# A Law of the Iterated Logarithm

## for Grenander's Estimator



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Based on joint work with:

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- 1: Introduction: classical LIL's.
- 2: Grenander's estimator: the MLE of a decreasing density.
- 3: Chernoff's distribution and tail behavior.
- 4: A LIL for Grenander's estimator.
- 5: Summary; further questions and open problems.

- Setting:  $X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_n, \ldots$  i.i.d. random variables with  $\mu = E(X_1) = 0$ ,  $Var(X_1) = \sigma^2$ .
- $S_n \equiv \sum_{i=1}^n X_i = n \overline{X}_n.$
- Then, with  $Z \sim N(0, 1)$ ,

$$\frac{S_n}{\sqrt{n}} = \sqrt{n}(\overline{X}_n - \mu) \to_d \sigma Z$$

Theorem. (Hartman and Wintner (1941)).

$$\limsup_{n \to \infty} \frac{S_n}{\sqrt{2n \log \log n}} = +\sigma \quad \text{a.s.},$$
$$\liminf_{n \to \infty} \frac{S_n}{\sqrt{2n \log \log n}} = -\sigma \quad \text{a.s.}.$$

Moreover, Strassen (1964) showed that

$$\frac{S_n}{\sqrt{2n\log\log n}} \rightsquigarrow [-\sigma,\sigma] \quad \text{a.s...and...}$$

with

$$\mathbb{S}_{n}(t) \equiv \begin{cases} \frac{S_{k}}{\sqrt{2n\log\log n}} & \text{at } t = k/n, \\ \text{linearly interp. on } k/n \leq t \leq (k+1)/n, \ k = 0, 1, \dots, n-1, \\ \text{we have} \end{cases}$$

$$\mathbb{S}_n \rightsquigarrow \sigma \mathcal{K}$$
 a.s.

where

$$\mathcal{K} \equiv \left\{ f \in C[0,1] : f(t) = \int_0^t \dot{f}(s) ds, \text{ some } \dot{f}, \int_0^1 \dot{f}^2(s) ds \le 1 \right\}.$$

Corollary.

$$\limsup_{n\to\infty} \frac{S_n}{\sqrt{2n\log\log n}} = \limsup_{n\to\infty} S_n(1) = \sigma \sup_{f\in\mathcal{K}} f(1) = \sigma \cdot 1$$
  
where the supremum in the last line is achieved at  $f(t) = t$ ,  
 $0 \le t \le 1$ .

### **Connection with exponential bounds:**

Suppose that  $X_i \sim N(0, 1)$  for  $1 \le i \le n$ . •  $n^{-1/2}S_n \sim N(0, 1)$ ,  $\sigma = 1$ , and

$$P\left(n^{-1/2}S_n > x\right) = 1 - \Phi(x) \le x^{-1}\phi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{x} e^{-x^2/2}$$

• Thus with  $b_n\equiv(2{
m log}{
m log} n)^{1/2}$ , and  $\delta>0$ ,

$$P(n^{-1/2}S_n > (1+\delta)(2\log\log n)^{1/2})$$

$$\leq \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{(1+\delta)b_n} \exp(-(1+\delta)^2\log\log n)$$

$$\equiv \frac{C}{b_n} (\log n)^{-(1+\delta)^2}$$

$$\sim \frac{C}{b_{n_k}} (k\log \alpha)^{-(1+\delta)^2}, \quad n_k \equiv \lfloor \alpha^k \rfloor, \ \alpha > 1$$

• Therefore, by the Borell-Cantelli lemma,

$$P(n_k^{-1/2}S_{n_k} > (1+\delta)(2\log\log n_k)^{1/2}$$
 i.o.) = 0.

