

Survival Prediction Using Gene Expression Data

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Abstract

This document describes applications of R package **bujar** for predicting survival in diffuse large B cell lymphoma treated with chemotherapy plus Rituximab using gene expression data.

Keywords: survival, Buckley-James regression, prediction, boosting, variable selection.

1. Introduction

Researchers have been interested in predicting survival in diffuse large B cell lymphoma (DLBCL) treated with chemotherapy. We re-evaluate clinical and microarray data in [Lenz et al. \(2008\)](#). Data from two treatment plans were collected: CHOP and R-CHOP. CHOP is a combination chemotherapy with cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine and prednisone. The current gold standard includes rituxima immunotherapy in addition to the chemotherapy (R-CHOP). It was interesting to identify genes that predict survival among patients who received CHOP also retain their prognostic power among patients who received R-CHOP. Data from 181 CHOP patients (training data) are used to build predictive models and data from 233 R-CHOP patients (test data) are used to validate the models. Due to the nature of high-dimensional data with 54675 probe sets or covariates, we first conduct a pre-selection procedure on the training data. This procedure filters out genes with lower variations if a sample variance for a gene was smaller than the 10th percentile for that gene. Afterwards we have 3833 remaining probe sets which were stored in the R package **bujar** ([Wang 2015](#)). Test data with the same remaining genes is used for validation.

One of the challenges is that we have right censored data, as often occurred in survival data analysis. Although proportional-hazards regression is a popular option, we focus on Buckley-James (BJ) regression for high-dimensional data proposed by [Wang and Wang \(2010\)](#). Essentially, BJ regression iteratively imputes the censored survival outcomes using the conditional expectation obtained from the current estimates, and the imputed survival outcomes are re-fitted with regression techniques, which in turn lead to different BJ predictive models depend on what regression model is chosen. We evaluate BJ boosting algorithms and BJ penalized regression implemented in **bujar**. To avoid overfitting, predictive modeling typically requires tuning parameter(s) selection. Tuning parameter is selected by data-driven cross-validation, unless otherwise specified. However, if twin boosting is conducted, the boosting iteration number is fixed in the second round of boosting. The analysis results can be different from [Wang and Wang \(2010\)](#) for two reasons. First, computer codes have been changed for BJ boost-

ing with componentwise least squares or smoothing splines as base learner. In the current implementation since version 0.1-10, every BJ iteration uses the optimal boosting iteration obtained from the last BJ iteration if tuning parameter is selected. The change results in more sparse variable selection and also consistent with BJ boosting with trees as base learner. Second, BJ boosting (not twin boosting) with trees involves an internal random mechanism for tree model building. In the current implementation since version 0.1-10, a new parameter `rng` in function `bujar` can be used for reproducible results.

```
R> library("bujar")
R> data("chop")
R> data("rchop")
R> ###censoring rate in the CHOP data
R> sum(chop$status==0)/nrow(chop)

[1] 0.4199

R> rchop <- subset(rchop, select=colnames(rchop)%in% colnames(chop))
R> chop$survtime <- chop$survtime + 1 ### add 1 for log-transformation
```

2. BJ Boosting with Linear Regression

2.1. BJ boosting with componentwise least squares (BJ-LS)

```
R> set.seed(123)
R> res.lin <- bujar(y=log(chop[,1]), cens=chop[,2], x=chop[,-(1:2)], tuning=TRUE,
  cv=TRUE, mstop=1000)
R> ###number of genes selected with BJ-LS
R> sum(res.lin$xselect==1)

[1] 27

R> coef.bj <- coef(res.lin)
R> ###estimated non-zero coefficients (only list 10)
R> coef.bj[abs(coef.bj)>0][1:10]
```

(Intercept)	x1553499_s_at	x1555939_at	x1558813_at	x1558999_x_at	x1561016_at
-0.41908	0.01159	0.01139	0.01112	-0.04109	-0.02474
x1562727_at	x1565740_at	x1565861_at	x1568732_at		
-0.01287	0.02801	0.01078	0.03484		

```
R> library("survival")
R> cutyear <- 3
```

```

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.lin, newx=rchop[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff

