

Step-by-Step Guidelines for Propensity Score Weighting with Two Groups

Beth Ann Griffin



Four key steps

- 1) Choose the primary treatment effect of interest (ATE or ATT)
- 2) Estimate propensity score (ps) weights
- 3) Evaluate the quality of the ps weights
- 4) Estimate the treatment effect

Case study

- **Aim:** To estimate the causal effect of MET/CBT5 versus “usual care”
 - Data from 2 SAMSHA CSAT discretionary grants

MET/CBT5

- Longitudinal, observational
- 37 sites from EAT study
- N = 2459

“Usual Care”

- Longitudinal, observational
- 4 sites from ATM study
- N = 444

Case study

- **Aim:** To estimate the causal effect of MET/CBT5 versus “usual care”
 - Data from 2 SAMSHA CSAT discretionary grants

MET/CBT5

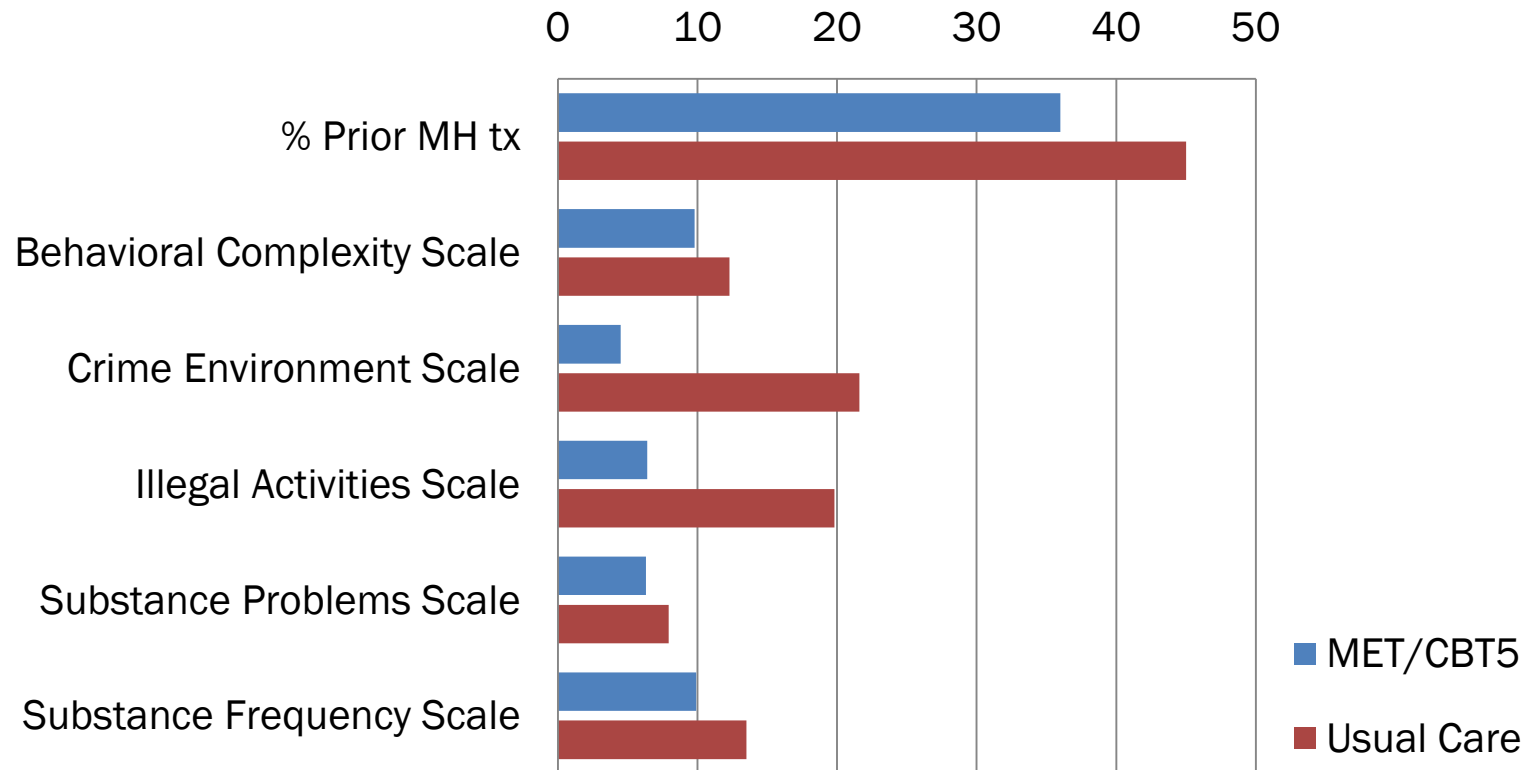
- Longitudinal, observational
- 37 sites from EAT study
- N = 2459

“Usual Care”

- Longitudinal, observational
- 4 sites from ATM study
- N = 444

All youth assessed with the GAIN at baseline, 6 months, and 12 months

Selection exists: Various meaningful ways in which the groups differ



Step 1: Choose the primary treatment effect (ATE or ATT)

- Today, we chose to focus on estimating an ATT-type estimand
 - Want to draw inferences about the effect of treatment for individuals in the control condition (so really ATC)
 - In this case, we can just flip treatment indicator so 1 = usual care and 0 = MET/CBT5 to get the needed ATT estimand for the control group
- Why?
 - Youth in the community are different from those targeted to receive MET/CBT5 in the EAT study
 - Thus, the policy question we want to address is

How would youth like those receiving “usual care” in the community have fared had they received MET/CBT5?

