

SISCR Module 7
Part IV:
Notes on Combining Biomarkers
and Developing Risk Models

Kathleen Kerr, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Biostatistics
University of Washington

Caveat

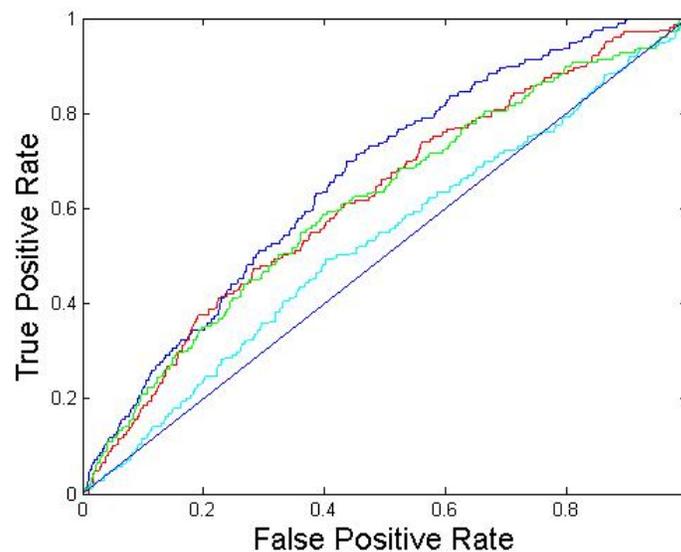
- This set of material should provide you with some guidance, but will not provide you with a recipe.

A shared experience

- Investigators interested in predicting a binary outcome D have a collection of modestly predictive biomarkers
- They combine the markers together with logistic regression. This results in...
- ... a modestly predictive combination

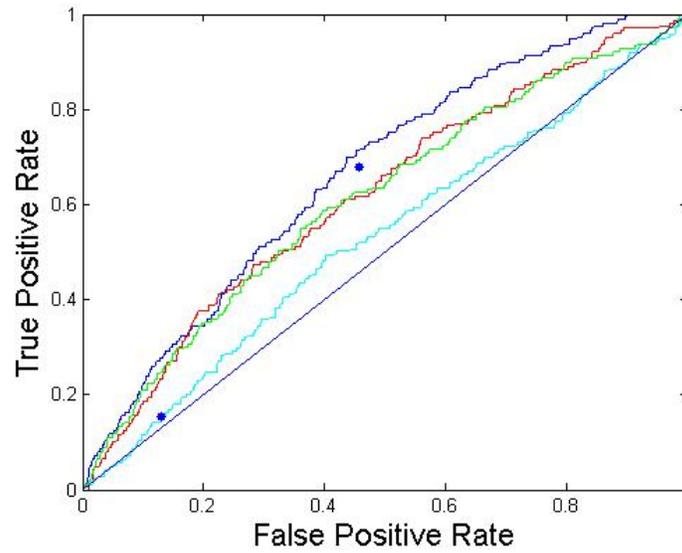
403

Framingham risk factors individually...



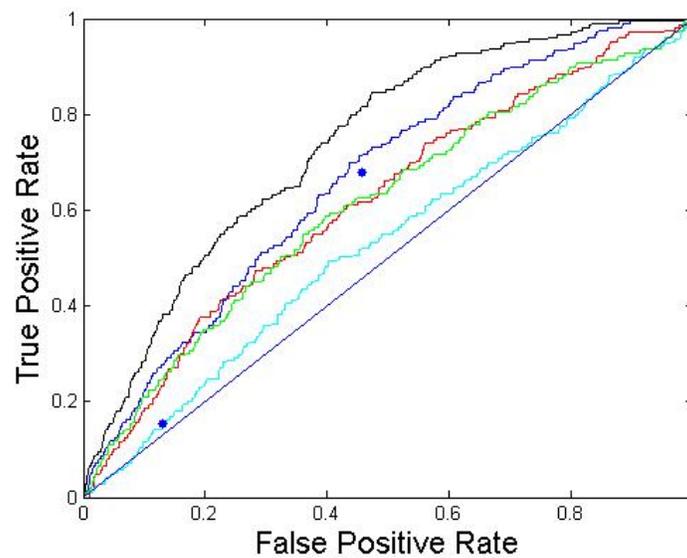
404

Framingham risk factors individually...



