

# Package ‘MPN’

October 22, 2024

**Title** Most Probable Number and Other Microbial Enumeration Techniques

**Version** 0.4.0

**Maintainer** John Ihrie <John.Ihrie@fda.hhs.gov>

**Description** Calculates the Most Probable Number (MPN) to quantify the concentration (density) of microbes in serial dilutions of a laboratory sample (described in Jarvis, 2010 <[doi:10.1111/j.1365-2672.2010.04792.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2672.2010.04792.x)>). Also calculates the Aerobic Plate Count (APC) for similar microbial enumeration experiments.

**License** Unlimited

**URL** <https://pub-connect.foodsafetyrisk.org/microbial/mpncalc/>

**RoxygenNote** 7.3.2

**Imports** stats

**Suggests** knitr, rmarkdown, testthat

**VignetteBuilder** knitr

**Encoding** UTF-8

**NeedsCompilation** no

**Author** Martine Ferguson [aut] (original R code),  
John Ihrie [cre, aut]

**Repository** CRAN

**Date/Publication** 2024-10-22 21:40:02 UTC

## Contents

apc . . . . .	2
mpn . . . . .	4
<b>Index</b>	<b>8</b>

apc

*Calculate aerobic plate count (APC)***Description**

apc calculates the Aerobic Plate Count (APC) point estimate and confidence interval of colony forming units (CFU). Adjusts for too-numerous-to-count (TNTC) plates using the maximum likelihood method of Haas et al. (2014).

**Usage**

```
apc(
  count,
  amount_scor,
  amount_tntc = NULL,
  tntc_limit = 250,
  conf_level = 0.95,
  tol = 1e-06
)
```

**Arguments**

count	A vector of CFU counts in each scorable (countable) plate.
amount_scor	A vector of inoculum amounts (in ml) in each scorable plate. See <i>Details</i> section.
amount_tntc	A vector of inoculum amounts (in ml) in each TNTC plate.
tntc_limit	A vector (or scalar) of the limit above which the plate counts are considered too-numerous-to-count (often 100, 250, or 300). Each plate can potentially have a different value. Default is 250.
conf_level	A scalar value between zero and one for the confidence level. Typically 0.95 (i.e., a 95 percent confidence interval).
tol	A scalar value for tolerance to be passed to <code>stats::optimize()</code> and <code>stats::uniroot()</code> .

**Details**

As an example, assume we start with four plates and 1 ml of undiluted inoculum. For the first two plates we use a 100-fold dilution; for the other two plates we use a 1,000-fold dilution. The first two plates were TNTC with limits of 300 and 250. The other plates had CFU counts of 28 and 20. We now have `count = c(28, 20)`, `amount_scor = 1 * c(.001, .001)`, `amount_tntc = 1 * c(.01, .01)`, and `tntc_limit = c(300, 250)`.

Currently, confidence intervals can only be calculated using the likelihood ratio (LR) approach described in Haas et al. (2014).

**Value**

A list containing:

- **APC**: The aerobic plate count point estimate in CFU/ml.
- **conf\_level**: The confidence level used.
- **LB**: The lower bound of the confidence interval.
- **UB**: The upper bound of the confidence interval.

**Warnings**

The likelihood ratio confidence interval assumptions depend on asymptotic theory. Therefore, the confidence interval results will be better with larger experiments.

`apc()` will fail in certain cases where the TNTC results are extremely unlikely to occur when taking the scorable (countable) plates into consideration. In other words, if the countable plates suggest a low concentration of microbes, then TNTC plates at higher dilution levels are probably due to experimental error. Mathematically, the probability is so small that the likelihood function is essentially zero.

**References**

Bacteriological Analytical Manual, 8th Edition, Chapter 3, <https://www.fda.gov/food/laboratory-methods-food/bam-chapter-3-aerobic-plate-count>

Haas CN, Heller B (1988). "Averaging of TNTC counts." *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, 54(8), 2069-2072.

Haas CN, Rose JB, Gerba CP (2014). "Quantitative microbial risk assessment, Second Ed." *John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*, ISBN 978-1-118-14529-6.