```

Call:

```
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)
```

	N	Observed	Expected	(O-E) ² /E	(O-E) ² /V
group=high	33	16	6.25	15.21	17.2
group=low	200	44	53.75	1.77	17.2

Chisq= 17.2 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 3.45e-05

```

R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",
  lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))

```

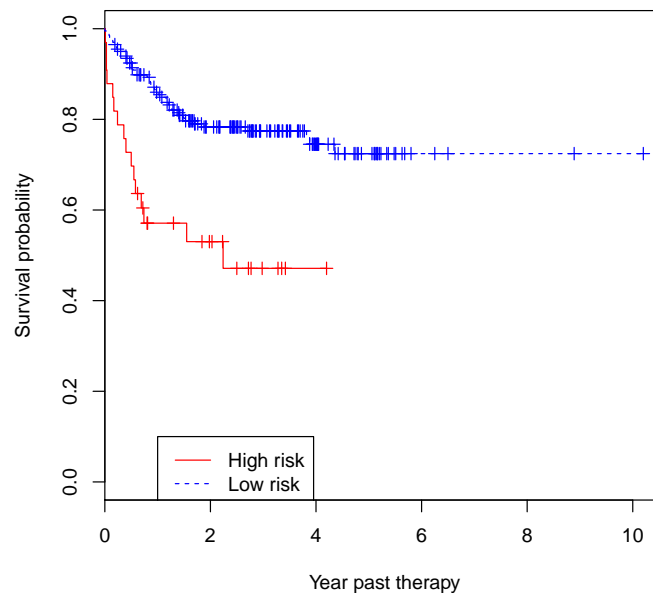


Figure 1: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for BJ-LS regression.

2.2. BJ twin boosting with componentwise least squares

```
R> res.lin2 <- bujar(y=log(chop[,1]), cens=chop[,2], x=chop[,-(1:2)], tuning=TRUE,
  cv=FALSE, mstop=1000, twin=TRUE, mstop2=100)
R> ### number of genes selected with BJ-LS
R> sum(res.lin2$xselect==1)

[1] 10

R> coef.bj <- coef(res.lin2)
R> coef.bj[abs(coef.bj)>0]

(Intercept) 1558999_x_at 1561016_at 1562727_at 1568732_at 1569344_a_at
-0.649229 -0.129651 -0.085982 -0.046537 0.153564 0.008244
212713_at 229839_at 237797_at 242758_x_at 244346_at
0.044846 0.128520 0.210326 0.141115 0.124829

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.lin2, newx=rchop[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff

Call:
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)

          N Observed Expected (O-E)^2/E (O-E)^2/V
group=high 65      24      15      5.45      7.32
group=low  168     36     45      1.81      7.32

Chisq= 7.3 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 0.00684
```

```

R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",
      lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))

```

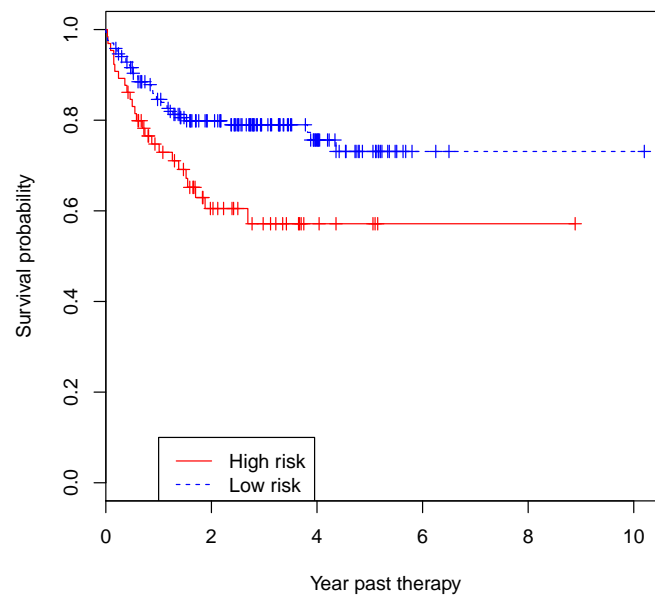


Figure 2: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for twin BJ-LS regression.

