

# Package ‘simr’

August 18, 2025

**Type** Package

**Title** Power Analysis for Generalised Linear Mixed Models by Simulation

**Description** Calculate power for generalised linear mixed models, using simulation. Designed to work with models fit using the 'lme4' package. Described in Green and MacLeod, 2016 <[doi:10.1111/2041-210X.12504](https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12504)>.

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**BugReports** <https://github.com/pitakakariki/simr/issues>

**License** GPL (>= 2)

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|              |                                                                    |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| simr-package | <i>simr: Simulation-based power calculations for mixed models.</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

---

Description

simr is a package that makes it easy to run simulation-based power analyses with lme4.

Author(s)

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See Also

Useful links:

- <https://github.com/pitakakariki/simr>
- Report bugs at <https://github.com/pitakakariki/simr/issues>

---

|       |                                     |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| doFit | <i>Fit model to a new response.</i> |
|-------|-------------------------------------|

---

**Description**

This is normally an internal function, but it can be overloaded to extend `simr` to other packages.

**Usage**

```
doFit(y, fit, subset, ...)
```

**Arguments**

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>y</code>      | new values for the response variable (vector or matrix depending on the model).                                                                                                    |
| <code>fit</code>    | a previously fitted model object.                                                                                                                                                  |
| <code>subset</code> | boolean vector specifying how much of the data to use. If missing, the model is fit to all the data. This argument needs to be implemented for <a href="#">powerCurve</a> to work. |
| <code>...</code>    | additional options.                                                                                                                                                                |

**Value**

a fitted model object.

---

|       |                                               |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------|
| doSim | <i>Generate simulated response variables.</i> |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------|

---

**Description**

This is normally an internal function, but it can be overloaded to extend `simr` to other packages.

**Usage**

```
doSim(object, ...)
```

**Arguments**

|                     |                                                     |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <code>object</code> | an object to simulate from, usually a fitted model. |
| <code>...</code>    | additional options.                                 |

**Value**

a vector containing simulated response values (or, for models with a multivariate response such as binomial `gl(m)`'s, a matrix of simulated response values). Suitable as input for [doFit](#).

---

|        |                                                   |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------|
| doTest | <i>Apply a hypothesis test to a fitted model.</i> |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------|

---

### Description

This is normally an internal function, but it can be overloaded to extend simr to other packages.

### Usage

```
doTest(object, test, ...)
```

### Arguments

|        |                                                                   |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| object | an object to apply a statistical test to, usually a fitted model. |
| test   | a test function, see <a href="#">tests</a> .                      |
| ...    | additional options.                                               |

### Value

a p-value with attributes describing the test.

---

|        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| extend | <i>Extend a longitudinal model.</i> |
|--------|-------------------------------------|

---

### Description

This method increases the sample size for a model.

### Usage

```
extend(object, along, within, n, values)
```

### Arguments

|        |                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| object | a fitted model object to extend.                                                                                                                        |
| along  | the name of an explanatory variable. This variable will have its number of levels extended.                                                             |
| within | names of grouping variables, separated by "+" or ",". Each combination of groups will be extended to n rows.                                            |
| n      | number of levels: the levels of the explanatory variable will be replaced by 1, 2, 3, ..., n for a continuous variable or a, b, c, ..., n for a factor. |
| values | alternatively, you can specify a new set of levels for the explanatory variable.                                                                        |

## Details

extend takes "slices" through the data for each unique value of the extended variable. An extended dataset is built from n slices, with slices duplicated if necessary.

## Value

A copy of object suitable for `doSim` with an extended dataset attached as an attribute named `newData`.

## Examples

```
fm <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
nrow(example)
fmx1 <- extend(fm, along="x", n=20)
nrow(getData(fmx1))
fmx2 <- extend(fm, along="x", values=c(1,2,4,8,16))
nrow(getData(fmx2))
```

---

getData

*Get an object's data.*

---

## Description

Get the data associated with a model object.

## Usage

```
getData(object)
```

```
getData(object) <- value
```

## Arguments

|        |                                                                                                                          |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| object | a fitted model object (e.g. an object of class <code>merMod</code> or <code>lm</code> ).                                 |
| value  | a new <code>data.frame</code> to replace the old one. The new data will be stored in the <code>newData</code> attribute. |

## Details

Looks for data in the following order:

1. The object's `newData` attribute, if it has been set by `simr`.
2. The data argument of `getCall(object)`, in the environment of `formula(object)`.

## Value

A `data.frame` with the required data.

