

# Package ‘SuperExactTest’

July 21, 2025

**Type** Package

**Title** Exact Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections

**Version** 1.1.0

**Date** 2022-03-29

**Author** Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao and Bin Zhang

**Maintainer** Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>

**Contact** Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang  
<bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

## Description

Identification of sets of objects with shared features is a common operation in all disciplines. Analysis of intersections among multiple sets is fundamental for in-depth understanding of their complex relationships. This package implements a theoretical framework for efficient computation of statistical distributions of multi-set intersections based upon combinatorial theory, and provides multiple scalable techniques for visualizing the intersection statistics. The statistical algorithm behind this package was published in Wang et al. (2015) <[doi:10.1038/srep16923](https://doi.org/10.1038/srep16923)>.

**License** GPL-3

**Depends** grid (>= 3.1.0), methods, R (>= 3.1.0)

**Suggests** knitr, rmarkdown

**VignetteBuilder** knitr

**URL** <https://github.com/mw201608/SuperExactTest/>

**BugReports** <https://github.com/mw201608/SuperExactTest/issues>

**NeedsCompilation** yes

**Repository** CRAN

**Date/Publication** 2022-03-23 16:10:05 UTC

## Contents

Cancer . . . . .	2
cis.eqtls . . . . .	3

cpsets . . . . .	3
deBarcode . . . . .	5
GWAS . . . . .	5
intersect . . . . .	6
intersectElements . . . . .	7
jaccard . . . . .	8
MSET . . . . .	8
msets . . . . .	10
plot.msets . . . . .	11
summary.msets . . . . .	14
SuperExactTest . . . . .	16
supertest . . . . .	16

<b>Index</b>	<b>18</b>
--------------	-----------

---

Cancer	<i>Cancer Census Dataset</i>
--------	------------------------------

---

## Description

This example dataset contains a list of seven cancer predisposition gene sets.

## Usage

```
data(Cancer)
```

## Details

The seven cancer predisposition gene sets are:

- NRG (Rahman, N. Realizing the promise of cancer predisposition genes. *Nature* 2014, 505:302-308);
- NBG (Tamborero, D. et al. Comprehensive identification of mutational cancer driver genes across 12 tumor types. *Scientific reports* 2013, 3:2650);
- LDG (Kandoth, C. et al. Mutational landscape and significance across 12 major cancer types. *Nature* 2013, 502:333-339);
- GGG (Lawrence, M. S. et al. Discovery and saturation analysis of cancer genes across 21 tumour types. *Nature* 2014, 505:495-501);
- ELG (Garraway, L. A. & Lander, E. S. Lessons from the cancer genome. *Cell* 2013, 153:17-37);
- CCG (Futreal, P. A. et al. A census of human cancer genes. *Nature reviews. Cancer* 2004, 4:177-183);
- BVG (Vogelstein, B. et al. Cancer genome landscapes. *Science* 2013, 339:1546-1558).

## References

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**[supertest](#)

---

`cis.eqtls`*cis-eQTLs*

---

**Description**

This example dataset contains a list of cis-eQTL genes.

**Usage**

```
data(eqtls)
```

**Details**

A list is included in this dataset: `cis.eqtls`, which contains four sets of cis-eQTL genes published by Gibbs et al (PLOS Genetics 2010, 6:e1000952) as deposited in the eQTL Browser (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/projects/g>). The four sets of cis-eQTL genes were detected in four different brain regions from Gibbs: brain cerebellum (CB), brain frontal cortex region (FC), brain temporal cortex region (TC), and brain pons region (PONS) respectively.

**See Also**[supertest](#)

---

`cpsets`*Multi-Set Intersection Probability*

---

**Description**

Density and distribution function of multi-set intersection test.

**Usage**

```
dpsets(x,L,n,log.p =FALSE)
cpsets(x,L,n,lower.tail=TRUE,log.p=FALSE,
       simulation.p.value=FALSE,number.simulations=1000000)
```

**Arguments**

<code>x</code>	integer, number of elements overlap among all sets.
<code>L</code>	vector, set sizes.
<code>n</code>	integer, background population size.
<code>lower.tail</code>	logical; if TRUE, probability is $P[\text{overlap} \leq x]$ , otherwise, $P[\text{overlap} > x]$ .
<code>log.p</code>	logical; if TRUE, probability $p$ is given as $\log(p)$ .
<code>simulation.p.value</code>	logical; if TRUE, probability $p$ is computed from simulation.
<code>number.simulations</code>	integer; number of simulations.

