

# Package ‘getmstatistic’

May 8, 2026

**Title** Quantifying Systematic Heterogeneity in Meta-Analysis

**Version** 0.2.2

**Description** Quantifying systematic heterogeneity in meta-analysis using R. The M statistic aggregates heterogeneity information across multiple variants to, identify systematic heterogeneity patterns and their direction of effect in meta-analysis. It's primary use is to identify outlier studies, which either show “null” effects or consistently show stronger or weaker genetic effects than average across, the panel of variants examined in a GWAS meta-analysis. In contrast to conventional heterogeneity metrics (Q-statistic, I-squared and tau-squared) which measure random heterogeneity at individual variants, M measures systematic (non-random) heterogeneity across multiple independently associated variants. Systematic heterogeneity can arise in a meta-analysis due to differences in the study characteristics of participating studies. Some of the differences may include: ancestry, allele frequencies, phenotype definition, age-of-disease onset, family-history, gender, linkage disequilibrium and quality control thresholds. See <<https://magosil86.github.io/getmstatistic/>> for statistical theory, documentation and examples.

**Depends** R (>= 3.1.0)

**License** MIT + file LICENSE

**URL** <https://magosil86.github.io/getmstatistic/>

**BugReports** <https://github.com/magosil86/getmstatistic/issues>

**LazyData** true

**Imports** ggplot2 (>= 1.0.1), gridExtra (>= 0.9.1), gtable (>= 0.1.2), metafor (>= 1.9-6), psych (>= 1.5.1), stargazer (>= 5.1)

**Suggests** foreign (>= 0.8-62), knitr (>= 1.10.5), testthat, covr, rmarkdown

**RoxygenNote** 7.1.1

**VignetteBuilder** knitr

**NeedsCompilation** no

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draw_table	<i>Helper function to draw table grobs.</i>
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## Description

draw\_table() Pre and post version: 2.0.0 gridExtra packages handle drawing tables differently. draw\_table() determines the installed version of gridExtra and applies the appropriate syntax. If gridExtra version < 2.0.0 then it uses old gridExtra syntax to build table Grob(graphical object) else uses new syntax. draw\_table()

## Usage

```
draw_table(body, heading, ...)
```

## Arguments

body	A dataframe. Table body.
heading	A string. Table title.
...	Further arguments to control the gtable.

## Details

prints tables without rownames.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Ryan Welch, <https://github.com/welchr/LocusZoom/issues/16>

**Examples**

```

library(gridExtra)

## Not run:

# Table of iris values
iris_dframe <- head(iris)
title_iris_dframe <- paste("Table: Length and width measurements (cm) of sepals and petals,",
                          "for 50 flowers from 3 species of iris (setosa, versicolor,",
                          "and virginica).\n", sep = " ")
# Wrap title text at column 60
title_iris_dframe <- sapply(strwrap(title_iris_dframe, width = 60, simplify = FALSE),
                          paste, collapse = "\n")
# Draw table
table_influential_studies <- draw_table(body = iris_dframe, heading = title_iris_dframe)

# Table of mtcars values
mtcars_dframe <- head(mtcars)
title_mtcars_dframe <- paste("Table: Motor Trend US magazine (1974) automobile statistics",
                            "for fuel consumption, \nautomobile design and performance.\n",
                            sep = " ")
# Wrap title text at column 60
title_mtcars_dframe <- sapply(strwrap(title_mtcars_dframe, width = 60, simplify = FALSE),
                              paste, collapse = "\n")
# Draw table
table_influential_studies <- draw_table(body = mtcars_dframe, heading = title_mtcars_dframe)

## End(Not run)

```

---

getmstatistic

*Quantifying Systematic Heterogeneity in Meta-Analysis.*


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**Description**

getmstatistic computes  $M$  statistics to assess the contribution of each participating study in a meta-analysis. The  $M$  statistic aggregates heterogeneity information across multiple variants to identify systematic heterogeneity patterns and their direction of effect in meta-analysis. It's primary use is to identify outlier studies, which either show "null" effects or consistently show stronger or weaker genetic effects than average, across the panel of variants examined in a GWAS meta-analysis.

