

# Additional **multcomp** Examples

Torsten Hothorn

March 9, 2026

It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the theory and applications described in the `generalsiminf` vignette.

## 1 Simple Examples

**Example: Simple Linear Model.** Consider a simple univariate linear model regressing the distance to stop on speed for 50 cars:

```
R> lm.cars <- lm(dist ~ speed, data = cars)
R> summary(lm.cars)
```

Call:

```
lm(formula = dist ~ speed, data = cars)
```

Residuals:

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-29.07	-9.53	-2.27	9.21	43.20

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	-17.579	6.758	-2.60	0.012 *
speed	3.932	0.416	9.46	1.5e-12 ***

---

Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 15.4 on 48 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.651, Adjusted R-squared: 0.644

F-statistic: 89.6 on 1 and 48 DF, p-value: 1.49e-12

The estimates of the regression coefficients  $\beta$  and their covariance matrix can be extracted from the fitted model via:

```
R> betahat <- coef(lm.cars)
R> Vbetahat <- vcov(lm.cars)
```

At first, we are interested in the hypothesis  $\beta_1 = 0$  and  $\beta_2 = 0$ . This is equivalent to the linear hypothesis  $\mathbf{K}\beta = 0$  where  $\mathbf{K} = \text{diag}(2)$ , i.e.,

```
R> K <- diag(2)
R> Sigma <- diag(1 / sqrt(diag(K %*% Vbetahat %*% t(K))))
R> z <- Sigma %*% K %*% betahat
R> Cor <- Sigma %*% (K %*% Vbetahat %*% t(K)) %*% t(Sigma)
```

Note that  $\mathbf{z} = (-2.6011, 9.464)$  is equal to the  $t$  statistics. The multiplicity-adjusted  $p$  values can now be computed by means of the multivariate  $t$  distribution utilizing the `pmvt` function available in package `mvtnorm`:

```
R> library("mvtnorm")
R> df.cars <- nrow(cars) - length(betahat)
R> sapply(abs(z), function(x) 1 - pmvt(-rep(x, 2), rep(x, 2), corr = Cor, df = df.cars))

[1] 1.661e-02 2.458e-12
```

Note that the  $p$  value of the global test is the minimum  $p$  value of the partial tests.

The computations above can be performed much more conveniently using the functionality implemented in package `multcomp`. The function `glht` just takes a fitted model and a matrix defining the linear functions, and thus hypotheses, to be tested:

```
R> library("multcomp")
R> cars.ht <- glht(lm.cars, linfct = K)
R> summary(cars.ht)
```

#### Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

```
Fit: lm(formula = dist ~ speed, data = cars)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept) == 0	-17.579	6.758	-2.60	0.017 *
speed == 0	3.932	0.416	9.46	<1e-10 ***

```
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)
```

Simultaneous confidence intervals corresponding to this multiple testing procedure are available via

```
R> confint(cars.ht)
```

#### Simultaneous Confidence Intervals

```
Fit: lm(formula = dist ~ speed, data = cars)
```

```
Quantile = 2.131
```

95% family-wise confidence level

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	lwr	upr
(Intercept) == 0	-17.579	-31.981	-3.177
speed == 0	3.932	3.047	4.818

The application of the framework isn't limited to linear models, nonlinear least-squares estimates can be tested as well. Consider constructing simultaneous confidence intervals for the model parameters (example from the manual page of `nls`):

```
R> DNase1 <- subset(DNase, Run == 1)
R> fm1DNase1 <- nls(density ~ SSlogis(log(conc), Asym, xmid, scal), DNase1)
R> K <- diag(3)
R> rownames(K) <- names(coef(fm1DNase1))
R> confint(glht(fm1DNase1, linfct = K))
```

Simultaneous Confidence Intervals

```
Fit: nls(formula = density ~ SSlogis(log(conc), Asym, xmid, scal),
  data = DNase1, algorithm = "default", control = list(maxiter = 50,
  tol = 1e-05, minFactor = 0.0009765625, printEval = FALSE,
  warnOnly = FALSE, scaleOffset = 0, nDcentral = FALSE),
  trace = FALSE)
```

Quantile = 2.136

95% family-wise confidence level

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	lwr	upr
Asym == 0	2.345	2.178	2.512
xmid == 0	1.483	1.309	1.657
scal == 0	1.041	0.973	1.110

which is not totally different from univariate confidence intervals