**Value**

`dpsets` gives the density and `cpsets` gives the distribution function.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[supertest](#), [MSET](#)

**Examples**

```
## Not run:  
#set up fake data  
n=500; A=260; B=320; C=430; D=300; x=170  
(d=dpsets(x,c(A,B,C,D),n))  
(p=cpsets(x,c(A,B,C,D),n,lower.tail=FALSE))  
  
## End(Not run)
```

---

`deBarcode`*Decrypt Barcode*

---

**Description**

Decrypt barcode information.

**Usage**

```
deBarcode(barcode, setnames, collapse=' & ')
```

**Arguments**

<code>barcode</code>	a vector of character strings, encoding the intersection combination.
<code>setnames</code>	set names.
<code>collapse</code>	an optional character string to separate the results. See <a href="#">paste</a> .

**Details**

`barcode` are character strings of '0' and '1', indicating absence or presence of each set in a intersection combination.

**Value**

A vector.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>

**Examples**

```
deBarcode(c('01011', '10100'), c('S1', 'S2', 'S3', 'S4', 'S5'))
```

---

`GWAS`*GAWS Catalog Dataset*

---

**Description**

This example dataset contains a list of gene sets associated with six types of clinical traits curated in the GWAS Catalog.

**Usage**

```
data(GWAS)
```

**Details**

The six clinical traits are:

- NEU (Bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, Schizophrenia, Major depressive disorder, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, Cognitive performance, Bipolar disorder);
- INF (Crohn’s disease, Ulcerative colitis, Inflammatory bowel disease, Rheumatoid arthritis, Multiple sclerosis, Systemic lupus erythematosus);
- CVD (Type 2 diabetes, Coronary heart disease, Blood pressure, total Cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, Triglycerides);
- HT (height);
- IgG (IgG glycosylation);
- OB (obesity, obesity related traits).

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[supertest](#)

---

intersect

*Set Operations*

---

**Description**

Performs set union and intersection on multiple input vectors.

**Usage**

```
union(x, y, ...)
intersect(x, y, ...)
```

**Arguments**

`x, y, ...` vectors (of the same mode) containing a sequence of items (conceptually) with no duplicated values.

**Details**

These functions extend the the same functions in the base package to handle more than two input vectors.

**Value**

A vector of the same mode as `x` or `y` for `intersect`, and of a common mode for `union`.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**Examples**

```
##not run##
```

---

intersectElements	<i>Find Intersection Membership</i>
-------------------	-------------------------------------

---

**Description**

Find intersections and assign element to intersection combinations.

**Usage**

```
intersectElements(x, mutual.exclusive=TRUE)
```

**Arguments**

x	list; a collection of sets.
mutual.exclusive	logical; see Details.

**Details**

See example below for the use of `mutual.exclusive`.

**Value**

A data.frame with two columns:

Entry	set elements.
barcode	intersection combination that each entry belongs to.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>

**Examples**

```
set.seed(123)
sets=list(S1=sample(letters,10), S2=sample(letters,5), S3=sample(letters,7))
intersectElements(sets,mutual.exclusive=TRUE)
intersectElements(sets,mutual.exclusive=FALSE)
```

jaccard

*Calculate Jaccard Index*

---

**Description**

This function calculates Jaccard indices between pairs of sets.

**Usage**

```
jaccard(x)
```

**Arguments**

x                    list, a collect of sets.

**Value**

A matrix of pairwise Jaccard indices.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>

**Examples**

```
## Not run:  
#set up fake data  
x=list(S1=letters[1:20], S2=letters[10:26], S3=sample(letters,10), S4=sample(letters,10))  
jaccard(x)  
  
## End(Not run)
```

---

MSET*Exact Test of Multi-Set Intersection*

---

**Description**

Calculate FE and significance of intersection among multiple sets.

