

Minimax Estimation of a Normal Mean Vector  
When the Covariance Matrix is Unknown\*

by

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ABSTRACT

Let  $X$  be an observation from a  $p$ -variate normal distribution ( $p \geq 3$ ) with mean vector  $\theta$  and unknown positive definite covariance matrix  $\Sigma$ . We wish to estimate  $\theta$  under the quadratic loss  $L(\delta; \theta, \Sigma) = [\text{tr}(Q\Sigma)]^{-1} (\delta - \theta)' Q (\delta - \theta)$ , where  $Q$  is a known positive definite matrix. Estimators of the following form are considered:

$$\delta_{k,h}(X,W) = [I - kh(X'W^{-1}X)\lambda_1(QW/n^*)Q^{-1}W^{-1}]X,$$

where  $W$ :  $p \times p$  is observed independently of  $X$  and has a Wishart distribution with  $n$  degrees of freedom and parameter  $\Sigma$ .  $\lambda_1(A)$  denotes the minimum characteristic root of  $A$ , and  $h(t): [0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, \infty)$  is absolutely continuous with respect to Lebesgue measure, is nonincreasing, and satisfies the additional requirements that  $th(t)$  is nondecreasing and  $\sup_{t>0} th(t) = 1$ .

With  $h(t) = t^{-1}$ , the class  $\delta_{k,h}$  specializes to that considered by Berger, Bock, Brown, Casella, and Gleser (1977). For the more general class considered in the present paper, it is shown that there is an interval  $[0, k_{n,p}]$  of values of  $k$  (which may be degenerate for small values of  $n-p$ ) for which  $\delta_{k,h}$  is minimax and dominates the usual estimator  $\delta_0 \equiv X$  risk.

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1. Introduction. Assume that  $X$  is a  $p$ -dimensional random column vector which is normally distributed with mean vector  $\theta$  and unknown positive definite covariance matrix  $\Sigma$ . We observe  $X$ , and also independently observe the  $p \times p$  random matrix  $W$ , which has a Wishart distribution with  $n$  degrees of freedom and parameter  $\Sigma = n^{-1}E(W)$ . It is desired to estimate  $\theta$  by an estimator  $\delta(X,W)$  under the quadratic loss

$$(1.1) \quad L(\delta(X,W); \theta, \Sigma) = \frac{1}{\text{tr}(\Sigma Q)} [(\delta(X,W) - \theta)' Q (\delta(X,W) - \theta)]$$

where  $Q$  is a known  $p \times p$  positive definite matrix. For this problem it is well known that the classical least squares, maximum likelihood, best equivariant estimator  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$  is minimax, but inadmissible if  $p \geq 3$ . Recently Berger, Bock, Brown, Casella, and Gleser (1977) provided the first explicit examples of estimators which dominate  $\delta_0(X,W)$  in risk in this context. These estimators have the form

$$(1.2) \quad \delta_c(X,W) = \left[ I_p - \left( \frac{c \lambda_1(QW/n^*)}{X'W^{-1}X} \right) Q^{-1}W^{-1} \right] X$$

where  $n^* = n - p - 1$ ,  $\lambda_1(A)$  denotes the minimum characteristic root of a matrix  $A$ , and  $0 \leq c \leq c_{n,p}$ . The constants  $c_{n,p}$  are described analytically in Berger et al (1977), but their actual values for various choices of  $n$  and  $p$  had to be obtained by simulation.

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As noted in Berger et al (1977), the class (1.2) contains no admissible procedures, since every member of the class (except  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$ ) has a singularity at  $X = 0$ . Both for analytic reasons and based on risk simulations, they conjectured that an estimator of the form

$$(1.3) \quad \delta_c^*(X,W) = [I_p - \frac{\min(c, n^*X'W^{-1}X)\lambda_1(QW/n^*)}{X'W^{-1}X} Q^{-1}W^{-1}]X$$

would dominate  $\delta_c(X,W)$  in risk. However, they were not able to prove that  $\delta_c^*(X,W)$  is minimax.

