

## Moments of a binomial loss distribution

[Nematrian website page: [ERMMTBinomialLossDistributionMoments](#), © Nematrian 2015]

Suppose a portfolio has  $n$  equally-sized exposures. Each one is independent and has a probability  $p$  of creating a unit loss (and a probability  $1 - p$  of creating a zero loss), with  $p$  the same for each exposure, meaning that the portfolio loss,  $-X$ , is distributed according to a [binomial distribution](#), i.e.:

$$Pr(X = m) = B(m; n, p) = \binom{n}{m} p^m (1 - p)^{(n-m)} = \frac{n!}{m! (n - m)!} p^m (1 - p)^{(n-m)}$$

The mean and the variance of the portfolio loss distribution can be found as follows. We note that:

$$\sum_{m=0}^n \frac{n!}{m! (n - m)!} p^m (1 - p)^{(n-m)} = 1$$

The mean of the loss distribution is given by:

$$\begin{aligned} E(X) &= \sum_{m=0}^n \frac{n!}{m! (n - m)!} p^m (1 - p)^{(n-m)} m \\ &= np \sum_{m=1}^n \frac{(n - 1)!}{(m - 1)! ((n - 1) - (m - 1))!} p^{(m-1)} (1 - p)^{((n-1)-(m-1))} = np \cdot 1 = np \end{aligned}$$

Likewise:

$$\begin{aligned} E(X(X - 1)) &= n(n - 1)p^2 \sum_{m=2}^n \frac{(n - 2)!}{(m - 2)! ((n - 2) - (m - 2))!} p^{(m-2)} (1 - p)^{((n-2)-(m-2))} \\ &= n(n - 1)p^2 \end{aligned}$$

The variance of the loss distribution is:

$$\begin{aligned} E\left((X - E(X))^2\right) &= E((X - np)^2) = E(X^2 - 2npX + n^2p^2) \\ &= E(X(X - 1)) + E(X) - 2npE(X) + n^2p^2 \\ &= n(n - 1)p^2 + np(1 - 2np + np) = np(1 - p) \end{aligned}$$

Thus binomial distribution has mean  $np$  and variance  $np(1 - p)$ .

As  $n \rightarrow \infty$ , the Central Limit Theorem CLT implies that the binomial distribution tends to a [normal distribution](#) with the same mean and variance, i.e. to  $X \sim N(np, np(1 - p))$  where  $N(x)$  is the cumulative normal distribution.