To reduce computing burden for other modeling methods, we adopted a supervised gene screening to select the top 100 probe sets based on univariate BJ regression.

```
R> library("rms")
R> res <- rep(NA, ncol(chop))
R> for(i in 3:ncol(chop)){
  bjres <- try(bj(Surv(survtime, status) ~ chop[,i], data=chop, link="log"))
  ###if BJ convergence fails, still included for further analysis
  if(inherits(bjres, "try-error")) res[i] <- 1e-5
  else res[i] <- anova(bjres)[1,3] #p-value
}
R> nsel <- 100
R> ### select top nsel=100 genes with most significant p-values
R> chop2 <- chop[, c(1, 2, sort.list(res, decreasing=FALSE)[1:nsel])]
R> rchop2 <- rchop[, c(1, 2, sort.list(res, decreasing=FALSE)[1:nsel])]
R> colnames(chop2)[- (1:2)] <- colnames(rchop2)[- (1:2)] <-
  paste("x", colnames(chop2)[- (1:2)], sep="")
R> detach(package:rms)
```

3. BJ LASSO

Within each BJ iteration, the LASSO is used to fit the imputed survival outcomes. The penalty tuning parameter is fixed at the 20th value in 100 penalty sequence values determined within each BJ iteration.

```
R> res.lasso <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[, -(1:2)],
  learner="enet2", tuning=FALSE, whichlambda=20)
R> ### how many genes selected by BJ-LASSO
R> sum(res.lasso$xselect==1)
```

```
[1] 44
```

```
R> ###estimated non-zero coefficients (only list 10)
R> coef.bj <- coef(res.lasso)
R> coef.bj[abs(coef.bj)>0][1:10]
```

(Intercept)	x229839_at	x243713_at	x1553317_s_at	x244434_at	x240898_at
-0.667338	0.049976	0.033250	0.018725	0.004755	0.010600
x206439_at	x1569344_a_at	x237493_at	x237797_at		
0.017686	0.020368	0.001943	0.105017		

```
R> pred.bj <- predict(res.lasso, newx=rchop2[, -(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff
```

Call:

```
survdif(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)
```

	N	Observed	Expected	$(O-E)^2/E$	$(O-E)^2/V$
group=high	37	18	7.39	15.24	17.5
group=low	196	42	52.61	2.14	17.5

Chisq= 17.5 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 2.82e-05

```
R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",
  lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
```

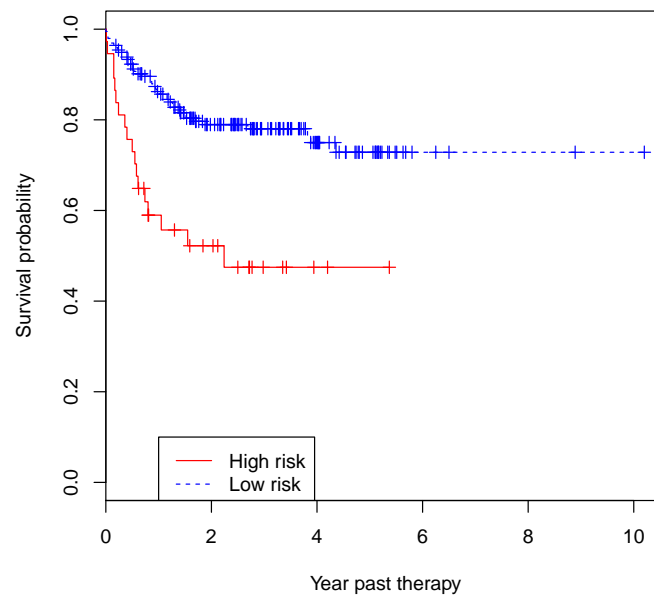


Figure 3: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for BJ-LASSO regression

4. BJ SCAD

BJ-SCAD is an extension of BJ-LASSO (Wang and Wang 2010; Fan and Li 2001). Within each BJ iteration, the SCAD is used with the imputed survival outcomes. The penalty tuning parameter is fixed at the 20th value in 100 penalty sequence values determined within each BJ iteration.

```
R> res.scad <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[,-(1:2)],
  learner="snet", tuning=FALSE, whichlambda=20)
R> ### how many genes selected by BJ-SCAD
R> sum(res.scad$xselect==1)
```

```
[1] 34
```

```
R> ###estimated non-zero coefficients (only list 10)
R> coef.bj <- coef(res.scad)
R> coef.bj[abs(coef.bj)>0][1:10]
```