In an earlier paper, the present author [Gleser (1976)] showed that when a lower bound,  $K$ , for  $\lambda_1(Q\Sigma)$  is known, estimators of the form

$$(1.4) \quad \delta_h(X,W) = [I_p - c h(X'W^{-1}X)Q^{-1}W^{-1}]X,$$

where  $h(t): [0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, \infty)$  is absolutely continuous with respect to Lebesgue measure,  $h(t)$  is nondecreasing in  $t$ ,  $\sup_{t>0} h(t) = 1$ , and  $0 \leq c \leq 2(p-2)(n-p)K/(n-1)$  dominate  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$  in risk. In that paper it was also shown that if no lower bound to  $\lambda_1(Q\Sigma)$  is known, then no estimator of the form (1.3) can dominate  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$  in risk.

In the present paper, the methods of Gleser (1976) and Berger et al (1977) are combined to prove the following result:

Theorem 1.1. Consider the class of estimators

$$(1.5) \quad \delta_{k,h}(X,W) = [I_p - kh(X'W^{-1}X)\lambda_1(QW/n^*)Q^{-1}W^{-1}]X$$

where  $h(t): [0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, \infty)$  is absolutely continuous with respect to Lebesgue measure, and

- (i)  $th(t)$  is nondecreasing in  $t$ ,
- (ii)  $\sup_{t>0} th(t) = 1$ ,
- (iii)  $h(t)$  is nonincreasing in  $t$ .

If  $0 \leq k \leq k_{n,p}$ , where  $k_{n,p}$  is defined by Equation (2.7) and tabled for selected values of  $n$  and  $p$  in Table 1, then  $\delta_{k,h}(X,W)$  dominates  $\delta_0(X,W)$  in risk, and hence is minimax.

It is not difficult to show that the class of rules (1.5) includes both the class of rules (1.2) and the class (1.3).

2. Proof of Theorem 1. Let

$$(2.1) \quad \Delta \equiv \Delta(\theta, \Sigma) = [ \text{tr}(Q\Sigma) ] E^{X,W} [ L(\delta_{k,h}(X,W); \theta, \Sigma) - L(X; \theta, \Sigma) ].$$

As in Berger et al (1977), superscripts on the expected value operator indicate the random variable with respect to which the expectation is to be computed.

The quantity  $\Delta = \Delta(\theta, \Sigma)$  is the difference in risks between  $\delta_{k,h}(X,W)$  and  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$ , weighted by the positive quantity  $\text{tr}(Q\Sigma)$ . If  $\Delta = \Delta(\theta, \Sigma) \leq 0$  for all  $\theta$  and  $\Sigma$ , then  $\delta_{k,h}(X,W)$  dominates  $\delta_0(X,W)$  in risk.

The initial steps of our proof closely follow those of Berger et al (1977). We expand the quadratic loss of  $\delta_{k,h}$ , take expected values in the order  $E^W E^X$ , and use the familiar technique of integration by parts [Berger (1976)] to obtain

$$E^X [ h(X'W^{-1}X) (X-\theta)'W^{-1}X ] = E^X [ h(X'W^{-1}X) \text{tr}\Sigma W^{-1} + 2h^{(1)}(X'W^{-1}X) X'W^{-1}\Sigma W^{-1}X ],$$

where  $h^{(1)}(t) = dh(t)/dt$  exists almost surely. These steps yield the result:

$$(2.2) \quad \Delta = E^{X,W} \{ k\lambda_1 [\lambda_1 h^2(X'W^{-1}X)X'W^{-1}Q^{-1}W^{-1}X - 2h(X'W^{-1}X)\text{tr}\Sigma W^{-1} \\ - 4\lambda_1 h^{(1)}(X'W^{-1}X)X'W^{-1}\Sigma W^{-1}X] \},$$

where  $\lambda_1 = \lambda_1(QW/n^*)$ . Next we note that

$$(2.3) \quad X'W^{-1}Q^{-1}W^{-1}X \leq \frac{X'W^{-1}X}{n^*\lambda_1(QW/n^*)},$$

and thus, since  $\text{th}(t) \leq 1$ ,

$$k\lambda_1(QW/n^*)h^2(X'W^{-1}X)X'W^{-1}Q^{-1}W^{-1}X \leq kh(X'W^{-1}X)/n^*.$$