Step 2: Estimate the ps weights

- Only 1 command needed for this step
- Binary treatment command in TWANG currently available in R, SAS and STATA
- Also have a user-friendly Shiny app

STATA CODE SLIDES

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds bcs
prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- **use aod_big,clear** ← **Specifies name of dataset**
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
- ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
- rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
- objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
- plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

Specifies name of treatment variable (for ATT, it should = targeted group)

- use `add_big,clear`
- ps **atm** age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm **age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds bcs prmhtx, ///**
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ,///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\ **Specifies list of pretreatment covariates to balance on**)/
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

**Specifies
categorical variable
race4g as i.race4g**

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female **i.race4g** sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

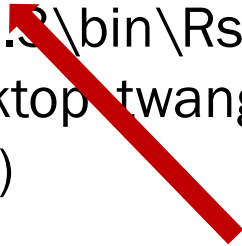
Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds bcs prmhtx, ///
- **ntrees(5000)** stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
- rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
- objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
- plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

Specifies the maximum number of iterations used by GBM. Should be large (5000 to 10000)

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata


- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) **stopmethod(es.max)** estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.2\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar\twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace



Specifies the criteria for choosing the optimal number of iterations. Available choices include mean or max ES and mean or max KS statistics

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata


- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) **estimand(ATT)** ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace



**Specifies primary
estimand of
interest (ATT or
ATE)**

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace



**Specifies the
R executable
by name and
path**

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace



**Specifies folder
where outputted
data and plots
will go**

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace



**Specifies
name of
file where
diagnostic
plots will go**

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhtx, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- **balance, unweighted weighted** ←
- save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace

**Print unweighted
and weighted
balance tables in
the output
window**

Command to estimate ps weights in Stata

- use aod_big,clear
- ps atm age female i.race4g sfs sps sds ias ces eps imds
bcs prmhxt, ///
ntrees(5000) stopmethod(es.max) estimand(ATT) ///
rcmd(C:\Program Files\R\R-3.0.3\bin\Rscript.exe) ///
objpath(C:\Users\sliu002\Desktop\twang\webinar twang) ///
plotname(binary_twang_att.pdf)
- balance, unweighted weighted
- **save subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,replace** ←

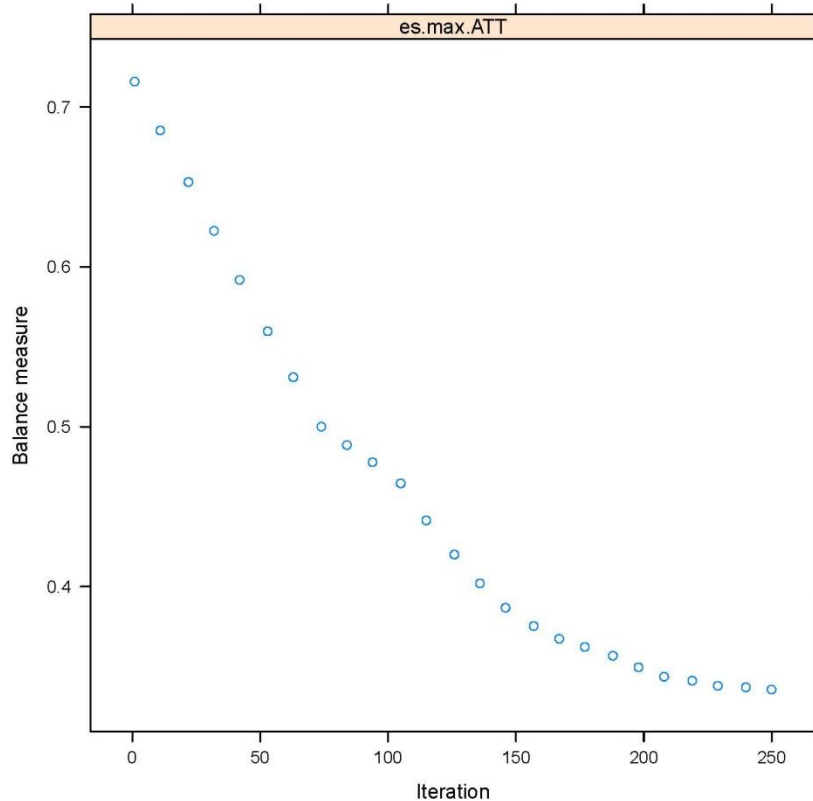
**Specifies
name of
outputted
dataset with
ps weights**

Step 3: Evaluate the quality of the ps weights

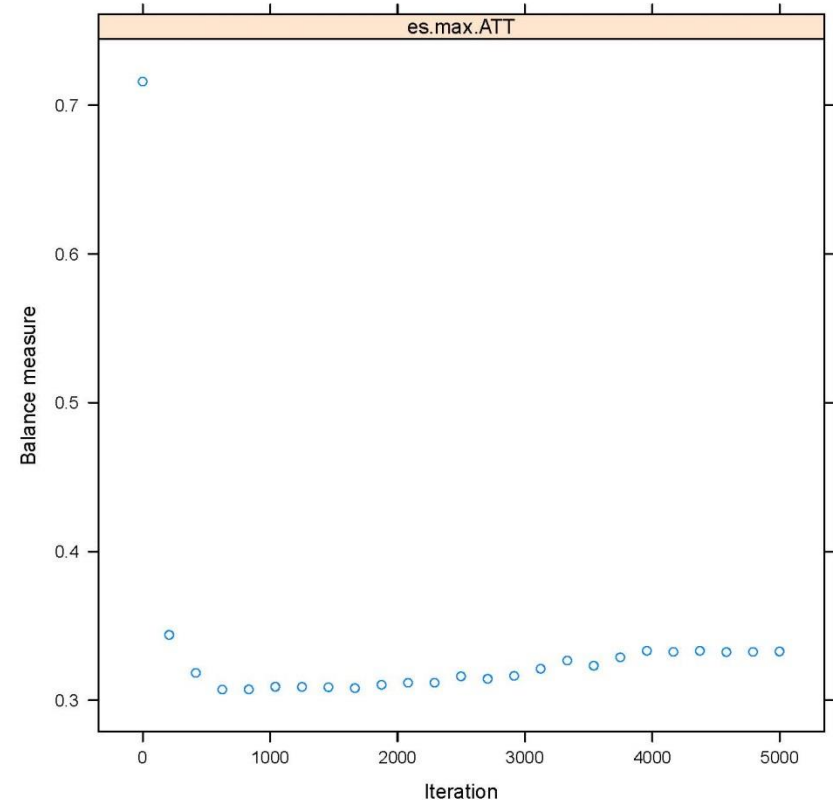
- Key issues that should be checked:
 - **Convergence** = did the algorithm run long enough
 - **Balance** = how well matched the two groups look after weighting
 - **Overlap** = whether there is evidence that the distributions of the pretreatment covariates in the two groups line up well