(Intercept)	x229839_at	x243713_at	x1553317_s_at	x244434_at	x240898_at
-0.926616	0.096749	0.026454	0.012551	0.002007	0.005404
x1569344_a_at	x237797_at	x212713_at	x1569100_a_at		
0.021512	0.186503	0.044884	0.018026		

```
R> pred.bj <- predict(res.scad, newx=rchop2[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff
```

Call:

```
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)
```

	N	Observed	Expected	(O-E) ² /E	(O-E) ² /V
group=high	43	21	8.48	18.46	21.8
group=low	190	39	51.52	3.04	21.8

Chisq= 21.8 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 3.03e-06

```
R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )  
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",  
      lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))  
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
```

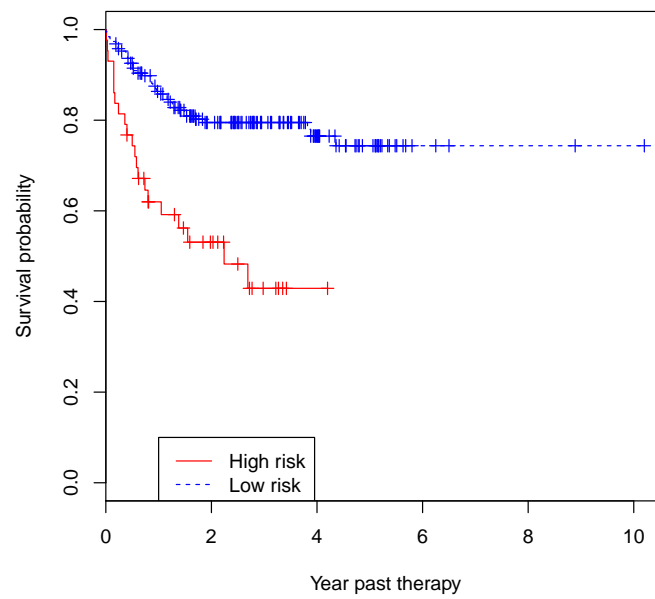


Figure 4: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for BJ-SCAD regression.

5. BJ Boosting with Smoothing Splines

5.1. BJ boosting with componentwise smoothing splines (BJ-SM)

```
R> set.seed(123)
R> res.ss <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[,-(1:2)],
  learner="pspline", tuning=FALSE, cv=FALSE, mstop=100)
R> ### how many genes selected by BJ smoothing splines, only list 10
R> sum(res.ss$xselect==1)

[1] 36

R> colnames(res.ss$x)[res.ss$xselect==1][1:10]

[1] "x229839_at"    "x243713_at"    "x244434_at"    "x240898_at"    "x226869_at"
[6] "x237493_at"    "x204879_at"    "x231442_at"    "x208168_s_at"  "x231049_at"

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.ss, newx=rchop2[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff
```

Call:

```
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)
```

	N	Observed	Expected	(O-E) ² /E	(O-E) ² /V
group=high	49	22	9.2	17.80	21.4
group=low	184	38	50.8	3.22	21.4

Chisq= 21.4 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 3.77e-06

```
R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )  
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",  
       lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))  
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
```

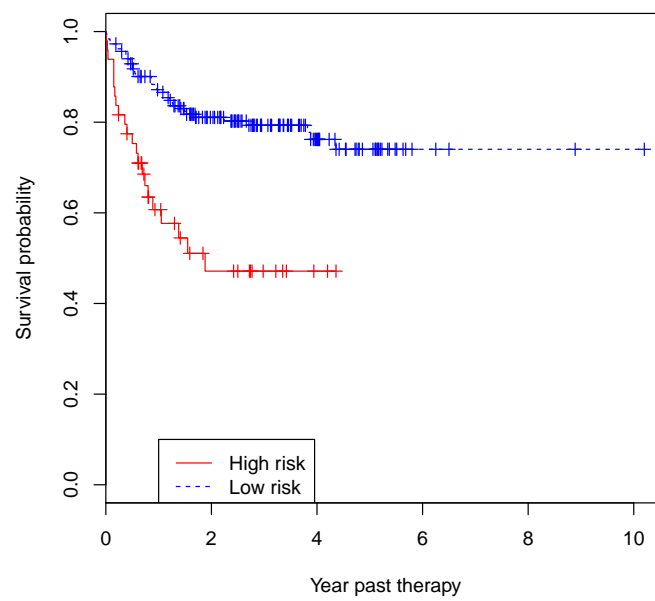


Figure 5: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for BJ-SM regression.