```
R> confint(fm1DNase1)
```

	2.5%	97.5%
Asym	2.1935	2.539
xmid	1.3215	1.679
scal	0.9743	1.115

because the parameter estimates are highly correlated

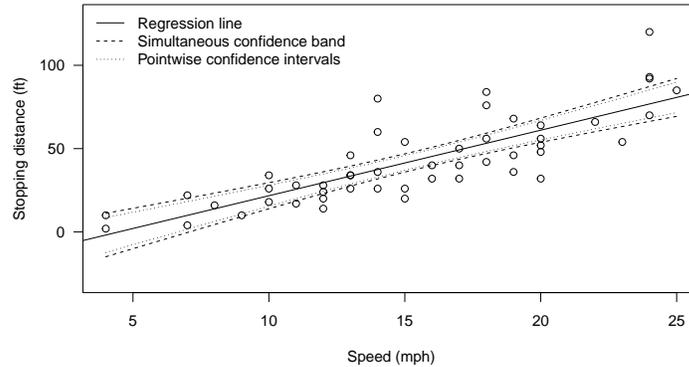


Figure 1: cars data: Regression line with confidence bands (dashed) and intervals (dotted).

```
R> cov2cor(vcov(fm1DNase1))
```

```
      Asym  xmid  scal
Asym 1.0000 0.9868 0.9008
xmid 0.9868 1.0000 0.9063
scal 0.9008 0.9063 1.0000
```

**Example: Confidence Bands for Regression Line.** Suppose we want to plot the linear model fit to the cars data including an assessment of the variability of the model fit. This can be based on simultaneous confidence intervals for the regression line  $x_i^T \hat{\beta}$ :

```
R> K <- model.matrix(lm.cars)[!duplicated(cars$speed),]
R> ci.cars <- confint(glht(lm.cars, linfct = K), abseps = 0.1)
```

Figure 1 depicts the regression fit together with the confidence band for the regression line and the pointwise confidence intervals as computed by `predict(lm.cars)`.

## 2 Multiple Comparison Procedures

Multiple comparisons of means, i.e., regression coefficients for groups in AN(C)OVA models, are a special case of the general framework sketched in the previous section. The main difficulty is that the comparisons one is usually interested in, for example all-pairwise differences, can't be directly specified based on model

parameters of an AN(C)OVA regression model. We start with a simple one-way ANOVA example and generalize to ANCOVA models in the following.

Consider a one-way ANOVA model, i.e., the only covariate  $x$  is a factor at  $j$  levels. In the absence of an intercept term only, the elements of the parameter vector  $\beta \in \mathbb{R}^j$  correspond to the mean of the response in each of the  $j$  groups:

```
R> ex <- data.frame(y = rnorm(12), x = gl(3, 4, labels = LETTERS[1:3]))
R> aov.ex <- aov(y ~ x - 1, data = ex)
R> coef(aov.ex)
```

```
      xA      xB      xC
0.1627 0.1835 0.2976
```

Thus, the hypotheses  $\beta_2 - \beta_1 = 0$  and  $\beta_3 - \beta_1 = 0$  can be written in form of a linear function  $\mathbf{K}\beta$  with

```
R> K <- rbind(c(-1, 1, 0),
+           c(-1, 0, 1))
R> rownames(K) <- c("B - A", "C - A")
R> colnames(K) <- names(coef(aov.ex))
R> K
```

```
      xA xB xC
B - A -1  1  0
C - A -1  0  1
```

Using the general linear hypothesis function `glht`, this so-called ‘many-to-one comparison procedure’ (Dunnett, 1955) can be performed via

```
R> summary(glht(aov.ex, linfct = K))
```

#### Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

```
Fit: aov(formula = y ~ x - 1, data = ex)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
B - A == 0	0.0208	0.8010	0.03	1.00
C - A == 0	0.1349	0.8010	0.17	0.98

(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)

Alternatively, a symbolic description of the general linear hypothesis of interest can be supplied to `glht`:

```
R> summary(glht(aov.ex, linfct = c("xB - xA = 0", "xC - xA = 0")))
```

#### Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

```
Fit: aov(formula = y ~ x - 1, data = ex)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

```
              Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
xB - xA == 0    0.0208     0.8010    0.03    1.00
xC - xA == 0    0.1349     0.8010    0.17    0.98
(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)
```

However, in the presence of an intercept term, the full parameter vector  $\theta = c(\mu, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_j)$  can't be estimated due to singularities in the corresponding design matrix. Therefore, a vector of *contrasts*  $\gamma^*$  of the original parameter vector  $\gamma$  is fitted. More technically, a contrast matrix  $\mathbf{C}$  is included into this model such that  $\beta = \mathbf{C}\gamma^*$  any we only obtain estimates for  $\gamma^*$ , but not for  $\gamma$ :

