

**SMALL DEVIATION PROBABILITIES FOR POSITIVE RANDOM VARIABLES**

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We deduce two lemmas that seem to be useful while studying small deviation probabilities for positive random variables. As an example, the so-called small balls problem is examined. Bibliography: 11 titles.

1. RESULTS

Assume that a nonnegative random variable  $Z$  takes values in any neighborhood of zero with positive probability not equal to one.

For  $u \geq 0$ , set

$$\Lambda(u) = \mathbf{E}e^{-uZ}, \quad m(u) = -(\log \Lambda(u))', \quad \sigma^2(u) = (\log \Lambda(u))'', \quad (1.1)$$

$$Q(u) = -um(u) - \log \Lambda(u).$$

Recall that

$$m(u) = \mathbf{E}Z(u), \quad 0 < \sigma^2(u) = \mathbf{Var}Z(u), \quad (1.2)$$

where the distribution of the random variable  $Z(u) \geq 0$  is conjugate to that of  $Z$ , i.e.,

$$\mathbf{P}(Z(u) \leq r) = \int_0^r e^{-uy} d\mathbf{P}(Z \leq y) / \Lambda(u), \quad r \geq 0. \quad (1.3)$$

Note (see [1, Lemma 2.1]) that  $m(u)$  is a monotone decreasing function on  $(0, \infty)$ ,  $Q(u)$  is a monotone increasing function on  $(0, \infty)$ , and

$$m(0) = \mathbf{E}Z \leq \infty, \quad m(\infty) = 0, \quad Q(0) = 0, \quad Q(\infty) = -\log \mathbf{P}(Z = 0). \quad (1.4)$$

**Lemma 1.** For  $0 < r \leq \mathbf{E}Z$ ,

$$e^{-Q(h)} \geq \mathbf{P}(Z \leq r) \geq \frac{1}{2} e^{-2a(1+\sqrt{1+2Q(h)/a})} e^{-Q(h)}, \quad (1.5)$$

where  $a = \sup_{u>0} \frac{u^2 \sigma^2(u)}{Q(u)}$  and  $h$  is the unique solution of the equation

$$m(h) = r. \quad (1.6)$$

**Remark 1.** Denote  $\rho(r) = \sup_{u \geq 0} (-ur - \log \Lambda(u))$ . We have  $\rho(r) = Q(h)$  provided that  $0 < r \leq \mathbf{E}Z < \infty$  and equality (1.6) holds;  $\rho(0) = Q(\infty)$ ;  $\rho(r) = +\infty$  for  $r < 0$  and  $\rho(r) = 0$  for  $r > \mathbf{E}Z$ . Thus, using Lemma 1, we obtain the following inequality, which is now valid for all  $r$ :

$$e^{-\rho(r)} \geq \mathbf{P}(Z \leq r) \geq \frac{1}{2} e^{-2a(1+\sqrt{1+2\rho(r)/a})} e^{-\rho(r)}.$$

From (1.5) it follows (provided that  $a \neq \infty$ ) that the values  $\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r)$  and  $1/Q(h)$  are small simultaneously; moreover, if  $Q(h)$  tends to infinity, then  $\log \mathbf{P}(Z \leq r)$  is approximately equal to  $-Q(h)$ . In other words, Lemma 1 allows one to find, under some additional assumptions, the asymptotics of the logarithm of the probability  $\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r)$ . The following result is a nice basis for the analysis of the asymptotic behavior of the probability itself.

Let (see (1.2))  $Z_0(u) = \frac{Z(u) - \mathbf{E}Z(u)}{\sqrt{\mathbf{Var}Z(u)}}$ ,  $u > 0$ . Denote

$$\delta_\varepsilon(u) = \int_0^{1/\varepsilon} |\mathbf{E}e^{itZ_0(u)} - e^{-t^2/2}| dt, \quad \varepsilon > 0. \quad (1.7)$$

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**Lemma 2.** For any positive  $r, h, s$ , and  $\varepsilon$ ,

$$\mathbf{P}(r - s < Z \leq r) = \Lambda(h)e^{hr} \frac{1 - e^{-hs}}{\tau\sqrt{2\pi}} \left( e^{-\beta^2/2} + \theta (\beta e^{-\beta^2/2}/\tau + 1/\tau^2 + \rho_\varepsilon(h, s)) \right), \quad (1.8)$$

where  $|\theta|$  is bounded by some absolute constant,

$$\tau = h\sigma(h), \quad \beta = \frac{r - m(h)}{\sigma(h)}, \quad \rho_\varepsilon(h, s) = \delta_\varepsilon(h) + (1 + \delta_\varepsilon(h))(1 + \frac{1}{hs})\tau\varepsilon. \quad (1.9)$$