Also, since  $\text{th}(t)$  is nondecreasing,

$$0 \leq \frac{d}{dt}(\text{th}(t)) = h(t) + \text{th}^{(1)}(t),$$

so that

$$(2.4) \quad h^{(1)}(X'W^{-1}X) \geq \frac{h(X'W^{-1}X)}{X'W^{-1}X}.$$

Substituting these results into (2.2), we conclude that

$$(2.5) \quad \Delta \leq E^{X,W} \{ k\lambda_1(QW/n^*)h(X'W^{-1}X) \left[ \frac{k}{n^*} - \text{tr}\Sigma W^{-1} + 4 \frac{X'W^{-1}\Sigma W^{-1}X}{X'W^{-1}X} \right] \}.$$

For any square root  $\Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}$  of  $\Sigma$ , let

$$(2.6) \quad Y = \Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}X, \quad U = \Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}W\Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

and

$$\eta = \Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}\theta, \quad \phi = \Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}Q\Sigma^{\frac{1}{2}}.$$

Then  $Y$  and  $U$  are statistically independent,  $Y$  has a  $p$ -variate normal distribution with mean vector  $\eta$  and covariance matrix  $I_p$ , and  $U$  has a Wishart distribution with  $n$  degrees of freedom and parameter  $I_p$ . In terms of  $Y$  and  $U$ ,

$$(2.7) \quad \Delta \leq E^Y E^U \left\{ \frac{k}{n^*} \lambda_1(\phi U) h(Y'U^{-1}Y) \left[ \frac{k}{n^*} - 2\text{tr}U^{-1} + 4 \frac{Y'U^{-2}Y}{Y'U^{-1}Y} \right] \right\}.$$

Finally, let  $\Gamma_Y$  be an orthogonal  $p \times p$  matrix satisfying

$$(2.8) \quad Y' \Gamma_Y' = ((Y'Y)^{\frac{1}{2}}, 0, 0, \dots, 0)$$

and let

$$(2.9) \quad V = \Gamma_Y U \Gamma_Y', \quad \phi_Y = \Gamma_Y \phi \Gamma_Y'.$$

Then the conditional distribution of  $V$  given  $Y$  is a Wishart distribution with  $n$  degrees of freedom and parameter  $I_p$ , independent of  $Y$ . Also

$$(2.10) \quad \text{tr}U^{-1} = \text{tr}V^{-1}, \quad Y'U^{-1}Y = Y'Y(V^{-1})_{11}, \quad Y'U^{-2}Y = Y'Y(V^{-2})_{11}.$$

Let

$$(2.11) \quad v_1 = (V^{-1})_{11}, \quad v_2 = (V^{-2})_{11}.$$

It follows that

$$(2.12) \quad \Delta \leq E^Y E^V \left\{ \frac{k}{n^*} \lambda_1(\phi_Y V) h(Y'Y v_1) \left[ \frac{k}{n^*} - 2\text{tr}V^{-1} + 4 \frac{v_2}{v_1} \right] \right\}.$$

Let  $r(t) = th(t)$ . Then from (2.12), we obtain

$$(2.13) \quad \Delta \leq \frac{k}{n^*} E^Y \left\{ \left( \frac{1}{Y'Y} \right) E^V [r(Y'Y v_1)] \frac{\lambda_1(\phi_Y V)}{v_1} \left( \frac{k}{n^*} - 2\text{tr}V^{-1} + 4 \frac{v_2}{v_1} \right) \right\}.$$

Let

$$\beta = \lambda_1(\phi_Y) = \lambda_1(\Gamma_Y \phi \Gamma_Y') = \lambda_1(\phi) = \lambda_1(Q\Sigma),$$

and let

$$\Sigma^* = \frac{1}{\beta} \phi_{Y'}.$$

Then  $\lambda_1(\Sigma^*) = 1$ , and

$$(2.14) \quad \Delta \leq -\frac{k\beta}{n^*} E^Y \left\{ \left( \frac{1}{Y'Y} \right) E^V \left[ r(Y'YV_1) \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} \left( 2\text{tr}V^{-1} - 4\frac{v_2}{v_1} - \frac{k}{n^*} \right) \right] \right\}$$