Step 3: Checking convergence

Bad Convergence



Good Convergence



Step 3: Checking balance

- TWANG has numerous diagnostics for assessing balance

Step 3: Checking balance with tables

Step 3: Checking balance with tables

Unweighted balance table

Unweighted

	txmn	txsd	ctmn	ctsd	stdeffsz	stat	p	ks	kspval
—									
age	15.82	1.088	15.54	1.573	.255	4.59	0	.116	0
bcs	12.26	7.405	9.832	7.776	.328	6.309	0	.177	0
ces	.242	.363	.052	.177	.524	10.81	0	.262	0
eps	.279	.191	.208	.185	.373	7.267	0	.186	0
female	.214	.411	.315	.465	-.246	-4.666	0	.101	.001
ias	.224	.19	.087	.109	.719	14.73	0	.485	0
imds	7.723	8.234	7.831	8.515	-.013	-.253	.8	.03	.874
prmhtx	.449	.498	.367	.482	.164	3.202	.001	.082	.012
sds	3.099	2.332	2.338	2.22	.327	6.382	0	.147	0
sfs	.145	.147	.109	.123	.246	4.889	0	.12	0
sps	7.93	4.454	6.311	4.268	.364	7.1	0	.141	0
race4g									
1	.673	.469	.51	.5	.349	21.45	0	.163	0
2	.135	.342	.081	.273	.157	.	.	.054	0
3	.097	.296	.241	.428	-.487	.	.	.144	0
4	.092	.29	.168	.374	-.261	.	.	.076	0
Missingn~s									
bcs	0	0	.002	.049	-.054	-37.83	0	.002	.297
eps	0	0	.002	.04	-.044	-32.14	0	.002	.395
ias	0	0	.009	.094	-.103	-72.54	0	.009	.045
imds	0	0	.002	.04	-.044	-32.14	0	.002	.395
prmhtx	.002	.047	.007	.083	-.059	-1.093	.275	.005	.25
race4g	.002	.047	0	0	.048	.	.	.002	0
sds	0	0	.004	.06	-.066	-47.38	0	.004	.201
sps	0	0	.001	.035	-.038	-27.37	0	.001	.461

Step 3: Checking balance with tables

Unweighted balance table

Unweighted

	txmn	txsd	ctmn	ctsd	stdeffsz	stat	p	ks	kspval
age	15.82	1.088	15.54	1.573	.255	4.59	0	.116	0
bcs	12.26	7.405	9.832	7.776	.328	6.309	0	.177	0
ces	.242	.363	.052	.177	.524	10.81	0	.262	0
eps	.279	.191	.208	.185	.373	7.267	0	.186	0
female	.214	.411	.315	.465	-.246	-4.666	0	.101	.001
ias	.224	.19	.087	.109	.719	14.73	0	.485	0
imds	7.723	8.234	7.831	8.515	-.013	-.253	.8	.03	.874
prmhtx	.449	.498	.367	.482	.164	3.202	.001	.082	.012
sds	3.099	2.332	2.338	2.22	.327	6.382	0	.147	0
sfs	.145	.147	.109	.123	.246	4.889	0	.12	0
sps	7.93	4.454	6.311	4.268	.364	7.1	0	.141	0
race4g									
1	.673	.469	.51	.5	.349	21.45	0	.163	0
2	.135	.342	.081	.273	.157	.	.	.054	0
3	.097	.296	.241	.428	-.487	.	.	.144	0
4	.092	.29	.168	.374	-.261	.	.	.076	0
Missingn~s									
bcs	0	0	.002	.049	-.054	-37.83	0	.002	.297
eps	0	0	.002	.04	-.044	-32.14	0	.002	.395
ias	0	0	.009	.094	-.103	-72.54	0	.009	.045
imds	0	0	.002	.04	-.044	-32.14	0	.002	.395
prmhtx	.002	.047	.007	.083	-.059	-1.093	.275	.005	.25
race4g	.002	.047	0	0	.048	.	.	.002	0
sds	0	0	.004	.06	-.066	-47.38	0	.004	.201
sps	0	0	.001	.035	-.038	-27.37	0	.001	.461