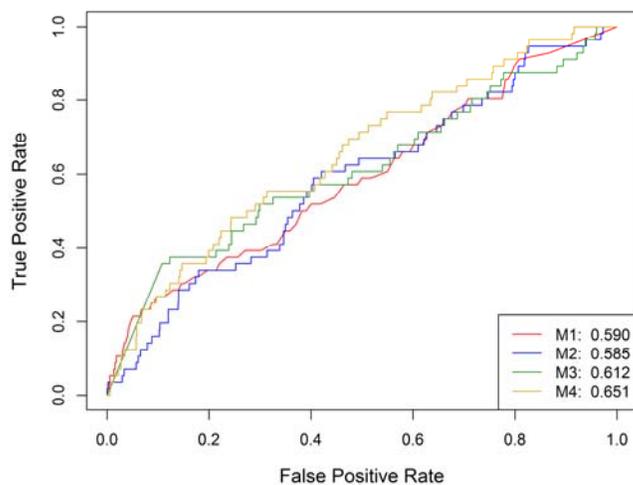
405

Framingham risk factors in combination



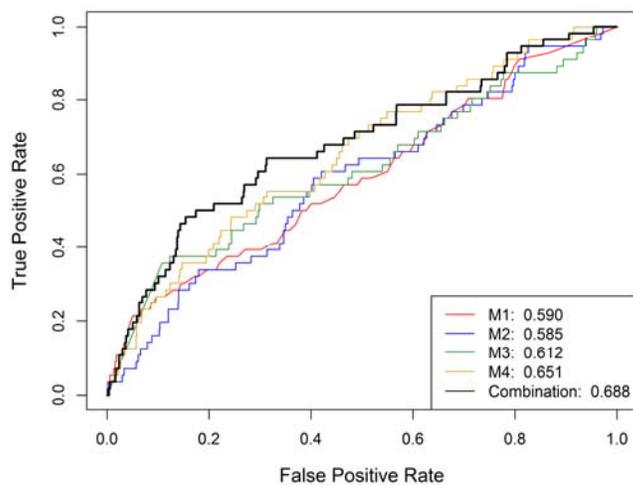
406

AKI biomarkers individually...



407

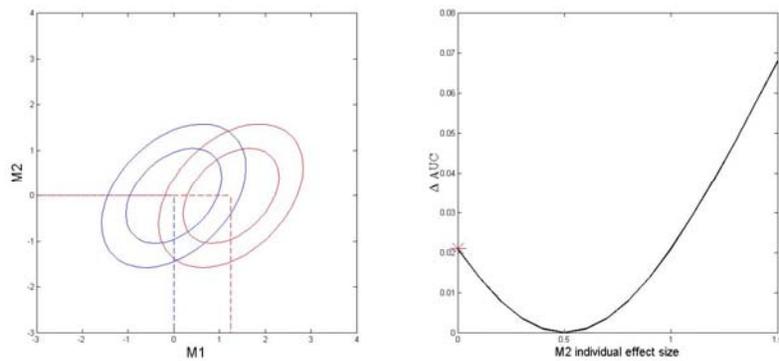
AKI biomarkers in combination



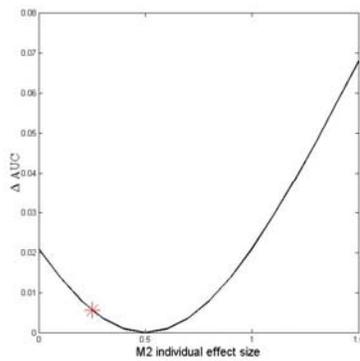
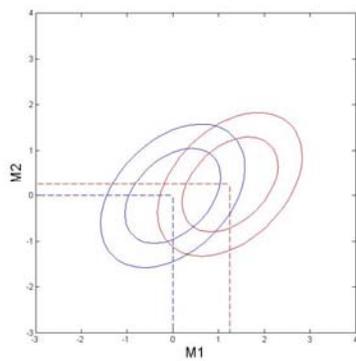
408

- The previous examples used linear combinations to combine predictors
- Is the problem that we don't know the right way to combine markers?
- Let's return to our BiNormal Model