**Usage**

```

getmstatistic(beta_in, lambda_se_in, study_names_in, variant_names_in, ...)

## Default S3 method:
getmstatistic(
  beta_in,
  lambda_se_in,

```

```

study_names_in,
variant_names_in,
save_dir = getwd(),
tau2_method = "DL",
x_axis_increment_in = 0.02,
x_axis_round_in = 2,
produce_plots = TRUE,
verbose_output = FALSE,
...
)

```

### Arguments

beta_in	A numeric vector of study effect-sizes e.g. log odds-ratios.
lambda_se_in	A numeric vector of standard errors, genomically corrected at study-level.
study_names_in	A character vector of study names.
variant_names_in	A character vector of variant names e.g. rsIDs.
...	Further arguments.
save_dir	A character scalar specifying a path to the directory where plots should be stored (optional). Required if produce_plots = TRUE.
tau2_method	A character scalar, method to estimate heterogeneity: either "DL" or "REML" (Optional). Note: The REML method uses the iterative Fisher scoring algorithm (step length = 0.5, maximum iterations = 10000) to estimate tau2.
x_axis_increment_in	A numeric scalar, value by which x-axis of M scatterplot will be incremented (Optional).
x_axis_round_in	A numeric scalar, value to which x-axis labels of M scatterplot will be rounded (Optional).
produce_plots	A boolean to generate plots (optional).
verbose_output	An optional boolean to display intermediate output.

### Details

In contrast to conventional heterogeneity metrics (Q-statistic, I-squared and tau-squared) which measure random heterogeneity at individual variants,  $M$  measures systematic (non-random) heterogeneity across multiple independently associated variants.

Systematic heterogeneity can arise in a meta-analysis due to differences in the study characteristics of participating studies. Some of the differences may include: ancestry, allele frequencies, phenotype definition, age-of-disease onset, family-history, gender, linkage disequilibrium and quality control thresholds. See the getmstatistic website for statistical theory, documentation and examples. getmstatistic uses summary data i.e. study effect-sizes and their corresponding standard errors to calculate  $M$  statistics (One  $M$  for each study in the meta-analysis).

In particular, getmstatistic employs the inverse-variance weighted random effects regression model provided in the metafor R package to extract SPREs (standardized predicted random effects) which are then aggregated to formulate  $M$  statistics.

**Value**

Returns a list containing:

- `Mstatistic_expected_mean` , A numeric scalar for the expected mean for M
- `Mstatistic_expected_sd` , A numeric scalar for the expected standard deviation for M
- `number_studies` , A numeric scalar for the number of studies
- `number_variants` , A numeric scalar for the number of variants
- `Mstatistic_crit_alpha_0_05` , A numeric scalar of the critical M value at the 5 percent significance level.
- `M_dataset` (dataframe) A dataset of the computed M statistics, which includes the following fields:
  - `M` , Mstatistic
  - `M_sd` , standard deviation of M
  - `M_se` , standard error of M
  - `lowerbound` , lowerbound of M 95
  - `upperbound` , upperbound of M 95
  - `bonfpvalue` , 2-sided bonferroni pvalues of M
  - `qvalue` , false discovery rate adjusted pvalues of M
  - `tau2` , `tau_squared`, DL estimates of between-study heterogeneity
  - `I2` , `I_squared`, proportion of total variation due to between study variance
  - `Q` , Cochran's Q
  - `xb` , fitted values excluding random effects
  - `usta` , standardized predicted random effect (SPRE)
  - `xbu` , fitted values including random effects
  - `stdxbu` , standard error of prediction (fitted values) including random effects
  - `hat` , diagonal elements of the projection hat matrix
  - `study` , study numbers
  - `snp` , variant numbers
  - `beta_mean` , average variant effect size
  - `oddsratio` , average variant effect size as oddsratio
  - `beta_n` , number of variants in each study
- `influential_studies_0_05` (dataframe) A dataset of influential studies significant at the 5 percent level.
- `weaker_studies_0_05` (dataframe) A dataset of under-performing studies significant at the 5 percent level.

**Methods (by class)**

- `default`: Computes M statistics

**See Also**

[rma.uni](#) function in metafor for random effects model, and <https://magosil86.github.io/getmstatistic/> for getmstatistic website.