**See Also**

[mpn](#) for Most Probable Number

**Examples**

```
#----- "Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment (Haas et al., 2014) -----

# Table 6.1 (Sample A)
my_count <- c(1, 2, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 3, 6, 8, 4)
my_amount_scor <- c(1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2.5, 2.5, 2.5, 2.5, 5, 5)
apc(my_count, my_amount_scor) #1.08

# Table 6.1 (Sample B)
my_count <- c(1, 0, 5, 1, 0, 5, 0, 1, 5, 1, 8)
my_amount_scor <- c(1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2.5, 2.5, 2.5, 2.5, 5, 5)
apc(my_count, my_amount_scor) #1.08

# Table 6.2
my_count <- c(12, 8, 15, 40, 58)
my_amount_scor <- c(1, 1, 1, 10, 10)
my_amount_tntc <- c(10, 100, 100, 100)
```

```

my_tntc_limit <- 100
apc(my_count, my_amount_scor, my_amount_tntc, my_tntc_limit) #~7 (6.03, 7.96)

#----- "Averaging of TNTC Counts" (Haas & Heller, 1988) -----
# Note:
# Results are slightly different due mostly to differences in how the TNTC
# portion of the likelihood function is formulated (i.e., incomplete gamma
# function vs. infinite Poisson sum--see Haas et al. (2014) for details of
# this mathematical relationship).

my_count <- c(10, 12, 23, 48, 63)
my_amount_scor <- c(1, 1, 1, 5, 5)
my_amount_tntc <- c(5, 10, 10)
my_tntc_limit <- 80
apc(my_count, my_amount_scor, my_amount_tntc, my_tntc_limit)
#Haas & Heller: APC = 13.28 CFU/ml

```

---

mpn

---

*Calculate most probable number (MPN)*


---

## Description

mpn calculates the Most Probable Number (*MPN*) point estimate and confidence interval for microbial concentrations. Also calculates Blodgett's (2002, 2005, 2010) Rarity Index (*RI*).

## Usage

```

mpn(
  positive,
  tubes,
  amount,
  conf_level = 0.95,
  CI_method = c("Jarvis", "LR"),
  tol = 1e-06
)

```

## Arguments

positive	A vector of number of positive tubes at each dilution level.
tubes	A vector of total number of tubes at each dilution level.
amount	A vector of the amount of inoculum per tube at each dilution level. See <i>Details</i> section.
conf_level	A scalar value between zero and one for the confidence level. Typically 0.95 (i.e., a 95 percent confidence interval).
CI_method	The method used for calculating the confidence interval. Choices are "Jarvis" or "LR" (likelihood ratio). See <i>Details</i> section.
tol	A scalar value for tolerance to be passed to <code>stats::uniroot()</code> .

## Details

As an example, assume we start with 3g of undiluted inoculum per tube, then use a 10-fold dilution for 2 dilutions. We now have amount =  $3 * c(1, .1, .01)$ .

When all tubes are negative, the point estimate of *MPN* is zero (same approach as Jarvis et al.). The point estimate for the BAM tables "is listed as less than the lowest MPN for an outcome with at least one positive tube" (App.2).

When all tubes are positive, the point estimate for *MPN* is Inf (same approach as Jarvis et al.) since no finite maximum likelihood estimate (MLE) exists. The BAM tables "list the MPN for this outcome as greater than the highest MPN for an outcome with at least one negative tube" (App.2). Here, the difference is probably trivial since the sample should be further diluted if all tubes test positive.

The bias adjustment for the point estimate uses the method of Salama et al. (1978). Also see Haas (1989).

Currently, confidence intervals can only be calculated using the Jarvis (2010) or likelihood ratio (LR) approach (Ridout, 1994). The BAM tables use an alternate approach. We slightly modified Jarvis' approach when all tubes are positive or all are negative; we use  $\alpha$  instead of  $\alpha/2$  since these are one-sided intervals. The Ridout (1994) LR approach uses the same technique (with  $\alpha$ ) for these two extreme cases.

If the Rarity Index is less than  $1e-04$ , the experimental results are highly improbable. The researcher may consider running the experiment again and/or changing the dilution levels.

## Value

A list containing:

- **MPN**: The most probable number point estimate for microbial density (concentration).
- **MPN\_adj**: The bias-adjusted point estimate for MPN.
- **variance**: The estimated variance (see Jarvis et al.) of the *MPN* estimate if *CI\_method* = "Jarvis". If all tubes are positive or all negative, *variance* will be NA. If *CI\_method* is not "Jarvis", *variance* will be NA.
- **var\_log**: The estimated variance of the natural log of the MPN estimate (see Jarvis et al.) using the Delta Method. If all tubes are positive or all negative, *var\_log* will be NA. If *CI\_method* is not "Jarvis", *var\_log* will be NA.
- **conf\_level**: The confidence level used.
- **CI\_method**: The confidence interval method used.
- **LB**: The lower bound of the confidence interval.
- **UB**: The upper bound of the confidence interval.
- **RI**: The rarity index.