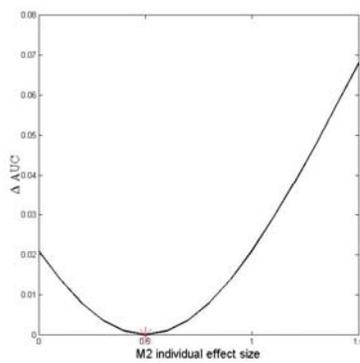
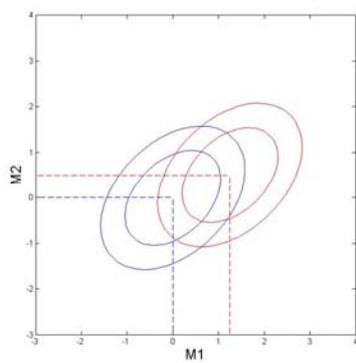
409



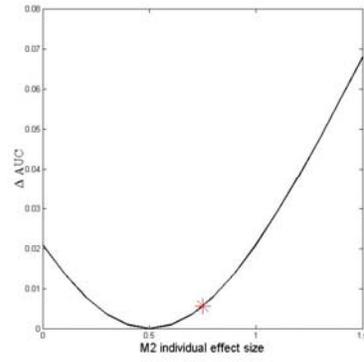
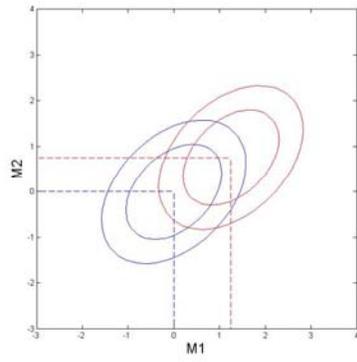
410



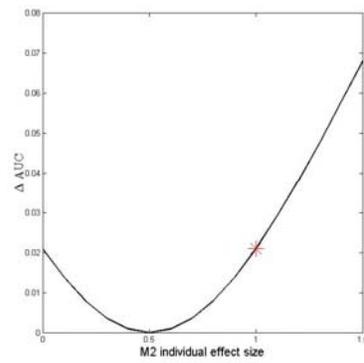
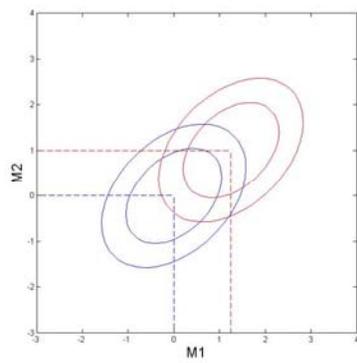
411



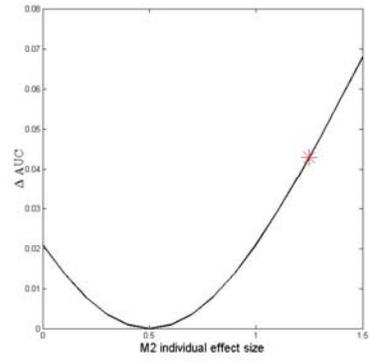
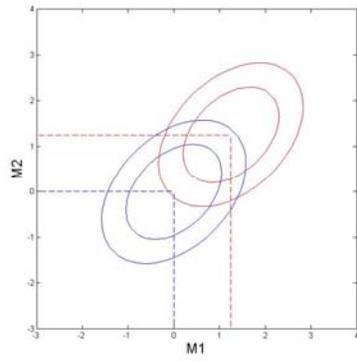
412



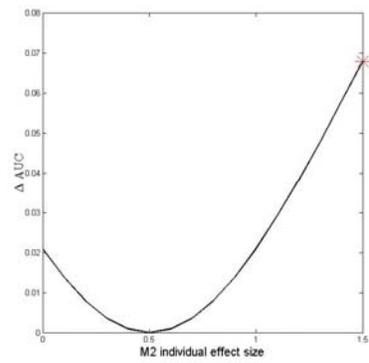
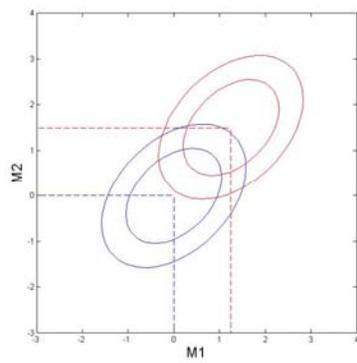
413



