metaSeq: Meta-analysis of RNA-seq count data

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1 Introduction

This document provides the way to perform meta-analysis of RNA-seq data using \textit{metaSeq} package. Meta-analysis is a attempt to integrate multiple data in different studies and retrieve much reliable and reproducible result. In transcriptome study, the goal of analysis may be differentially expressed genes (DEGs). In our package, the probability of one-sided \textit{NOISeq} \cite{ni} is applied in each study. This is because the numbers of reads are often different depending on its study and \textit{NOISeq} is robust method against its difference (see the next section). By meta-analysis, genes which differentially expressed in many studies are detected as DEGs.

2 RSE: Read-Size Effect

In many cases, the number of reads are depend on study. For example, here we prepared multiple RNA-Seq count data designed as Breast Cancer cell lines vs Normal cells measured in 4 different studies (this data is also accessible by \texttt{data(BreastCancer)}).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID in this vignette</th>
<th>Accession (SRA / ERA Accession)</th>
<th>Experimental Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>StudyA</td>
<td>SRP008746</td>
<td>Breast Cancer (n=3) vs Normal (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudyB</td>
<td>SRP006726</td>
<td>Breast Cancer (n=1) vs Normal (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudyC</td>
<td>SRP005601</td>
<td>Breast Cancer (n=7) vs Normal (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudyD</td>
<td>ERP000992</td>
<td>Breast Cancer (n=2) vs Normal (n=1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Difference of the number of reads
As shown in the figure 1, the number of reads in StudyA, B, C, and D are relatively different. Generally, statistical test is influenced by the number of reads; the more the number of reads is large, the more the statistical tests are tend to be significant (see the next section). Therefore, in meta-analysis of RNA-seq data, data may be suffered from this bias. Here we call this bias as RSE (Read Size Effect).

3 Robustness against RSE

In the point of view of robustness against RSE, we evaluated five widely used method in RNA-seq; DESeq [2], edgeR [3], baySeq [4], and NOISeq [1]. Here we used only StudyA data. All counts in the matrix are repeatedly down-sampled in accordance with distributions of binomial (the probability equals 0.5). 1 (original), 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16, and 1/32-fold data are prepared as low read size situation. In each read size, four methods are conducted (figure 2.A, this data is also accessible by data(StudyA) and data(pvals)), then we focussed on how top500 genes of original data in order of significance will change its members, influenced by low read size (figure 2.B).

Figure 2: A(left): RSE in each RNA-Seq method, B(right): Top 500 genes in order of significance

Ideal method will returns same result regardless of read size, because same data was used. As shown in figure 2, NOISeq is not almost affected by the number of reads and robustly detects same genes as DEGs. Therefore, we concluded that NOISeq is suitable method at least in the point of view of meta-analysis. Note that probability of NOISeq is not equal to p-value; it is the probability that a gene is differentially expressed [1]. Our package integrates its probability by Fisher’s method [5] or Stouffer’s method (inverse normal method) [6]. In regard to Stouffer’s method, weighting by the number of replicates (sample size) is used.
4 Getting started

At first, install and load the metaSeq and snow.

> library("metaSeq")  
> library("snow")

The RNA-seq expression data in breast cancer cell lines and normal cells is prepared. The data is measured from 4 different studies. The data is stored as a matrix (23368 rows × 18 columns).

> data(BreastCancer)

We need to prepare two vectors. First vector is for indicating the experimental condition (e.g., 1: Cancer, 2: Normal) and second one is for indicating the source of data (e.g., A: StudyA, B: StudyB, C: StudyC, D: StudyD).

> flag1 <- c(1,1,1,0,0, 1,0, 1,1,1,1,1,1,0, 1,1,0)  
> flag2 <- c("A","A","A","A", "B","B", "C","C","C","C","C", "D","D","D")

Then, we use meta.readData to create R object for meta.oneside.noiseq.

> cds <- meta.readData(data = BreastCancer, factor = flag1, studies = flag2)

Onesided-NOISeq is performed in each studies and each probabilities are summalized as a member of list object.

> ## This is very time consuming step.  
> # cl <- makeCluster(4, "SOCK")  
> # result <- meta.oneside.noiseq(cds, k = 0.5, norm = "tmm", replicates = "biological",  
> # factor = flag1, conditions = c(1, 0), studies = flag2, cl = cl)  
> # stopCluster(cl)  
> 
> ## Please load pre-calculated result (Result.Meta)  
> ## by data function instead of scripts above.  
> data(Result.Meta)  
> result <- Result.Meta

Fisher’s method and Stouffer’s method can be applied to the result of meta.oneside.noiseq.

