

# Math 170S

## Lecture Notes Section 8.8 <sup>\*†</sup>

### Likelihood ratio tests

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**NOTE:** Materials that appear in the textbook but do not appear in the lecture notes might still be tested. Please send me an email if you find typos.

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†This notes is based on Hanbaek Lyu's and Liza Rebrova's notes from the previous quarter, and I would like to thank them for their generosity. "*Nanos gigantum humeris insidentes* (I am but a dwarf standing on the shoulders of giants)".

# 1 Example: MLE, Level 0

Let  $X$  be a normal random variable with unknown mean  $\mu$  and **known variance** 1. Suppose that the samples for  $X$  are

$$x_1 = 1.1; \quad x_2 = -1.1; \quad x_3 = 2; \quad x_4 = -3.$$

Suppose that you are being asked to guess if

- $\mu = 1$ ; or
- $\mu = 3$ .

Which one would be the most rational choice?

## 2 Recap: likelihood function

Let  $X$  be an RV with density  $f_\theta$ , with **unknown parameter**  $\theta$ . The **likelihood function** is

$$L(\theta) := f_\theta(x_1) f_\theta(x_2) \dots f_\theta(x_n).$$

The larger the likelihood function, the more likely that  $\theta$  is the correct choice.

### 3 Answer: MLE, Level 0

The density function for the normal random variable is

$$f_{\mu}(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x - \mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right).$$

So the likelihood function is (write this down)

$$\begin{aligned} L(\mu) &= f_{\mu}(x_1) \dots f_{\mu}(x_n) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x_1 - \mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right) \dots \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x_n - \mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right) \\ &= \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}}\right)^{n/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} [(x_1 - \mu)^2 + \dots + (x_n - \mu)^2]\right). \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\sigma^2 = 1$ , we have

$$L(\mu) = \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}}\right)^{n/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} [(x_1 - \mu)^2 + \dots + (x_n - \mu)^2]\right).$$

So we have

$$\begin{aligned} L(1) &= \left(\frac{1}{2\pi}\right)^{4/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} [(1.1 - 1)^2 + \dots + (-3 - 1)^2]\right) \\ &= 5.7 \times 10^{-7}; \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} L(3) &= \left(\frac{1}{2\pi}\right)^{4/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} [(1.1 - 3)^2 + \dots + (-3 - 3)^2]\right) \\ &= 8.6 \times 10^{-15}. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $L(1) > L(3)$ , the rational choice here is  $\mu = 1$ .

## 4 Example: MLE, Level 1

Let  $X$  be a normal RV with unknown mean  $\mu$  and **known variance** 1, with samples

$$x_1 = 1.1; \quad x_2 = -1.1; \quad x_3 = 2; \quad x_4 = -3.$$

Suppose that you are being asked to guess if

- $\mu = 1$ ; or
- $\mu \neq 1$ . (**Notice the difference here.**)

Which one would be the most rational choice?

## 5 Answer: MLE, Level 1

For the case  $\mu = 1$ , the likelihood function is

$$\begin{aligned} L(1) &= \left(\frac{1}{2\pi}\right)^{4/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} [(1.1 - 1)^2 + \dots + (-3 - 1)^2]\right) \\ &= 5.7 \times 10^{-7}. \end{aligned}$$

For the second case  $\mu \neq 1$ , which values of  $\mu$  should we choose to substitute into  $L(\mu)$ ?

Answer: Use MLE  $\hat{\mu}$ .

- Recall that the MLE  $\hat{\mu}$  is the value that maximizes the likelihood function  $L$ ;
- Also recall that, for normal random variables,  $\hat{\mu}$  is equal to the sample mean  $\bar{x}$ .

Our sample mean here is equal to  $\bar{x} = -\frac{1}{4}$ , so the likelihood function for  $\mu \neq 1$  is

$$\begin{aligned} L\left(-\frac{1}{4}\right) &= \left(\frac{1}{2\pi}\right)^{4/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2}\left[(1.1 - (-\frac{1}{4}))^2 + \right.\right. \\ &\quad \left.\left.(-1.1 - (-\frac{1}{4}))^2 + (2 - (-\frac{1}{4}))^2 + (-3 - (-\frac{1}{4}))^2\right]\right) \\ &= 1 \times 10^{-5}. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $L(-\frac{1}{4}) > L(1)$ , the rational choice here is  $\mu \neq 1$ .