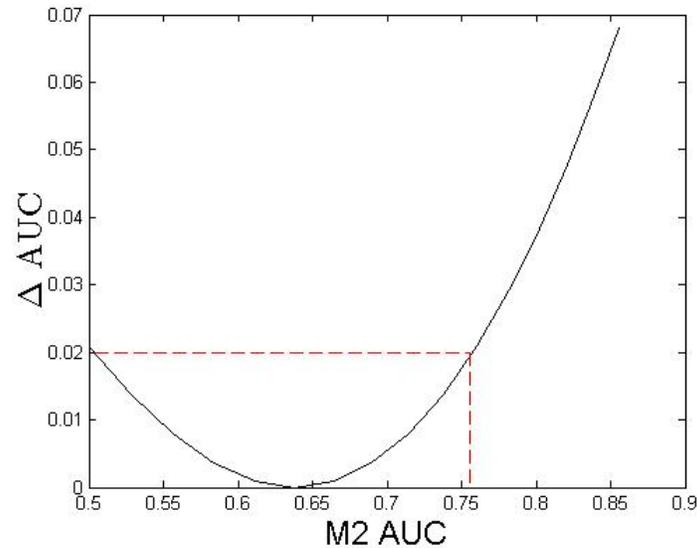
414



415



416



417

Lessons from the example:

- A marker with no predictive capacity by itself can have positive incremental value.
- Incremental value is **not** a monotone function of marginal predictive capacity.
- To get large incremental value, we may need new biomarkers that are nearly as strong as existing markers.

418

Observations about the example:

- In the example, the true risk scores are known theoretically and exactly
 - $\text{risk}(D | M1)$
 - $\text{risk}(D | M2)$
 - $\text{risk}(D | M1, M2)$
- In particular, we are not *estimating* $\text{risk}(D | M1, M2)$.
- Conclusion: “better methods for combining biomarkers” is not what is lacking in this example

419

Lessons from Machine Learning

- Lim et al (2000) compared 33 classification algorithms on 32 datasets
 - 22 decision tree-building algorithms
 - 9 statistical algorithms
 - 2 neural network algorithms
- The best performing algorithm “was not statistically different” from 20 other algorithms.
- Logistic regression came in second

420

Lessons from Machine Learning

- There is no universally “optimal” way of combining biomarkers
 - For every method, there is probably some data structure for which it is optimal.

421

Lessons from Statistics and Machine Learning

- Different methods are optimal for different data structures, so should we try out lots of methods?
 - We should worry about “model selection” bias
 - If we try out lots of methods on our data and choose the best, we will have biased estimates of model performance without special methods
 - For modestly sized datasets in biomedicine, choose something sensible and move on.

422

Recent efforts to provide reporting standards and guidelines for publications reporting new risk models: TRIPOD and RiGoR

Annals of Internal Medicine RESEARCH AND REPORTING METHODS

Transparent Reporting of a multivariable prediction model for Individual Prognosis Or Diagnosis (TRIPOD): Explanation and Elaboration

Karel G.M. Moons, PhD; Douglas G. Altman, DSc; Johannes B. Reitsma, MD, PhD; John P.A. Ioannidis, MD, DSc; Petra Macaskill, PhD; Ewout W. Steyerberg, PhD; Andrew J. Vickers, PhD; David F. Ransohoff, MD; and Gary S. Collins, PhD

(TRIPOD co-published in 11 journals)

Kerr et al. *Biomarker Research* (2015) 3:2
DOI 10.1186/s40364-014-0027-7



REVIEW

Open Access

RiGoR: reporting guidelines to address common sources of bias in risk model development

Kathleen F Kerr^{1*}, Allison Meisner¹, Heather Thiessen-Philbrook², Steven G Coca³ and Chirag R Parikh⁴

TRIPOD

- Response to common problems with risk models presented in the literature
- In some areas many risk models are being developed (diabetes, prostate cancer), making it challenging for clinicians to decide which one to use.
- This problem is exacerbated by poor reporting.
 - The existence of existing models not acknowledged, new model not compared to existing models
 - Failure to provide information on the actual model (!)
- <https://www.tripod-statement.org/>