> F <- Fisher.test(result)  
> S <- Stouffer.test(result)

These outputs are summalized as list whose length is 3. First member is the probability which means a gene is upper-regulated genes, and Second member is lower-regulated genes. Weight in each study is also saved as its third member (weight is used only by Stouffer’s method).
> head(F$Upper)

1/2-SBSRNA4  A1BG  A1BG-AS1  A1CF   A2LD1
0.3842542  0.5316118  0.5325544  NA  0.1358559
A2M
0.2252807

> head(F$Lower)

1/2-SBSRNA4  A1BG  A1BG-AS1  A1CF   A2LD1
0.8420357  0.6078896  0.4047202  NA  0.3661371
A2M
0.6197968

> F$Weight

Study 1  Study 2  Study 3  Study 4
5       2       8       3

> head(S$Upper)

1/2-SBSRNA4  A1BG  A1BG-AS1  A1CF   A2LD1
0.3709297  0.2663748  0.2711745  NA  0.2957139
A2M
0.2996707

> head(S$Lower)

1/2-SBSRNA4  A1BG  A1BG-AS1  A1CF   A2LD1
0.6290703  0.7336252  0.7288255  NA  0.7042861
A2M
0.7003293

> S$Weight

Study 1  Study 2  Study 3  Study 4
5       2       8       3
Generally, by meta-analysis, detection power will improved and much genes are detected as DEGs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Number of DEGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOISeq</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOISeq</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOISeq</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOISeq</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOISeq</td>
<td>A, B, C, D (not meta-analysis)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaSeq (Fisher, Upper)</td>
<td>A, B, C, D</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaSeq (Fisher, Lower)</td>
<td>A, B, C, D</td>
<td>1483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaSeq (Stouffer, Upper)</td>
<td>A, B, C, D</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaSeq (Stouffer, Lower)</td>
<td>A, B, C, D</td>
<td>2271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Meta-analysis by non-NOISeq method

For some reason, we may want to use non-NOISeq method like DESeq, edgeR, or even cuffdiff [7]. We prepared other.oneside.noiseq as optional function for such methods. Returned object can be directly applied to Fisher.test and Stouffer.test.

We have to prepare at least 2 matrix filled with p-value or probability. First matrix is for upper-regulated genes between control group and treatment group. On the other hand, second matrix is for lower-regulated genes. As optional parameter, weight in each study is also available. Weight is need for Stouffer’s method but not necessary for Fisher’s method.

```r
> ## Assume this matrix as one-sided p-values
> ## generated by non-NOISeq method (e.g., cuffdiff)
> upper <- matrix(runif(300), ncol=3, nrow=100)
> lower <- 1 - upper
> rownames(upper) <- paste0("Gene", 1:100)
> rownames(lower) <- paste0("Gene", 1:100)
> weight <- c(3,6,8)
```

Next, other.oneside.pvalues will return a list object for Fisher.test or Stouffer.test by upper, lower, and weight.

```r
> ## other.oneside.pvalues function return a matrix
> ## which can input Fisher.test or Stouffer.test
> result <- other.oneside.pvalues(upper, lower, weight)
```

result above can be applied to Fisher.test and Stouffer.test.

```r
> F <- Fisher.test(result)
> str(F)
```

List of 3

$ Upper : Named num [1:100] 0.118 0.828 0.973 0.427 0.857 ... 
..- attr(*, "names")= chr [1:100] "Gene1" "Gene2" "Gene3" "Gene4" ... 

$ Lower : Named num [1:100] 0.928 0.437 0.104 0.369 0.151 ... 
..- attr(*, "names")= chr [1:100] "Gene1" "Gene2" "Gene3" "Gene4" ... 

$ Weight: Named num [1:3] 3 6 8 
..- attr(*, "names")= chr [1:3] "Exp 1" "Exp 2" "Exp 3"

```r
> head(F$Upper)
          Gene1 Gene2 Gene3 Gene4 Gene5 Gene6
0.1176611 0.8277090 0.9731657 0.4272973 0.8572458 0.5062429
```

```r
> head(F$Lower)
          Gene1 Gene2 Gene3 Gene4 Gene5 Gene6
0.9275860 0.4373895 0.1044698 0.3699850 0.1509984 0.5180261
```
> F$Weight

Exp 1 Exp 2 Exp 3
   3   6   8

> S <- Stouffer.test(result)
> str(S)

List of 3
$ Upper : Named num [1:100] 0.0657 0.6907 0.9297 0.2891 0.9095 ...  
  ..- attr(*, "names")= chr [1:100] "Gene1" "Gene2" "Gene3" "Gene4" ... 
$ Lower : Named num [1:100] 0.9343 0.3093 0.0703 0.7109 0.0905 ...  
  ..- attr(*, "names")= chr [1:100] "Gene1" "Gene2" "Gene3" "Gene4" ... 
$ Weight: Named num [1:3] 3 6 8  
  ..- attr(*, "names")= chr [1:3] "Exp 1" "Exp 2" "Exp 3"

> head(S$Upper)

       Gene1   Gene2   Gene3   Gene4   Gene5   Gene6
0.06565849 0.69073059 0.92967182 0.28908807 0.90948121 0.36445464

> head(S$Lower)

       Gene1   Gene2   Gene3   Gene4   Gene5   Gene6
0.93434151 0.30926941 0.07032818 0.71091193 0.09051879 0.63554536

> S$Weight

Exp 1 Exp 2 Exp 3
   3   6   8
6 Setup

This vignette was built on:

```r
> sessionInfo()
```

R version 3.0.1 (2013-05-16)
Platform: x86_64-apple-darwin10.8.0 (64-bit)

locale:

attached base packages:
[1] splines parallel stats graphics grDevices utils
[7] datasets methods base

other attached packages:
[1] metaSeq_0.99.0 snow_0.3-12 NOISeq_2.0.0
[4] Biobase_2.20.1 BiocGenerics_0.6.0

loaded via a namespace (and not attached):
[1] tools_3.0.1
References


