For which sets $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ the infinity of X is equivalent to the existence in X of an element that exceeds a threshold integer computed for X?

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Abstract

We define computable functions $g, h : \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\} \to \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$. For an integer $n \geqslant 3$, let Ψ_n denote the following statement: *if a system* $S \subseteq \left\{ x_i! = x_k : (i, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}) \wedge (i \neq k) \right\} \cup \left\{ x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\} \right\}$ *has only finitely many solutions in positive integers* $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, *then each such solution* $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ *satisfies* $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant g(n)$. For a positive integer n, let Γ_n denote the following statement: *if a system* $S \subseteq \left\{ x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\} \right\} \cup \left\{ 2^{2^{x_i}} = x_k : i, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\} \right\}$ *has only finitely many solutions in positive integers* $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, *then each such solution* $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ *satisfies* $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant h(n)$. We prove: **(1)** if the equation $x! + 1 = y^2$ has only finitely many solutions in positive integers, then the statement Ψ_6 guarantees that each such solution (x, y) belongs to the set $\{(4, 5), (5, 11), (7, 71)\}$, **(2)** the statement Ψ_9 proves the following implication: if there exists a positive integer x such that $x^2 + 1$ is prime and $x^2 + 1 > g(7)$, then there are infinitely many primes of the form $n^2 + 1$, **(3)** the statement Ψ_9 proves the following implication: if there exists an integer $x \geqslant g(6)$ such that $x! + 1$ is prime, then there are infinitely many primes of the form $n! + 1$, **(4)** the statement Ψ_{16} proves the following implication: if there exists a twin prime greater than $g(14)$, then there are infinitely many twin primes, **(5)** the statement Γ_{13} proves the following implication: if $n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$ and $2^{2^n} + 1$ is composite and greater than $h(12)$, then $2^{2^n} + 1$ is composite for infinitely many positive integers n.

Key words and phrases: Brocard's problem, Brocard-Ramanujan equation, composite Fermat numbers, Dickson's conjecture, halting of a Turing machine, infinite subset of $\mathbb{N}$, prime numbers of the form $n^2 + 1$, prime numbers of the form $n! + 1$, Richert's lemma, twin prime conjecture.

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1 Introduction

A twin prime is a prime number that differs from another prime number by 2. The twin prime conjecture states that there are infinitely many twin primes, see [14, p. 39]. The following statement

(1) "For every non-negative integer n there exist prime exist numbers p and q
such that $p + 2 = q$ and $p \in [10^n, 10^{n+1}]$"

is a Π_1 statement which strengthens the twin prime conjecture, see [3, p. 43]. Statement (1) is equivalent to the non-halting of a Turing machine. C. H. Bennett claims that most mathematical conjectures can be settled indirectly by proving stronger Π_1 statements, see [1].

In this article, we study sets $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ whose infinitude is equivalent to the existence in X of an element that exceeds a threshold number $t(X) \in \mathbb{N}$ computed for X. If X is computable, then this property implies that the infinity of X is equivalent to the halting of a Turing machine. If a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ is empty or infinite, then any non-negative integer m is a threshold number of X. If a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ is non-empty and finite, then the all threshold numbers of X form the set $\{\max(X), \max(X) + 1, \max(X) + 2, \ldots\}$.

Theorem 1. *([4, p. 35]). There exists a polynomial $D(x_1, \ldots, x_m)$ with integer coefficients such that if ZFC is arithmetically consistent, then the sentences* "The equation $D(x_1, \ldots, x_m) = 0$ is solvable in non-negative integers" *and* "The equation $D(x_1, \ldots, x_m) = 0$ is not solvable in non-negative integers *are not provable in ZFC.*

Let $\mathcal{Y}$ denote the set of all non-negative integers k such that the equation $D(x_1, \ldots, x_m) = 0$ has no solutions in $\{0, \ldots, k\}^m$. Since the set $\{0, \ldots, k\}^m$ is finite, we know a computer program which for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ decides whether or not $n \in \mathcal{Y}$. Let $\gamma: \mathbb{N}^{m+1} \to \mathbb{N}$ be a computable bijection, and let $\mathcal{E} \subseteq \mathbb{N}^{m+1}$ be the solution set of the equation $D(x_1, \ldots, x_m) + 0 \cdot x_{m+1} = 0$. Theorem 1 implies Theorems 2 and 3.

