



ETH Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

DYNAMIC CAUSAL MODELING

STEFAN FRÄSSLE

TRANSLATIONAL NEUROMODELING UNIT (TNU) UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH & ETH ZURICH

Methods and Models for fMRI Analysis (HS 2018)

Theoretical Session

Zurich, December 11, 2018

FROM FUNCTIONAL SEGREGATION TO FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION

localization of brain activity *functional segregation*



 u_1 $u_1 \times u_2$

"Where in the brain does my experimental manipulation have an effect?"

analysis of brain connectivity *functional integration*



https://team.inria.fr/parietal/files/2013/02/pc_dag.jpg

"How do brain regions interact with each other? How does my experimental manipulation propagate through the network?"





DIFFERENT FORMS OF BRAIN CONNECTIVITY

structural connectivity



- presence of anatomical/ physical connections
- Diffusion weighted imaging (DWI), tractography, tracer studies

adapted from: Sporns, 2007, Scholarpedia





functional connectivity



https://team.inria.fr/parietal/files/2013/02/pc_dag.jpg

- statistical dependencies between regional time series
- correlations, Independent Component Analysis (ICA)

effective connectivity



http://www.clker.com/cliparts/e/5/Q/i/e/o/brain-line-drawing-md.png

- directed influences between neuronal populations
- Dynamic causal modeling (DCM)

DYNAMIC CAUSAL MODELING



- Dynamic causal modeling (DCM) for functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data was introduced in 2003 by Karl Friston, Lee Harrison and Will Penny (NeuroImage 19:1273-1302)
- Allows effective connectivity analyses based on fMRI data

Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage





DYNAMIC CAUSAL MODELING



Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; David et al., 2006, NeuroImage



GENERATIVE MODEL



- 1. enforces mechanistic thinking: how could the data have been caused?
- 2. generate synthetic data (observations) by sampling from the prior can the model explain certain phenomena at all?
- 3. inference about model structure: formal approach to disambiguating mechanisms $\rightarrow p(m|y)$
- 4. inference about model parameters $\rightarrow p(\theta|y,m)$

Stephan et al., 2016, Front. Hum. Neurosci.; Frässle et al., in press, Wiley Interdiscip. Rev. Cogn. Sci.

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DCM FOR FMRI (OVERVIEW)



Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; Stephan et al., 2015, Neuron









Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; Stephan et al., 2008, NeuroImage

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Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; Stephan et al., 2008, NeuroImage

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DCM effective connectivity parameters are rate constants





 x_1 0.10 x_2

If region₁ \rightarrow region₂ is 0.10s⁻¹, this means that, per unit time, the increase in activity in region₂ corresponds to 10% of the current activity in region₁

Friston et al., 2003, Neurolmage







Interim summary: bilinear neuronal state equation



Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage







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HEMODYNAMIC MODEL

Neuronal dynamics only indirectly observable via hemodynamic response

1 neuronal activity1 blood flow

1 oxygenated Hb

1 T2*

fMRI signal

Huettel et al., 2004, NeuroImage





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HEMODYNAMIC MODEL

6 hemodynamic parameters:

 $\theta^h = \{\kappa, \gamma, \tau, \alpha, \rho, \varepsilon\}$

Important for model fitting, but typically of no interest for statistical inference.

Hemodynamic parameters are computed separately for each region \rightarrow region specific HRFs!

Friston et al., 2003, *NeuroImage*; Stephan et al., 2007, *NeuroImage*







BOLD SIGNAL CHANGE EQUATION







Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; Stephan et al., 2007, NeuroImage

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SIMULATIONS









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WHAT CAN DCM EXPLAIN?

WHAT CAN DCM EXPLAIN?

Example: two connected node









WHAT CAN DCM EXPLAIN?

Example: modulation of connection



$$\frac{dx}{dt} = Ax + u_2 B^{(2)} x + C u_1$$
$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & 0 \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + u_2 \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ b_{21}^{(2)} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} c_{11} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \end{bmatrix}$$







WHAT CAN DCM EXPLAIN?

Example: modulation of inhibitory self-connection









MODEL INVERSION / INFERENCE





DYNAMIC CAUSAL MODELING



Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; David et al., 2006, NeuroImage





BAYES THEOREM

Bayes theorem gives a recipe for evaluating the posterior density by combining new data (likelihood) and prior knowledge



The posterior probability of the parameters is an optimal combination of our prior knowledge and the new data that we have acquired



Reverend Thomas Bayes (1702-1761)







LIKELIHOOD FUNCTION

Assume data is normally distributed around the prediction from the dynamical model (Gaussian noise):

$$p(y(t)|\theta,m) = \mathcal{N}(y(t);g(\theta^n,\theta^h,u),\theta^\sigma)$$



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Bayes theorem gives a recipe for evaluating the posterior density by combining new data (likelihood) and prior knowledge

$$p(\theta|y,m) = \frac{p(y|\theta,m)p(\theta|m)}{p(y|m)}$$

Neuronal parameters:

- self-connections: principled (to ensure that the system is stable)
- other parameters (between-region connections, modulation, inputs): shrinkage priors

