

# An Ising-based Model for the Spread of Infection

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**Abstract**—A zero-field ferromagnetic Ising model is utilized to simulate the propagation of infection in a population that assumes a square lattice structure. The rate of infection increases with temperature. The disease spreads faster among individuals with low  $J$  values. Such effect, however, diminishes at higher temperatures.

**Keywords**—Epidemiology, Ising model, lattice models

## I. INTRODUCTION

ONE of the simplest models in epidemiology separates the population into two discrete states:  $S$  for susceptible and  $I$  for infected or infective [1]. In the SI model, the time rate of change in number of susceptible and infected individuals varies is given by the following equations:

$$\frac{dS}{dt} = -\beta SI \quad (1)$$

and

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = \beta SI . \quad (2)$$

where  $\beta$  is the infection rate. To consider a closed system, we consider a constant population size. Thus at any given time, the sum of susceptibles and infectives is equal to some constant, say  $N$ . That is,  $S(t) + I(t) = N$ . In which case, the above equations yield the following solutions:

$$S(t) = \frac{N}{1 + e^{\beta(t-t_c)}} \quad (3)$$

and

$$I(t) = \frac{N}{1 + e^{-\beta(t-t_c)}} . \quad (4)$$

Eq. 3 and 4 are logistic or S-curves. The point of inflection occurs at the critical time  $t_c$ .

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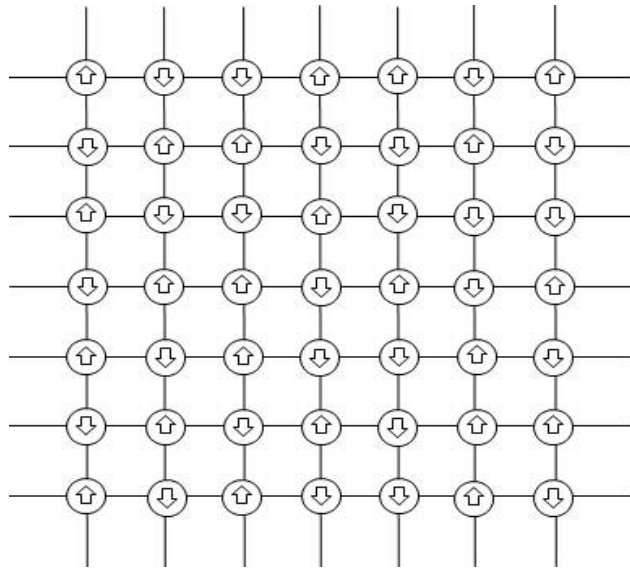


Fig. 1 A square lattice containing susceptible *spin down* and infected *spin up* individuals

In this work, we adapt the Ising model [2] framework to study dynamics of disease spread. Similar to [3], we confine our investigation to a square lattice and impose periodic boundary conditions. We observe the infection rate,  $\beta$ , varies with parameters such as temperature  $T$  and neighbor interactions.

## II. THE MODEL

Consider a closed community described by the square lattice in Fig. 1. Each site is occupied by one individual which can either be susceptible (spin down,  $\sigma = -1$ ) or infective (spin up,  $\sigma = +1$ ). The edges of the lattice are connected, thus forming a torus or a donut. Associate with each lattice configuration is a Hamiltonian which takes the form

$$H = -J \sum_{i,j} \sum_{x,y} \sigma_{ij} \sigma_{xy} , \quad (5)$$

Where  $(x,y) \in \{(i+1, j), (i-1, j), (i, j+1), (i, j-1)\}$  describes the Von Neumann neighborhood and  $J$  is the interaction parameter which described the (coupling) strength between spins.

Initially, the lattice is filled with susceptibles (all spin down). A random site is then selected and the corresponding spin flipped (from down to up). This is the first infective. For succeeding iterations, a randomly chosen site changes state if the change in energy,  $\Delta H = H_{\text{new}} - H_{\text{previous}}$ , is less than or equal to zero. If  $\Delta H > 0$ , the flip is accepted according to the probability

$$p = e^{-\Delta H / T} , \quad (6)$$

where  $T$  is the scaled temperature. Flipping is allowed only in one direction (up  $\rightarrow$  down,  $S \rightarrow I$ ). Whenever a site is infected, it remains that way until the end of the simulation. Data presented in the next section correspond to the mean of 10 independent trials for a population size  $N=100$  ( $10 \times 10$  lattice).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Simulation results reveal a logistic type of behavior, which is characteristic of the standard SI model. Fig. 2 shows the propagation of infection when  $T=2.20$  and  $J=1.00$ . At the onset, the spread of the disease approximates an exponential growth. But as time progresses, the growth slows down and saturates at the value of  $N$ . Since there is no recovery (flipping is one way), the entire community eventually becomes infected. The point of inflection,  $t_c$ , corresponds to the time when 50% of the population is already affected by the disease.