Theorem 2. *If ZFC is arithmetically consistent, then for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ the sentences "n is a threshold number of $\mathcal{Y}$" and "n is not a threshold number of $\mathcal{Y}$" are not provable in ZFC.*

Theorem 3. *We know a computer program which for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ decides whether or not $n \in \gamma(\mathcal{E})$. The set $\gamma(\mathcal{E})$ is empty or infinite. In both cases, every non-negative integer n is a threshold number of $\gamma(\mathcal{E})$. If ZFC is arithmetically consistent, then the sentences "$\gamma(\mathcal{E})$ is empty", "$\gamma(\mathcal{E})$ is not empty", "$\gamma(\mathcal{E})$ is finite", and "$\gamma(\mathcal{E})$ is infinite" are not provable in ZFC.*

The classes of the infinite recursively enumerable sets and of the infinite recursive sets are not recursively enumerable, see [15, p. 234].

Corollary 1. *If an algorithm $\mathtt{Alg}_1$ for every recursive set $\mathcal{R} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ finds a non-negative integer $\mathtt{Alg}_1(\mathcal{R})$, then there exists a finite set $\mathcal{W} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ such that $\mathcal{W} \cap [\mathtt{Alg}_1(\mathcal{W}) + 1, \infty) \neq \emptyset$. If an algorithm $\mathtt{Alg}_2$ for every recursively enumerable set $\mathcal{R} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ finds a non-negative integer $\mathtt{Alg}_2(\mathcal{R})$, then there exists a finite set $\mathcal{W} \subseteq \mathbb{N}$ such that $\mathcal{W} \cap [\mathtt{Alg}_2(\mathcal{W}) + 1, \infty) \neq \emptyset$.*

2 Basic lemmas and definitions

Let $g(3) = 4$, and let $g(n+1) = g(n)!$ for every integer $n \geqslant 3$. For an integer $n \geqslant 3$, let $\mathcal{U}_n$ denote the following system of equations:

$$\begin{cases} \forall i \in \{1, \ldots, n-1\} \setminus \{2\} \ x_i! & = & x_{i+1} \\ x_1 \cdot x_2 & = & x_3 \\ x_2 \cdot x_2 & = & x_3 \end{cases}$$

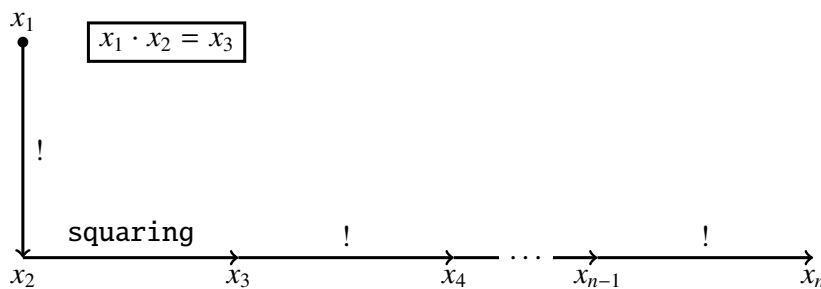The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the construction of the system $\mathcal{U}_n$.

Fig. 1 Construction of the system $\mathcal{U}_n$

Lemma 1. *For every integer $n \geqslant 3$, the system $\mathcal{U}_n$ has exactly two solutions in positive integers, namely $(1, \ldots, 1)$ and $\big(2, 2, g(3), \ldots, g(n)\big)$.*

Let
$$B_n = \Big\{x_i! = x_k: \ (i, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}) \wedge (i \neq k)\Big\} \cup \Big\{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k: \ i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\Big\}$$

For an integer $n \geqslant 3$, let Ψ_n denote the following statement: *if a system $S \subseteq B_n$ has only finitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, then each such solution $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ satisfies $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant g(n)$.* The statement Ψ_n says that for subsystems of B_n the largest known solution is indeed the largest possible.

Hypothesis 1. *The statements $\Psi_3, \ldots, \Psi_{16}$ are true.*

Theorem 4. *Every statement Ψ_n is true with an unknown integer bound that depends on n.*

Proof. For every positive integer n, the system B_n has a finite number of subsystems. □

Theorem 5. *For every statement Ψ_n, the bound $g(n)$ cannot be decreased.*

Proof. It follows from Lemma 1 because $\mathcal{U}_n \subseteq B_n$. □

Lemma 2. *For every positive integers x and y, $x! \cdot y = y!$ if and only if*

$$(x + 1 = y) \vee (x = y = 1)$$

Lemma 3. *For every positive integers x and y, $x + 1 = y$ if and only if*

$$(1 \neq y) \wedge (x! \cdot y = y!)$$

Lemma 4. *For every non-negative integers b and c, $b + 1 = c$ if and only if $2^{2^b} \cdot 2^{2^b} = 2^{2^c}$.*

Lemma 5. *(Wilson's theorem, [6, p. 89]). For every integer $x \geqslant 2$, x is prime if and only if x divides $(x - 1)! + 1$.*

Let $f(1) = 2$, $f(2) = 4$, and let $f(n + 1) = f(n)!$ for every integer $n \geqslant 2$. Let $h(1) = 1$, and let $h(n + 1) = 2^{2^{h(n)}}$ for every positive integer n.