In particular, if  $r = m(h)$ , then  $\beta = 0$  and

$$\mathbf{P}(r - s < Z \leq r) = e^{-Q(h)} \frac{1 - e^{-hs}}{\tau\sqrt{2\pi}} (1 + \theta(1/\tau^2 + \rho_\varepsilon(h, s))). \quad (1.10)$$

Note that (1.8) implies, besides (1.10), that for  $0 < r < \mathbf{E}Z$ ,  $h$  satisfying (1.6), and any  $\delta$ ,

$$\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r + \delta/h) = e^{-Q(h)} \frac{e^\delta}{\tau\sqrt{2\pi}} \left( e^{-\delta^2/2\tau^2} + \theta((1 + \delta e^{-\delta^2/2\tau^2})/\tau^2 + \rho_\varepsilon(h, \infty)) \right). \quad (1.11)$$

**Remark 2.** If  $\delta_0(h) = \lim_{\varepsilon \searrow 0} \delta_\varepsilon(h) < \infty$ , then (1.8) implies that for all positive  $s$

$$\mathbf{P}(r - s < Z \leq r) = \Lambda(h)e^{hr} \frac{1 - e^{-hs}}{\tau\sqrt{2\pi}} \left( e^{-\beta^2/2} + \theta (\beta e^{-\beta^2/2}/\tau + 1/\tau^2 + \delta_0(h)) \right) \quad (1.12)$$

(and similar corollaries of (1.10), (1.11)). In particular,

$$\frac{d\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r)}{dr} = \Lambda(h)e^{hr} \frac{h}{\tau\sqrt{2\pi}} \left( e^{-\beta^2/2} + \theta (\beta e^{-\beta^2/2}/\tau + 1/\tau^2 + \delta_0(h)) \right),$$

i.e., Lemma 2 also allows one to investigate the probabilities of small deviations in the local setting.

Now let us demonstrate that if the parameter  $\tau = h\sigma(h)$  is bounded, the function  $e^{-Q(h)}/\tau\sqrt{2\pi}$  from (1.10) can give an approximation of the probability  $\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r)$  that is not quite satisfactory.

Let  $Z_j, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$ , be independent random variables with distribution functions  $F_j(x)$  such that

$$F_j(x) = l_j(x)x^{\alpha_j}, \quad x \searrow 0, \quad (1.13)$$

where  $\alpha_j$  are some positive numbers and  $l_j(x)$  are functions slowly varying at zero. Then for a fixed  $n$ ,

$$P_n(r) = \mathbf{P}(Z_1 + \dots + Z_n \leq r) \sim k_n \prod_{j=1}^n F_j(r), \quad r \searrow 0, \quad (1.14)$$

where  $k_n = \prod_{j=1}^n \Gamma(1 + \alpha_j)/\Gamma(1 + \alpha)$  and  $\alpha = \alpha_1 + \dots + \alpha_n$ . (One can prove (1.14) by induction, using the properties of slowly varying functions.)

On the other hand, if  $Z = Z_1 + \dots + Z_n$ , then (see (1.1))

$$\Lambda(u) = \prod_{j=1}^n \Lambda_j(u), \quad m(u) = \sum_{j=1}^n m_j(u), \quad \sigma^2(u) = \sum_{j=1}^n \sigma_j^2(u), \quad Q(u) = \sum_{j=1}^n Q_j(u), \quad (1.15)$$

where

$$\Lambda_j(u) = \mathbf{E}e^{-uZ_j}, \quad m_j(u) = -(\log \Lambda_j(u))', \quad \sigma_j^2(u) = (\log \Lambda_j(u))'', \\ Q_j(u) = -um_j(u) - \log \Lambda_j(u).$$

If condition (1.13) holds, then

$$\Lambda_j(u) \sim \Gamma(1 + \alpha_j) F_j(1/u), \quad m_j(u) \sim \alpha_j/u, \quad \sigma_j^2(u) \sim \alpha_j/u^2, \quad u \rightarrow \infty, \quad (1.16)$$

whence

$$um(u) \rightarrow \alpha, \quad u^2\sigma^2(u) \rightarrow \alpha, \quad u \rightarrow \infty.$$

Taking into consideration (1.15), (1.16), and the relation  $h \sim \alpha/r$ ,  $r \searrow 0$ , following from (1.6), we obtain

$$e^{-Q(h)}/(h\sigma(h)\sqrt{2\pi}) = e^{hr} \prod_{j=1}^n L_j(h)/(h\sigma(h)\sqrt{2\pi}) \sim \omega_\alpha P_n(r), \quad r \searrow 0.$$

Here  $\omega_\alpha = (\frac{e}{\alpha})^\alpha \frac{\Gamma(1+\alpha)}{\sqrt{2\pi\alpha}} > 1$  for any finite  $\alpha > 0$  (and  $\omega_\alpha \rightarrow 1$  as  $\alpha \rightarrow \infty$ ). Thus the leading term in the right-hand side of (1.10) and the asymptotics from (1.14) are indeed different.