- $X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_n$  are i.i.d. with density f on  $\mathbb{R}^+ \equiv [0, \infty)$ .
- Then Grenander's estimator  $\hat{f}_n$  of f is the Maximum Likelihood Estimator of  $f_0$  over the class of decreasing densities on  $\mathbb{R}^+$ : if

$$L_n(g) \equiv n^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^n \log\{g(X_i)\} = \mathbb{P}_n(\log g)$$

then  $\widehat{f}_n$  satisfies

 $L_n(\widehat{f}_n) = \max\{L_n(g) : g \text{ a monotone decreasing density on } \mathbb{R}^+\}.$ 

Grenander (1956) showed that the maximum likelihood estimator  $\hat{f}_n$  of f is the (left-) derivative of the least concave majorant of the empirical distribution function  $\mathbb{F}_n$ 

 $\widehat{f}_n$  = left derivative of the least concave majorant of  $\mathbb{F}_n$ , the empirical distribution of  $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  i.i.d. F









Grenander Estimator and Exp(1) density, n = 40

How to study  $\hat{f}_n$ ? Groeneboom's switching relation! Switching for  $\hat{f}_n$ : Define

$$\widehat{s}_n(a) \equiv \operatorname{argmax}_{s \ge 0} \{ \mathbb{F}_n(s) - as \}, \quad a > 0 \\ \equiv \sup\{s \ge 0 : \ \mathbb{F}_n(s) - as = \sup_{z \ge 0} (\mathbb{F}_n(z) - az) \}.$$

Then for each fixed  $t \in (0,\infty)$  and a > 0

$$\left\{\widehat{f}_n(t) < a\right\} = \left\{\widehat{s}_n(a) < t\right\}.$$



**Theorem.** (Prakasa Rao (1969), Groeneboom (1985)): If f(x) > 0, f'(x) < 0, and f' is continuous at x, then with  $c \equiv (4f(x)/(f'(x))^2)^{1/3}$  and  $C \equiv (2^{-1}f(x)|f'(x)|)^{1/3}$ ,  $\mathbb{S}_n(x,t) \equiv n^{1/3} \left( \widehat{f}_n(x+n^{-1/3}ct) - f(x) \right)$  $\rightarrow_d C \cdot \mathbb{S}(t)$ 

where

W is a standard two-sided Brownian motion starting at 0, and

$$\mathbb{S} \equiv$$
 the left - derivative of the least concave majorant  $\mathbb{C}$   
of  $W(t) - t^2$ .

In particular, with t = 0,

$$n^{1/3}\left(\widehat{f}_n(x) - f(x)\right) \to_d C\mathbb{S}(0) \stackrel{d}{=} C2Z$$

where the distribution of  $Z \equiv \operatorname{argmax}_h\{W(h) - h^2\}$  is Chernoff's distribution .

**Proof:** By the switching relation  $\{\hat{f}_n(t) < a\} = \{\hat{s}_n(a) < t\}$ :

$$P(n^{1/3}(\hat{f}_n(x_0 + n^{-1/3}t) - f(x_0)) < y)$$
  
=  $P(\hat{f}_n(x_0 + n^{-1/3}t) < f(x_0) + yn^{-1/3}),$   
=  $P(\hat{s}_n(f(x_0) + yn^{-1/3}) < x_0 + n^{-1/3}t)$   
=  $P(\operatorname{argmax}_v\{\mathbb{F}_n(v) - (f(x_0) + n^{-1/3}y)v\} < x_0 + n^{-1/3}t)$ 

Now we change variables  $v = x_0 + n^{-1/3}h$  in the argument of  $\mathbb{F}_n$ , center and scale to find: the right side in the last display equals  $P(\operatorname{argmax}_h\{\mathbb{F}_n(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - (f(x_0) + n^{-1/3}y)(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h)\} < t)$  $= P\left(\operatorname{argmax}_h\{\mathbb{F}_n(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - \mathbb{F}_n(x_0) - (F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - \mathbb{F}(x_0)) - (F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - F(x_0)) + F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - F(x_0) - f(x_0)n^{-1/3}h - n^{-2/3}yh\} < t\right).$  (1)