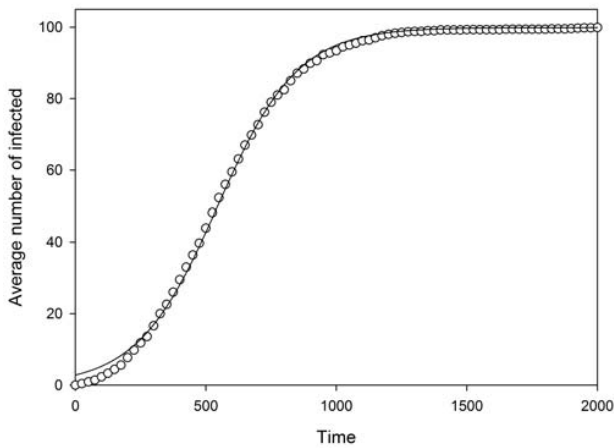


Fig. 2 Infection curve associated with  $T=2.2$  and  $J=1.0$

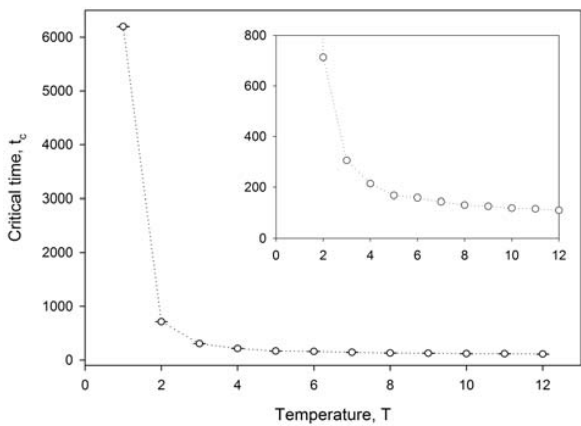


Fig. 3 Critical time,  $t_c$ , as a function of temperature,  $T$

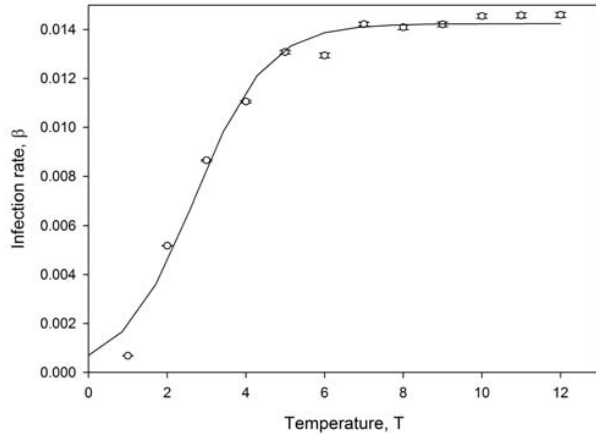


Fig. 4 Temperature dependence of the infection rate

Estimates of the critical time,  $t_c$ , and infection rate,  $\beta$ , are obtained by using Eqn. 4 as a fitting function. Fig. 3 reveal a sudden drop in  $t_c$  associated with a slight rise in temperature (from 6000 to  $<1000$  when  $T$  was changed from 1.0 to 2.0). But as  $T$  is increased further, the variation in critical times becomes minimal. The point of inflection occurs at an earlier time at larger  $T$  values. Thus, the disease spreads more rapidly at higher temperatures. Calculated values of the rates,  $\beta$ , are plotted in Fig. 4. As  $T$  increases,  $\beta$  approaches a constant value. In our Ising-based SI model, the concept of temperature may be related to the level of aggression of a particular virus or associated to external parameters like ambient temperature and humidity. The concept of temperature may also be perceived with a broader scope to include the effects of cultural and socio-economic risk factors.

Next, we present the effect of varying interaction parameter,  $J$ , on the infection curves. In Fig. 5(a), saturation (100% infective) is achieved fastest when  $J=0.25$ . The rate of spread of infection decreases with increasing  $J$ . This parameter may be interpreted as the inverse of the contact time. Lower  $J$  values can mean prolonged exposure to the agent or contagion. The effect of the parameter  $J$  on the spread of the disease, however, vanishes at higher temperatures. Fig. 5(b) shows overlapping plots, independent of the  $J$  value.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The dynamics of the spread of infection on a two-dimensional square lattice with periodic boundary conditions was analyzed using an Ising-based SI model. Beginning from a single infective, the disease was able to propagate faster at higher temperatures. Increasing the value of the interaction parameter,  $J$ , slowed down the infection spread. These effects, however, became less evident as the temperature is increased further.

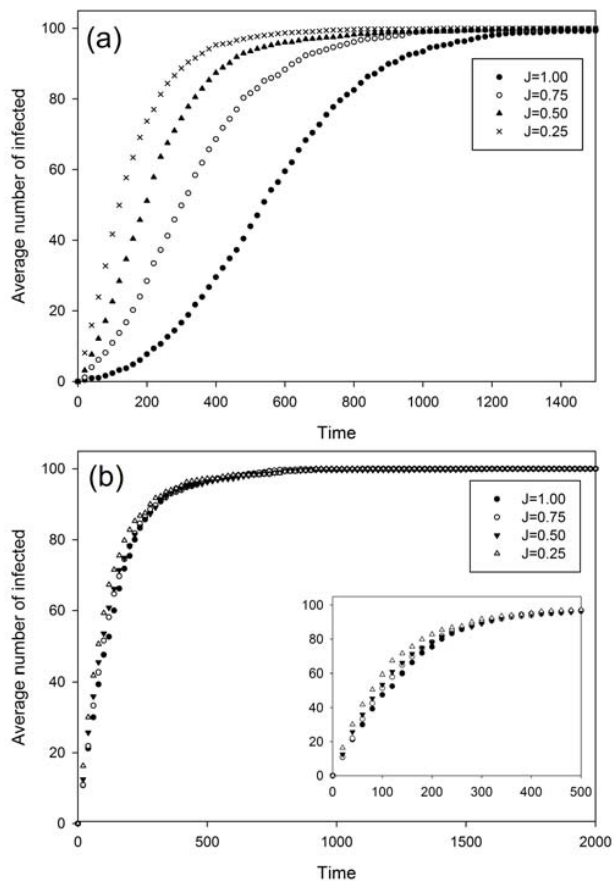


Fig. 5 Effect of varying  $J$ : (a)  $T=2.2$  and (b)  $T=10.0$

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