In conclusion, we give an example of using relation (1.12).

Let  $\{X\}$  be a centered Gaussian vector taking values in a separable Hilbert space  $H$ . Then  $X = \sum \lambda_j^{1/2} \xi_j e_j$ , where  $\{e_j\}$  is an orthogonal basis in  $H$ ,  $\{\lambda_j\}$  is a sequence of nonnegative nonincreasing numbers with finite sum, and  $\xi_j$  are independent standard normal random variables.

Let  $a = \sum \alpha_j e_j \in H$ , where  $\sum \alpha_j^2 < \infty$ , and  $r > 0$ . We are interested in estimates of the probabilities  $\mathbf{P}(r - s < Z \leq r)$ , where  $Z = \|X - a\|^2 = \sum (\lambda_j^{1/2} \xi_j - \alpha_j)^2$ .

For  $\gamma > 0$ , denote (see [2])

$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda(\gamma) &= \mathbf{E} \exp(-\gamma Z) = \prod (1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)^{-1/2} \exp(-\gamma\alpha_j^2/(1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)), \\ m(\gamma) &= \sum_j \left( \frac{\lambda_j}{1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j} + \frac{\alpha_j^2}{(1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)^2} \right), \\ \sigma^2(\gamma) &= \sum_j \sigma_j^2 = \sum_j \left( \frac{2\lambda_j^2}{(1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)^2} + \frac{4\lambda_j\alpha_j^2}{(1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)^3} \right). \end{aligned} \quad (1.17)$$

**Theorem 1.** Let  $\lambda_3 > 0$ . Then for any  $r, s > 0$  and  $\gamma > 0$ ,

$$\mathbf{P}(r - s < \|X - a\|^2 \leq r) = \Lambda(\gamma) e^{\gamma r} \frac{1 - e^{-\gamma s}}{\gamma \sigma(\gamma) \sqrt{2\pi}} \left( e^{-\beta^2/2} + \theta((\gamma \sigma(\gamma))^{-1} + (\gamma \sigma(\gamma))^{-2}) \right), \quad (1.18)$$

where  $\beta = (r - m(\gamma))/\sigma(\gamma)$ ,  $|\theta| \leq c \sqrt{\lambda_1/\lambda_2} (1 + \log(\lambda_2/\lambda_3))$ , and  $c$  is an absolute constant.

Recall that if  $\gamma$  is the solution of the equation  $m(\gamma) = r$ , then  $\beta = 0$ .

Note that Theorem 1 allows one to refine known general results on the asymptotic behavior of the probability that a Gaussian vector from a Hilbert space hits a sphere of small radius (see, for example, [3–9], and also Theorem 4 of [2]).

*Proof of Theorem 1.* Let  $Z = \|X - a\|^2$  in (1.12). Then (see (1.2), (1.3), (1.7), and [2, p. 441]) the random variable  $Z(\gamma)$  has the same distribution as  $\sum (\beta_j^{1/2} \xi_j - \omega_j)^2$  with  $\beta_j = \lambda_j/(1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)$ ,  $\omega_j = \alpha_j/(1 + 2\gamma\lambda_j)$ . Hence

$$\mathbf{E} e^{itZ(\gamma)} = \prod (1 - 2it\beta_j)^{-1/2} \exp(it\omega_j^2/(1 - 2it\beta_j)). \quad (1.19)$$

Set (see (1.17))  $f(t) = \mathbf{E} \exp(it(Z(\gamma) - m(\gamma))/\sigma(\gamma))$  and  $\tau_j = \gamma\beta_j$ . Keeping in mind that in the case under consideration  $\mathbf{E}Z(\gamma) = m(\gamma)$  and  $\mathbf{Var}Z(\gamma) = \sigma^2(\gamma)$ , (1.19) implies, by standard arguments, that

$$\log f(t) = -t^2/2 + \theta(t/\tau)^3 \sum \tau_j \gamma^2 \sigma_j^2 = -t^2/2 + \theta t^3/\tau, \quad |t| \leq \varepsilon\tau,$$

where  $\tau = \gamma \sigma(\gamma)$ ,  $|\theta| \leq c$ , and  $c, \varepsilon$  are absolute positive constants. It follows that

$$\int_0^{\varepsilon\tau} |f(t) - e^{-t^2/2}| dt \leq c_1/\tau.$$

Now let us estimate  $I = \int_{\varepsilon\tau}^{\infty} |f(t)| dt$ . We have  $I = \tau \int_{\varepsilon}^{\infty} \prod \xi_j(u) du$ , where

$$\xi_j(u) = (1 + 4u^2\tau_j^2)^{-1/4} \exp(-2u^2\tau_j\gamma\omega_j^2/(1 + 4u^2\tau_j^2)).$$