Let  $\mathbb{G}_n(t) \equiv n^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbb{1}\{\xi_i \leq t\}$ ,  $\mathbb{U}_n(t) \equiv \sqrt{n}(\mathbb{G}_n(t) - t)$  with  $\xi_i$ i.i.d. Uniform[0,1]. Thus  $\mathbb{F}_n \stackrel{d}{=} \mathbb{G}_n(F)$ . The the stochastic term in (1) satisfies, with  $W \equiv$  two-sided standard Brownian motion,

$$n^{2/3} \left\{ \mathbb{F}_n(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - \mathbb{F}_n(x_0) - (F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h) - F(x_0)) \right\}$$
  

$$\stackrel{d}{=} n^{2/3 - 1/2} \left\{ \mathbb{U}_n(F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h)) - \mathbb{U}_n(F(x_0)) \right\}$$
  

$$= n^{1/6} \left\{ \mathbb{U}(F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}h)) - \mathbb{U}(F(x_0)) \right\} + o_p(1) \qquad \text{by KMT}$$
  

$$\stackrel{d}{=} n^{1/6} W(f(x_0)n^{-1/3}h) + o_p(1)$$
  

$$\stackrel{d}{=} \sqrt{f(x_0)} W(h) + o_p(1)$$

where W is a standard two-sided Brownian motion process starting from 0. On the other hand, with  $\delta_n \equiv n^{-1/3}$ ,

$$n^{2/3} \left( F(x_0 + n^{-1/3}) - F(x_0) - f(x_0)n^{-1/3}h \right)$$
  
=  $\delta_n^{-2} (F(x_0 + \delta_n h) - F(x_0) - f(x_0)\delta_n h)$   
 $\rightarrow -b|h|^2$  with  $b = |f'(x_0)|/2$ 

by our hypotheses, while  $n^{2/3}n^{-1/3}n^{-1/3}h = n^0h = h$ .

Thus it follows that the last probability above converges to

$$P\left(\operatorname{argmax}_{h}\left\{aW(h)-b|h|^{2}-yh\right\} < t\right)$$

$$= \left\{\begin{array}{l}P(\mathbb{S}_{a,b}(t) < y) & \text{by switching again}\\P\left((a/b)^{(2/3)}\operatorname{argmax}_{h}\{W(h)-h^{2}\}-(2b)^{-1}y < t\right), \text{by (2) below}\end{array}\right\}$$

where

$$S_{a,b}(t) = \text{slope at } t \text{ of the least concave majorant of}$$
$$aW(h) - bh^2 \equiv \sqrt{f_0(x_0)}W(h) - |f'_0(x_0)||h|^2/2$$
$$\stackrel{d}{=} |2^{-1}f_0(x_0)f'_0(x_0)|S(t/c_0).$$

and where we used

$$\arg\max\{aW(h) - bh^2\} \stackrel{d}{=} \left(\frac{a}{b}\right)^{2/3} \arg\max\{W(h) - h^2\} - \frac{1}{2b}y.$$
 (2)

First appearance of Z: Chernoff (1964), *Estimation of the mode*:

- $X_1, \ldots, X_n$  i.i.d. with density f and distribution function F.
- Fix a > 0;  $\hat{x}_a \equiv$  center of the interval of length 2a containing the most observations.
- $x_a \equiv$  center of the interval of length 2*a* maximizing F(x+a) F(x-a).
- Chernoff shows:

 $> n^{1/3}(\hat{x}_a - x_a) \rightarrow_d \left(\frac{8f(x_a + a)}{c}\right)^{1/3} Z$ where  $c \equiv f'(x_a - a) - f'(x_a + a).$   $> f_Z(z) = \frac{1}{2}g(z)g(-z) \text{ where}$   $g(t) \equiv \lim_{x \nearrow t^2} \frac{\partial}{\partial x}u(t, x) = \lim_{x \nearrow t^2} u_x(t, x),$ 

▷ 
$$u(t,x) \equiv P^{(t,x)}(W(z) > z^2)$$
, for some  $z \ge t$ ) is a solution to the backward heat equation

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t}u(t,x) = -\frac{1}{2}\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}u(t,x)$$

under the boundary conditions

$$u(t, t^2) = \lim_{x \nearrow t^2} u(t, x) = 1, \quad \lim_{x \to -\infty} u(t, x) = 0.$$

Groeneboom (1989) showed that g has Fourier transform given by

$$\widehat{g}(\lambda) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} e^{i\lambda s} g(s) ds = \frac{2^{1/3}}{Ai(i(2)^{-1/3}\lambda)};$$
(3)