Hemodynamic parameters:

- empirical





PRIORS

Types of priors:

- Explicit priors on *model parameters* (e.g., connection strengths)
- Implicit priors on *model functional form* (e.g., system dynamics)
- Choice of "interesting" data features (e.g., regional time-series vs. ICA analysis)

Role of priors (on model parameters):

- Resolving the *ill-posedness* of the inverse problem
- Avoiding overfitting (cf. generalization error)

Impact of priors:

- On parameter posterior distributions (cf. "shrinkage to the mean" effect)
- On model evidence (cf. "Occam's razor")
- On free-energy landscape (cf. Laplace approximation)





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Reverend Thomas Bayes (1702-1761)







VARIATIONAL BAYES (VB)

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Idea: find an approximate density $q(\theta)$ that is maximally similar to the true posterior $p(\theta|y)$. This is often done by assuming a particular form for q (fixed form VB) and then optimizing its sufficient statistics.





NEGATIVE FREE ENERGY



F(q, y) is a functional with respect to the approximate posterior $q(\theta)$.

Maximizing F(q, y) is equivalent to:

- minimizing KL[q||p]
- tightening F(q, y) as a lower bound on the log model evidence

When F(q, y) is maximized, $q(\theta)$ is our best estimate of the true posterior.





The **negative free energy** represents a trade-off between the accuracy and complexity of a model:

 $F = \langle \log p(y|\theta, m) \rangle_q - \frac{KL[q(\theta)||p(\theta|m)]}{KL[q(\theta)||p(\theta|m)]}$

(expected log likelihood)

accuracy complexity (KL divergence between approximate posterior and prior)





The **negative free energy** represents a trade-off between the accuracy and complexity of a model:

 $F = \langle \log p(y|\theta, m) \rangle_q - KL[q(\theta) || p(\theta|m)]$

In contrast to "simple" criteria (e.g., AIC & BIC), the complexity term of the negative free energy accounts for parameter interdependencies and is a much richer description:

$$KL[q(\theta)||p(\theta|m)] = \frac{1}{2}\ln|C_{\theta}| - \frac{1}{2}\ln|C_{\theta|y}| + \frac{1}{2}(\mu_{\theta|y} - \mu_{\theta})^{T}C_{\theta}^{-1}(\mu_{\theta|y} - \mu_{\theta})$$

complexity **higher** the more independent prior parameters





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complexity **higher** the more dependent posterior parameters





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complexity **higher** the more posterior deviates from prior mean







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The **negative free energy** as a lower bound approximation to the log model evidence is the current gold standard for Bayesian model selection (BMS).

Generative modeling: comparing competing hypotheses about the mechanisms underlying observed data.

- a priori definition of hypothesis set (model space) is crucial
- determine the most plausible hypothesis (model), given the data

Note: **Model selection is not equal to model validation** and only allows to compare the relative goodness of competing hypotheses within the pre-specified model space!

 \rightarrow Model validation requires external criteria (external to the measured data).





But: There is an infinite number of possible models for a given dataset. Wouldn't we need to search the entire model space and test all possible models?

No! With more models included in the model space, the risk of overfitting (at the level of models) increases, too.



Ghahramani, 2004





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Solutions:

- regularization: definition of model space (i.e., specify priors p(m) over models)
- family-level Bayesian model selection
- Bayesian model averaging (BMA)

Ghahramani, 2004





NOTE: GLM VS. DCM

DCM tries to model the same phenomena (i.e., local BOLD responses) as a GLM, just in a different way (via connectivity and its modulations).

No activation detected by a GLM \rightarrow no motivation to include this region in a deterministic DCM.

However, a stochastic DCM (that incorporates a noise term in the neuronal state equation and can thus accounts for endogenous fluctuations) could be applied despite the absence of a local activation.





Stephan, 2004, J. Anat.





APPLICATIONS





Stimuli: radially moving dots were presented.

Pre-scanning: 5x30s trials with 5 speed changes. Subjects were asked to detect the change in radial velocity.

Scanning: No actual speed changes. Conditions:

- F: fixation
- S: static dots
- M: moving dots
- A: attend moving dots



Büchel and Friston, 1997, Cerebral Cortex; Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage





Single-subject results: BOLD activation patterns



Linear contrast: attention > no attention

Büchel and Friston, 1997, Cerebral Cortex; Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage







V1 V5 SPC

Model space definition - which models can explain the data (Quiz)?



Büchel and Friston, 1997, Cerebral Cortex; Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage

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attention 0.10 PPC 0.26 stim $\sqrt{5}$ motion



Single-subject results: DCM effective connectivity

Büchel and Friston, 1997, Cerebral Cortex; Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; Stephan et al., 2008, NeuroImage





APPLICATIONS OF BMS AND BMA

Individuals with different forms of colorgrapheme synesthesia were tested and effective connectivity in the relevant neural circuits was assessed using DCM.

