Interventions and Causal Inference

Eberhardt, Frederick and Scheines, Richard (2006) Interventions and Causal Inference. In *[PSA 2006] Philosophy of Science Assoc. 20th Biennial Mtg (Vancouver): PSA 2006 Contributed Papers*.

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Abstract

The literature on causal discovery has focused on interventions that involve randomly assigning values to a single variable. But such a randomized intervention is not the only possibility, nor is it always optimal. In some cases it is impossible or it would be unethical to perform such an intervention. We provide an account of ″hard″ and ″soft″ interventions, and discuss what they can contribute to causal discovery. We also describe how the choice of the optimal intervention(s) depends heavily on the particular experimental set-up and the assumptions that can be made.

Keywords:	causation, (different types of) interventions, optimal sequences of experiments
Subjects:	Specific Sciences: Computer Science: Artificial Intelligence General Issues: Causation
Conferences and Volumes:	[PSA 2006] Philosophy of Science Assoc. 20th Biennial Mtg (Vancouver): PSA 2006 Contributed Papers
ID Code:	2944
Deposited By:	Eberhardt, Frederick
Deposited On:	13 October 2006