Highlights denotes rows with absolute ES > 0.10

Step 3: Checking balance with tables

Weighted balance table

Weighted: esmax

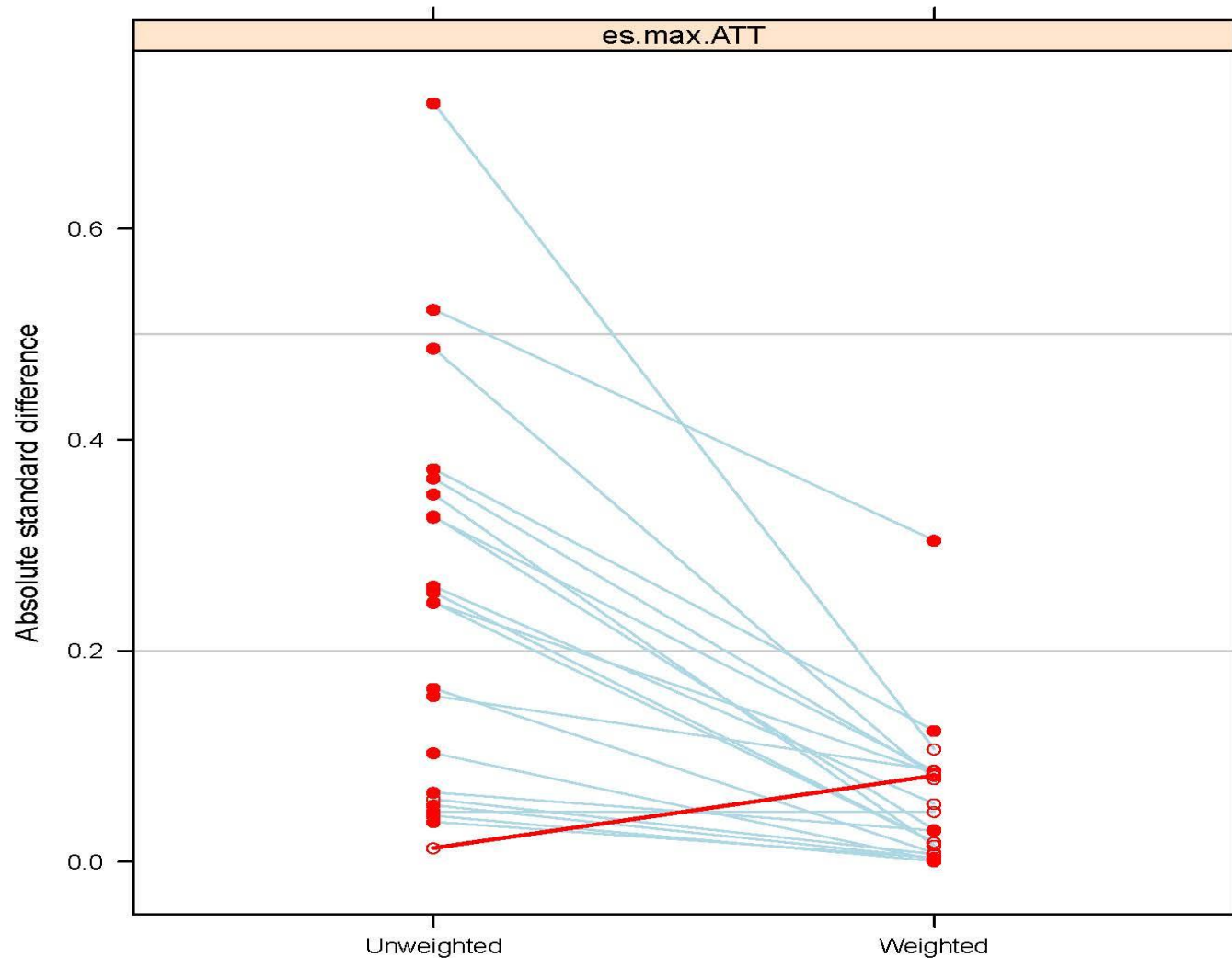
	txmn	txsd	ctmn	ctsd	stdeffsz	stat	p	ks	kspval
age	15.82	1.088	15.8	1.459	.019	.238	.812	.052	.524
bcs	12.26	7.405	12.48	7.757	-.03	-.466	.641	.06	.351
ces	.242	.363	.131	.284	.305	4.32	0	.152	0
eps	.279	.191	.255	.183	.124	2.056	.04	.064	.283
female	.214	.411	.248	.432	-.084	-1.311	.19	.035	.929
ias	.224	.19	.203	.169	.107	1.67	.095	.083	.073
imds	7.723	8.234	8.396	8.509	-.082	-1.262	.207	.062	.308
prmhtx	.449	.498	.453	.498	-.008	-.129	.898	.004	1
sds	3.099	2.332	2.898	2.245	.086	1.312	.19	.049	.6
sfs	.145	.147	.148	.144	-.019	-.283	.778	.049	.605
sps	7.93	4.454	7.561	4.249	.083	1.272	.204	.052	.522
race4g									
1	.673	.469	.666	.472	.016	1.083	.362	.007	.362
2	.135	.342	.105	.307	.087	.	.	.03	.362
3	.097	.296	.12	.325	-.079	.	.	.023	.362
4	.092	.29	.108	.311	-.055	.	.	.016	.362
Missingn~s									
bcs	0	0	0	.013	-.004	-21.96	0	0	.125
eps	0	0	0	.005	-.001	-30.06	0	0	.029
ias	0	0	0	.012	-.002	-72.29	0	0	0
imds	0	0	0	.005	-.001	-30.06	0	0	.029
prmhtx	.002	.047	.003	.053	-.007	-.212	.832	.001	.832
race4g	.002	.047	0	0	.048	.	.	.002	.362
sds	0	0	.002	.041	-.03	-42.25	0	.002	.004
sps	0	0	0	.011	-.004	-20.27	0	0	.151