Using the equality  $\sigma_j^2 = 2\beta_j^2 + 4\beta_j\omega_j^2$  (see (1.17)), it is easy to prove that for  $\delta = 1/10$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \xi_j(u) &\leq \exp(-\delta u^2\gamma^2\sigma_j^2), \quad u\tau_j \leq 1, \\ \xi_j(u) &\leq (e/(1 + 4u^2\tau_j^2))^{-1/4} \exp(-\delta\gamma^2\sigma_j^2/\tau_j^2), \quad u\tau_j \geq 1. \end{aligned} \tag{1.20}$$

Choose a positive integer  $n$  satisfying the condition

$$\sum_{j=1}^n \sigma_j^2 \geq \sigma^2/2 > \sum_{j=1}^{n-1} \sigma_j^2$$

and set

$$I = \left( \tau \int_{\varepsilon}^{1/\tau_n} + \tau \int_{1/\tau_n}^{\infty} \right) \prod \xi_j(u) du = I_1 + I_2.$$

With the help of (1.20) we obtain

$$I_1 \leq \tau \int_{\varepsilon}^{1/\tau_n} \prod_{j \geq n} \xi_j(u) du \leq \tau \int_{\varepsilon}^{\infty} e^{-\delta u^2\gamma^2\sigma^2/2} du \leq c/\tau^2.$$

Now let us estimate  $I_2$ . We have to consider three cases:  $n = 1$ ,  $n = 2$ , and  $n \geq 3$ . Let us restrict ourselves to the most general first case. Bearing in mind (1.20) and the inequality  $\tau_j \geq \tau_n$  for  $j \leq n$ , we obtain

$$I_2 \leq \tau \int_{1/\tau_3}^{\infty} \xi_1(u)\xi_2(u)\xi_3(u) du + \tau \int_{1/\tau_2}^{1/\tau_3} \xi_1(u)\xi_2(u) du + \tau \int_{1/\tau_1}^{1/\tau_2} \xi_1(u) du = I_{21} + I_{22} + I_{23},$$

where

$$I_{21} \leq \tau e^{1-\delta\tau^2/2\tau_1^2} \int_{1/\tau_3}^{\infty} \prod_{j=1}^3 (1 + 4u^2\tau_j^2)^{-1/4} du$$

and

$$\int_{1/\tau_3}^{\infty} \prod_{j=1}^3 (1 + 4u^2\tau_j^2)^{-1/4} du \leq \frac{1}{\tau_1} \sqrt{\tau_1/2\tau_2} \leq \frac{1}{\tau_1} \sqrt{\lambda_1/2\lambda_2};$$

$$I_{22} \leq \tau/\tau_1 e^{1-\delta\tau^2/2\tau_1^2} \sqrt{\lambda_1/2\lambda_2} \log \lambda_2/\lambda_3; \quad I_{23} \leq \tau/\tau_1 e^{1-\delta\tau^2/2\tau_1^2} \sqrt{2\lambda_1/2\lambda_2}.$$

Theorem 1 follows from (1.12) and the above calculations.  $\square$

## 2. PROOFS OF LEMMAS 1 AND 2.

The proof of Lemma 1 essentially repeats the proof of Theorem 1 from [10]. However, we present it, because the computations are rather short.

For any  $u \geq 0$ ,

$$\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r) = \Lambda(u) \mathbf{E} e^{u\bar{Z}} \mathbf{I}[\bar{Z} \leq r], \tag{2.1}$$

where  $\bar{Z} = Z(u)$  and the random variable  $Z(u)$  has the distribution (1.3). Hence

$$\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r) = e^{-Q(h)} I(u), \quad I(u) = \mathbf{E} e^{u\sigma(u)Z_0(u)} \mathbf{I}[Z_0(u) \leq \frac{r - m(u)}{\sigma(u)}] \tag{2.2}$$

( $Z_0(u)$  is defined before relation (1.7)).