## Warnings

The Jarvis confidence interval assumptions of approximate normality (Delta Method and asymptotic normality of maximum likelihood estimators) depend on large-sample theory. The likelihood ratio assumptions also depend on large-sample theory. Therefore, the Jarvis and LR confidence interval approaches work best with larger experiments.

## References

- Bacteriological Analytical Manual, 8th Edition, Appendix 2, <https://www.fda.gov/food/laboratory-methods-food/bam-appendix-2-most-probable-number-serial-dilutions>
- Blodgett RJ (2002). "Measuring improbability of outcomes from a serial dilution test." *Communications in Statistics: Theory and Methods*, 31(12), 2209-2223.
- Blodgett RJ (2005). "Serial dilution with a confirmation step." *Food Microbiology*, 22(6), 547-552.
- Blodgett RJ (2010). "Does a serial dilution experiment's model agree with its outcome?" *Model Assisted Statistics and Applications*, 5(3), 209-215.
- Haas CN (1989). "Estimation of microbial densities from dilution count experiments" *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 55(8), 1934-1942.
- Haas CN, Rose JB, Gerba CP (2014). "Quantitative microbial risk assessment, Second Ed." *John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*, ISBN 978-1-118-14529-6.
- Jarvis B, Wilrich C, Wilrich P-T (2010). "Reconsideration of the derivation of Most Probable Numbers, their standard deviations, confidence bounds and rarity values." *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, 109, 1660-1667.
- Ridout MS (1994). "A comparison of confidence interval methods for dilution series experiments." *Biometrics*, 50(1), 289-296.
- Salama IA, Koch GG, Tolley DH. (1978) "On the estimation of the most probable number in a serial dilution technique." *Communications in Statistics - Theory and Methods*, 7(13), 1267-1281.

## See Also

Shiny app: <https://pub-connect.foodsafetyrisk.org/microbial/mpncalc/apc> for Aerobic Plate Count

## Examples

```
# Compare MPN, 95% CI, and RI to Jarvis -----
# Table 1
mpn(positive = c(3, 1, 1), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(1, .1, .01))
#Jarvis: 7.5 (1.9, 30) RI = .209

mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 0), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(1, .1, .01))
#Jarvis: 0 (0, 1.1) RI = 1
mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 0), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(1, .1, .01),
    conf_level = .975)$UB #alpha / 2

mpn(positive = c(3, 3, 3), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(1, .1, .01))
#Jarvis: Inf (36, Inf) RI = 1
mpn(positive = c(3, 3, 3), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(1, .1, .01),
    conf_level = .975)$LB #alpha / 2

# Table 2
mpn(positive = c(20, 14, 3), tubes = c(20, 20, 20), amount = c(1, .1, .01))
#Jarvis: 13 (7.6, 21) RI = 0.794
```

```

mpn(positive = c(50, 35, 7), tubes = c(50, 50, 50),
    amount = 2 * c(1, .1, .01))
#Jarvis: 6.3 (4.5, 8.7) RI = .806

mpn(positive = c(1, 5, 3, 1, 1), tubes = c(1, 5, 5, 5, 5),
    amount = c(5, 1, .5, .1, .05))
#Jarvis: 2.7 (1.3, 5.5) RI = .512

# Compare MPN and 95% CI to BAM tables -----

# Table 1
mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 0), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: <3.0 (-, 9.5)

mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 1), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: 3.0 (0.15, 9.6)

mpn(positive = c(2, 2, 0), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: 21 (4.5, 42)

mpn(positive = c(3, 3, 3), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: >1100 (420, -)
mpn(positive = c(3, 3, 2), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))$MPN

# Table 2
mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 0), tubes = c(5, 5, 5), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: <1.8 (-, 6.8)
mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 1), tubes = c(5, 5, 5), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))$MPN

mpn(positive = c(4, 0, 2), tubes = c(5, 5, 5), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: 21 (6.8, 40)

mpn(positive = c(5, 5, 5), tubes = c(5, 5, 5), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))
#BAM: >1600 (700, -)
mpn(positive = c(5, 5, 4), tubes = c(5, 5, 5), amount = c(.1, .01, .001))$MPN

# Compare MPN and 95% LR CI to Ridout (1994) -----

# Table 1
mpn(positive = c(0, 0, 0), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001),
    CI_method = "LR")
#Ridout: 0 (0, 9.0)
mpn(positive = c(2, 2, 0), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001),
    CI_method = "LR")
#Ridout: 21.1 (6.2, 54.3)
mpn(positive = c(3, 3, 3), tubes = c(3, 3, 3), amount = c(.1, .01, .001),
    CI_method = "LR")
#Ridout: Inf (465.1, Inf)

```

# Index

apc, [2](#), [6](#)

mpn, [3](#), [4](#)