Hence to show that  $\Delta = \Delta(\theta, \Sigma) \leq 0$  for all  $\theta, \Sigma$ , it suffices to show that for all  $\Sigma^*$  with  $\lambda_1(\Sigma^*) = 1$  and all values of  $Y'Y$  the following inequality holds:

$$(2.15) \quad \tau = E^V \left\{ r(Y'YV_1) \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} \left( 2\text{tr}V^{-1} - 4\frac{v_2}{v_1} - \frac{k}{n^*} \right) \right\} \geq 0.$$

Except for the term  $r(Y'YV_1)$ , this inequality is precisely the inequality in Equation (2.7) of Berger et al (1977). [For the class of estimators considered in Berger et al (1977),  $r(t) \equiv 1$  for all  $t$ .] Our problem is to account for the  $r(Y'YV_1)$  term in (2.15). To do so, we make use of a distributional representation previously utilized in Gleser (1976).

Lemma 2.1. Let  $V$  have a Wishart distribution with degrees of freedom  $n$  and parameter  $I_p$ , and let  $V$  be partitioned as

$$(2.16) \quad V = \begin{pmatrix} v_{11} & v_{12} \\ v_{12}' & v_{22} \end{pmatrix}, \quad v_{11}: 1 \times 1, \quad v_{22}: (p-1) \times (p-1).$$

Let  $\ell' = V_{12} V_{22}^{-\frac{1}{2}}$  for any square root  $V_{22}^{\frac{1}{2}}$  of  $V_{22}$ . Then  $v_1 = (V^{-1})_{11}$ ,  $\ell$  and  $V_{22}$  are mutually statistically independent,  $v_1^{-1}$  has a  $\chi_{n-p+1}^2$  distribution,  $\ell$  has a  $(p-1)$ -variate standard multivariate normal distribution, and  $V_{22}$  has



a Wishart distribution with  $n$  degrees of freedom and parameter  $I_{p-1}$ .

Proof. This is a well-known result easily proved by making the indicated changes of variables in the density of  $V$ .  $\square$

Let  $V^{-1}$  be partitioned as

$$V^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} v^{11} & v^{12} \\ (v^{12})' & v^{22} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 & v^{12} \\ (v^{12})' & v^{22} \end{pmatrix}$$

similar to  $V$  in (2.16). Using the well known relationships between the block elements of  $V$  and of  $V^{-1}$  it can be shown that

$$(2.17) \quad v_2 = v_1^2(1 + \ell'V_{22}^{-1}\ell), \quad \text{tr}V^{-1} = \text{tr}V_{22}^{-1} + v_1(1 + \ell'V_{22}^{-1}\ell)$$

and that

$$(2.18) \quad V = \begin{pmatrix} v_1^{-1} + \ell'\ell & \ell'V_{22}^{-1} \\ (\ell'V_{22}^{-1})' & V_{22} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Note from (2.18) that for fixed values of  $\ell$  and  $V_{22}$ ,  $V$  is decreasing in  $v_1$  in the sense of positive definiteness, and that  $v_1V$  is increasing in  $v_1$ .

Thus, for fixed values of  $\ell$  and  $V_{22}$ ,

$$(2.19) \quad \lambda_1(\Sigma^*V) \text{ is decreasing in } v_1, \quad v_1\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V) \text{ is increasing in } v_1.$$

It follows from (2.15), (2.17), (2.18) and Lemma 2.1 that

$$(2.20) \quad \tau = E^{\ell, V_{22}} v_1 \int_{r(Y'Yv_1)} \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} [2 \text{tr}V_{22}^{-1} - 2v_1(1 + \ell'V_{22}^{-1}\ell) - \frac{k}{n^*}] \cdot$$

Since  $r(Y'Yv_1)$  is an increasing function of  $v_1$ , we could try to use the following well-known lemma to pull  $E^{\ell, V_{22}} \int_{r(Y'Yv_1)}$  out of the expected value in (2.20).