5.2. BJ twin boosting with componentwise smoothing splines

```
R> set.seed(123)
R> res.ss2 <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[,-(1:2)],
  learner="pspline", tuning=TRUE, cv=TRUE, mstop=100, twin=TRUE, mstop2=200)
R> ### how many genes selected by BJ twin smoothing splines, only list 10
R> sum(res.ss2$xselect==1)

[1] 25

R> colnames(res.ss2$x)[res.ss2$xselect==1][1:10]

[1] "x229839_at"      "x243713_at"      "x1553317_s_at"  "x244434_at"      "x240898_at"
[6] "x206439_at"      "x1569344_a_at"   "x237797_at"     "x212713_at"      "x1569100_a_at"

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.ss2, newx=rchop2[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop2$survtime, status = rchop2$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff

Call:
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)

          N Observed Expected (O-E)^2/E (O-E)^2/V
group=high 62         26     13.2      12.4     16.1
group=low  171         34     46.8       3.5     16.1

Chisq= 16.1  on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 5.98e-05
```

```

R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",
      lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))

```

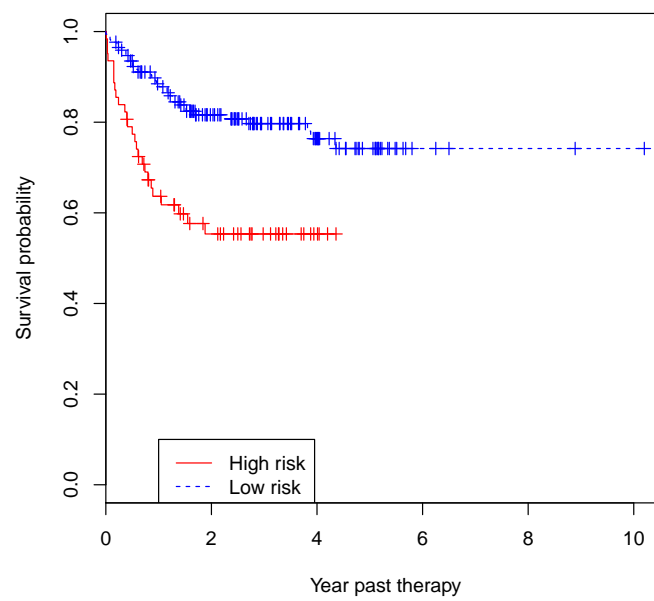


Figure 6: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for twin BJ-SM regression.

6. BJ Boosting with Regression Trees

6.1. BJ boosting with regression stumps (BJ-Tree)

```
R> res.tree1 <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[,-(1:2)],
  learner="tree", tuning=TRUE, cv=TRUE, mstop=1000, n.cores=2, rng=123)
R> ###Number of genes selected with tree, only list 10
R> sum(res.tree1$xselect==1)

[1] 75

R> colnames(res.tree1$x)[res.tree1$xselect==1][1:10]

[1] "x229839_at"      "x243713_at"      "x1553317_s_at"  "x1554413_s_at"  "x244434_at"
[6] "x240898_at"      "x206439_at"      "x226869_at"     "x1569344_a_at"  "x237493_at"

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.tree1, newx=rchop2[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff
```

Call:

```
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)
```

	N	Observed	Expected	(O-E) ² /E	(O-E) ² /V
group=high	32	13	6.29	7.173	8.1
group=low	201	47	53.71	0.839	8.1

Chisq= 8.1 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 0.00443

```
R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )  
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",  
       lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))  
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
```