3 Heuristic arguments against the statement $\forall n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0, 1, 2\}\ \Psi_n$

Let
$$G_n = \{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \{x_i + 1 = x_k : i, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\}$$

Hypothesis 2. *([24, p. 109]. If a system $S \subseteq G_n$ has only finitely many solutions in non-negative integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, then each such solution $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ satisfies $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant h(2n)$.*

Hypothesis 3. *If a system $S \subseteq G_n$ has only finitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, then each such solution $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ satisfies $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant f(2n)$.*

Observations 1 and 2 heuristically justify Hypothesis 3.

Observation 1. *(cf. [24, p. 110, Observation 1]). For every system $S \subseteq G_n$ which involves all the variables $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, the following new system*

$$\left(\bigcup_{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k \in S} \{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k\}\right) \cup \{x_k! = y_k : k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \left(\bigcup_{x_i + 1 = x_k \in S} \{1 \neq x_k,\ y_i \cdot x_k = y_k\}\right)$$

is equivalent to S. If the system S has only finitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, then the new system has only finitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n, y_1, \ldots, y_n$.

Proof. It follows from Lemma 3. □

Observation 2. *The equation $x_1! = x_1$ has exactly two solutions in positive integers, namely $x_1 = 1$ and $x_1 = f(1)$. The system $\begin{cases} x_1! &=& x_1 \\ x_1 \cdot x_1 &=& x_2 \end{cases}$ has exactly two solutions in positive integers, namely $(1, 1)$ and $(f(1), f(2))$. For every integer $n \geqslant 3$, the following system*

$$\begin{cases} x_1! &=& x_1 \\ x_1 \cdot x_1 &=& x_2 \\ \forall i \in \{2, \ldots, n - 1\}\ x_i! &=& x_{i+1} \end{cases}$$

has exactly two solutions in positive integers, namely $(1, \ldots, 1)$ and $(f(1), \ldots, f(n))$.

For a positive integer n, let Φ_n denote the following statement: *if a system*

$$S \subseteq \{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \{x_i! = x_k : i, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \{1 \neq x_k : k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\}$$

has only finitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, *then each such solution* $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ *satisfies* $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant f(n)$.

Theorem 6. *The statement* $\forall n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$ Φ_n *implies Hypothesis 3.*

Proof. It follows from Lemma 3. $\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ $\square$

Let $\mathcal{R}ng$ denote the class of all rings $\boldsymbol{K}$ that extend $\mathbb{Z}$, and let

$$E_n = \{1 = x_k : k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \{x_i + x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \{x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\}$$

Th. Skolem proved that every Diophantine equation can be algorithmically transformed into an equivalent system of Diophantine equations of degree at most 2, see [20, pp. 2–3] and [11, pp. 3–4]. The following result strengthens Skolem's theorem.

Lemma 6. *([22, p. 720]).* Let $D(x_1, \ldots, x_p) \in \mathbb{Z}[x_1, \ldots, x_p]$. *Assume that* $\deg(D, x_i) \geqslant 1$ *for each* $i \in \{1, \ldots, p\}$. *We can compute a positive integer* $n > p$ *and a system* $T \subseteq E_n$ *which satisfies the following two conditions:*

Condition 1. *If* $\boldsymbol{K} \in \mathcal{R}ng \cup \{\mathbb{N}, \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}\}$, *then*

$$\forall \tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p \in \boldsymbol{K} \left(D(\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p) = 0 \Longleftrightarrow \exists \tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n \in \boldsymbol{K} \ (\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p, \tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n) \ \textit{solves } T \right)$$

Condition 2. *If* $\boldsymbol{K} \in \mathcal{R}ng \cup \{\mathbb{N}, \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}\}$, *then for each* $\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p \in \boldsymbol{K}$ *with* $D(\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p) = 0$, *there exists a unique tuple* $(\tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n) \in \boldsymbol{K}^{n-p}$ *such that the tuple* $(\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p, \tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n)$ *solves* T.

Conditions 1 and 2 imply that for each $\boldsymbol{K} \in \mathcal{R}ng \cup \{\mathbb{N}, \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}\}$, *the equation* $D(x_1, \ldots, x_p) = 0$ *and the system* T *have the same number of solutions in* $\boldsymbol{K}$.

Let α, β, and γ denote variables.

Lemma 7. *([18, p. 100]) For each positive integers* x, y, z, $x + y = z$ *if and only if*

$$(zx + 1)(zy + 1) = z^2(xy + 1) + 1$$

Corollary 2. *We can express the equation* $x + y = z$ *as an equivalent system* $\mathcal{F}$, *where* $\mathcal{F}$ *involves* x, y, z *and* 9 *new variables, and where* $\mathcal{F}$ *consists of equations of the forms* $\alpha + 1 = \gamma$ *and* $\alpha \cdot \beta = \gamma$.

Proof. The new 9 variables express the following polynomials:

$$zx, \quad zx + 1, \quad zy, \quad zy + 1, \quad z^2, \quad xy, \quad xy + 1, \quad z^2(xy + 1), \quad z^2(xy + 1) + 1$$

$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad$ $\square$

Lemma 8. *(cf. [24, p. 110, Lemma 4]).* Let $D(x_1, \ldots, x_p) \in \mathbb{Z}[x_1, \ldots, x_p]$. *Assume that* $\deg(D, x_i) \geqslant 1$ *for each* $i \in \{1, \ldots, p\}$. *We can compute a positive integer* $n > p$ *and a system* $T \subseteq G_n$ *which satisfies the following two conditions:*

Condition 3. *For every positive integers* $\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p$,

$$D(\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p) = 0 \Longleftrightarrow \exists \tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\} \ (\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p, \tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n) \ \textit{solves } T$$

Condition 4. *If positive integers* $\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p$ *satisfy* $D(\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p) = 0$, *then there exists a unique tuple* $(\tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^{n-p}$ *such that the tuple* $(\tilde{x}_1, \ldots, \tilde{x}_p, \tilde{x}_{p+1}, \ldots, \tilde{x}_n)$ *solves* T.

Conditions 3 and 4 imply that the equation $D(x_1, \ldots, x_p) = 0$ *and the system* T *have the same number of solutions in positive integers.*

Proof. Let the system T be given by Lemma 6. We replace in T each equation of the form $1 = x_k$ by the equation $x_k \cdot x_k = x_k$. Next, we apply Corollary 2 and replace in T each equation of the form $x_i + x_j = x_k$ by an equivalent system of equations of the forms $\alpha + 1 = \gamma$ and $\alpha \cdot \beta = \gamma$. $\square$

Theorem 7. *Hypothesis 3 implies that there is an algorithm which takes as input a Diophantine equation, and returns an integer such that this integer is greater than the solutions in positive integers, if these solutions form a finite set.*

Proof. It follows from Lemma 8. $\square$

Open Problem 1. *Is there an algorithm which takes as input a Diophantine equation, and returns an integer such that this integer is greater than the moduli of integer (non-negative integer, positive integer) solutions, if the solution set is finite?*

Matiyasevich's conjecture on finite-fold Diophantine representations ([13]) implies a negative answer to Open Problem 1, see [12, p. 42].

The statement $\forall n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$ Φ_n implies that there is an algorithm which takes as input a factorial Diophantine equation, and returns an integer such that this integer is greater than the solutions in positive integers, if these solutions form a finite set. This conclusion is a bit strange because a computable upper bound on non-negative integer solutions does not exist for exponential Diophantine equations with a finite number of solutions, see [10, p. 300].

4 Brocard's problem

Let $\mathcal{A}$ denote the following system of equations:

$$
\begin{cases}
x_1! &=& x_2 \\
x_2! &=& x_3 \\
x_5! &=& x_6 \\
x_4 \cdot x_4 &=& x_5 \\
x_3 \cdot x_5 &=& x_6
\end{cases}
$$

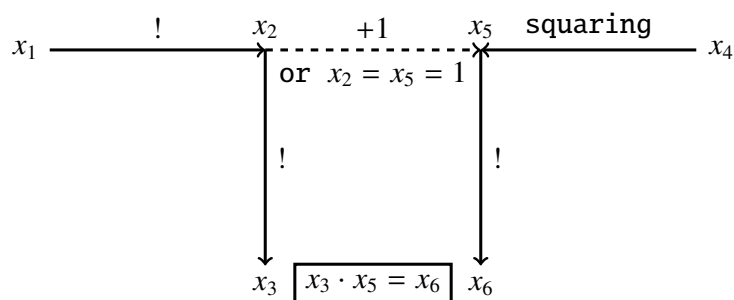Lemma 2 and the diagram in Figure 2 explain the construction of the system $\mathcal{A}$.