```
R> aov.ex2 <- aov(y ~ x, data = ex)
R> coef(aov.ex2)
```

```
(Intercept)          xB          xC
      0.16273      0.02081      0.13488
```

The default contrasts in R are so-called treatment contrasts, nothing but differences in means for one baseline group (compare the Dunnett contrasts and the estimated regression coefficients):

```
R> contr.treatment(table(ex$x))
```

```
 4 4
4 0 0
4 1 0
4 0 1
```

```
R> K %*% contr.treatment(table(ex$x)) %*% coef(aov.ex2)[-1]
```

```
      [,1]
B - A 0.02081
C - A 0.13488
```

so that  $\mathbf{KC}\hat{\beta}^* = \mathbf{K}\hat{\beta}$ .

When the `mcp` function is used to specify linear hypotheses, the `glht` function takes care of contrasts. Within `mcp`, the matrix of linear hypotheses  $\mathbf{K}$  can be written in terms of  $\gamma$ , not  $\gamma^*$ . Note that the matrix of linear hypotheses only applies to those elements of  $\hat{\gamma}^*$  attached to factor  $x$  but not to the intercept term:

```
R> summary(glht(aov.ex2, linfct = mcp(x = K)))
```

Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

Multiple Comparisons of Means: User-defined Contrasts

```
Fit: aov(formula = y ~ x, data = ex)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
B - A == 0	0.0208	0.8010	0.03	1.00
C - A == 0	0.1349	0.8010	0.17	0.98

(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)

or, a little bit more convenient in this simple case:

```
R> summary(glht(aov.ex2, linfct = mcp(x = c("B - A = 0", "C - A = 0"))))
```

Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

Multiple Comparisons of Means: User-defined Contrasts

```
Fit: aov(formula = y ~ x, data = ex)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
B - A == 0	0.0208	0.8010	0.03	1.00
C - A == 0	0.1349	0.8010	0.17	0.98

(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)

More generally, inference on linear functions of parameters which can be interpreted as ‘means’ are known as *multiple comparison procedures* (MCP). For some of the more prominent special cases, the corresponding linear functions can be computed by convenience functions part of **multcomp**. For example, Tukey all-pair comparisons for the factor *x* can be set up using

```
R> glht(aov.ex2, linfct = mcp(x = "Tukey"))
```

General Linear Hypotheses

Multiple Comparisons of Means: Tukey Contrasts

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate
B - A == 0	0.0208
C - A == 0	0.1349
C - B == 0	0.1141

The initial parameterization of the model is automatically taken into account:

```
R> glht(aov.ex, linfct = mcp(x = "Tukey"))
```

## General Linear Hypotheses

Multiple Comparisons of Means: Tukey Contrasts

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate
B - A == 0	0.0208
C - A == 0	0.1349
C - B == 0	0.1141

### 3 Two-way ANOVA

For two-way ANOVA models, one might be interested in comparing the levels of the two factors simultaneously. For the model

```
R> mod <- lm(breaks ~ wool + tension, data = warpbreaks)
```

one can extract the appropriate contrast matrices for both factors via

```
R> K1 <- glht(mod, mcp(wool = "Tukey"))$linfct
R> K2 <- glht(mod, mcp(tension = "Tukey"))$linfct
```

and we can simultaneously compare the levels of each factor using

```
R> summary(glht(mod, linfct = rbind(K1, K2)))
```

#### Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

```
Fit: lm(formula = breaks ~ wool + tension, data = warpbreaks)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
B - A == 0	-5.78	3.16	-1.83	0.2304
M - L == 0	-10.00	3.87	-2.58	0.0458 *
H - L == 0	-14.72	3.87	-3.80	0.0015 **
H - M == 0	-4.72	3.87	-1.22	0.5703

---

Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1  
(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)

where the first comparison is with respect to `wool` and the remaining three to `tension`.

For models with interaction term

```
R> mod <- lm(breaks ~ wool * tension, data = warpbreaks)
```

one might be interested in comparing the levels of `tension` within the levels of `wool`. There are two ways to do this. First, we compute the means of the response for all six combinations of the levels of `wool` and `tension`:

```
R> tmp <- expand.grid(tension = unique(warpbreaks$tension),
+                   wool = unique(warpbreaks$wool))
R> X <- model.matrix(~ wool * tension, data = tmp)
R> glht(mod, linfct = X)
```

### General Linear Hypotheses

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate
1 == 0	44.6
2 == 0	24.0
3 == 0	24.6
4 == 0	28.2
5 == 0	28.8
6 == 0	18.8

which is the same as

```
R> predict(mod, newdata = tmp)
```

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	44.56	24.00	24.56	28.22	28.78	18.78