**Usage**

```
MSET(x,n,lower.tail=TRUE,log.p=FALSE)
```



**Arguments**

x	list; a collection of sets.
n	integer; background population size.
lower.tail	logical; if TRUE, probability is $P[\text{overlap} < m]$ , otherwise, $P[\text{overlap} \geq m]$ , where $m$ is the number of elements overlap between all sets.
log.p	logical; if TRUE, probability $p$ is given as $\log(p)$ .

**Details**

This function implements an efficient statistical test for multi-set intersections. The algorithm behind this function was described in Wang et al 2015.

**Value**

A list with the following elements:

intersects	a vector of intersect items.
FE	fold enrichment of the intersection.
p.value	one-tail probability of observing equal to or larger than the number of intersect items.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[supertest](#), [cpsets](#), [dpsets](#)

**Examples**

```
## Not run:
#set up fake data
x=list(S1=letters[1:20], S2=letters[10:26], S3=sample(letters,10), S4=sample(letters,10))
MSET(x, 26, FALSE)

## End(Not run)
```

---

msets

---

*Class to Contain Multi-Set Intersections*


---

### Description

This object contains data regarding the intersections between multiple sets. This object is usually created by the `supertest` function.

### Details

Intersection combination is denoted by a barcode string of '0' and '1', where a value of '1' in the  $i$ th position of the string indicates that the intersection is involved with the  $i$ th set, 0 otherwise. E.g., string '000101' indicates that the intersection is an overlap between the 4th and 6th sets. Function [deBarcode](#) can be used to decrypt the barcode. Generic `summary` and `plot` functions can be applied to extract and visualize the results.

### Value

<code>x</code>	a list of sets from input.
<code>set.names</code>	names of the sets. If the input sets do not have names, they will be automatically named as SetX where X is an integer from 1 to the total number of sets.
<code>set.sizes</code>	a vector of set sizes.
<code>n</code>	background population size.
<code>overlap.sizes</code>	a named vector of intersection sizes. Each intersection component is named by a barcoded character string of '0' and '1'. See <code>Details</code> for barcode.
<code>overlap.expected</code>	a named vector of expected intersection sizes when item <code>n</code> is available.
<code>P.value</code>	a vector of p values for the intersections when item <code>n</code> is available.

### Author(s)

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

### References

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

### See Also

[supertest](#), [summary.msets](#), [plot.msets](#), [deBarcode](#)

---

plot.msets

*Draw Multi-Set Intersections*


---

## Description

This function draws intersections among multiple sets.

## Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'msets'
plot(x, Layout=c('circular','landscape'), degree=NULL,
keep.empty.intersections=TRUE,
sort.by=c('set','size','degree','p-value'),
min.intersection.size=0, max.intersection.size=Inf,
ylim=NULL, log.scale=FALSE, yfrac=0.8, margin=NULL,
color.scale.pos=c(0.85, 0.9), legend.pos=c(0.85,0.25),
legend.col=2, legend.text.cex=1, color.scale.cex=1,
color.scale.title=expression(paste(-Log[10], '(', italic(P), ')')),
color.on='#2EFE64', color.off='#EEEEEE',
show.overlap.size=TRUE, show.fold.enrichment=FALSE, show.set.size=TRUE,
overlap.size.cex=0.9, track.area.range=0.3, bar.area.range=0.2,
new.gridPage=TRUE, minMinusLog10PValue=0,
maxMinusLog10PValue=NULL, show.elements=FALSE, ...)
```

## Arguments

x	a msets object.
Layout	layout for plotting.
degree	a vector of intersection degrees for plotting. E.g., when degree=c(2:3), only those intersections involving two or three sets will be plotted. By default, degree=NULL, all possible intersections are plotted.
keep.empty.intersections	logical; if FALSE, empty intersection(s) will be discarded to save plotting space.
min.intersection.size	Minimum size of an intersection to be plotted.
max.intersection.size	Maximum size of an intersection to be plotted.
sort.by	how to sort intersections. It can be either one of the key words "set", "size", "degree", and "p-value", or a vector of custom ordered set combination strings.
ylim	the limits c(y1, y2) of plotting overlap size.
log.scale	logical; whether to plot with log transformed intersection sizes.
yfrac	numeric; the fraction (0 to 1) of canvas used for plotting bars. Only used for landscape Layout.

<code>margin</code>	numeric; a vector of 4 numeric values specifying the margins (bottom, left, top, & right) in unit of "lines". Default <code>c(1,1,1,1)+0.1</code> for circular Layout and <code>c(0.5,5,1.5,2)+0.1</code> for landscape Layout. Increase margin if the plot area is cropped.
<code>color.scale.pos</code>	numeric; x and y coordinates (0 to 1) for packing the color scale guide. It could be a keyword "topright" or "topleft" in the landscape layout, and one of "topright", "topleft", "bottomright" and "bottomleft" in the circular layout.
<code>legend.pos</code>	numeric; x and y coordinates (0 to 1) for packing the legend in the circular layout. It could be one of the keywords "bottomright", "bottomleft", "topleft" and "topright".
<code>legend.col</code>	integer; number of columns of the legend in the circular layout.
<code>legend.text.cex</code>	numeric; specifying the amount by which legend text should be magnified relative to the default.
<code>color.scale.cex</code>	numeric; specifying the amount by which color scale text should be magnified relative to the default.
<code>color.scale.title</code>	character or expression; a title for the color scale guide.
<code>color.on</code>	color code; specifying the color for set(s) which are "present" for an intersection. Can be a vector of colors. When NULL, a predefined list of colors will be used.
<code>color.off</code>	color code; specifying the color for set(s) which are "absent" for an intersection.
<code>show.overlap.size</code>	logical; whether to show overlap size on top of the bars. This will be set to FALSE if <code>show.fold.enrichment = TRUE</code> .
<code>show.fold.enrichment</code>	logical; whether to show fold enrichment if available rather than overlap size. This will impact <code>show.overlap.size</code> .
<code>show.set.size</code>	color code; whether to show set size in the landscape layout.
<code>overlap.size.cex</code>	numeric; specifying the amount by which overlap size text should be magnified relative to the default.
<code>track.area.range</code>	the magnitude of track area from origin in the circular layout.
<code>bar.area.range</code>	the magnitude of bar area from edge of the track area in the circular layout. The sum of <code>track.area.range</code> and <code>bar.area.range</code> should not be larger than 0.5.
<code>new.gridPage</code>	logic; whether to start a new grid page. Set FALSE to allow for customized arrangement of the grid layout.
<code>minMinusLog10PValue</code>	numeric; minimum minus log10 P value for capping the scale of color map. Default 0.

maxMinusLog10PValue	numeric; maximum minus log <sub>10</sub> P value for capping the scale of color map. Default maximum from the data.
show.elements	logical; whether to show the intersection elements on top of the bars with the landscape layout. See Details for more control options elements.*.
...	additional arguments for the plot function. See Details.

## Details

The plot canvas has coordinates 0~1 for both x and y axes. Additional optional plot parameters include:

- ylab, a character string of y axis label.
- circle.radii, radii size of the circles in landscape Layout. Default 0.5.
- heatmapColor, a vector of customized heat colors.
- show.expected.overlap, whether to show expected overlap in landscape Layout. Default 'FALSE'.
- expected.overlap.style, one of c("hatchedBox", "horizBar", "box"). Default 'hatchedBox'.
- expected.overlap.lwd, line width for expected.overlap "horizBar" and "box". Default 2.
- color.expected.overlap, color for showing expected overlap in hatched lines. Default 'grey'.
- alpha.expected.overlap, alpha channel for transparency for showing expected overlap hatched lines. Default 1 (normalized to the range 0 to 1).
- cex, scale of text font size.
- cex.lab, scale of axis label text font size.
- show.track.id, logic, whether to show the track id in the circular layout. Default TRUE.
- phantom.tracks, number of phantom tracks in the middle in the circular layout. Default 2.
- gap.within.track, ratio of gap width over block width on the same track. Default 0.1.
- gap.between.track, ratio of gap width over track width. Default 0.1.
- bar.split, a vector of two values specifying a continuous range that will be cropped in the y axis with the landscape layout.
- elements.list, a data.frame or matrix such as the one generated by the summary function from a msets object, with row names matching the barcodes of intersection combinations and at least one column named "Elements" listing the elements to be displayed (the elements should be concatenated by separator ", ").
- elements.cex, numeric; specifying the amount by which intersection element text should be magnified. Default 0.9.
- elements.rot, numeric; the angle to rotate the text of intersection elements. Default 45.
- elements.col, colour for intersection element text. Default black.
- elements.maximum, maximum number of elements to show.
- intersection.size.rotate, logic, whether to rotate the text of intersection size.
- flip.vertical, logic, whether to flip the bars to downwards in landscape Layout. Default 'FALSE'.
- title, figure title. Default NULL.
- cex.title, scale of title text font size. Default 1.

**Value**

No return.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[msets](#)

**Examples**