**Examples**

```
lm1 <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
X <- getData(lm1)
```

---

lastResult

---

*Recover an unsaved simulation*


---

**Description**

Simulations can take a non-trivial time to run. If the user forgets to assign the result to a variable this method can recover it.

**Usage**

```
lastResult()
```

**See Also**

[.Last.value](#)

**Examples**

```
fm1 <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
powerSim(fm1, nsim=10)
ps1 <- lastResult()
```

---

makeGlmr

---

*Create an artificial mixed model object*


---

**Description**

Make a [merMod](#) object with the specified structure and parameters.

**Usage**

```
makeGlmr(formula, family, fixef, VarCorr, data)
```

```
makeLmer(formula, fixef, VarCorr, sigma, data)
```

**Arguments**

|         |                                                                                                                       |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| formula | a formula describing the model (see <a href="#">glmer</a> ).                                                          |
| family  | type of response variable (see <a href="#">family</a> ).                                                              |
| fixef   | vector of fixed effects                                                                                               |
| VarCorr | variance and covariances for random effects. If there are multiple random effects, supply their parameters as a list. |
| data    | data.frame of explanatory variables.                                                                                  |
| sigma   | residual standard deviation.                                                                                          |

---

|        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| modify | <i>Modifying model parameters.</i> |
|--------|------------------------------------|

---

**Description**

These functions can be used to change the size of a model's fixed effects, its random effect variance/covariance matrices, or its residual variance. This gives you more control over simulations from the model.

**Usage**

```
fixef(object) <- value

coef(object) <- value

VarCorr(object) <- value

sigma(object) <- value

scale(object) <- value
```

**Arguments**

|        |                        |
|--------|------------------------|
| object | a fitted model object. |
| value  | new parameter values.  |

**Details**

New values for VarCorr are interpreted as variances and covariances, not standard deviations and correlations. New values for sigma and scale are interpreted on the standard deviation scale. This means that both VarCorr(object)<-VarCorr(object) and sigma(object)<-sigma(object) leave object unchanged, as you would expect.

sigma<- will only change the residual standard deviation, whereas scale<- will affect both sigma and VarCorr.

These functions can be used to change the value of individual parameters, such as a single fixed effect coefficient, using standard R subsetting commands.

**See Also**

[getData](#) if you want to modify the model's data.

**Examples**

```
fm <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
fixef(fm)
fixef(fm)["x"] <- -0.1
fixef(fm)
```

---

powerCurve

---

*Estimate power at a range of sample sizes.*


---

**Description**

This function runs [powerSim](#) over a range of sample sizes.

**Usage**

```
powerCurve(
  fit,
  test = fixed(getDefaultXname(fit)),
  sim = fit,
  along = getDefaultXname(fit),
  within,
  breaks,
  seed,
  fitOpts = list(),
  testOpts = list(),
  simOpts = list(),
  ...
)
```

**Arguments**

|        |                                                                                                                       |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| fit    | a fitted model object (see <a href="#">doFit</a> ).                                                                   |
| test   | specify the test to perform. By default, the first fixed effect in fit will be tested. (see: <a href="#">tests</a> ). |
| sim    | an object to simulate from. By default this is the same as fit (see <a href="#">doSim</a> ).                          |
| along  | the name of an explanatory variable. This variable will have its number of levels varied.                             |
| within | names of grouping variables, separated by "+" or ",". Each combination of groups will be extended to n rows.          |
| breaks | number of levels of the variable specified by along at each point on the power curve.                                 |

seed                specify a random number generator seed, for reproducible results.  
 fitOpts            extra arguments for `doFit`.  
 testOpts          extra arguments for `doTest`.  
 simOpts           extra arguments for `doSim`.  
 ...                any additional arguments are passed on to `simrOptions`. Common options include:  
                     `nsim`: the number of simulations to run (default is 1000).  
                     `alpha`: the significance level for the statistical test (default is 0.05).  
                     `progress`: use progress bars during calculations (default is TRUE).

### See Also

`print.powerCurve`, `summary.powerCurve`, `confint.powerCurve`

### Examples

```
## Not run:
fm <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
pc1 <- powerCurve(fm)
pc2 <- powerCurve(fm, breaks=c(4,6,8,10))
print(pc2)
plot(pc2)

## End(Not run)
```

---

|          |                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| powerSim | <i>Estimate power by simulation.</i> |
|----------|--------------------------------------|

---

### Description

Perform a power analysis for a mixed model.