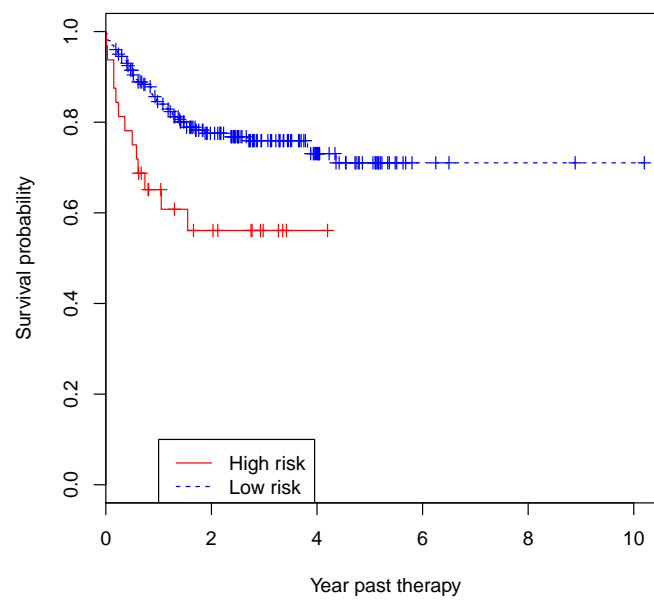


Figure 7: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for BJ-Tree regression.

6.2. BJ twin boosting with regression stumps

```
R> res.tree2 <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[,-(1:2)],
  learner="tree", tuning=TRUE, cv=TRUE, mstop=1000, twin=TRUE, mstop2=100,
  n.cores=2, rng=123)
R> ###Number of genes selected with tree, only list 10
R> sum(res.tree2$xselect==1)

[1] 29

R> colnames(res.tree2$x)[res.tree2$xselect==1][1:10]

[1] "x229839_at"      "x244434_at"      "x240898_at"      "x226869_at"      "x237493_at"
[6] "x237797_at"      "x204879_at"      "x231442_at"      "x1556395_at"     "x1553499_s_at"

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.tree2, newx=rchop2[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff

Call:
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)

          N Observed Expected (O-E)^2/E (O-E)^2/V
group=high  74         31      15.4      15.66     21.4
group=low   159         29      44.6       5.43     21.4

Chisq= 21.4  on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 3.82e-06
```

```

R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",
      lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))

```

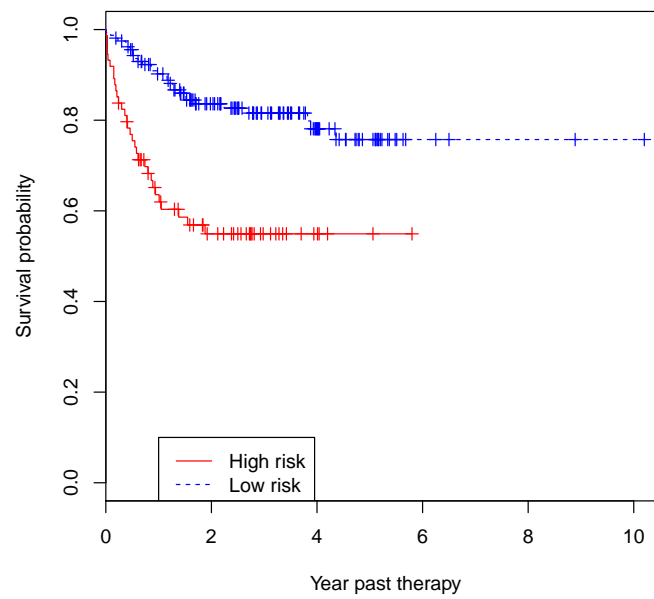


Figure 8: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for twin BJ-Tree regression.