We now construct a contrast matrix based on Tukey-contrasts for `tension` in a block-diagonal way, i.e., for each level of `wool`:

```
R> Tukey <- contrMat(table(warpbreaks$tension), "Tukey")
R> K1 <- cbind(Tukey, matrix(0, nrow = nrow(Tukey), ncol = ncol(Tukey)))
R> rownames(K1) <- paste(levels(warpbreaks$wool)[1], rownames(K1), sep = ":")
R> K2 <- cbind(matrix(0, nrow = nrow(Tukey), ncol = ncol(Tukey)), Tukey)
R> rownames(K2) <- paste(levels(warpbreaks$wool)[2], rownames(K2), sep = ":")
R> K <- rbind(K1, K2)
R> colnames(K) <- c(colnames(Tukey), colnames(Tukey))
```

and perform the tests via

```
R> summary(glht(mod, linfct = K %*% X))
```

### Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

```
Fit: lm(formula = breaks ~ wool * tension, data = warpbreaks)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
A:M - L == 0	-20.556	5.157	-3.99	0.0013 **
A:H - L == 0	-20.000	5.157	-3.88	0.0018 **
A:H - M == 0	0.556	5.157	0.11	1.0000
B:M - L == 0	0.556	5.157	0.11	1.0000

```

B:H - L == 0   -9.444      5.157   -1.83   0.3080
B:H - M == 0  -10.000     5.157   -1.94   0.2553
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)

```

where the effects are the same as

```
R> K %*% predict(mod, newdata = tmp)
```

```

      [,1]
A:M - L -20.5556
A:H - L -20.0000
A:H - M  0.5556
B:M - L  0.5556
B:H - L -9.4444
B:H - M -10.0000

```

We see that the groups (M, L) and (H, L) are different, however, only for wool A (in contrast to the additive model above).

Note that the same results can be obtained by fitting the so-called cell-means model based on a new factor derived as the interaction of `wool` and `tension`:

```

R> warpbreaks$tw <- with(warpbreaks, interaction(tension, wool))
R> cell <- lm(breaks ~ tw - 1, data = warpbreaks)
R> summary(glht(cell, linfct = K))

```

#### Simultaneous Tests for General Linear Hypotheses

```
Fit: lm(formula = breaks ~ tw - 1, data = warpbreaks)
```

Linear Hypotheses:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )	
A:M - L == 0	-20.556	5.157	-3.99	0.0013	**
A:H - L == 0	-20.000	5.157	-3.88	0.0018	**
A:H - M == 0	0.556	5.157	0.11	1.0000	
B:M - L == 0	0.556	5.157	0.11	1.0000	
B:H - L == 0	-9.444	5.157	-1.83	0.3080	
B:H - M == 0	-10.000	5.157	-1.94	0.2553	

```

---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
(Adjusted p values reported -- single-step method)

```

## 4 Test Procedures

Several global and multiple test procedures are available from the `summary` method of `glht` objects and can be specified via its `test` argument:

- `test = univariate()` univariate  $p$  values based on either the  $t$  or normal distribution are reported. Controls the type I error for each partial hypothesis only.
- `test = Ftest()` global  $F$  test for  $H_0$ .
- `test = Chisqtest()` global  $\chi^2$  test for  $H_0$ .
- `test = adjusted()` multiple test procedures as specified by the `type` argument to `adjusted`: "`single-step`" denotes adjusted  $p$  values as computed from the joint normal or  $t$  distribution of the  $\mathbf{z}$  statistics (default), "`free`" implements multiple testing procedures under free combinations, "`Shaffer`" implements Bonferroni-adjustments taking logical constraints into account Shaffer (1986) and "`Westfall`" takes both logical constraints and correlations among the  $\mathbf{z}$  statistics into account Westfall (1997). In addition, all adjustment methods implemented in `p.adjust` can be specified as well.

## 5 Quality Assurance

The analyses shown in Westfall *et al.* (1999) can be reproduced using `multcomp` by running the R transcript file in `inst/MCMT`.

## References

- Dunnett CW (1955). "A Multiple Comparison Procedure for Comparing Several Treatments with a Control." *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, **50**(272), 1096–1121.
- Shaffer JP (1986). "Modified Sequentially Rejective Multiple Test Procedures." *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, **81**(395), 826–831. doi:10.1080/01621459.1986.10478341.
- Westfall PH (1997). "Multiple Testing of General Contrasts using Logical Constraints and Correlations." *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, **92**(437), 299–306. doi:10.1080/01621459.1997.10473627.
- Westfall PH, Tobias RD, Rom D, Wolfinger RD, Hochberg Y (1999). *Multiple Comparisons and Multiple Tests Using the SAS System*. SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC.