GNE: A deep learning framework for gene network inference by aggregating biological information

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Overview

- Understanding functional aspects of genes or proteins is crucial to provide insights into underlying biological phenomena for different health and disease conditions.
- Often intractable through biological experiments.
- Topological landscape of gene interactions provides the support for understanding such phenomena.
- Sparse connectivity between the genes
- We propose Gene Network Embedding (GNE), a deep neural network architecture to learn lower dimensional representation for each gene, by integrating the topological properties of gene interaction network with additional information such as expression data.
- Outperforms strong baselines.

Gene Network Embedding (GNE)

Given a gene network denoted as $G = (V, E, A)$, gene network embedding aims to learn a function $f$ that maps gene information to a d-dimensional space where a gene is represented by a vector $y_i \in \mathbb{R}^d$ where $d \ll M$. The low dimensional vectors $y_i$ and $y_j$ for genes $v_i$ and $v_j$ preserve their relationships in terms of the network topological structure and attribute proximity.

- Node represents a gene and edges represent the interactions with other genes.

Overview of GNE

- Models the complex statistical relationship between topological properties and expression data via nonlinear transformation of fused representation.

Assuming a gene network with expression data as node attributes:
1. Obtain dense representation $v_i^{(s)}$ of topological properties of a gene through topological encoder
2. Obtain expression representation $v_i^{(e)}$ of a gene by passing expression data through expression encoder
3. Get the joint representation $v_i^{(s)} + \lambda v_i^{(e)}$
4. Transform the representations using nonlinear layers
5. Predict probability of interactions
6. Update the parameters of encoders, hidden layers by applying gradient descent to optimize maximum likelihood loss

Acknowledgements

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Quantitative results

Result on interaction prediction

- AUROC comparison shows that GNE outperforms other strong baselines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Yeast AUROC</th>
<th>Yeast AUPR</th>
<th>E. coli AUROC</th>
<th>E. coli AUPR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.579</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>0.557</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isomap</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>0.588</td>
<td>0.559</td>
<td>0.672</td>
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<tr>
<td>LINE</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.686</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.851</td>
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<tr>
<td>node2vec</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>0.708</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>0.862</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isomap+</td>
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<td>0.652</td>
<td>0.644</td>
<td>0.649</td>
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<tr>
<td>LINE+</td>
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<td>node2vec+</td>
<td>0.751</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>0.871</td>
<td>0.826</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNE (topology only)</td>
<td>0.787</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td>0.930</td>
<td>0.931</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNE</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.940</td>
<td>0.939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Temporal Holdout Validation

- Temporal holdout validation with two versions of interaction data: 2017 and 2018 version
- Model trained on 2017 version and tested on 2018 version

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LINE</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>0.611</td>
<td>0.569</td>
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<td>node2vec</td>
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<td>0.587</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNE</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>0.653</td>
<td>0.658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Predicts gene interactions more accurately
- Integration of expression data improves the interaction prediction.

Qualitative results

- Learned embeddings is projected into 2D space using t-SNE package for visualization.
- Our method learns similar representation for genes within same operon.
- Two-sample KS test shows that genes within the same operon have significantly similar vector representation than expected by chance.

Sensitivity Analysis

- Integration of expression data with topological properties improves the performance.
- No significant improvement when number of (training) interactions increases (> 50%).