6.3. BJ boosting with regression trees of degree 4

```
R> res.tree4 <- bujar(y=log(chop2[,1]), cens=chop2[,2], x=chop2[,-(1:2)],
  learner="tree",degree=4, tuning=TRUE, cv=TRUE, mstop=100, rel.inf=TRUE,
  n.cores=2,rng=123)
R> ###Number of genes selected with tree, only list 10
R> sum(res.tree4$xselect==1)

[1] 77

R> colnames(res.tree4$x)[res.tree4$xselect==1][1:10]

[1] "x229839_at"      "x243713_at"      "x1553317_s_at"  "x244434_at"      "x240898_at"
[6] "x206439_at"      "x226869_at"      "x1569344_a_at"  "x237797_at"      "x204879_at"

R> pred.bj <- predict(res.tree4, newx=rchop2[,-(1:2)])
R> pred.bj <- exp(pred.bj) - 1
R> group <- cut(pred.bj, breaks=c(-1, cutyear, 100), labels=c("high", "low"))
R> dat.km <- data.frame(survtime=rchop$survtime, status = rchop$status, group=group)
R> fit.diff <- survdiff(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km)
R> fit.diff
```

Call:

```
survdiff(formula = Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data = dat.km)
```

	N	Observed	Expected	(O-E) ² /E	(O-E) ² /V
group=high	35	15	6.94	9.37	10.7
group=low	198	45	53.06	1.22	10.7

Chisq= 10.7 on 1 degrees of freedom, p= 0.00109

```

R> fit.surv <- survfit(Surv(survtime, status) ~ group, data=dat.km )
R> plot(fit.surv, xlab="Year past therapy",ylab="Survival probability",
      lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))
R> legend(1, .1, c("High risk", "Low risk"), lty = 1:2, col=c("red","blue"))

```

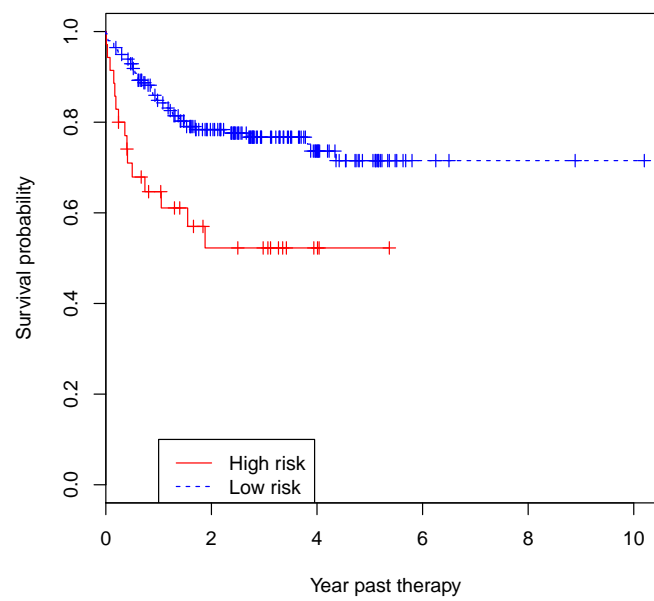


Figure 9: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for BJ-Tree (degree 4) regression.

Partial dependence plots can be utilized to show the impact of one or more covariates on the response after taking account the average effects of all other covariates in the model. We can generate plots for selected genes. See Figure 5 in [Wang and Wang \(2010\)](#).

```
R> gene <- c("x1558999_x_at", "x212713_at", "x224043_s_at", "x229839_at",
  "x237515_at", "x237797_at", "x242758_x_at", "x244346_at")
R> par(mfrow=c(2,4))
R> for(i in 1:length(gene))
  plot(res.tree4$res.fit, i.var=which(colnames(res.tree4$x) == gene[i]))
```

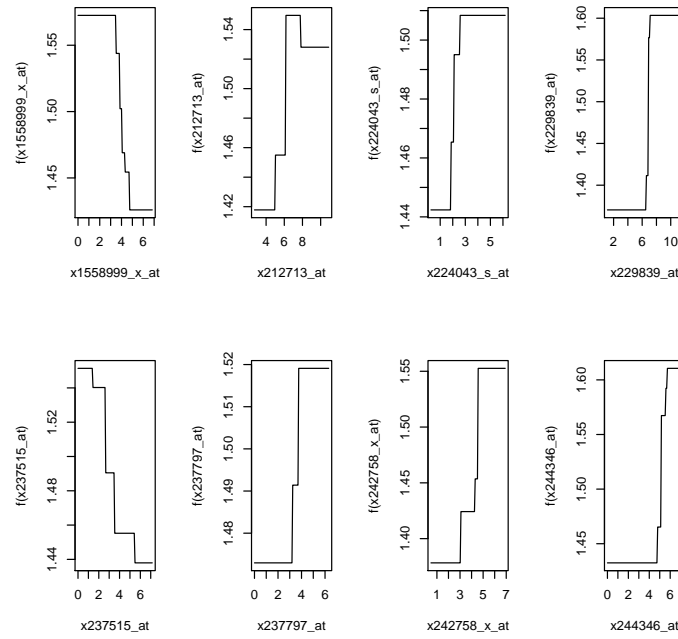


Figure 10: Partial plots of selected genes based on BJ-Tree (degree=4) regression.

The two-way interaction partial plots display gene-gene interactions similar. See Figure 6 in Wang and Wang (2010).

```
R> for(i in 1:6)
  plot(res.tree4$res.fit, i.var=unlist(res.tree4$interactions$rank.list[i,c(1, 3)]))
```

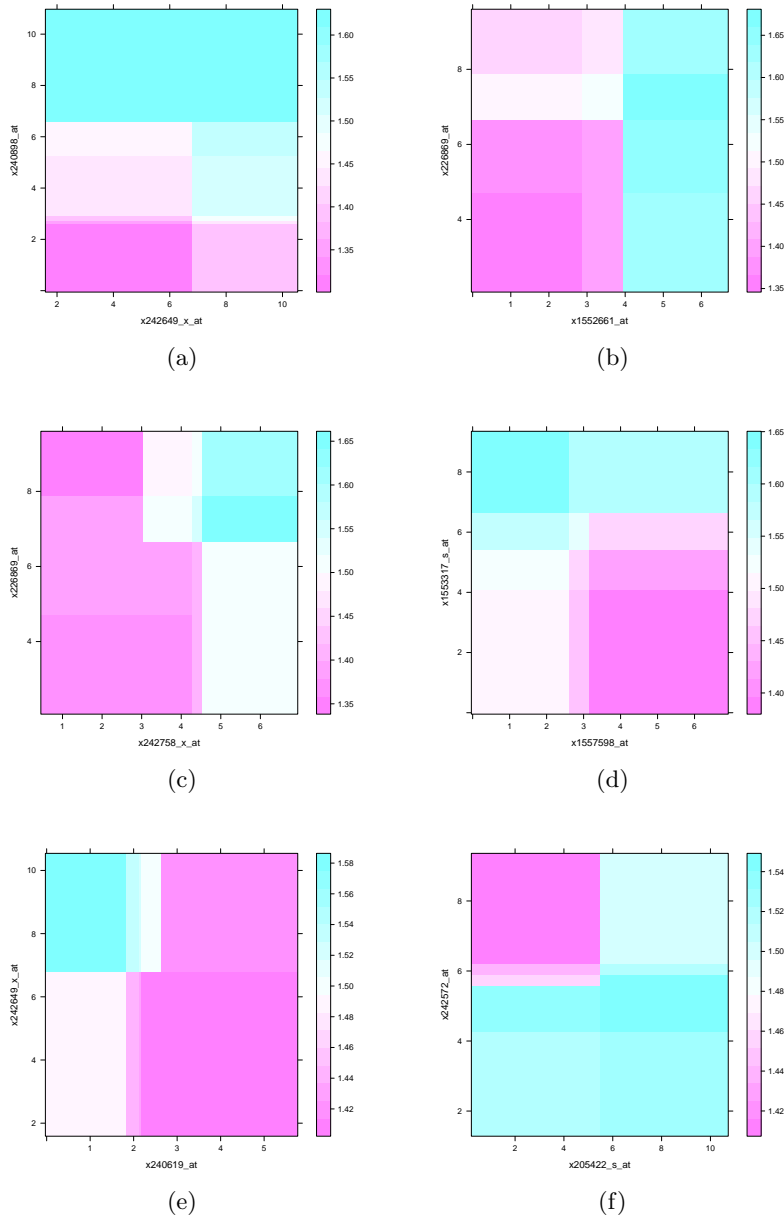


Figure 11: Gene-gene interactions based on BJ-Tree (degree=4) regression.

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