Highlights denote rows with absolute ES > 0.10

Step 3: Checking balance graphically

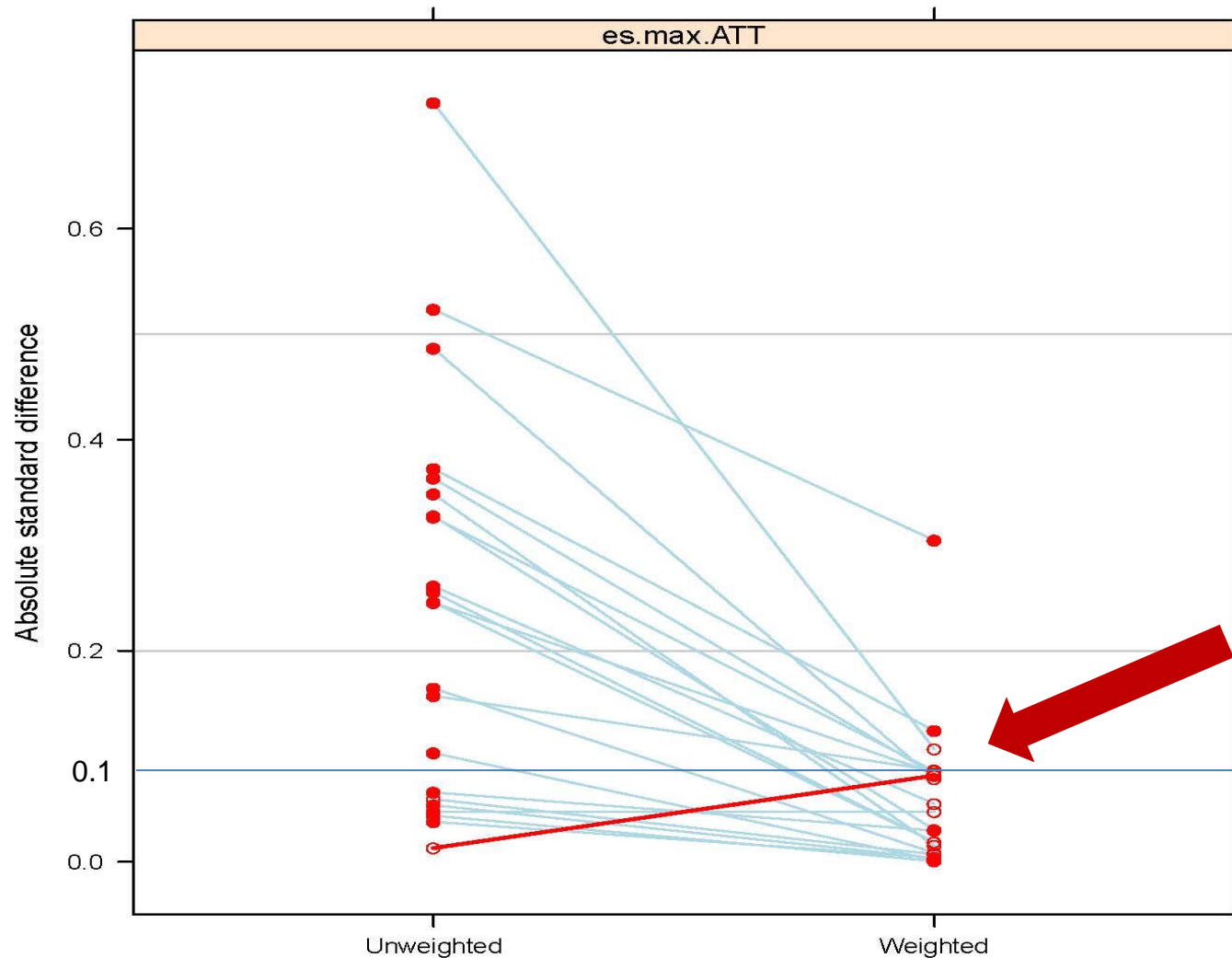
Step 3: Checking balance graphically

ES plot



Step 3: Checking balance graphically

ES plot

