

L5: Bayesian Inference

Jan 21, 2026

FODA

Jeff M. Phillips



Recall Bayes' Rule

$$Pr(M|D) =$$

$$\frac{\overset{\text{compute} = \text{likelihood}}{P(D|M)} \cdot \overset{\text{given} = \text{prior}}{P_r(M)}}{\underset{\text{often ignore}}{P_r(D)}}$$

Cracked windshield

• Discrete models Ω_M

Height

• Continuous model Ω_M

only likelihood, no prior
 $\rightarrow$ Normal

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

$$\underline{P_r(M|D)}$$

which model
is most likely
given data observed.

$$\propto \underline{P_r(D|M)} \cdot \underline{P_r(M)}$$

prop to

$\propto$ $\equiv$ proportional to

$$h(x) \propto C \cdot g(x)$$

if $h(x) = C \cdot g(x) \quad \forall x$
for some constant C .

Continuous

$P(m|D)$
posterior

$$\propto f(D|m) \cdot \pi(m)$$

likelihood

prior

when

$$D = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$$

$$f(D|m) = \prod_{i=1}^n g(x_i|m)$$

$$x_i \sim \mathcal{Q}$$

iid
independent

unbiased
distribution

Prior

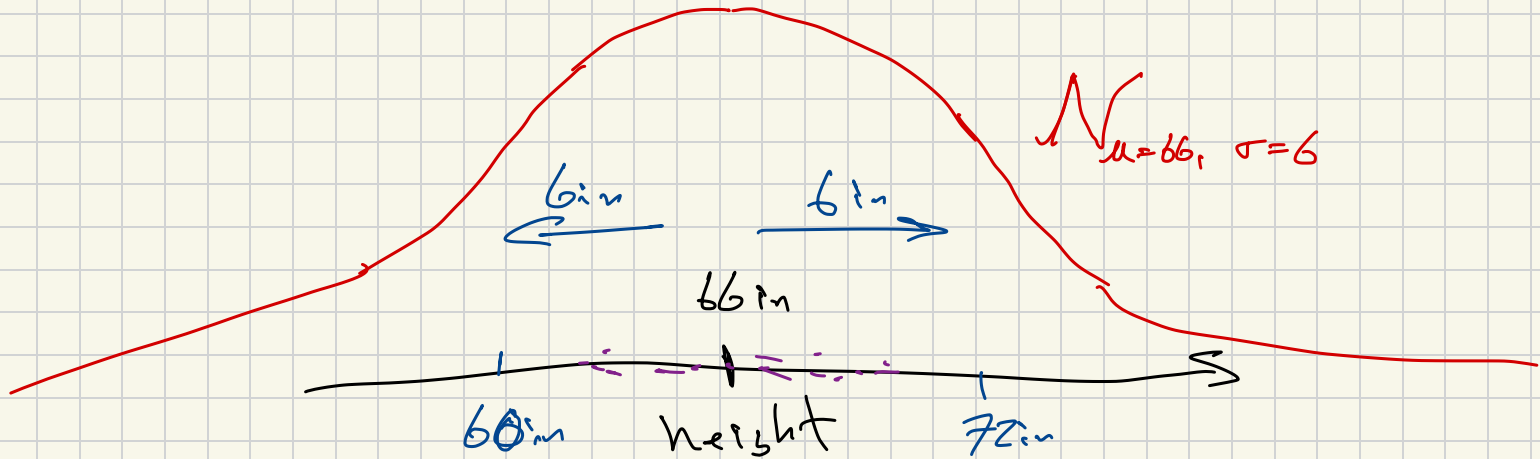
$$\pi(m) = \mathcal{N}_{66,6}$$

roughly 66 inches

$\sim \pm 6$ inches

$$\pi(m) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma} \exp\left(-\frac{(u - m)^2}{\sigma^2}\right)$$

guess average height of UoU student.



Data + prior

$$\pi(\mu) = \mathcal{N}_{66, 6}$$

inches

likelihood $\rightarrow$ maximum likelihood estimator MLE

$$D = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\} \in \mathbb{R} \quad \text{Observed / not?}$$

$$\text{MLE} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i = 5.5 \text{ ?}$$

pred. $\Rightarrow 66$ inches

Prior $\pi(m) = N_{66, 6}$

observed data $D = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$ independent

likelihood $f(D|m) = \prod_{i=1}^n g(x_i|m)$

$$g(x|m) = N_{m, \sigma=2}$$

posterior $p(m|D) \propto f(D|m) \cdot \pi(m)$

$$\propto \left[\prod_{i=1}^n g(x_i|m) \right] \cdot \pi(m)$$

$$\ln(p(m|D)) \propto \ln\left(\left[\prod_{i=1}^n g(x_i|m)\right] \cdot \pi(m)\right) + C$$

log-posterior

$$\propto \sum_{i=1}^n \ln(g(x_i|m)) + \ln(\pi(m)) + C$$

$$\propto \sum_{i=1}^n \left[\frac{-(x_i - m)^2}{2\sigma^2} + \cancel{\ln\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi} \cdot \sigma}\right)} \right] + \frac{-(bb-m)^2}{2\sigma^2} + C$$

$$\propto - \left(\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - m)^2 + \frac{1}{q} (bb - m)^2 \right) + C$$

goal MAD



$$m^* = \underset{m \in \mathbb{R}_m}{\operatorname{argmin}} \quad q \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - m)^2 + (bb - m)^2$$

- 1. weighted average
- 2. make q copies each data x_i

Change prior

$$N_{bb, \sigma=0.01}$$

MAP

$$\rightarrow m^* = \underset{m}{\operatorname{argmin}}$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - m)^2 + 400 (bb - m)^2$$