### Usage

```
powerSim(
  fit,
  test = fixed(getDefaultXname(fit)),
  sim = fit,
  fitOpts = list(),
  testOpts = list(),
  simOpts = list(),
  seed,
  ...
)
```

**Arguments**

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| fit      | a fitted model object (see <a href="#">doFit</a> ).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| test     | specify the test to perform. By default, the first fixed effect in fit will be tested. (see: <a href="#">tests</a> ).                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| sim      | an object to simulate from. By default this is the same as fit (see <a href="#">doSim</a> ).                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| fitOpts  | extra arguments for <a href="#">doFit</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| testOpts | extra arguments for <a href="#">doTest</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| simOpts  | extra arguments for <a href="#">doSim</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| seed     | specify a random number generator seed, for reproducible results.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| ...      | any additional arguments are passed on to <a href="#">simrOptions</a> . Common options include:<br><br>nsim: the number of simulations to run (default is 1000).<br>alpha: the significance level for the statistical test (default is 0.05).<br>progress: use progress bars during calculations (default is TRUE). |

**See Also**

[print.powerSim](#), [summary.powerSim](#), [confint.powerSim](#)

**Examples**

```
fm1 <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
powerSim(fm1, nsim=10)
```

---

|                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| print.powerSim | <i>Report simulation results</i> |
|----------------|----------------------------------|

---

**Description**

Describe and extract power simulation results

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'powerSim'
print(x, alpha = x$alpha, level = 0.95, ...)

## S3 method for class 'powerCurve'
print(x, ...)

## S3 method for class 'powerSim'
summary(
  object,
  alpha = object$alpha,
```

```

    level = 0.95,
    method = getSimrOption("binom"),
    ...
)

## S3 method for class 'powerCurve'
summary(
  object,
  alpha = object$alpha,
  level = 0.95,
  method = getSimrOption("binom"),
  ...
)

## S3 method for class 'powerSim'
confint(
  object,
  parm,
  level = 0.95,
  method = getSimrOption("binom"),
  alpha = object$alpha,
  ...
)

## S3 method for class 'powerCurve'
confint(object, parm, level = 0.95, method = getSimrOption("binom"), ...)
```

## Arguments

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| x      | a <a href="#">powerSim</a> or <a href="#">powerCurve</a> object                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| alpha  | the significance level for the statistical test (default is that used in the call to <a href="#">powerSim</a> ).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| level  | confidence level for power estimate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| ...    | additional arguments to pass to <a href="#">binom::binom.confint</a><br>alpha refers to the threshold for an effect being significant and thus directly determines the point estimate for the power calculation. level is the confidence level that is calculated for this point evidence and determines the width/coverage of the confidence interval for power. |
| object | a <a href="#">powerSim</a> or <a href="#">powerCurve</a> object                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| method | method to use for computing binomial confidence intervals (see <a href="#">binom::binom.confint</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| parm   | currently ignored, included for S3 compatibility with <a href="#">stats::confint</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## See Also

[binom::binom.confint](#), [powerSim](#), [powerCurve](#)

---

simdata

*Example dataset.*


---

### Description

A simple artificial data set used in the tutorial. There are two response variables, a Poisson count  $z$  and a Gaussian response  $y$ . There is a continuous predictor  $x$  with ten values  $\{1, 2, \dots, 10\}$  and a categorical predictor  $g$  with three levels  $\{a, b, c\}$ .

---

simrOptions

*Options Settings for simr*


---

### Description

Control the default behaviour of simr analyses.

### Usage

```
simrOptions(...)
```

```
getSimrOption(opt)
```

### Arguments

... a list of names to get options, or a named list of new values to set options.  
 opt option name (character string).

### Value

getSimrOption returns the current value for the option  $x$ .

simrOptions returns

1. a named list of all options, if no arguments are given.
2. a named list of specified options, if a list of option names is given.
3. (invisibly) a named list of changed options with their previous values, if options are set.

### Options in simr

Options that can be set with this method (and their default values).

nsim default number of simulations (1000).

alpha default confidence level (0.05).

progress use progress bars during calculations (TRUE).

binom method for calculating confidence intervals ("exact").

`pbnsim` number of simulations for parametric bootstrap tests using `pbkrtest` (100).

`pcmin` minimum number of levels for the smallest point on a [powerCurve](#) (3).

`pcmax` maximum number of points on the default [powerCurve](#) (10).

`observedPowerWarning` warn if an unmodified fitted model is used (TRUE).

`carTestType` type of test, i.e. type of sum of squares, for tests performed with `car::Anova` ("II").

`lmerTestDdf` approximation to use for denominator degrees of freedom for tests performed with [lmerTest](#) ("Satterthwaite"). Note that setting this option to "lme4" will reduce the `lmerTest` model to an `lme4` model and break functionality based on `lmerTest`.

`lmerTestType` type of test, i.e. type of sum of squares, for F-tests performed with `lmerTest::anova.lmerModLmerTest` (2). Note that unlike the tests performed with `car::Anova`, the test type must be given as a number and not a character.

## Examples

