

## 2.5 Bayesian reasoning...

We are given initially

$$\text{prob}(+|\text{disease}) = 0.9$$

Bayes:

$$\text{prob}(+|\text{disease})\text{prob}(\text{disease}) = \text{prob}(\text{disease}|+)\text{prob}(+)$$

or

$$\text{prob}(\text{disease}|+) = \frac{\text{prob}(+|\text{disease})\text{prob}(\text{disease})}{\text{prob}(+)}$$

Find the denominator from normalization

$$\text{prob}(\text{disease}|+) + \text{prob}(\text{no disease}|+) = 1$$

giving the final result

$$\text{prob}(\text{disease}|+) = \frac{\text{prob}(+|\text{disease})}{\text{prob}(+|\text{disease}) + \text{prob}(+|\text{no disease}) \left( \frac{\text{prob}(\text{no disease})}{\text{prob}(\text{disease})} \right)}$$

depending on the false-alarm rate and the general incidence of the problem.

e.g. if  $\text{prob}(\text{disease})=0.1$  and the false-alarm rate  $\text{prob}(+|\text{no disease}) = 0.01$

$$\text{prob}(\text{disease}|+) = 0.91.$$

On the other hand, if the false-alarm rate were 0.1, then

$$\text{prob}(\text{disease}|+) = 0.5.$$

Think of the second case this way. Take 1000 people; 100 of them ( $1000 \times 0.1$ ) have the disease. Of these, 90 or ( $100 \times 0.9$ ) give a positive test. However, another 90 people ( $(1000-100) \times 0.1$ ) give a positive test without having the disease. So, given a positive test, a fraction  $90/(90+90)$  actually have the disease.