**Examples**

```
library(getmstatistic)
library(gridExtra)

# Basic M analysis using the heartgenes214 dataset.
# heartgenes214 is a multi-ethnic GWAS meta-analysis dataset for coronary artery disease.
# To learn more about the heartgenes214 dataset ?heartgenes214

# Running an M analysis on 20 GWAS significant variants (p < 5e-08) in the first 10 studies

heartgenes44_10studies <- subset(heartgenes214, studies <= 10 & fdr214_gwas46 == 2)
heartgenes20_10studies <- subset(heartgenes44_10studies,
  variants %in% unique(heartgenes44_10studies$variants)[1:20])

# Set directory to store plots, this can be a temporary directory
# or a path to a directory of choice e.g. plots_dir <- "~/Downloads"
plots_dir <- tempdir()

getmstatistic_results <- getmstatistic(heartgenes20_10studies$beta_flipped,
  heartgenes20_10studies$gcse,
  heartgenes20_10studies$variants,
  heartgenes20_10studies$studies,
  save_dir = plots_dir)

getmstatistic_results

# Explore results generated by getmstatistic function

# Retrieve dataset of M statistics
dframe <- getmstatistic_results$M_dataset

str(dframe)

# Retrieve dataset of stronger than average studies (significant at 5% level)
getmstatistic_results$influential_studies_0_05

# Retrieve dataset of weaker than average studies (significant at 5% level)
getmstatistic_results$weaker_studies_0_05

# Retrieve number of studies and variants
getmstatistic_results$number_studies
getmstatistic_results$number_variants

# Retrieve expected mean, sd and critical M value at 5% significance level
getmstatistic_results$M_expected_mean
getmstatistic_results$M_expected_sd
getmstatistic_results$M_crit_alpha_0_05

# To view plots stored in a temporary directory, call `tempdir()` to view the directory path
```

```
tempdir()

# Additional examples: These take a little bit longer to run

## Not run:

# Set directory to store plots, this can be a temporary directory
# or a path to a directory of choice e.g. plots_dir <- "~/Downloads"
plots_dir <- tempdir()

# Run M analysis on all 214 lead variants
# heartgenes214 is a multi-ethnic GWAS meta-analysis dataset for coronary artery disease.
getmstatistic_results <- getmstatistic(heartgenes214$beta_flipped,
                                       heartgenes214$gcse,
                                       heartgenes214$variants,
                                       heartgenes214$studies,
                                       save_dir = plots_dir)

getmstatistic_results

# Subset the GWAS significant variants ( $p < 5e-08$ ) in heartgenes214
heartgenes44 <- subset(heartgenes214, heartgenes214$fdr214_gwas46 == 2)

# Exploring getmstatistic options:
# Estimate heterogeneity using "REML", default is "DL"
# Modify x-axis of M scatterplot
# Run M analysis verbosely
getmstatistic_results <- getmstatistic(heartgenes44$beta_flipped,
                                       heartgenes44$gcse,
                                       heartgenes44$variants,
                                       heartgenes44$studies,
                                       save_dir = plots_dir,
                                       tau2_method = "REML",
                                       x_axis_increment_in = 0.03,
                                       x_axis_round_in = 3,
                                       produce_plots = TRUE,
                                       verbose_output = TRUE)

getmstatistic_results

## End(Not run)
```

---

heartgenes214

*heartgenes214.*

---

## Description

heartgenes214 is a multi-ethnic GWAS meta-analysis dataset for coronary artery disease.

**Usage**

heartgenes214

**Format**

A data frame with seven variables:

beta\_flipped Effect-sizes expressed as log odds ratios. Numeric

gcse Standard errors

studies Names of participating studies

variants Names of genetic variants/SNPs

cases Number of cases in each participating study

controls Number of controls in each participating study

fdr214\_gwas46 Flag indicating GWAS significant variants, 1: Not GWAS-significant, 2: GWAS-significant

**Details**

It comprises summary data (effect-sizes and their corresponding standard errors) for 48 studies (68,801 cases and 123,504 controls), at 214 lead variants independently associated with coronary artery disease ( $P < 0.00005$ ,  $FDR < 5\%$ ). Of the 214 lead variants, 44 are genome-wide significant ( $p < 5e-08$ ). The meta-analysis dataset is based on individuals of: African American, Hispanic American, East Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern and European ancestry.

The study effect-sizes have been flipped to ensure alignment of the effect alleles.

Standard errors were genomically corrected at the study-level.

**Source**

Magosi LE, Goel A, Hopewell JC, Farrall M, on behalf of the CARDIoGRAMplusC4D Consortium (2017) Identifying systematic heterogeneity patterns in genetic association meta-analysis studies. *PLoS Genet* 13(5): e1006755. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgen.1006755>.

<https://magosil86.github.io/getmstatistic/>

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