Groeneboom (1989) also showed that

$$f_Z(z) \sim \frac{1}{2Ai'(a_1)} 4^{4/3} z \exp\left(-\frac{2}{3}z^3 + 3^{1/3}a_1z\right),$$
  
$$P(Z > z) \sim \frac{1}{2Ai'(a_1)} 4^{4/3} \frac{1}{z} \exp\left(-\frac{2}{3}z^3\right) \quad \text{as} \quad z \to \infty$$

where  $a_1 \approx -2.3381...$  is the largest zero of the Airy function Ai on the negative real axis and  $Ai'(a_1) \approx 0.7022$ .



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1.22

The tail behavior of Z given in the last display leads naturally to the following conjecture concerning a LIL for the Grenander estimator:

$$\begin{split} \limsup_{n \to \infty} \frac{n^{1/3} (\hat{f}_n(x_0) - f(x_0))}{((3/2) \log \log n)^{1/3}} =_{a.s.} \left| \frac{1}{2} f(x_0) f'(x_0) \right|^{1/3} \cdot 2; \\ \text{note that if } \delta > 0 \text{ and } n_k \equiv \lfloor \alpha^k \rfloor \text{ with } \alpha > 1, \text{ then} \\ \exp\left(-\frac{2}{3} [(1+\delta)((3/2) \log \log n_k)^{1/3}]^3\right) \\ &= \exp\left(-(1+\delta)^3 \log \log n_k\right) \\ &= (\log n_k)^{-(1+\delta)^3} \sim \left(k \log \alpha \right)^{-(1+\delta)^3}\right). \end{split}$$

Equivalently

$$\begin{split} \limsup_{n \to \infty} \frac{n^{1/3} (\hat{f}_n(x_0) - f(x_0))}{(2 \log \log n)^{1/3}} &=_{a.s.} \left| \frac{1}{2} f(x_0) f'(x_0) \right|^{1/3} \cdot 2 \cdot \frac{1}{2^{1/3}} \cdot \left( \frac{3}{2} \right)^{1/3} \\ &=_{a.s.} \left| \frac{1}{2} f(x_0) f'(x_0) \right|^{1/3} \cdot 2 \cdot \left( \frac{3}{4} \right)^{1/3} . \end{split}$$
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How to prove this conjecture?

- Step 1: Switching!
- Step 2: localize; use a functional LIL for the local empirical process: Deheuvels and Mason (1994); Mason (2004).
- Step 3: Find the set of limit points via 1 and 2; study these via properties of the natural Strassen limit sets analogous to the distributional equivalents for Brownian motion.
- Step 4: Solve the resulting variational problem over the set of limit points expressed in terms of the Strassen limit points.

**Step 1: Switching.** Let  $r_n \equiv (n^{-1}2\log\log n)^{1/3}$ . We want to find a number  $y_0$  such that

$$P(r_n^{-1}(\hat{f}_n(x_0) - f(x_0)) > y \text{ i.o.}) = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } y > y_0, \\ 1, & \text{if } y < y_0. \end{cases}$$
  
Now  $\{\hat{f}_n(x_0) > a\} = \{\hat{s}_n(a) > x_0\}, \text{ so}$   
 $\{\hat{f}_n(x_0) > f(x_0) + r_n y \text{ i.o.}\} = \{\hat{s}_n(f(x_0) + r_n y) > x_0 \text{ i.o.}\}.$  (4)  
By letting  $s = x_0 + r_n h$  in the definition of  $\hat{s}_n$  we see that  
 $\hat{s}_n(f(x_0) + r_n y) - x_0$ 

=  $r_n \operatorname{argmax}_h \{ \mathbb{F}_n(x_0 + r_n h) - f(x_0 + r_n y)(x_0 + r_n h) \}$ and hence the right side of (4) can be rewritten as  $\{ \hat{h}_n > 0 \ \text{i.o.} \}$ where

$$\widehat{h}_{n} = \operatorname{argmax}_{h} \{ \mathbb{F}_{n}(x_{0} + r_{n}h) - (f(x_{0}) + r_{n}y)(x_{0} + r_{n}h) \} 
= \operatorname{argmax}_{h} \{ r_{n}^{-2} [\mathbb{F}_{n}(x_{0} + r_{n}h) - \mathbb{F}_{n}(x_{0}) - (F(x_{0} + r_{n}h) - F(x_{0}))] 
+ r_{n}^{-2} [F(x_{0} + r_{n}h) - F(x_{0}) - f(x_{0})r_{n}h] - yh \}.$$
(5)

The deterministic (drift) term on the right side converges to  $f'(x_0)h^2/2$  as  $n \to \infty$ .

