-style approach;

```r
> str(mammals)
'data.frame': 62 obs. of 2 variables:
$ body: num 3.38 0.48 1.35 465 36.33 ...  
$ brain: num 44.5 15.5 8.1 423 119.5 ...  
> summary(mammals)

   body         brain
Min.  : 0.005  Min.  : 0.14
1st Qu.: 0.600  1st Qu.: 4.25
Median : 3.150  Median : 17.25
Mean  : 198.738 Mean  : 283.13
3rd Qu.: 48.203 3rd Qu.: 166.00
Max.  :6654.000 Max.  :5712.00
```

- `str()` tells us the structure of an object
- `summary()` summarizes the object

Can also use these commands on any object – e.g. the single numbers we created earlier (try it!)
Operating on data: columns

Individual columns in data frames are identified using the $ symbol – just seen in the `str()` output.

```r
> mammals$brain
[1]  44.50  15.50   8.10  423.00 119.50 115.00  98.20   5.50  58.00
[10]  6.40   4.00   5.70   6.60   0.14   1.00  10.80  12.30   6.30
[19] 4603.00  0.30  419.00  655.00   3.50  115.00  25.60   5.00  17.50
[28]  680.00  406.00  325.00  12.30  1320.00  5712.00   3.90  179.00  56.00
[37]  17.00   1.00   0.40   0.25  12.50  490.00  12.10  175.00 157.00
[46]  440.00  179.50   2.40   81.00  21.00  39.20   1.90   1.20   3.00
[55]  0.33  180.00  25.00  169.00   2.60  11.40   2.50  50.40
> summary(mammals$brain)
      Min.   1st Qu.    Median      Mean   3rd Qu.      Max.  
    0.140   4.245   17.245    283.100   166.000  5712.000
```

Think of $ as ‘apostrophe-S’, i.e. mammals’s brain.

Unlike many other statistical packages, R can handle *multiple* datasets at the same time – helpful if your data are e.g. phenotypes & genotypes, or county & disease outbreak data. This isn’t possible without $, or *some* equivalent syntax.
Operating on data: columns

New columns are created when you assign their values — here containing the brain weights in kilograms;

```r
> mammals$brainkg <- mammals$brain/1000
> str(mammals)
'data.frame': 62 obs. of 3 variables:
$ body  : num  3.38  0.48  1.35  465  36.33 ... 
$ brain : num  44.5  15.5  8.1  423  119.5 ... 
$ brainkg: num  0.0445  0.0155  0.0081  0.423  0.1195 ... 
> summary(mammals$brainkg)
    Min. 1st Qu.  Median    Mean 3rd Qu.    Max. 
 0.00014 0.00425 0.01725   0.28310 0.16600 5.71200
```

- Assigning values to existing columns over-writes existing values — again, with no warning
- With e.g. `mammals$newcolumn <- 0`, the new column has every entry zero; R *recycles* this single value, for every entry
- It's unusual to delete columns... but if you *must*; `mammals$brainkg <- NULL`
Operating on data: columns

Other functions useful for summarizing data frames, and their columns:

> names(mammals)
[1] "body"  "brain"
> dim(mammals)  # dim is short for dimension
[1] 62 2
> length(mammals$body)  # how many rows in our dataset?
[1] 62
> min(mammals$body)
[1] 0.005
> max(mammals$body)
[1] 6654
> range(mammals$body)
[1] 0.005 6654.000
> mean(mammals$brain)
[1] 283.1342
> sd(mammals$brain)  # sd is short for standard deviation
[1] 930.2789
> median(mammals$brain)
[1] 17.25
> median(mammals$br)  # uses pattern-matching (but hard to debug later)
[1] 17.25
RStudio: the Script window

While fine for occasional use, entering every command ‘by hand’ is error-prone, and quickly gets tedious. A much better approach is to use a Script window – open one with Ctrl-Shift-N, or the drop-down menus;

- Opens a nice editor, enables saving code (.R extension)
- Run current line (or selected lines) with Ctrl-Enter, or Ctrl-R
RStudio: the Script window

**An important notice:** from now on, we assume you are using a script editor.

- First-time users tend to be reluctant to switch! – but it’s worth it, ask any experienced user
- Some code in slides may be formatted for cut-and-paste into scripts – it may not look exactly like what appears in the Console window
- Exercise ‘solutions’ given as .R files
- Scripts make it easy to run slightly modified code, without re-typing everything – remember to save them as you work
- Also remember the Escape key, if e.g. your bracket-matching goes wrong

For a very few jobs, e.g. changing directories, we’ll still use drop-down menus. But commands *are* available, for all tasks.
Operating on data: subsets

To identify general subsets – not just the columns selected by $ – R uses square brackets.