Fig. 2 Construction of the system $\mathcal{A}$

Lemma 9. *For every $x_1, x_4 \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0, 1\}$, the system $\mathcal{A}$ is solvable in positive integers x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6 if and only if $x_1! + 1 = x_4^2$. In this case, the integers x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6 are uniquely determined by the following equalities:*

$$
\begin{aligned}
x_2 &= x_1! \\
x_3 &= (x_1!)! \\
x_5 &= x_1! + 1 \\
x_6 &= (x_1! + 1)!
\end{aligned}
$$

Proof. It follows from Lemma 2. $\square$

It is conjectured that $x! + 1$ is a perfect square only for $x \in \{4, 5, 7\}$, see [25, p. 297]. A weak form of Szpiro's conjecture implies that there are only finitely many solutions to the equation $x! + 1 = y^2$, see [16].

Theorem 8. *If the equation $x_1! + 1 = x_4^2$ has only finitely many solutions in positive integers, then the statement Ψ_6 guarantees that each such solution (x_1, x_4) belongs to the set $\{(4, 5), (5, 11), (7, 71)\}$.*

Proof. Suppose that the antecedent holds. Let positive integers x_1 and x_4 satisfy $x_1! + 1 = x_4^2$. Then, $x_1, x_4 \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0, 1\}$. By Lemma 9, the system $\mathcal{A}$ is solvable in positive integers x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6. Since $\mathcal{A} \subseteq B_6$, the statement Ψ_6 implies that $x_6 = (x_1! + 1)! \leqslant g(6) = g(5)!$. Hence, $x_1! + 1 \leqslant g(5) = g(4)!$. Consequently, $x_1 < g(4) = 24$. If $x_1 \in \{1, \ldots, 23\}$, then $x_1! + 1$ is a perfect square only for $x_1 \in \{4, 5, 7\}$. $\qquad \square$

5 Are there infinitely many prime numbers of the form $n^2 + 1$?

Let $\mathcal{B}$ denote the following system of equations:

$$
\begin{cases}
\begin{aligned}
x_2! &= x_3 \\
x_3! &= x_4 \\
x_5! &= x_6 \\
x_8! &= x_9 \\
x_1 \cdot x_1 &= x_2 \\
x_3 \cdot x_5 &= x_6 \\
x_4 \cdot x_8 &= x_9 \\
x_5 \cdot x_7 &= x_8
\end{aligned}
\end{cases}
$$

Lemma 2 and the diagram in Figure 3 explain the construction of the system $\mathcal{B}$.
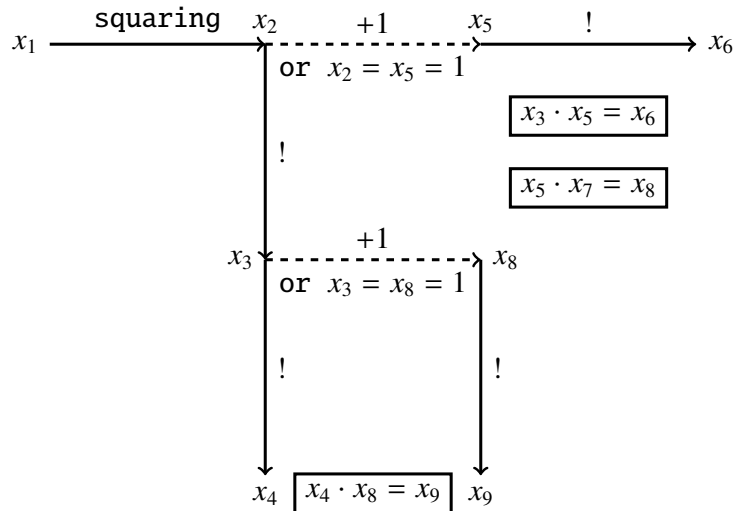

Fig. 3 Construction of the system $\mathcal{B}$

Lemma 10. *For every integer $x_1 \geqslant 2$, the system $\mathcal{B}$ is solvable in positive integers $x_2, \ldots, x_9$ if and only if $x_1^2 + 1$ is prime. In this case, the integers $x_2, \ldots, x_9$ are uniquely determined by the following equalities:*

$$
\begin{aligned}
x_2 &= x_1^2 \\
x_3 &= (x_1^2)! \\
x_4 &= ((x_1^2)!)! \\
x_5 &= x_1^2 + 1 \\
x_6 &= (x_1^2 + 1)! \\
x_7 &= \frac{(x_1^2)! + 1}{x_1^2 + 1} \\
x_8 &= (x_1^2)! + 1 \\
x_9 &= ((x_1^2)! + 1)!
\end{aligned}
$$