**Step 2: LIL for the local empirical process.** By a theorem of Mason (1988), the sequence of functions

$$\left\{r_n^{-2}[\mathbb{F}_n(x_0+r_nh)-\mathbb{F}_n(x_0)-(F(x_0+r_nh)-F(x_0)): h \in R\right\}$$

is almost surely relatively compact with limit set

 $\{g(f(x_0)\cdot): g \in \mathcal{G}\}$ 

where the two-sided Strassen limit set  ${\mathcal G}$  is given by

$$\mathcal{G} = \left\{ g : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R} \middle| g(t) = \int_0^t \dot{g}(s) ds, \ t \in \mathbb{R}, \ \int_{-\infty}^\infty \dot{g}^2(s) ds \le 1 \right\}.$$

**Proof:** Reduce to the local empirical process of  $\xi_1, \ldots, \xi_n$ i.i.d. Uniform(0,1). As in Mason (1988), take  $k_n \equiv nr_n = n^{2/3}(2\log\log n)^{1/3} \nearrow \infty$  and  $n^{-1}k_n = r_n \searrow 0$ .

Thus the processes involved in the argmax in (5) are almost surely relatively compact with limit set

$$\{g(f(x_0)h) + 2^{-1}f'(x_0)h^2 - yh : g \in \mathcal{G}\}$$
(6)

#### Step 3: Strassen set equivalences.

**Lemma 1.** Let c > 0 and  $d \in R$ . then

$$\{t \mapsto g(ct+d) - g(d) : g \in \mathcal{G}\} = \sqrt{c}\mathcal{G}.$$
  
This is analogous to  $W(ct+d) - W(d) \stackrel{d}{=} \sqrt{c}W(t).$ 

**Lemma 2.** Let  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  be positive constants and  $\gamma \in R$ . Then

$$\left\{ \operatorname{argmax} \{ \alpha g(h) - \beta h^2 - \gamma h \} : g \in \mathcal{G} \right\}$$
$$= \left\{ (\alpha/\beta)^{2/3} \operatorname{argmax}_h \{ g(h) - h^2 \} - \gamma/(2\beta) : g \in \mathcal{G} \right\}.$$

[This is analogous to

$$\operatorname{argmax}\left(\alpha W(h) - \beta h^2 - \gamma h\right) \stackrel{d}{=} (\alpha/\beta)^{2/3} \{W(h) - h^2\} - \gamma/(2\beta).$$

By Lemmas 1 and 2, with  $a = \sqrt{f(x_0)}$ ,  $b = |f'(x_0)|/2$ ,

$$\{g(f(x_0)h) + 2^{-1}f'(x_0)h^2 - yh : g \in \mathcal{G}\} \\ = \{ag(h) - bh^2 - yh : g \in \mathcal{G}\} \\ = \{(a/b)^{2/3} \arg\max\{g(h) - h^2\} - y/(2b) : g \in \mathcal{G}\}$$

Hence with  $T_g \equiv \operatorname{argmax}_h \{g(h) - h^2\}$ ,

$$\left\{ \hat{h}_n > 0 \text{ i.o.} \right\} \stackrel{a.s.}{=} \left\{ \left( \frac{a}{b} \right)^{2/3} \sup_{g \in \mathcal{G}} T_g > \frac{y}{2b} \right\}$$
$$= \left\{ 2b \left( \frac{a}{b} \right)^{2/3} \sup_{g \in \mathcal{G}} T_g > y \right\}$$
$$= \emptyset$$

if

$$y > y_0 \equiv 2b(a/b)^{2/3} \sup_{g \in \mathcal{G}} T_g = |2^{-1}f(x_0)f'(x_0)|^{1/3} 2 \sup_{g \in \mathcal{G}} T_g.$$