```
## Not run:
#set up fake data
x=list(S1=letters[1:20], S2=letters[10:26], S3=sample(letters,10), S4=sample(letters,10))
obj=supertest(x,n=26)
plot(obj)

## End(Not run)
```

---

summary.msets

*Summarize an msets Object*

---

**Description**

This function outputs summary statistics of a msets object.

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'msets'
summary(object, degree=NULL, ...)
```

**Arguments**

object	a msets object.
degree	a vector of intersection degrees to pull out.
...	additional arguments (not implemented).

**Value**

A list:

Barcode	a vector of 0/1 character strings, representing the set composition of each intersection.
otab	a vector of observed intersection size between any combination of sets.
etab	a vector of expected intersection size between any combination of sets if background population size is specified.
set.names	set names.
set.sizes	set sizes.
n	background population size.
P.value	upper tail p value for each intersection if background population size n is specified.
Table	a data.frame containing degree, otab, etab, fold change, p value and the overlap elements.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[msets](#)

**Examples**

```
## Not run:
#set up fake data
x=list(S1=letters[1:20], S2=letters[10:26], S3=sample(letters,10), S4=sample(letters,10))
obj=supertest(x,n=26)
summary(obj)

## End(Not run)
```

---

SuperExactTest	<i>SuperExactTest Package</i>
----------------	-------------------------------

---

**Description**

Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-set Intersections

**Details**

The main functions that most users may need from this package are [supertest](#) and [MSET](#). For a brief introduction of using this package, please see `vignette("set_html")`.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[supertest](#), [MSET](#)

**Examples**

```
## Not run:  
#See a brief introduction of using this package  
vignette("set_html")  
  
## End(Not run)
```

---

supertest	<i>Calculate Intersections Among Multiple Sets and Perform Statistical Tests</i>
-----------	--

---

**Description**

This function calculates intersection sizes among multiple sets and performs statistical tests of the intersections.

**Usage**

```
supertest(x, n=NULL, degree=NULL, ...)
```



**Arguments**

x	list; a collection of sets.
n	integer, background population size. Required for computing the statistical significance of intersections.
degree	a vector of intersection degrees for overlap analysis. E.g., when degree=c(2:3), only those intersections involving two or three sets will be computed. By default, degree=NULL, all possible intersections are computed.
...	additional arguments (not implemented).

**Details**

This function calculates intersection sizes between multiple sets and, if background population size  $n$  is specified, performs statistical tests of the intersections. For a brief introduction of using this package, please see `vignette("set_html")`.

**Value**

An object of class `msets`.

**Author(s)**

Minghui Wang <minghui.wang@mssm.edu>, Bin Zhang <bin.zhang@mssm.edu>

**References**

Minghui Wang, Yongzhong Zhao, and Bin Zhang (2015). Efficient Test and Visualization of Multi-Set Intersections. *Scientific Reports* 5: 16923.

**See Also**

[msets](#), [MSET](#), [Cancer](#), [cpsets](#), [dpsets](#)

**Examples**

```
## Not run:
#Analyze the cancer gene sets
data(Cancer)
Result=supertest(Cancer, n=20687)
summary(Result)
plot(Result,degree=2:7,sort.by='size')

## End(Not run)
```

# Index

\* **classes**

msets, 10

\* **datasets**

Cancer, 2

cis.eqtls, 3

GWAS, 5

Cancer, 2, 17

cis.eqtls, 3

cpsets, 3, 9, 17

deBarcode, 5, 10

dpsets, 9, 17

dpsets (cpsets), 3

GWAS, 5

intersect, 6

intersectElements, 7

jaccard, 8

MSET, 4, 8, 16, 17

msets, 10, 14, 15, 17

paste, 5

plot.msets, 10, 11

summary.msets, 10, 14

SuperExactTest, 16

supertest, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 16, 16

supertest, list-method (supertest), 16

union (intersect), 6