Proof. By Lemma 2, for every integer $x_1 \geqslant 2$, the system $\mathcal{B}$ is solvable in positive integers $x_2, \ldots, x_9$ if and only if $x_1^2 + 1$ divides $(x_1^2)! + 1$. Hence, the claim of Lemma 10 follows from Lemma 5. $\qquad \square$

Lemma 11. *There are only finitely many tuples $(x_1, \ldots, x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^9$ which solve the system $\mathcal{B}$ and satisfy $x_1 = 1$.*

Proof. If a tuple $(x_1, \ldots, x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^9$ solves the system $\mathcal{B}$ and $x_1 = 1$, then $x_1, \ldots, x_9 \leqslant 2$. Indeed, $x_1 = 1$ implies that $x_2 = x_1^2 = 1$. Hence, for example, $x_3 = x_2! = 1$. Therefore, $x_8 = x_3 + 1 = 2$ or $x_8 = 1$. Consequently, $x_9 = x_8! \leqslant 2$. $\qquad \square$

Edmund Landau's conjecture states that there are infinitely many primes of the form $n^2 + 1$, see [14, pp. 37–38].

Theorem 9. *The statement Ψ_9 proves the following implication: if there exists an integer $x_1 \geqslant 2$ such that $x_1^2 + 1$ is prime and greater than $g(7)$, then there are infinitely many primes of the form $n^2 + 1$.*

Proof. Suppose that the antecedent holds. By Lemma 10, there exists a unique tuple $(x_2, \ldots, x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^8$ such that the tuple $(x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_9)$ solves the system $\mathcal{B}$. Since $x_1^2 + 1 > g(7)$, we obtain that $x_1^2 \geqslant g(7)$. Hence, $(x_1^2)! \geqslant g(7)! = g(8)$. Consequently,

$$x_9 = ((x_1^2)! + 1)! \geqslant (g(8) + 1)! > g(8)! = g(9)$$

Since $\mathcal{B} \subseteq B_9$, the statement Ψ_9 and the inequality $x_9 > g(9)$ imply that the system $\mathcal{B}$ has infinitely many solutions $(x_1, \ldots, x_9) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^9$. According to Lemmas 10 and 11, there are infinitely many primes of the form $n^2 + 1$. $\qquad \square$

6 Are there infinitely many prime numbers of the form $n! + 1$?

It is conjectured that there are infinitely many primes of the form $n! + 1$, see [2, p. 443] and [21].

Theorem 10. *The statement Ψ_9 proves the following implication: if there exists an integer $x_1 \geqslant g(6)$ such that $x_1! + 1$ is prime, then there are infinitely many primes of the form $n! + 1$.*

Proof. We leave the analogous proof to the reader. $\qquad \square$

7 The twin prime conjecture and Dickson's conjecture

Let C denote the following system of equations:

$$
\begin{cases}
x_1! &=& x_2 \\
x_2! &=& x_3 \\
x_4! &=& x_5 \\
x_6! &=& x_7 \\
x_7! &=& x_8 \\
x_9! &=& x_{10} \\
x_{12}! &=& x_{13} \\
x_{15}! &=& x_{16} \\
x_2 \cdot x_4 &=& x_5 \\
x_5 \cdot x_6 &=& x_7 \\
x_7 \cdot x_9 &=& x_{10} \\
x_4 \cdot x_{11} &=& x_{12} \\
x_3 \cdot x_{12} &=& x_{13} \\
x_9 \cdot x_{14} &=& x_{15} \\
x_8 \cdot x_{15} &=& x_{16}
\end{cases}
$$

Lemma 2 and the diagram in Figure 4 explain the construction of the system C.
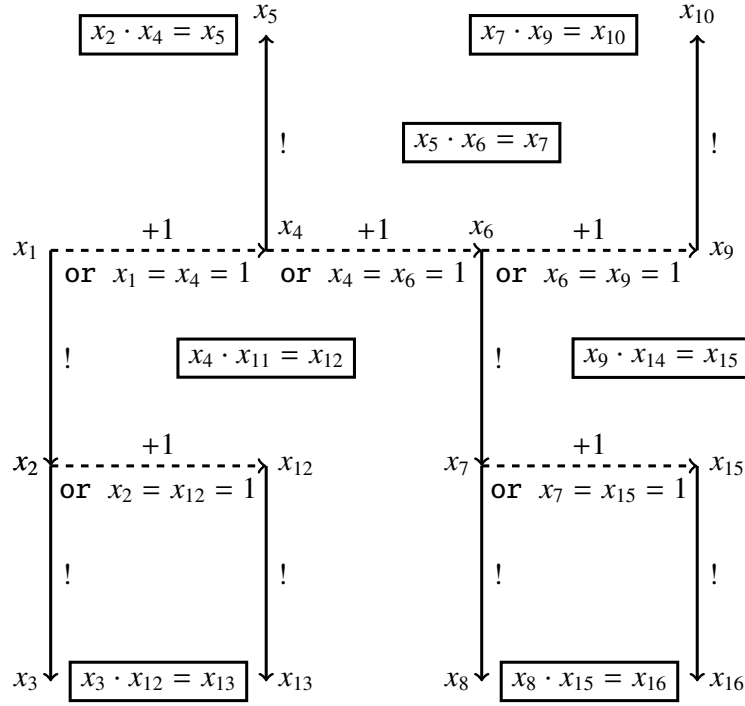
Fig. 4 Construction of the system C