Bayesian model selection (BMS) as a formal approach to differential diagnosis in clinical applications

(Note: Here, different forms of synesthesia were tested. This is not a clinical condition, but simply a specific cognitive trait)

PROJECTORS ASSOCIATORS AB AB -AB А В SPL SPL SG SG fixed connection modulatory input driving input SG LSA LSA **V4** SG CG CG Bottom-up Top-down LSA to V4 D Ε LSA to SPL All p(r_{BII}>0.5|y) = 0.756 14 (AU) Proj p(r_{RII}>0.5|y) = 0.996 Asso p(r_{TD}>0.5|y) = 0.981 Density -0.2 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 Modulatory conn. (Hz) -0.2 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 Modulatory conn. (Hz) ity Probabi ^o V4 to SPL SPL to V4 (AU) 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 r_{TD} (= 1−r_{BU}) -0.2 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.2 0.4 0.0 Modulatory conn. (Hz)

Modulatory conn. (Hz)

Van Leeuwen et al., 2011, J. Neurosci.





GENERATIVE EMBEDDING: APHASIA

Dissociating aphasic patients (N=11) and healthy controls (N=26)



Schofield et al., 2012, J. Neurosci.; Brodersen et al., 2011, PLoS Comp. Biol.



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GENERATIVE EMBEDDING: APHASIA

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GENERATIVE EMBEDDING: SCHIZOPHRENIA

Detecting subgroups of patients in schizophrenia (N=41)



Deserno et al., 2012, J. Neurosci.; Brodersen et al., 2014, NeuroImage: Clinical

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All Models are Wrong

BUT SOME ARE USEFUL

George Edward Pelham Box (1919-2013)







SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW definition of model space inference on model structure or inference on model parameters? inference on inference on individual models or model space partition? parameters of an optimal model or parameters of all models? optimal model structure assumed optimal model structure assumed comparison of model **BMA** to be identical across subjects? to be identical across subjects? families using FFX or RFX BMS yes no yes no RFX BMS FFX BMS RFX BMS FFX BMS FFX analysis of RFX analysis of parameter estimates parameter estimates (e.g. BPA) (e.g. t-test, ANOVA) Stephan et al., 2010, NeuroImage





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DYNAMIC CAUSAL MODELING

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Methods and Models for fMRI Analysis (HS 2018)

Practical Session

Zurich, December 11, 2018

EVOLUTION OF DCM

Different variants and extensions within SPM

- bilinear vs. nonlinear
- single-state vs. two-state (per region)
- deterministic vs. stochastic
- time-series vs. cross-spectra

Different variants and extensions **outside** SPM

- biologically plausible hemodynamic models
- DCM for layered BOLD
- Global optimization schemes for model inversion
- regression DCM (rDCM)









Friston et al., 2003, NeuroImage; Stephan et al., 2009, NeuroImage; Marreiros et al., 2008, NeuroImage; Daunizeau et al., 2009, NeuroImage; Friston et al., 2014, NeuroImage; Havlicek et al., 2017, NeuroImage; Heinzle et al., 2016, NeuroImage; Sengupta et al, 2015, NeuroImage; Lomakina et al., 2015, NeuroImage; Aponte et al., 2015, J. Neurosci. Meth.; Friston et al., 2016, NeuroImage; Raman et al., 2016, J. Neurosci. Meth; Frässle et al., 2017, 2018, NeuroImage





DATASET: BUTTON PRESSES

Experimental Paradigm:

Stimuli: Arrows pointing to the left or right.

Scanning: Button presses with respective hand.

- F: fixation
- LH: button press with left hand
- RH: button press with right hand

6 LH- and 6 RH-blocks (10 button presses per block) Each block lasted roughly 14 s TR = 2.2 s, TE = 36 ms







RESULTS: BOLD ACTIVITY

Exemplary single-subject (*Sub003*) results:

right M1 (left hand > right hand)

left M1

(right hand > left hand)

V1

(left + right hand > baseline)







p < 0.001, uncorrected





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Ingredients for DCM analysis:



- Specific hypothesis/question
- Model: based on hypothesis
- Time-series: extract from the SPM
- Inputs: experimental conditions from the design matrix





Recipe for DCM analysis (using the GUI in SPM):

- 1. extract the time series from all regions of interest (eigenvariate of all voxels in the regions of interest)
- 2. specify the model according to your hypotheses about the underlying network architecture





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Is there interhemispheric inhibition during motor responses?

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Recipe for DCM analysis (using the GUI in SPM):

- 1. extract the time series from all regions of interest (eigenvariate of all voxels in the regions of interest)
- 2. specify the model according to your hypotheses about the underlying network architecture
- 3. estimate the model
- 4. repeat steps 2 and 3 for all models in your model space
- 5. perform Bayesian model selection (BMS) or Bayesian model averaging (BMA)
- 6. inspect posterior parameter estimates of effective connectivity parameters (A, B, and C-matrix)





Bayesian model selection and Bayesian model averaging results:





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

Stefan Frässle, PhD

Translational Neuromodeling Unit (TNU) University of Zurich & ETH Zurich

Email: stefanf@biomed.ee.ethz.ch Phone: +41 44 634 91 14 Stefan_fraessle