It remains only to show that

$$\sup_{g \in \mathcal{G}} T_g = (3/4)^{1/3} \approx 0.90856...$$

This follows from Lemma 3:

**Lemma 3.** Let  $t_0$  be an arbitrary positive number and let  $\dot{g} \in L_1([0, t_0])$  be an arbitrary function satisfying

$$\int_0^{t_0} \dot{g}(s) ds - t_0^2 \ge \int_0^t \dot{g}(s) ds - t^2 \quad \text{for} \quad 0 \le t \le t_0.$$

Then, with  $\dot{g}_0(u) \equiv 2u$ ,  $0 \leq t \leq u$ ,

$$\int_0^{t_0} \dot{g}(u)^2 du \ge \int_0^{t_0} \dot{g}_0(u)^2 du = \int_0^{t_0} (2u)^2 du = \frac{4t_0^3}{3}.$$



**Intuition:** A few pictures and trial functions  $\dot{g}$  quickly lead to

$$\dot{g}_{0}(s) \equiv \begin{cases} 2s, & 0 \leq s \leq t_{0}, \\ 0, & t_{0} < s < \infty, \\ 0, & t < 0. \end{cases}$$

For this  $\dot{g}_0$  we have

$$g_0(t) = t^2 \mathbb{1}_{[0,t_0]}(t) + t_0^2 \mathbb{1}_{(t_0,\infty)}(t) + 0 \cdot \mathbb{1}_{(-\infty,0)}(t).$$
  
Note that  $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \dot{g}_0^2(s) ds = \int_0^{t_0} (2s)^2 ds = 4t_0^3/3$ . and that  
$$g_0(t) - t^2 = \begin{cases} 0, & t \le t_0, \\ t_0^2 - t^2, & t > t_0. \end{cases}$$

Thus 
$$\operatorname{argmax}(g_0(t) - t^2) = t_0$$
 while  $\sup_{t \ge 0}(g_0(t) - t^2) = 0$  is achieved for all  $0 \le t \le t_0$ . To force  $g_0 \in \mathcal{G}$  we simply require that  $\int_0^{t_0} \dot{g}_0^2(s) ds = 1$  and this yields  $4t_0^3/3 = 1$  or  $t_0 = (3/4)^{1/3}$ .

### 6. Open questions and further problems:

• For the mode estimator  $M(\hat{f}_n)$  of a log-concave density with mode  $m \equiv M(f)$  and f''(m) < 0, we know that

$$n^{1/5}(M(\widehat{f}_n) - M(f)) \rightarrow_d C_2 M(H^{(2)})$$

where  $H^{(2)}$  is the convex function given by the second derivative of the "invelope process"

H of 
$$Y(t) \equiv t^4 + \int_0^t W(s) ds$$
.

Do we have a LIL for  $M(\widehat{f}_n)$ :

$$\limsup_{n \to \infty} \frac{n^{1/5} (M(\hat{f}_n) - M(f))}{(2\log\log n)^{1/5}} =_{a.s.} \tilde{C}_2 < \infty?$$

• With definitions as in the last problem, do we have

$$P(M(H^{(2)}) \ge t) \le K_1 \exp(-K_2 t^5)$$
 for all  $t \ge 0$ 

for some  $K_1, K_2 < \infty$ ? An answer to the previous problem would start to give information about  $K_2$ !

- Are the touch points of *H* and *Y* isolated? (See Groeneboom, Jongbloed, & W (2001), Groeneboom and Jongbloed (2015), page 320.)
- Balabdaoui and W (2014) show that Chernoff's distribution is log-concave. Is it strongly log-concave?
- Is there a Berry-Esseen type result for Grenander's estimator? That is, for what sequences  $r_n \to \infty$  do we have

$$\sup_{t \in \mathbb{R}} \left| P\left( n^{1/3} (\widehat{f}_n(x) - f(x)) / C \le t \right) - P(2Z \le t) \right| \le \frac{K}{r_n}$$
  
for some K finite.

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