Lemma 12. *For every $x_4, x_9 \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0, 1, 2\}$, the system C is solvable in positive integers $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6, x_7, x_8, x_{10}, x_{11}, x_{12}, x_{13}, x_{14}, x_{15}, x_{16}$ if and only if x_4 and x_9 are prime and $x_4 + 2 = x_9$. In this case, the integers $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6, x_7, x_8, x_{10}, x_{11}, x_{12}, x_{13}, x_{14}, x_{15}, x_{16}$ are uniquely determined by the following equalities:*

$$
\begin{aligned}
x_1 &= x_4 - 1 \\
x_2 &= (x_4 - 1)! \\
x_3 &= ((x_4 - 1)!)! \\
x_5 &= x_4! \\
x_6 &= x_9 - 1 \\
x_7 &= (x_9 - 1)! \\
x_8 &= ((x_9 - 1)!)! \\
x_{10} &= x_9! \\
x_{11} &= \frac{(x_4 - 1)! + 1}{x_4} \\
x_{12} &= (x_4 - 1)! + 1 \\
x_{13} &= ((x_4 - 1)! + 1)! \\
x_{14} &= \frac{(x_9 - 1)! + 1}{x_9} \\
x_{15} &= (x_9 - 1)! + 1 \\
x_{16} &= ((x_9 - 1)! + 1)!
\end{aligned}
$$

Proof. By Lemma 2, for every $x_4, x_9 \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0, 1, 2\}$, the system C is solvable in positive integers $x_1, x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6, x_7, x_8, x_{10}, x_{11}, x_{12}, x_{13}, x_{14}, x_{15}, x_{16}$ if and only if

$$
\left(x_4 + 2 = x_9\right) \wedge \left(x_4 | (x_4 - 1)! + 1\right) \wedge \left(x_9 | (x_9 - 1)! + 1\right)
$$

Hence, the claim of Lemma 12 follows from Lemma 5. □

Lemma 13. *There are only finitely many tuples $(x_1, \ldots, x_{16}) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^{16}$ which solve the system C and satisfy*

$$
(x_4 \in \{1, 2\}) \vee (x_9 \in \{1, 2\})
$$

Proof. If a tuple $(x_1, \ldots, x_{16}) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^{16}$ solves the system C and

$$(x_4 \in \{1, 2\}) \vee (x_9 \in \{1, 2\})$$

then $x_1, \ldots, x_{16} \leqslant 7!$. Indeed, for example, if $x_4 = 2$ then $x_6 = x_4 + 1 = 3$. Hence, $x_7 = x_6! = 6$. Therefore, $x_{15} = x_7 + 1 = 7$. Consequently, $x_{16} = x_{15}! = 7!$. □

Theorem 11. *The statement Ψ_{16} proves the following implication: (∗) if there exists a twin prime greater than $g(14)$, then there are infinitely many twin primes.*

Proof. Suppose that the antecedent holds. Then, there exist prime numbers x_4 and x_9 such that $x_9 = x_4 + 2 > g(14)$. Hence, $x_4, x_9 \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0, 1, 2\}$. By Lemma 12, there exists a unique tuple $(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_5, x_6, x_7, x_8, x_{10}, x_{11}, x_{12}, x_{13}, x_{14}, x_{15}, x_{16}) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^{14}$ such that the tuple $(x_1, \ldots, x_{16})$ solves the system C. Since $x_9 > g(14)$, we obtain that $x_9 - 1 \geqslant g(14)$. Therefore, $(x_9 - 1)! \geqslant g(14)! = g(15)$. Hence, $(x_9 - 1)! + 1 > g(15)$. Consequently,

$$x_{16} = ((x_9 - 1)! + 1)! > g(15)! = g(16)$$

Since $C \subseteq B_{16}$, the statement Ψ_{16} and the inequality $x_{16} > g(16)$ imply that the system C has infinitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_{16}$. According to Lemmas 12 and 13, there are infinitely many twin primes. □