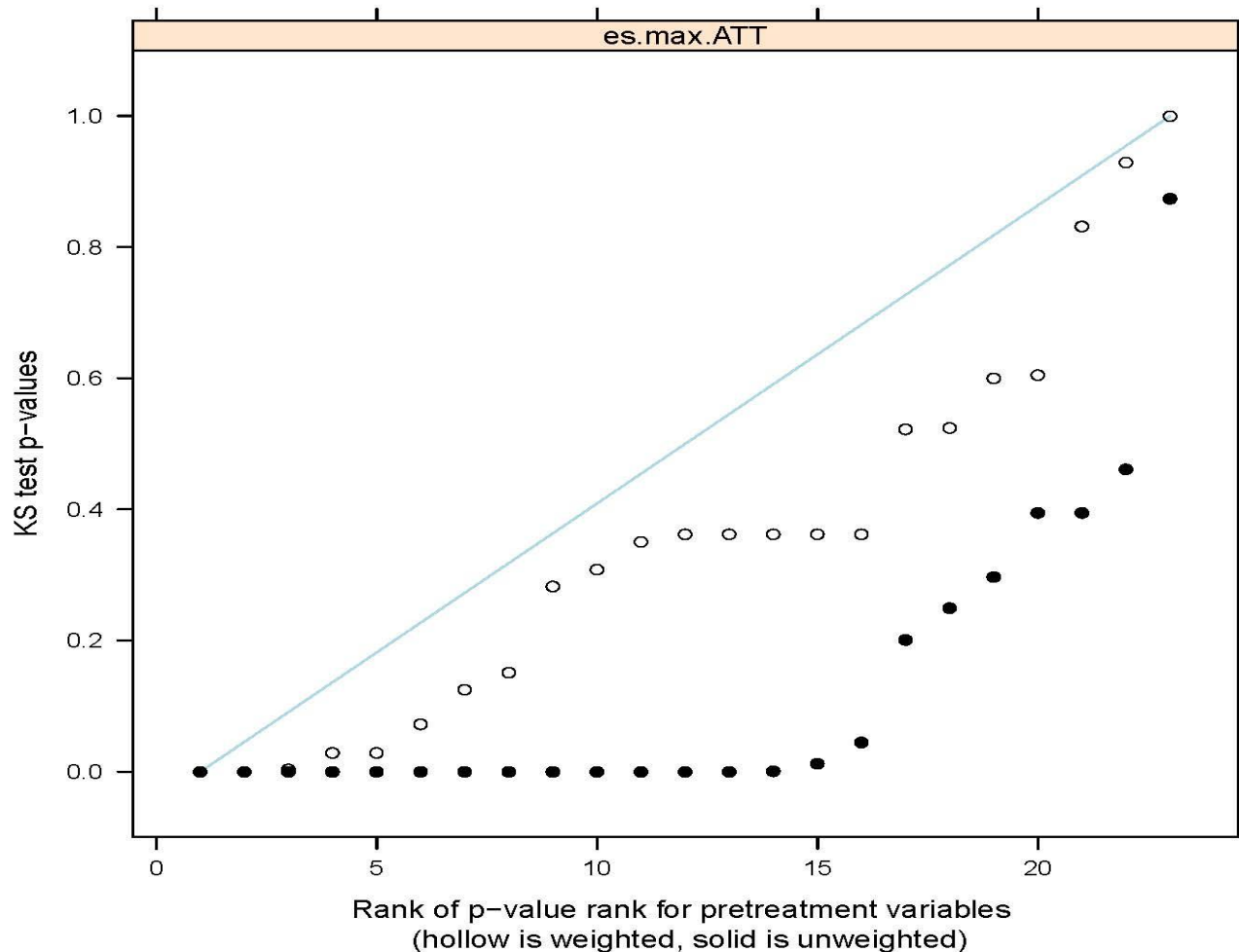


Want as many dots as possible to go below 0.10 after weighting

Step 3: Checking balance graphically

KS plot

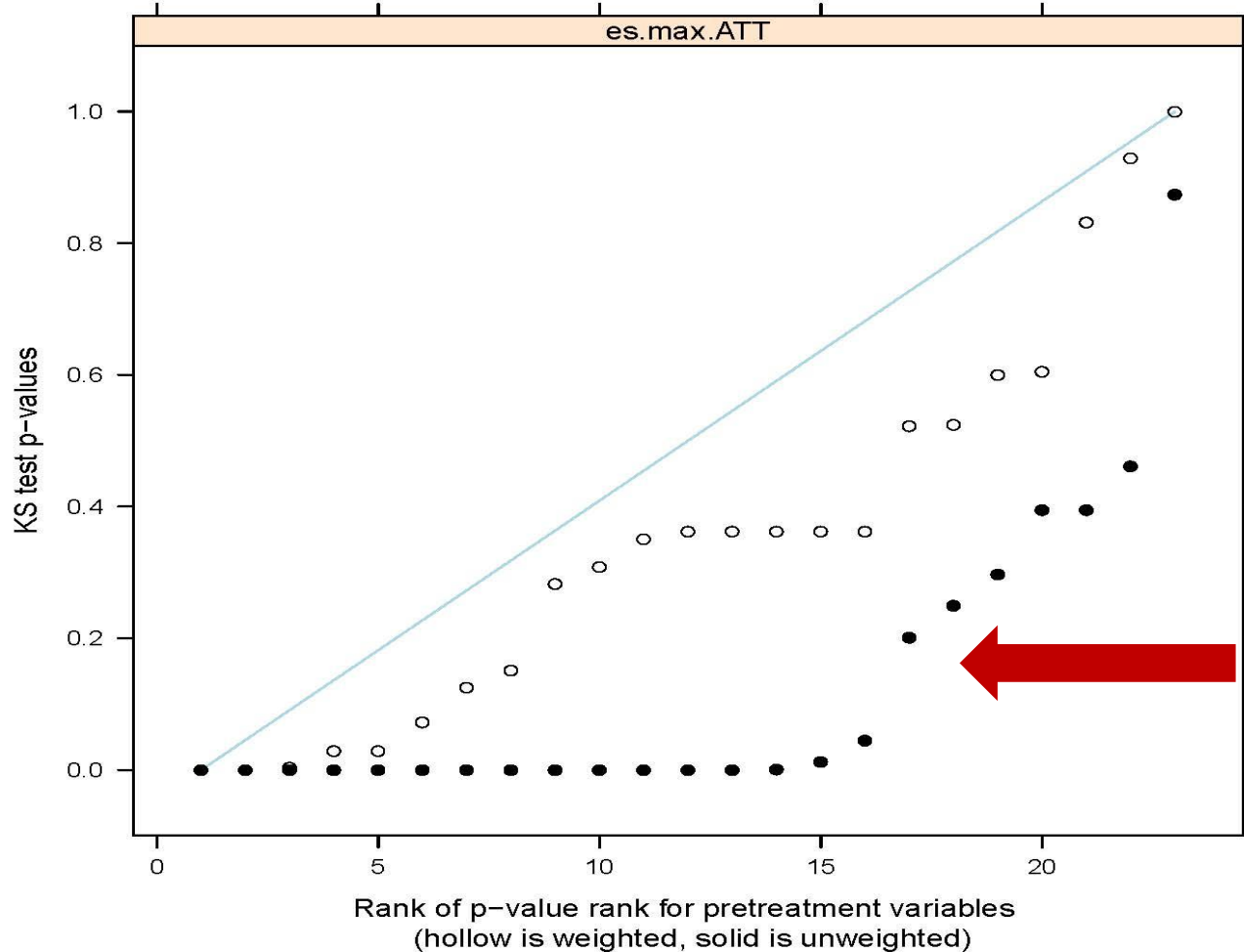
Plot 5 (ks): K-S P-values of Group Distns of Covariates