Selecting individuals elements;

>`mammals$brain[32]` # 32nd element of mammals$brain

```
[1] 1320
```

>`row.names(mammals)[32]`

```
[1] "Human"
```

>`mammals$body[32]`

```
[1] 62
```

>`mammals[32,2]` # 32nd row, 2nd column

```
[1] 62
```

Selecting entire columns (again!) or entire rows, blank entries indicate you want everything.

>`mammals[32,]` # everything in the 32nd row

```
body   brain
Human  62  1320
```

>`sum(mammals[32,])`

```
[1] 1382
```
Suppose we were interested in the brain weight (i.e. 2nd column) for mammals (i.e. rows) 14, 55, & 61. How to select these multiple elements?

> mammals[c(14,55,61),1]
[1] 0.005 0.048 0.104  # check these against data view

But what is c(14,55,61)? It's a vector of numbers – c() is for combine;

> length(c(14,55,61))
[1] 3
> str(c(14,55,61))
num [1:3] 14 55 61

We can select these rows and all the columns;

> mammals[c(14,55,61),]
     body      brain
Lesser short-tailed shrew 0.005 0.14
Musk shrew               0.048 0.33
Tree shrew               0.104 2.50
Operating on data: subsets

A very useful special form of vector;

> 1:10
  [1]  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9 10
> 6:2
  [1]  6  5  4  3  2
> -1:-3
  [1] -1 -2 -3

R expects you to know this shorthand – see e.g. its use of 1:3 in the output from `str()`, on the previous slide. For a ‘rectangular’ selection of rows and columns;

> mammals[20:22, 1:2]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>body</th>
<th>brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big brown bat</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donkey</td>
<td>187.100</td>
<td>419.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>521.000</td>
<td>655.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative values correspond to *dropping* those rows/columns;

> mammals[-3:-62, 1:2] # everything but the first two rows, & columns 1:2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>body</th>
<th>brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arctic fox</td>
<td>3.385</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owl monkey</td>
<td>0.480</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operating on data: subsets

As well as storing numbers and character strings (like "Donkey", "Big brown bat") R can also store *logicals* – TRUE and FALSE.

To make a new vector, with elements that are TRUE if body mass is above 500kg and FALSE otherwise;

```r
> is.heavy <- mammals$body > 500
> table(is.heavy)  # another useful data summary command
is.heavy
FALSE  TRUE
  58    4
```

Which mammals were these? (And what were their masses?)

```r
> mammals[is.heavy,]  # just the rows for which is.heavy is TRUE
    body  brain
Asian elephant    2547   4603
Horse             521     655
Giraffe           529     680
African elephant  6654    5712
> mammals[is.heavy,2]  # combining TRUE/FALSE (rows) and numbers (columns)
[1] 4603 655 680 5712
```
Operating on data: subsets

One final method... for now!

Instead of specifying rows/columns of interest by number, or through vectors of TRUEs/FALSEs, we can also just give the names – as character strings, or vectors of character strings.

```r
> mammals[c("Cow","Goat","Human"),"body"]
[1] 465.00  27.66  62.00
> mammals[c("Cow","Goat","Human"),c("body","brain")]
   body  brain
Cow  465.00  423
Goat  27.66  115
Human  62.00 1320
> mammals[c("Cow","Goat","Human"),2] # okay to mix & match
[1] 423  115 1320
```

– this is more typing than the other options, but is much easier to debug/reuse.
Quitting time (almost)

When you’re finished with RStudio;

- Ctrl-Q, or the drop-down menus, or entering `q()` at the command line all start the exit process
- You will be asked “Save workspace image to ~/\.RData?”
  - No/Don’t Save: nothing is saved, and is not available when you re-start. *This is recommended*, because you will do different things in each session
  - Yes: Everything in memory is stored in R’s internal format (.Rdata) and will be available when you re-start RStudio
  - Cancel: don’t quit, go back
- Writing about what you did (output from a script) often takes much longer than re-running that script’s analyses – so often, a ‘commented’ script is all the R you need to store

To get rid of *objects* in your current session, use `rm()`, e.g. `rm(is.heavy, mammals, x, y)` ... or RStudio’s ‘broom’ button.
Summary

- In RStudio, read in data from the pop-up menu in the Environment window (or Tools menu)

- Data frames store data; can have many of these objects – and multiple other objects, too

- Identify vectors with $, subsets with square brackets

- Many useful summary functions are available, with sensible names

- Scripts are an important drudgery-avoidance tool!