```
getSimrOption("nsim")
oldopts <- simrOptions(nsim=5)
getSimrOption("nsim")
simrOptions(oldopts)
getSimrOption("nsim")
```

---

|       |                                            |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| tests | <i>Specify a statistical test to apply</i> |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|

---

## Description

Specify a statistical test to apply

## Usage

```
fixed(
  xname,
  method = c("z", "t", "f", "chisq", "anova", "lr", "sa", "kr", "pb")
)

compare(model, method = c("lr", "pb"))

fcompare(model, method = c("lr", "kr", "pb"))

rcompare(model, method = c("lr", "pb"))

random()
```

## Arguments

|                     |                                              |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <code>xname</code>  | an explanatory variable to test (character). |
| <code>method</code> | the type of test to apply (see Details).     |
| <code>model</code>  | a null model for comparison (formula).       |

## Details

`fixed`: Test a single fixed effect, specified by `xname`.

`compare`: Compare the current model to a smaller one specified by the formula `model`.

`fcompare`, `rcompare`: Similar to `compare`, but only the fixed/random part of the formula needs to be supplied.

`random`: Test the significance of a single random effect.

## Value

A function which takes a fitted model as an argument and returns a single p-value.

## Methods

The method argument can be used to specify one of the following tests. Note that "z" is an asymptotic approximation for models not fitted with `glmer` and "kr" will only work with models fitted with `lmer`.

- z**: Z-test for models fitted with `glmer` (or `glm`), using the p-value from `summary.merMod`. For models fitted with `lmer`, this test can be used to treat the t-values from `summary.merMod` as z-values, which is equivalent to assuming infinite degrees of freedom. This asymptotic approximation seems to perform well for even medium-sized data sets, as the denominator degrees of freedom are already quite large (cf. Baayen et al. 2008) even if calculating their exact value is analytically unsolved and computationally difficult (e.g. with Satterthwaite or Kenward-Roger approximations). Setting `alpha=0.045` is roughly equal to the `t=2` threshold suggested by Baayen et al. (2008) and helps compensate for the slightly anti-conservative approximation.
- t**: T-test for models fitted with `lm`. Also available for mixed models when `lmerTest` is installed, using the p-value calculated using the Satterthwaite approximation for the denominator degrees of freedom by default. This can be changed by setting `lmerTestDdf`, see `simrOptions`.
- lr**: Likelihood ratio test, using `anova.merMod`.
- f**: Wald F-test, using `car::Anova`. Useful for examining categorical terms. For models fitted with `lmer`, this should yield equivalent results to `method='kr'`. Uses Type-II tests by default, this can be changed by setting `carTestType`, see `simrOptions`.
- chisq**: Wald Chi-Square test, using `car::Anova`. Please note that while this is much faster than the F-test computed with Kenward-Roger, it is also known to be anti-conservative, especially for small samples. Uses Type-II tests by default, this can be changed by setting `carTestType`, see `simrOptions`.

**anova:** ANOVA-style F-test, using [anova](#) and [lmerTest::anova.lmerModLmerTest](#). For ‘lm’, this yields a Type-I (sequential) test (see [anova](#)); to use other test types, use the F-tests provided by `car::Anova()` (see above). For lmer, this generates Type-II tests with Satterthwaite denominator degrees of freedom by default, this can be changed by setting `lmerTestDdf` and `lmerTestType`, see [simrOptions](#).

**kr:** Kenward-Roger test, using [KRmodcomp](#). This only applies to models fitted with [lmer](#), and compares models with different fixed effect specifications but equivalent random effects.

**pb:** Parametric bootstrap test, using [PBmodcomp](#). This test will be very accurate, but is also very computationally expensive.

Tests using random for a single random effect call [exactRLRT](#).

## References

Baayen, R. H., Davidson, D. J., and Bates, D. M. (2008). Mixed-effects modeling with crossed random effects for subjects and items. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 59, 390–412.

## Examples

```
lm1 <- lmer(y ~ x + (x|g), data=simdata)
lm0 <- lmer(y ~ x + (1|g), data=simdata)
anova(lm1, lm0)
compare(. ~ x + (1|g))(lm1)
rcompare(~ (1|g))(lm1)
## Not run: powerSim(fm1, compare(. ~ x + (1|g)))
```

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