Step 3: Checking balance graphically

KS plot

Plot 5 (ks): K-S P-values of Group Distns of Covariates



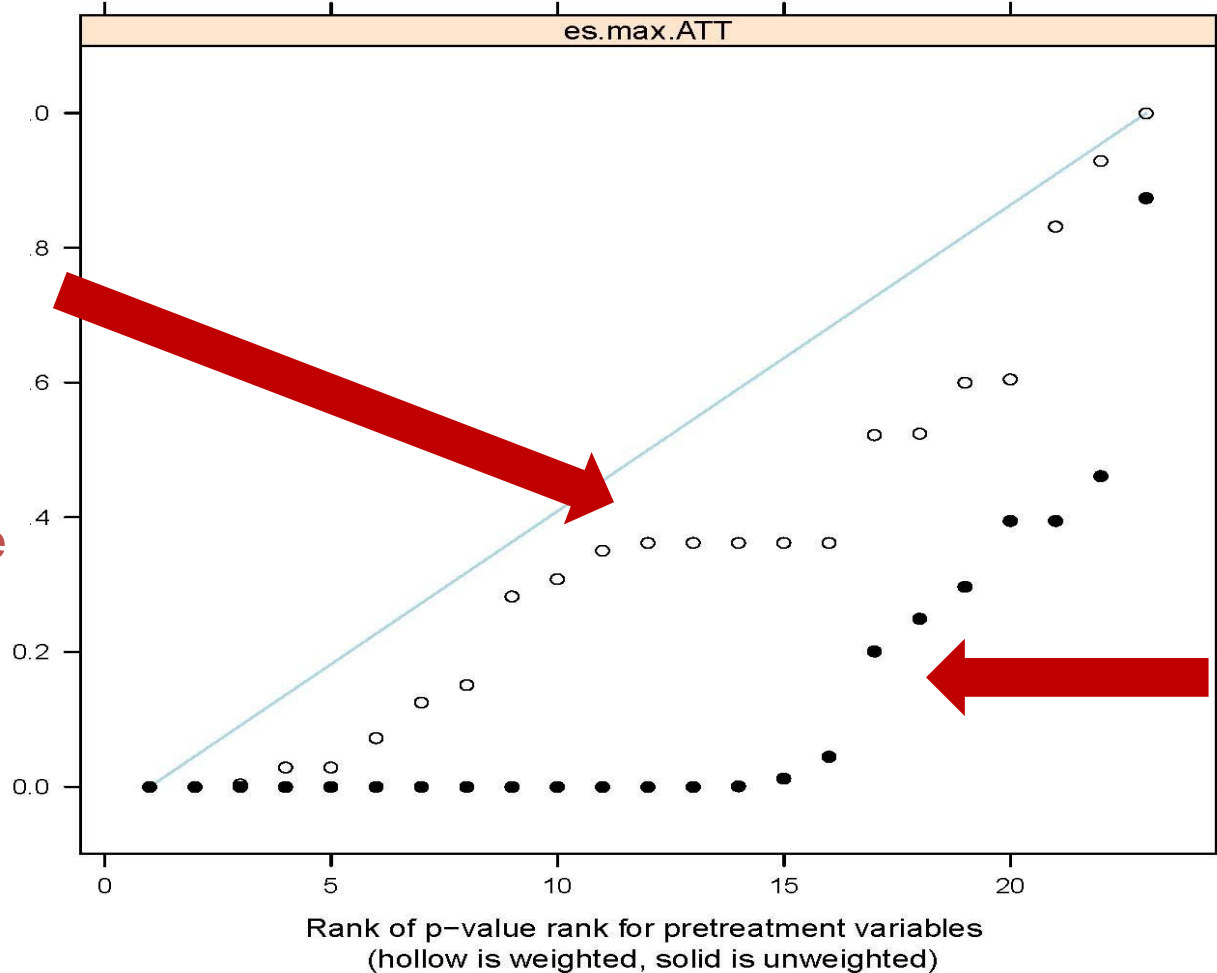
Solid dots = unweighted p-values. Note many less than 0.05

Step 3: Checking balance graphically

KS plot

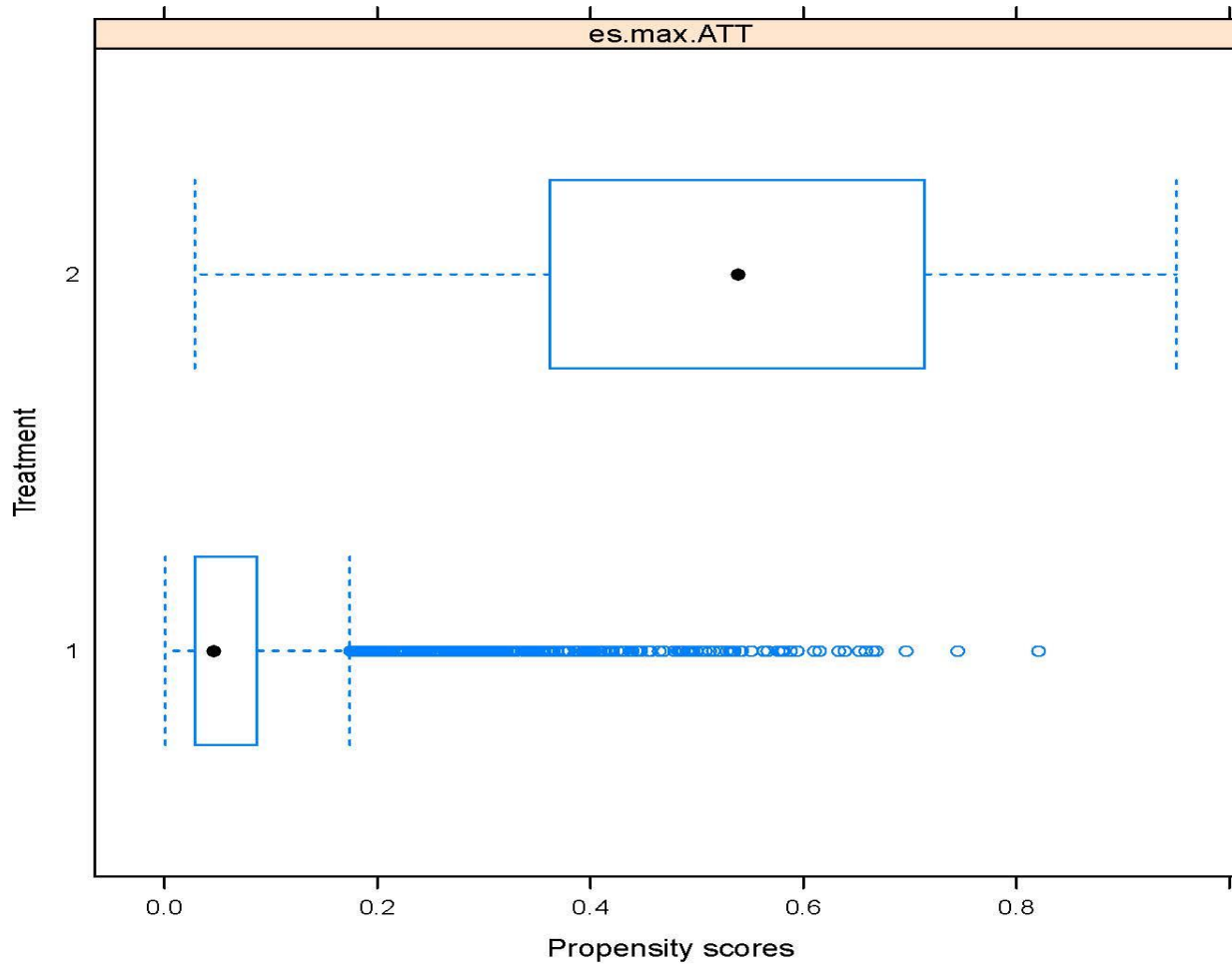
Plot 5 (ks): K-S P-values of Group Distns of Covariates

