



Geostatistical upscaling of rain gauge data to support uncertainty analysis of lumped urban hydrological models

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Geostatistical methods have been used to analyse the spatial correlation structure of rainfall at various spatial scales, but its application to estimate the level of uncertainty in rainfall upscaling has not been fully explored mainly due to its inherent complexity and demanding data requirements. In this study we presented a method to overcome these challenges and predict AARI together with associated uncertainty using geostatistical upscaling. Rainfall data collected from a cluster of eight paired rain gauges in a 400×200 sq. m. urban catchment are used in combination with spatial stochastic simulation to obtain optimal predictions of the spatially averaged rainfall intensity at any point in time within the urban catchment. The uncertainty in the prediction of catchment average rainfall intensity is obtained for multiple combinations of intensity ranges and temporal averaging intervals. The two main challenges addressed in this study are scarcity of rainfall measurement locations and non-normality of rainfall data, both of which need to be considered when adopting a geostatistical approach. Scarcity of measurement points is dealt with by pooling sample variograms of repeated rainfall measurements with similar characteristics. Normality of rainfall data is achieved through the use of Normal Score Transformation. Geostatistical models in the form of variograms are derived for transformed rainfall intensity. Next spatial stochastic simulation which is robust to nonlinear data transformation is applied to produce realisations of rainfall fields. These realisations in transformed space are first back-transformed and next spatially aggregated to derive a random sample of the spatially averaged rainfall intensity. This study shows that for small time and space scales the use of a single geostatistical model based on a single variogram is not appropriate and a distinction between rainfall intensity classes and length of temporal averaging intervals should be made. Further, results show that the prediction uncertainty comes mainly from two sources: spatial variability of rainfall and measurement error. At smaller temporal averaging intervals both these effects are high, resulting in a relatively high uncertainty in prediction. With longer temporal averaging intervals the uncertainty becomes lower due to stronger spatial correlation of rainfall data and relatively smaller measurement error. Results also show that the measurement error increases with decreasing rainfall intensity resulting in a higher uncertainty at lower intensities. Results from this study can be used for uncertainty analyses of hydrologic and hydrodynamic modelling of similar sized urban catchments as it provides information on uncertainty associated with rainfall estimation, which is arguably the most important input in these models. This will help to better interpret model results and avoid false calibration and force-fitting of model parameters.