RiGoR

- Similar effort to TRIPOD
- Focus is addressing possible sources of bias that can arise in risk model development
- Various terms are used to describe these biases
 - optimistic bias
 - overoptimistic bias
 - overfitting bias
 - selection bias
 - parameter uncertainty bias (Steyerberg)
 - model uncertainty bias (Steyerberg)
- Better to have terms that are descriptive and specific

425

- The RiGoR paper proposes the terms “resubstitution bias” and “model-selection bias” for two sources of bias that commonly arise in risk model development

426

Resubstitution bias

- If the same data are used to fit a risk model and evaluate its performance, the evaluation will be biased in the “optimistic” direction
 - The process of applying a model to the dataset used to fit the model has been called “resubstitution”, hence our name for this source of bias
 - Fairly extensive set of methods exist to correct for this bias when evaluating a risk model
 - bootstrapping
 - cross-validation
 - Harrell, *Regression Modeling Strategies* text and `rms` R package: “optimism-corrected AUC” etc
 - R demo

427

Model-selection bias

- If we pre-specify the exact form for our prediction model, and use the data only to estimate model parameters, then only resubstitution bias is a concern
- More likely we used the data to help us choose our model
 - transformations of our variables
 - what variables to include in the model
 - form of the model (square terms, interaction terms)
- Even if we correct for resubstitution bias in our evaluation of the final model, we can still have model-selection bias

428

Model-selection bias

- Methods here are less-developed
- If using bootstrapping or cross-validation, a common practice is to incorporate model-selection into the procedure
 - not entirely clear how well this works
 - requires a completely algorithmic method of model-selection
 - note that it doesn't actually assess the final, fitted model

429

Sample-splitting

- Randomly split the data into a training set and a test set (often 50-50, or 2/3-1/3)
 - all model development on the training set
 - when the final model is “locked down”, evaluate its performance on the test set
 - addresses both resubstitution bias and model-selection bias
- Criticized for its statistical inefficiency
 - only using a fraction of the data to build/train your model
 - still, if you have lots of data this might be the best way to go

430

Sample-splitting

- In order for sample-splitting to provide an unbiased assessment of model performance, you get “one look” at the test data
- Must “lock down” one or a few models to evaluate on the test data
- If you evaluate a model on the test data, then revisit the training data to try to come up with a better model, you are no longer getting an unbiased assessment
 - Now the test data are informing model development

431

Internal vs. External Validation

- All of the methods just discussed are methods of “internal” model validation
- “external” validation is a more challenging and more important hurdle: how does the model perform on a new sample of data from the appropriate clinical population?

432

One Method for Correcting for Resubstitution Bias

- “optimism-correct estimate of model performance”
- Harrell text: “bias-corrected or overfitting-corrected estimate of predictive accuracy”
- Illustrated in R Demo

433

One Method for Correcting for Resubstitution Bias

1. Fit the (pre-specified) model (call it M) and calculate its performance on the same dataset.
– often called the “apparent performance” of M
2. Draw a bootstrap sample of size n . Re-fit the model to the bootstrap sample, get M^* .
3. Evaluate M^* on both the original dataset and the bootstrap dataset used to get M^* . The difference between these is the estimate of optimism.
4. Repeat steps 2-3 many times. The average of the estimated optimisms across many bootstrap samples is the estimate of optimism. Subtract the estimated optimism from the apparent estimate of performance.

434

Summary

- There is no general “optimal” way to build a prediction model
- Logistic regression has been observed to work well in lots of settings
 - NB: need special methods for high-dimensional settings, not addressed here
- The variable that is most predictive on its own will not necessarily offer the most improvement to an existing risk model
- To improve upon an existing risk model we should not necessarily seek markers that are independent of existing markers

435

Summary

- Risk models are often poorly reported in the literature. Some recently-proposed reporting standards are attempts to improve the situation (TRIPOD, RiGoR)
- Beware of optimistic biases in risk model development: resubstitution bias and model-selection bias
 - There are plenty of other opportunities for biases to enter a study, e.g. selection of cases and controls

436

