

Contents

Preface: Brief history of the Lehmann Symposia: Origins, goals and motivation <i>Javier Rojo</i>	v
Contributors to this volume	vii
Scientific program	viii
Partial list of participants	xii
Acknowledgement of referees' services	xix
PAPERS	
Testing	
On likelihood ratio tests <i>Erich L. Lehmann</i>	1
Student's t-test for scale mixture errors <i>Gábor J. Székely</i>	9
Multiple Testing	
Recent developments towards optimality in multiple hypothesis testing <i>Juliet Popper Shaffer</i>	16
On stepdown control of the false discovery proportion <i>Joseph P. Romano and Azeem M. Shaikh</i>	33
An adaptive significance threshold criterion for massive multiple hypotheses testing <i>Cheng Cheng</i>	51
Philosophy	
Frequentist statistics as a theory of inductive inference <i>Deborah G. Mayo and D. R. Cox</i>	77
Where do statistical models come from? Revisiting the problem of specification <i>Aris Spanos</i>	98
Transformation Models, Proportional Hazards	
Modeling inequality and spread in multiple regression <i>Rolf Aaberge, Steinar Bjerve and Kjell Doksum</i>	120
Estimation in a class of semiparametric transformation models <i>Dorota M. Dabrowska</i>	131
Bayesian transformation hazard models <i>Gousheng Yin and Joseph G. Ibrahim</i>	170

Copulas and Decoupling

- Characterizations of joint distributions, copulas, information, dependence and decoupling, with applications to time series**
Victor H. de la Peña, Rustam Ibragimov and Shaturgun Sharakhmetov 183

Regression Trees

- Regression tree models for designed experiments**
Wei-Yin Loh 210

Competing Risks

- On competing risk and degradation processes**
Nozer D. Singpurwalla 229

- Restricted estimation of the cumulative incidence functions corresponding to competing risks**
Hammou El Barmi and Hari Mukerjee 241

Robustness

- Comparison of robust tests for genetic association using case-control studies**
Gang Zheng, Boris Freidlin and Joseph L. Gastwirth 253

Multiscale Stochastic Processes

- Optimal sampling strategies for multiscale stochastic processes**
Vinay J. Ribeiro, Rudolf H. Riedi and Richard G. Baraniuk 266

Asymptotics

- The distribution of a linear predictor after model selection: Unconditional finite-sample distributions and asymptotic approximations**
Hannes Leeb 291

- Local asymptotic minimax risk bounds in a locally asymptotically mixture of normal experiments under asymmetric loss**
Debasis Bhattacharya and A. K. Basu 312

Density Estimation

- On moment-density estimation in some biased models**
Robert M. Mnatsakanov and Frits H. Ruymgaart 322

- A note on the asymptotic distribution of the minimum density power divergence estimator**
Sergio F. Juárez and William R. Schucany 334

Brief history of the Lehmann Symposia: Origins, goals and motivation

The idea of the Lehmann Symposia as platforms to encourage a revival of interest in fundamental questions in theoretical statistics, while keeping in focus issues that arise in contemporary interdisciplinary cutting-edge scientific problems, developed during a conversation that I had with Victor Perez Abreu during one of my visits to Centro de Investigación en Matemáticas (CIMAT) in Guanajuato, Mexico. Our goal was and has been to showcase relevant theoretical work to encourage young researchers and students to engage in such work.

The First Lehmann Symposium on Optimality took place in May of 2002 at Centro de Investigación en Matemáticas in Guanajuato, Mexico. A brief account of the Symposium has appeared in Vol. 44 of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics series of Lecture Notes and Monographs. The volume also contains several works presented during the First Lehmann Symposium. All papers were refereed. The program and a picture of the participants can be found on-line at the website <http://www.stat.rice.edu/lehmann/1st-Lehmann.html>.

The Second Lehmann Symposium on Optimality was held from May 19–May 22, 2004 at Rice University. There were close to 175 participants in the Symposium. A partial list and a photograph of participants, as well as the details of the scientific program, are provided in the next few pages. All scientific activities took place in Duncan Hall in the School of Engineering. Most of the plenary and invited speakers agreed to be videotaped and their talks may be accessed by visiting the following website: <http://webcast.rice.edu/webcast.php?action=details&event=408>. All papers presented in this volume were refereed, and one third of submitted papers were rejected.

At the time of this writing, plans are underway to hold the Third Lehmann Symposium at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute during May of 2007.

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Finally, thanks go the Statistics Department at Rice University for facilitating my participation in these activities.

May 15th, 2006
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