## 6 Settings: likelihood ratio tests

**Object:**  $X$  is a random variable with density function  $f_\theta$  with **unknown**  $\theta$ .

**Hypotheses:**

- $H_0$ :  $\theta$  comes from a given set  $\omega$ .
- $H_1$ :  $\theta$  does not come from  $\omega$ .

**Input:** Random samples  $X_1, \dots, X_n$  for  $X$  and significance level  $\alpha$ .

## Methodology:

- Find the value  $\hat{\theta}_0$  that maximizes the likelihood function  $L$  **among the  $\theta$ 's in given set  $\omega$ .**
- Find the value  $\hat{\theta}_1$  that maximizes the likelihood function  $L$  **among all  $\theta$ .** (This means  $\hat{\theta}_1$  is the maximum likelihood estimate.)

- Reject  $H_0$  if

$$\frac{L(\hat{\theta}_0)}{L(\hat{\theta}_1)} \leq k.$$

Do not reject  $H_0$  otherwise.

- Here  $k \in [0, 1]$  is a number chosen so that the test has significance level  $\alpha$ .

# 7 Example: likelihood ratio test, Level 1

Let  $X$  be a normal RV with unknown mean  $\mu$  and **known variance** 1, with samples

$$x_1 = 1.1; \quad x_2 = -1.1; \quad x_3 = 2; \quad x_4 = -3.$$

The hypothesis are:

- The null hypothesis  $H_0$  is  $\mu \in \{1, 2\}$ .
- The alternative hypothesis  $H_1$  is  $\mu \notin \{1, 2\}$ .

Suppose that we reject  $H_0$  if  $\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} \leq 0.3$ . Should we reject  $H_0$  or not?

# 8 Answer: likelihood ratio test, Level 1

We first compute the ratio  $\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)}$ :

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} &= \frac{\left(\frac{1}{2\pi\sigma^2}\right)^{n/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right]\right)}{\left(\frac{1}{2\pi\sigma^2}\right)^{n/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^2\right]\right)} \\ &= \frac{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right]\right)}{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^2\right]\right)}\end{aligned}$$

Now note that (BT) (write this down)

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_0)^2 &= \sum_{i=1}^n ((x_i - \bar{x}) + (\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0))^2 \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n [(x_i - \bar{x})^2 + 2(x_i - \bar{x})(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0) + (\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2] \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 + 2(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0) \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x}) + \sum_{i=1}^n (\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2 \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 + 2(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)(n\bar{x} - n\bar{x}) + n(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2 \\ &= \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 + n(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2. \end{aligned}$$

So we have (write this down)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} &= \frac{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right]\right)}{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^2\right]\right)} \\ &= \frac{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 + n(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right]\right)}{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^2\right]\right)} \end{aligned}$$

Now recall that  $\hat{\mu}_1 = \bar{x}$  (sample mean is the the MLE for normal RV).

Also note that  $n = 4$  and  $\sigma^2 = 1$ . This means that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} &= \frac{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^4 (x_i - \bar{x})^2 + 4(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right]\right)}{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^4 (x_i - \bar{x})^2\right]\right)} \\ &= \exp\left(-2(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right). \end{aligned}$$

We now compute  $\hat{\mu}_0$ .

Note that the set  $\omega$  for the null hypothesis is  $\omega = \{1, 2\}$ .

We check the value of  $L(\mu)$  for these two values

$$\begin{aligned} L(1) &= \left(\frac{1}{2\pi}\right)^{4/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} [(1.1 - 1)^2 + \dots + (-3 - 1)^2]\right) \\ &= 5.7 \times 10^{-7}; \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} L(2) &= \left(\frac{1}{2\pi}\right)^{4/2} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2} [(1.1 - 2)^2 + \dots + (-3 - 2)^2]\right) \\ &= 5.2 \times 10^{-10}. \end{aligned}$$

So the winner is  $\hat{\mu}_0 = 1$ . Hence we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} &= \exp(-2(\bar{x} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2) = \exp\left(-2\left(\frac{-1}{4} - 1\right)^2\right) \\ &= 0.04. \end{aligned}$$

This ratio is smaller than 0.3, so we reject  $H_0$ .

# 9 Example: likelihood ratio test, Level 2

Let  $X$  be a normal random variable with unknown mean  $\mu$  and **known variance**  $\sigma^2$  (**notice the difference here**).

- $H_0$  is  $\mu = \mu_0$ .
- $H_1$  is  $\mu \neq \mu_0$ . (**Notice the difference here.**)

Suppose that we reject  $H_0$  if  $\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} \leq k$ .

