

A one-minute introduction to the **gRain** package

Søren Højsgaard
Aarhus University, Denmark

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	A worked example: chest clinic	1
2.1	Building a grain	2
2.2	Queries to grains	3
3	A one-minute version of gRain	3

1 Introduction

The **gRain** package implements propagation in [gra]phical [i]ndependence [n]etworks (hereafter abbreviated **grain**). Such networks are also known as probabilistic networks and Bayesian networks. More information about the package might be available from the webpage <http://gbi.agrsci.dk/~sorenh/R/gRainweb>.

2 A worked example: chest clinic

This section reviews the chest clinic example of Lauritzen and Spiegelhalter (1988) (illustrated in Figure 1) and shows one way of specifying the model in **gRain**. Lauritzen and Spiegelhalter (1988) motivate the chest clinic example as follows:

“Shortness-of-breath (dyspnoea) may be due to tuberculosis, lung cancer or bronchitis, or none of them, or more than one of them. A recent visit to Asia increases the chances of tuberculosis, while smoking is known to be a risk factor for both lung cancer and bronchitis. The results of a single chest X-ray do not discriminate between lung cancer and tuberculosis, as neither does the presence or absence of dyspnoea.”

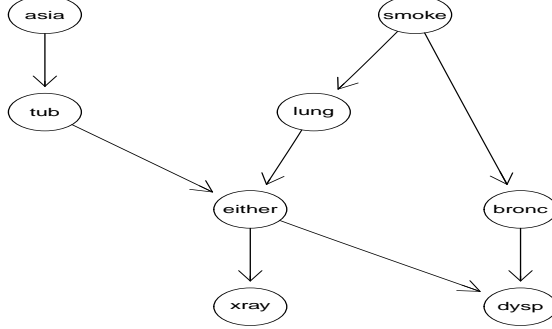


Figure 1: Chest clinic example from LS.

2.1 Building a grain

A Bayesian network is a special case of graphical independence networks. In this section we outline how to build a Bayesian network. The starting point is a probability distribution factorising according to a DAG with nodes V . Each node $v \in V$ has a set $pa(v)$ of parents and each node $v \in V$ has a finite set of states. A joint distribution over the variables V can be given as

$$p(V) = \prod_{v \in V} p(v|pa(v)) \quad (1)$$

where $p(v|pa(v))$ is a function defined on $(v, pa(v))$. This function satisfies that $\sum_{v^*} p(v = v^*|pa(v)) = 1$, i.e. that for each configuration of the parents $pa(v)$, the sum over the levels of v equals one. Hence $p(v|pa(v))$ becomes the conditional distribution of v given $pa(v)$. In practice $p(v|pa(v))$ is specified as a table called a conditional probability table or a CPT for short. Thus, a Bayesian network can be regarded as a complex stochastic model built up by putting together simple components (conditional probability distributions).

Thus the DAG in Figure 1 dictates a factorization of the joint probability function as

$$p(V) = p(\alpha)p(\sigma)p(\tau|\alpha)p(\lambda|\sigma)p(\beta|\sigma)p(\epsilon|\tau, \lambda)p(\delta|\epsilon, \beta)p(\xi|\epsilon). \quad (2)$$

In (2) we have $\alpha = \text{asia}$, $\sigma = \text{smoker}$, $\tau = \text{tuberculosis}$, $\lambda = \text{lung cancer}$, $\beta = \text{bronchitis}$, $\epsilon = \text{either tuberculosis or lung cancer}$, $\delta = \text{dyspnoea}$ and $\xi = \text{xray}$. Note that ϵ is a logical variable which is true if either τ or λ are true and false otherwise.

2.2 Queries to grains

Suppose we are given the finding (evidence) that a set of variables $E \subset V$ have a specific value e^* . For example that a person has recently visited Asia and suffers from dyspnoea, i.e. $\alpha = \text{yes}$ and $\delta = \text{yes}$.