Lemma 2.2. Let  $g_1(s)$  and  $g_2(s)$  map  $[0, \infty)$  into  $[0, \infty)$  and let  $S$  be a nonnegative random variable. Then if  $g_1(s)$  and  $g_2(s)$  are either both nonincreasing in  $s$  or both nondecreasing in  $s$ ,

$$E^S [g_1(S)g_2(S)] \geq E^S [g_1(S)]E^S [g_2(S)].$$

Unfortunately  $\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)/v_1$  times the quantity in square brackets in (2.20) is neither a nondecreasing nor a nonincreasing function of  $v_1$ . We thus try a more indirect attack, attempting to pull  $E^{v_1} [h(Y'Yv_1)]$  out of the expected value in (2.20). [Note that neither  $r(Y'Yv_1)$  nor  $h(Y'Yv_1)$  depend upon  $\ell$  and  $V_{22}$ .]

Using Lemma 2.2, (2.19), and the fact that  $h(t)$  is nonincreasing in  $t$ , while  $r(t)$  is nondecreasing in  $t$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} & E^{v_1} \left\{ r(Y'Yv_1) \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} [2 \operatorname{tr} V_{22}^{-1} - 2v_1(1+\ell'V_{22}^{-1}\ell)] \right\} \\ &= E^{v_1} \{ Y'Y h(Y'Yv_1) \lambda_1(\Sigma^*V) [2 \operatorname{tr} V_{22}^{-1} - 2v_1(1+\ell'V_{22}^{-1}\ell)] \} \\ (2.21) \quad &\geq E^{v_1} \{ Y'Y h(Y'Yv_1) \} E^{v_1} \{ \lambda_1(\Sigma^*V) [2 \operatorname{tr} V_{22}^{-1} - 2v_1(1+\ell'V_{22}^{-1}\ell)] \} \\ &= E^{v_1} \{ Y'Y h(Y'Yv_1) \} E^{v_1} \{ \lambda_1(\Sigma^*V) (2 \operatorname{tr} V_{22}^{-1} - 4\frac{v_2}{v_1}) \} \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} & E^{v_1} \left\{ r(Y'Yv_1) \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} \left(-\frac{k}{n^*}\right) \right\} \\ &\geq E^{v_1} \{ r(Y'Yv_1) \} E^{v_1} \left\{ -\frac{k\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{n^*} \right\} \\ (2.22) \quad &= E^{v_1} \{ Y'Y h(Y'Yv_1) v_1 \} E^{v_1} \left\{ \frac{k\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{n^*} \right\} \\ &\geq E^{v_1} \{ Y'Y h(Y'Yv_1) \} E^{v_1} \{ v_1 \} E^{v_1} \left\{ -\frac{k\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{n^*} \right\}, \\ &= E^{v_1} \{ Y'Y h(Y'Yv_1) \} E^{v_1} \left\{ -\frac{k\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{(n^*)^2} \right\}, \end{aligned}$$

since

$$E^{V_1}[v_1] = E[1/\chi_{n-p+1}^2] = \frac{1}{n-p-1} = \frac{1}{n^*}.$$

Hence,

$$(2.23) \quad \tau \geq E^{V_1} \left\{ \frac{Y'Yh(Y'Yv_1)}{n^*} \right\} E^{L, V_1} E^{V_1} \left\{ \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} [R(V) - \frac{k}{n^*}] \right\}$$

where

$$(2.24) \quad R(V) = n^*(2v_1 \operatorname{tr}V^{-1} - 4v_2).$$

It now follows from (2.15), (2.20), and (2.23) that  $\Delta \leq 0$  if for all  $\Sigma^*$  with  $\lambda_1(\Sigma^*) = 1$ ,

$$(2.25) \quad E^V \left\{ \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} (R(V) - \frac{k}{n^*}) \right\} \geq 0.$$

This requirement closely resembles Equation (2.7) of Berger et al (1977), except that in place of their  $\rho(V) = 2 \operatorname{tr}V^{-1} - 4 v_2/v_1$ , we have  $R(V) = n^*v_1\rho(V)$ . Using the arguments above, or by direct application of Lemma 2.2, it can be shown that for every  $\Sigma^*$ ,

$$(2.26) \quad E^V \left\{ \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} (\rho(V) - \frac{k}{n^*}) \right\} \geq E^V \left\{ \frac{\lambda_1(\Sigma^*V)}{v_1} (R(V) - \frac{k}{n^*}) \right\},$$

so that  $k_{n,p}$  obtained from (2.25) will be less than or equal to the value of  $c_{n,p}$  obtained in Berger et al (1977).