Determine the value of  $k$  so that the significance level of this test is equal to  $\alpha$ .



# 10 Answer: likelihood ratio test,

## Level 2

The ratio  $\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)}$  is equal to (see what you previously wrote)

$$\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} = \frac{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 + n(\bar{X} - \hat{\mu}_0)^2\right]\right)}{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \hat{\mu}_1)^2\right]\right)}$$

Now note that  $\hat{\mu}_0 = \mu_0$  since  $\omega = \{\mu_0\}$ . Also note that  $\hat{\mu}_1 = \bar{X}$  since the MLE for normal random variable is sample mean.

So we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} &= \frac{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 + n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2\right]\right)}{\exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \left[\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2\right]\right)} \\ &= \exp\left(-\frac{n}{2\sigma^2} (\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2\right). \end{aligned}$$

We then have (BT)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} &\leq k \\ \exp\left(-\frac{n}{2\sigma^2}(\bar{X}-\mu_0)^2\right) &\leq k \\ -\frac{n}{2\sigma^2}(\bar{X}-\mu_0)^2 &\leq \log k \\ \frac{(\bar{X}-\mu_0)^2}{\sigma^2/n} &\geq -2 \log k \\ \frac{|\bar{X}-\mu_0|}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}} &\geq \sqrt{-2 \log k}. \end{aligned}$$

The type I error for this test is then equal to

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha &= P\left[\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} \leq k\right] \\ \alpha &= P\left[\frac{|\bar{X}-\mu_0|}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}} \geq \sqrt{-2 \log k}\right] \end{aligned}$$

Since  $\frac{\bar{X} - \mu_0}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}}$  is a normal random variable with mean 0 and variance 1, we then have

$$\alpha = P \left[ |N(0, 1)| \geq \sqrt{-2 \log k} \right],$$

which means that

$$\sqrt{-2 \log k} = z_{\alpha/2}$$

$$-2 \log k = (z_{\alpha/2})^2$$

$$k = \exp \left( -\frac{(z_{\alpha/2})^2}{2} \right),$$

which answers the question.

**Remark 1.** In particular, the critical region for this test is

$$\begin{aligned} C &= \left\{ (X_1, \dots, X_n) \mid \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1)} \leq k \right\} \\ &= \left\{ (X_1, \dots, X_n) \mid \frac{|\bar{X} - \mu_0|}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}} \geq \sqrt{-2 \log k} \right\} \\ &= \left\{ (X_1, \dots, X_n) \mid \frac{|\bar{X} - \mu_0|}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}} \geq z_{\alpha/2} \right\}, \end{aligned}$$

which is the critical region that we have seen from Section 8.1.

# 11 Example: likelihood ratio test, Level 3

Let  $X$  be a normal random variable with unknown mean  $\mu$  and **unknown variance**  $\sigma^2$  (**notice the difference here**).

- The null hypothesis  $H_0$  is  $\mu = \mu_0, \sigma^2 \in [0, \infty)$ .
- The alternative hypothesis  $H_0$  is  $\mu \neq \mu_0, \sigma^2 \in [0, \infty)$ .

Compute the critical region for this likelihood ratio test with significance level  $\alpha$ .

# 12 Answer: likelihood ratio test, Level 3

Recall that the likelihood function for normal RV is (see what you wrote).

$$L(\mu, \sigma^2) = \left( \frac{1}{2\pi\sigma^2} \right)^{n/2} \exp \left( -\frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu)^2 \right).$$

For the null hypothesis  $H_0$ ,  $\mu = \mu_0$ ,  $\sigma^2 \in [0, \infty)$ .

The MLEs for this regime are (write this down)

$$\hat{\mu}_0 = \mu_0; \quad \hat{\sigma}_0^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu_0)^2.$$

Therefore we get

$$\begin{aligned} L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2) &= \left( \frac{1}{2\pi \hat{\sigma}_0^2} \right)^{n/2} \exp \left( -\frac{1}{2\hat{\sigma}_0^2} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu_0)^2 \right) \\ &= \left( \frac{1}{2\pi \hat{\sigma}_0^2} \right)^{n/2} \exp \left( \frac{-n}{2} \right). \end{aligned}$$

For the alternative hypothesis  $H_1$ ,  $\mu \in (-\infty, \infty)$ ,  $\sigma^2 \in [0, \infty)$ . The MLEs for this regime is (write this down)

$$\hat{\mu}_1 = \bar{X}; \quad \hat{\sigma}_1^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2.$$

(**Important**: Here we use the variance of the sample distribution, **not** the sample variance.)