With this finding, we are often interested in the conditional distribution $p(v|E = e^*)$ for some of the variables $v \in V \setminus E$ or in $p(U|E = e^*)$ for a set $U \subset V \setminus E$.

In the chest clinic example, interest might be in $p(\lambda|e^*)$, $p(\tau|e^*)$ and $p(\beta|e^*)$, or possibly in the joint (conditional) distribution $p(\lambda, \tau, \beta|e^*)$.

Interest might also be in calculating the probability of a specific event, e.g. the probability of seeing a specific finding, i.e. $p(E = e^*)$.

3 A one-minute version of gRain

A simple way of specifying the model for the chest clinic example is as follows.

1. Specify conditional probability tables (with values as given in Lauritzen and Spiegelhalter (1988)):

```
> yn <- c("yes", "no")
> a <- cptable(~asia, values=c(1,99), levels=yn)
> t.a <- cptable(~tub/asia, values=c(5,95,1,99), levels=yn)
> s <- cptable(~smoke, values=c(5,5), levels=yn)
> l.s <- cptable(~lung/smoke, values=c(1,9,1,99), levels=yn)
> b.s <- cptable(~bronc/smoke, values=c(6,4,3,7), levels=yn)
> e.lt <- cptable(~either/lung:tub, values=c(1,0,1,0,1,0,0,1), levels=yn)
> x.e <- cptable(~xray/either, values=c(98,2,5,95), levels=yn)
> d.be <- cptable(~dysp/bronc:either, values=c(9,1,7,3,8,2,1,9), levels=yn)
```

2. Create the grain from the conditional probability tables:

```
> plist <- compileCPT(list(a, t.a, s, l.s, b.s, e.lt, x.e, d.be))
> plist
```

CPTspec with probabilities:

```
P( asia )
P( tub | asia )
P( smoke )
P( lung | smoke )
P( bronc | smoke )
P( either | lung tub )
P( xray | either )
P( dysp | bronc either )
```

```
> in1 <- grain(plist)
> in1
```

```
Independence network: Compiled: FALSE Propagated: FALSE
Nodes: chr [1:8] "asia" "tub" "smoke" "lung" "bronc" "either" "xray" ...
```

3. The `grain` can be queried to give marginal probabilities:

```
> querygrain(in1,nodes=c("lung","bronc"), type="marginal")
```

```
$lung
lung
  yes    no
0.055 0.945
```

```
$bronc
bronc
  yes    no
0.45 0.55
```

Likewise, a joint distribution can be obtained.

```
> querygrain(in1,nodes=c("lung","bronc"), type="joint")
```

```
      bronc
lung  yes    no
yes  0.0315 0.0235
no   0.4185 0.5265
```

4. Findings can be entered as:

```
> in12 <- setFinding(in1,nodes=c("asia","dysp"),states=c("yes","yes"))
```

5. The `grain` can be queried again:

```
> querygrain(in12,nodes=c("lung","bronc"))
```

```
$lung
lung
      yes          no
0.09952515 0.90047485
```

```
$bronc
bronc
      yes          no
0.8114021 0.1885979
```

```
> querygrain(in12,nodes=c("lung","bronc"), type="joint")
```

	bronc	
lung	yes	no
yes	0.06298076	0.03654439
no	0.74842132	0.15205354

6. Zero probabilities

Consider setting the finding

```
> in13 <- setFinding(in1,nodes=c("either","tub"),states=c("no","yes"))
```

Under the model, this finding has zero probability;

```
> pFinding(in13)
```

```
[1] 0
```

Therefore, all conditional probabilities are (under the model) undefined;

```
> querygrain(in13,nodes=c("lung","bronc"), type="joint")
```

	bronc	
lung	yes	no
yes	NaN	NaN
no	NaN	NaN

References

Steffen Lillholt Lauritzen and David Spiegelhalter. Local computations with probabilities on graphical structures and their application to expert systems. *J. Roy. Stat. Soc. Ser. B*, 50(2):157–224, 1988.