Since  $R(V)$  shares with  $\rho(V)$  the necessary invariance properties under orthogonal rotation of  $V$  by a matrix of the form

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & \Delta \end{pmatrix}, \quad \Delta: (p-1) \times (p-1) \text{ orthogonal},$$

the arguments of Berger et al (1977) can be applied to show that (2.25) holds if  $0 \leq k \leq k_{n,p}$ , where  $k_{n,p}$  is the solution to

$$(2.27) \quad k = \min \left\{ \frac{\tau_0(k) + \tau_1(k)}{\tau'_0(k) + \tau'_1(k)}, \frac{\tau_0(k)}{\tau'_0(k)} \right\}$$

and where

$$\tau_0(k) = E^V \{ R(V) v_1^{-1} [v_{22} I_{\Omega_k}(V) + \lambda_1(V) I_{\bar{\Omega}_k}(V)] \},$$

$$\tau_1(k) = E^V \{ R(V) v_1^{-1} (v_{11} - v_{22}) I_{\Omega_k}(V) \},$$

$$\tau'_0(k) = E^V \{ v_1^{-1} [v_{22} I_{\Omega_k}(V) + \lambda_1(V) I_{\bar{\Omega}_k}(V) + \lambda_1(V) I_{\bar{\Omega}_k}(V)] \},$$

$$\tau'_1(k) = E^V \{ v_1^{-1} (v_{11} - v_{22}) I_{\Omega_k}(V) \},$$

$v_{22}$  is the first diagonal element of  $V_{22}$ , and

$$I_{\Omega_k}(V) = 1 - I_{\bar{\Omega}_k}(V) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } R(V) < k/n^*, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

With the help of Dr. George Casella, the identical computer program, modified only by replacing  $\rho(V)$  by  $R(V)$ , used in Berger et al (1977) to calculate the values of their  $c_{n,p}$  was used to calculate values of  $k_{n,p}$  by means of simulation. The resulting values of  $k_{n,p}$  appear in Table 1.

### 3. Remarks

When compared with the corresponding values of  $c_{n,p}$  in Berger et al (1977), the values of  $k_{n,p}$  are admittedly disappointingly small (being at best 90% of the values of  $c_{n,p}$ ). However, these values, even when applied in connection with rules of the form (1.2) or (1.3), produce substantial

improvements in risk when compared to  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$ , especially when  $\theta'\theta$  is small. In addition, since (1.5) is a far broader class than (1.2) or (1.3), these constants allow for flexibility in the form of the estimator of  $\theta$ . In the case when  $\Sigma$  is known, certain rules of the form (1.5) with  $\Sigma$  replacing  $(n^*)^{-1}W$  are known to be generalized Bayes and admissible. It is doubtful whether the same assertion can be made about the rules (1.5) when  $\Sigma$  is unknown, largely because of the use of  $\lambda_1(QW/n^*)$  in the formula for the estimator.

Several very gross inequalities were used to obtain the results of this paper. The use of inequality (2.3) probably does not lose us much, particularly since the inequality is also used in Berger et al (1977). The inequality (2.4) is more serious, amounting to adding the quantity

$$(3.1) \quad 4E^{X,W} [\lambda_1(QW/n^*)r^{(1)}(X'W^{-1}X)X'W^{-1}\Sigma W^{-1}X]$$

to the risk of  $\delta_{k,h}(X,W)$ . Note that  $r^{(1)}(t) = dr(t)/dt$  is positive, so that there is a chance that a substantial improvement in risk for  $\delta_{k,h}(X,W)$  over  $\delta_0(X,W)$  has been ignored in using the inequality (2.4). Finally, the inequalities leading from (2.20) to (2.25) add an additional inaccuracy to the assessment of risk of  $\delta_{k,h}(X,W)$ , as can be seen from (2.26). However, unless we want to make use of more detailed information about the form of  $h(t)$ , these inequalities are unavoidable.

The principal accomplishment of this paper lies in demonstrating that a wide and functionally flexible class of estimators can be used to dominate the usual estimator  $\delta_0(X,W) = X$  in risk when  $\Sigma$  is unknown (and  $p \geq 3$ ). Whether any particular one of these rules, or any other rule, can be recommended for practical application is still an open question.

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