Open dots = weighted p-values. Note getting larger and moving towards the diagonal line



Solid dots = unweighted p-values. Note many less than 0.05

Step 3: Checking overlap



Step 3: Checking overlap

Check for 0 (empty) cells on binary and categorical

	MET/ CBT5	Usual Care
Female	774	95
Race = 1	1254	299
Race = 2	200	60
Race = 3	592	43
Race = 4	412	41
Prior MH trt	897	199

Compare the minimums and maximums

	MET/ CBT5	Usual Care
SFS	(0, 0.71)	(0, 0.65)
SPS	(0, 16)	(0, 16)
SDS	(0, 7)	(0, 7)
IAS	(0, 1)	(0, 1)
CES	(0, 1)	(0, 1)
EPS	(0, 0.98)	(0, 0.99)
IMDS	(0, 41)	(0, 34)
BCS	(0, 31)	(0, 31)

Note: We haven't even begun to talk about the outcome yet

- Steps 1 to 3 do not involve any outcomes
- We first focus on dealing with selection/pre-treatment group differences
- Then, if we do a good job, we will move to outcome analyses

Step 4: Estimate the treatment effect

- Estimate as difference in propensity score weighted means between the two groups of interest
 - Since we are using weights, we need to adjust our standard errors for the weighting
 - Analogous to fitting regression models with survey data with survey weights

Step 4: Estimate the treatment effect

- Estimate as difference in propensity score weighted means between the two groups of interest
 - Since we are using weights, we need to adjust our standard errors for the weighting
 - Analogous to fitting regression models with survey data with survey weights

We can use survey analysis commands in any software to estimate treatment effects

Step 4: Estimate the treatment effect (cont.)

Stata Code:

- use subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,clear
- reg sfs8p12 metcbt5[pweight=esmaxatt]

(sum of wgt is 7.3694e+02)

Linear regression

Number of obs = 2901
F(1, 2899) = 4.69
Prob > F = 0.0304
R-squared = 0.0049
Root MSE = .13845

sfs8p12	Robust				
	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
metcbt5	-.0198438	.0091637	-2.17	0.030	-.0378119 -.0018758
_cons	.1141963	.0066653	17.13	0.000	.1011271 .1272656

Step 4: Estimate the treatment effect (cont.)

Stata Code:

- use subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,clear
- reg sfs8p12 metcbt5[pweight=esmaxatt]

```
(sum of wgt is 7.3694e+02)
```

```
Linear regression
```

```
Number of obs = 2901  
F( 1, 2899) = 4.69  
Prob > F = 0.0304  
R-squared = 0.0049  
Root MSE = .13845
```

	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
sfs8p12						
metcbt5	-.0198438	.0091637	-2.17	0.030	-.0378119	-.0018758
_cons	.1141963	.0066653	17.13	0.000	.1011271	.1272656

Results show that youth like those in “usual care” would have fared better had they received MET/CBT5

Comparison with unweighted treatment effect

Stata Code:

- use subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,clear
- reg sfs8p12 metcbt5

Source	SS	df	MS			
Model	.832622997	1	.832622997	Number of obs =	2901	
Residual	41.6553919	2899	.014368883	F(1, 2899) =	57.95	
Total	42.4880148	2900	.01465104	Prob > F =	0.0000	
				R-squared =	0.0196	
				Adj R-squared =	0.0193	
				Root MSE =	.11987	

sfs8p12	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
metcbt5	-.0470548	.0061815	-7.61	0.000	-.0591753	-.0349343
_cons	.1141963	.0056888	20.07	0.000	.1030419	.1253508

Comparison with unweighted treatment effect

Stata Code:

- use subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,clear
- reg sfs8p12 metcbt5

Source	SS	df	MS			
Model	.832622997	1	.832622997	Number of obs =	2901	
Residual	41.6553919	2899	.014368883	F(1, 2899) =	57.95	
Total	42.4880148	2900	.01465104	Prob > F =	0.0000	
				R-squared =	0.0196	
				Adj R-squared =	0.0193	
				Root MSE =	.11987	

sfs8p12	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
metcbt5	-.0470548	.0061815	-7.61	0.000	-.0591753	-.0349343
_cons	.1141963	.0056888	20.07	0.000	.1030419	.1253508

- Also shows significant evidence that youth in “usual care” have higher substance use frequency at 12-months than those in MET/CBT5
- Magnitude of the effect unweighted is double (-0.02 vs -0.047)

Step 4: Doubly robust estimation

- “Doubly robust” estimation is the preferred route for estimating causal treatment effects
 - Combines fitting a propensity score weighted regression model with the inclusion of additional pretreatment control covariates
 - As long as one piece is right (either the multivariate outcome model or the propensity score model), obtain consistent treatment effect estimates

Step 4: Doubly robust estimation: Adding in covariates with lingering imbalances

Stata Code: **imbalances**

- use subdata_twogrp_att_wgts,clear
- reg sfs8p12 metcbt5 ces [pweight=esmaxatt]

```
(sum of wgt is 7.3694e+02)
```

Linear regression

```
Number of obs = 2901  
F( 2, 2898) = 2.67  
Prob > F = 0.0693  
R-squared = 0.0070  
Root MSE = .13832
```

	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
sfs8p12						
metcbt5	-.0219624	.0096355	-2.28	0.023	-.0408555	-.0030693
ces	-.0191335	.0161545	-1.18	0.236	-.050809	.012542
_cons	.118827	.0078169	15.20	0.000	.1034998	.1341542