Therefore we get

$$\begin{aligned} L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2) &= \left( \frac{1}{2\pi \hat{\sigma}_1^2} \right)^{n/2} \exp \left( -\frac{1}{2\hat{\sigma}_1^2} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \right) \\ &= \left( \frac{1}{2\pi \hat{\sigma}_1^2} \right)^{n/2} \exp \left( \frac{-n}{2} \right). \end{aligned}$$

Therefore the ratio  $\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)}$  is (BT)

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)} &= \frac{\left(\frac{1}{2\pi\hat{\sigma}_0^2}\right)^{n/2} \exp\left(\frac{-n}{2}\right)}{\left(\frac{1}{2\pi\hat{\sigma}_1^2}\right)^{n/2} \exp\left(\frac{-n}{2}\right)} \\
&= \left(\frac{\hat{\sigma}_1^2}{\hat{\sigma}_0^2}\right)^{n/2} \\
&= \left(\frac{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu_0)^2}\right)^{n/2} \\
&= \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu_0)^2}\right)^{n/2}.
\end{aligned}$$



Now recall (see what you wrote)

$$\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu_0)^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 + n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2,$$

so we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)} &= \left( \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \mu_0)^2} \right)^{n/2} \\ &= \left( \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2 + n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2} \right)^{n/2} \\ &= \left( \frac{1}{1 + \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}} \right)^{n/2}. \end{aligned}$$

Now note that, the likelihood ratio test is checking if

$$\frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)} \leq k.$$

This is equivalent to (BT) (write this down)

$$\begin{aligned} \left( \frac{1}{1 + \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}} \right)^{n/2} &\leq k \\ \frac{1}{1 + \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}} &\leq k^{2/n} \\ \frac{1}{k^{2/n}} &\leq 1 + \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2} \\ k^{-2/n} - 1 &\leq \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2} \\ (n - 1)(k^{-2/n} - 1) &\leq \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}. \end{aligned}$$

This is equal to

$$\frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2} \geq (n - 1)(k^{-2/n} - 1).$$

Now recall that the sample variance  $s$  is

$$s^2 = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2.$$

So our inequality becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{n(\bar{X} - \mu_0)^2}{s^2} &\geq (n-1)(k^{-2/n} - 1) \\ \frac{\sqrt{n}|\bar{X} - \mu_0|}{s} &\geq \sqrt{(n-1)(k^{-2/n} - 1)}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence the type I error for this test is

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha &= P \left[ \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)} \leq k \right] \\ &= P \left[ \frac{\sqrt{n}|\bar{X} - \mu_0|}{s} \geq \sqrt{(n-1)(k^{-2/n} - 1)} \right]. \end{aligned}$$

Since  $X$  is a normal random variable, we have

$$T := \frac{\sqrt{n}(\bar{X} - \mu_0)}{s}$$

is a t-student random variable with  $n - 1$  degrees of freedom. So we have

$$\alpha = P \left[ |T| \geq \sqrt{(n - 1)(k^{-2/n} - 1)} \right],$$

which is equivalent to

$$\begin{aligned} \sqrt{(n - 1)(k^{-2/n} - 1)} &= t_{\alpha/2}(n - 1) \\ (n - 1)(k^{-2/n} - 1) &= (t_{\alpha/2}(n - 1))^2 \\ k^{-2/n} &= \frac{(t_{\alpha/2}(n - 1))^2}{n - 1} + 1 \\ k &= \left[ \frac{(t_{\alpha/2}(n - 1))^2}{n - 1} + 1 \right]^{-n/2}, \end{aligned}$$

which is our answer.

**Remark 2.** In particular, the critical region for this test is

$$\begin{aligned}
C &= \left\{ (X_1, \dots, X_n) \mid \frac{L(\hat{\mu}_0, \hat{\sigma}_0^2)}{L(\hat{\mu}_1, \hat{\sigma}_1^2)} \leq k \right\} \\
&= \left\{ (X_1, \dots, X_n) \mid \frac{\sqrt{n} |\bar{X} - \mu_0|}{s} \geq \sqrt{(n-1)(k^{-2/n} - 1)} \right\} \\
&= \left\{ (X_1, \dots, X_n) \mid \frac{\sqrt{n} |\bar{X} - \mu_0|}{s} \geq t_{\alpha/2}(n-1) \right\},
\end{aligned}$$

which is the critical region that we have seen from Section 8.2.