Let  $h$  be the solution of Eq. (1.6). Then  $I(h) \leq 1$ , and (2.2) with  $u = h$  implies

$$\mathbf{P}(Z \leq r) \leq e^{-Q(h)}. \quad (2.3)$$

If  $a = \infty$ , the lower bound is obvious. Now let  $a < \infty$ . If  $m(u) < r$  (or  $u > h$ ), then

$$I(u) \geq e^{u(m(u)-r)} \mathbf{P}\left(|Z_0(u)| \leq \frac{r-m(u)}{\sigma(u)}\right) \geq e^{u(m(u)-r)} \left(1 - \frac{\sigma^2(u)}{(r-m(u))^2}\right). \quad (2.4)$$

For  $t \geq h$ , put  $\xi(t) = t(r - m(t))$ . Obviously,

$$Q(u) - Q(h) = - \int_h^u tm'(t)dt = \xi(u) + \int_h^u (m(t) - m(h))dt \leq \xi(u), \quad h \leq u < \infty. \quad (2.5)$$

Denote  $\nu = a + \sqrt{a^2 + 2aQ(h)}$ . Let  $u$  be the solution of the equation  $\xi(u) = \nu$  (such a solution exists and is unique, because the function  $\xi(t)$  monotonically grows from zero to infinity on  $[h, \infty)$ ). Then, by (2.5) and the choice of  $\nu$ ,

$$Q(u) \leq Q(h) + \xi(u) = Q(h) + \nu, \quad u(r - m(u)) = \xi(u) = \nu, \\ \frac{\sigma^2(u)}{(r - m(u))^2} = \frac{u^2\sigma^2(u)}{\xi^2(u)} \leq \frac{aQ(u)}{\nu^2} = \frac{a(Q(h) + \nu)}{\nu^2} = \frac{1}{2}.$$

This, along with (2.2)–(2.4), implies Lemma 1.  $\square$

*Proof of Lemma 2.* Let  $h > 0$ . From (2.1) and (2.2) it follows that

$$\mathbf{P}(r - s < Z \leq r) = e^{-Q(h)} \int_{\gamma}^{\beta} e^{\tau t} F^{(h)}(dt), \quad (2.6)$$

where  $\beta = (r - m(h))/\sigma(h)$ ,  $\gamma = (r - s - m(h))/\sigma(h)$ ,  $\tau = h\sigma(h)$ , and  $F^{(h)}(t)$  is the distribution function of  $Z_0(h)$ . Denote  $\Delta(t) = F^{(h)}(t) - \Phi(t)$  (where  $\Phi(t)$  is the standard normal distribution function). We have

$$\int_{\gamma}^{\beta} e^{\tau t} F^{(h)}(dt) = \int_{\gamma}^{\beta} e^{\tau t} \Phi(dt) + \int_{\gamma}^{\beta} e^{\tau t} \Delta(dt) = I + J. \quad (2.7)$$

As in [11, (2.4)–(2.8)], we obtain

$$|J| \leq c \frac{e^{\tau\beta} - e^{\tau\gamma}}{\tau} (\delta_{\varepsilon}(h) + \varepsilon(1 + \delta_{\varepsilon}(h))(\tau + 1/(\beta - \gamma))). \quad (2.8)$$

Now let us consider the integral  $I$ . We have

$$\sqrt{2\pi} I = \frac{1}{\tau} e^{\tau\beta} \int_{-\mu}^0 e^{u-(\beta+u/\tau)^2/2} du, \quad (2.9)$$

where  $\mu = \tau(\beta - \gamma) = hs$ . Further,

$$e^{-(\beta+u/\tau)^2/2} = e^{-\beta^2/2}(1 - 4\beta/\tau) + \frac{1}{2}(u/\tau)^2(e^{-t^2/2})'' \Big|_{t=\beta+\theta u/\tau}, \quad 0 < \theta < 1,$$

whence

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{-\mu}^0 e^{u-(\beta+u/\tau)^2/2} du &= e^{-\beta^2/2} (1 - e^{-\mu} - \frac{\beta}{\tau} \int_{-\mu}^0 te^t dt) + \frac{\theta_1}{2\tau^2} \int_{-\mu}^0 t^2 e^t dt \\ &= (1 - e^{-\mu})(e^{-\beta^2/2}(1 + \theta_2\beta/\tau) + \theta_3/\tau^2), \end{aligned} \tag{2.10}$$

where  $-1 < \theta_1 < 2e^{-3/2}$ ,  $0 < \theta_2 < 1$ ,  $|\theta_3| < 1$ .

Lemma 2 follows from (2.6)–(2.10).  $\square$

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