Functions of Random Variables

More Probability Theory

Using the Distribution Function

Let there be a random variable X with a known distribution function $F_X(x)$, the density function for the random variable $Y = g(X)$ can be found with the following steps

1. Find the region of Y in the space of X, find $g^{-1}(y)$
2. Find the region of $Y \leq y$
3. Find $F_Y(y) = P(Y \leq y)$ using the probability density function of X over region $Y \leq y$
4. Find $f_Y(y)$ by differentiating $F_Y(y)$

Example 1

Let X have the following probability density function:

$$f_X(x) = \begin{cases} 2x & 0 \leq x \leq 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Find the probability density function of $Y = 3X - 1$?

Using the PDF

Let there be a random variable X with a known distribution function $F_X(x)$, if the random variable $Y = g(X)$ is either increasing or decreasing, than the probability density function can be found as

$$f_Y(y) = f_X\{g^{-1}(y)\} \left| \frac{dg^{-1}(y)}{dy} \right|$$

Example 2

Let X have the following probability density function:

$$f_X(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{3}{2}x^2 + x & 0 \leq y \leq 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Find the probability density function of $Y = 5 - (X/2)$?

Using the MGF

Using the uniqueness property of Moment Generating Functions, for a random variable X with a known distribution function $F_X(x)$ and random variable $Y = g(X)$, the distribution of Y can be found by:

1. Find the moment generating function of Y, $M_Y(t)$.
2. Compare $M_Y(t)$, with known moment generating functions. If $M_Y(t) = M_V(t)$, for all values t, them Y and V have identical distributions.

Example 3

Let X follow a normal distribution with mean μ and variance σ^2. Find the distribution of $Z = \frac{X-\mu}{\sigma}$.

Example 4

Let Z follow a standard normal distribution with mean 0 and variance 1. Find the distribution of $Y = Z^2$