Let $\mathbb{P}(x)$ denote the predicate "*x is a prime number*". Dickson's conjecture ([14, p. 36], [26, p. 109]) implies that the existential theory of $(\mathbb{N}, =, +, \mathbb{P})$ is decidable, see [26, Theorem 2, p. 109]. For a positive integer n, let Θ_n denote the following statement: *for every system $S \subseteq \{x_i + 1 = x_j : i, j \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\} \cup \{\mathbb{P}(x_i) : i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}\}$ the solvability of S in non-negative integers is decidable.*

Lemma 14. *If the existential theory of $(\mathbb{N}, =, +, \mathbb{P})$ is decidable, then the statements Θ_n are true.*

Proof. For every non-negative integers x and y, $x + 1 = y$ if and only if

$$\exists u, v \in \mathbb{N} \ ((u + u = v) \wedge \mathbb{P}(v) \wedge (x + u = y))$$

□

Theorem 12. *The conjunction of the implication (∗) and the statement $\Theta_{g(14)+2}$ implies that the twin prime conjecture is decidable.*

Proof. By the statement $\Theta_{g(14)+2}$, we can decide the truth of the sentence

$$\exists x_1 \ldots \exists x_{g(14)+2} \left((\forall i \in \{1, \ldots, g(14) + 1\} \ x_i + 1 = x_{i+1}) \wedge \mathbb{P}(x_{g(14)}) \wedge \mathbb{P}(x_{g(14)+2}) \right) \tag{2}$$

If sentence (2) is false, then the twin prime conjecture is false. If sentence (2) is true, then there exists a twin prime greater than $g(14)$. In this case, the twin prime conjecture follows from Theorem 11. □

8 Are there infinitely many composite Fermat numbers?

Integers of the form $2^{2^n} + 1$ are called Fermat numbers. Primes of the form $2^{2^n} + 1$ are called Fermat primes, as Fermat conjectured that every integer of the form $2^{2^n} + 1$ is prime, see [9, p. 1]. Fermat correctly remarked that $2^{2^0} + 1 = 3$, $2^{2^1} + 1 = 5$, $2^{2^2} + 1 = 17$, $2^{2^3} + 1 = 257$, and $2^{2^4} + 1 = 65537$ are all prime, see [9, p. 1].

Open Problem 2. *([9, p. 159]). Are there infinitely many composite numbers of the form $2^{2^n} + 1$?*

Most mathematicians believe that $2^{2^n} + 1$ is composite for every integer $n \geqslant 5$, see [8, p. 23].

Theorem 13. *([23]). An unproven inequality stated in [23] implies that $2^{2^n} + 1$ is composite for every integer $n \geqslant 5$.*

Let
$$H_n = \left\{ x_i \cdot x_j = x_k : \ i, j, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\} \right\} \cup \left\{ 2^{2^{x_i}} = x_k : \ i, k \in \{1, \ldots, n\} \right\}$$

Lemma 15. *The following subsystem of H_n*

$$\begin{cases} x_1 \cdot x_1 &= \ x_1 \\ \forall i \in \{1, \ldots, n-1\} \ 2^{2^{x_i}} &= \ x_{i+1} \end{cases}$$

has exactly one solution $(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \in (\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\})^n$, namely $(h(1), \ldots, h(n))$.

For a positive integer n, let Γ_n denote the following statement: *if a system $S \subseteq H_n$ has only finitely many solutions in positive integers $x_1, \ldots, x_n$, then each such solution $(x_1, \ldots, x_n)$ satisfies $x_1, \ldots, x_n \leqslant h(n)$.* The statement Γ_n says that for subsystems of H_n the largest known solution is indeed the largest possible.

Hypothesis 4. *The statements $\Gamma_1, \ldots, \Gamma_{13}$ are true.*

The truth of the statement $\forall n \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\} \ \Gamma_n$ is doubtful because a computable upper bound on non-negative integer solutions does not exist for exponential Diophantine equations with a finite number of solutions, see [10, p. 300].

Lemma 16. *For every positive integer n, the system H_n has a finite number of subsystems.*

Theorem 14. *Every statement Γ_n is true with an unknown integer bound that depends on n.*

Proof. It follows from Lemma 16. $\square$

Theorem 15. *The statement Γ_{13} proves the following implication: if $z \in \mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$ and $2^{2^z} + 1$ is composite and greater than $h(12)$, then $2^{2^z} + 1$ is composite for infinitely many positive integers z.*

Proof. Let us consider the equation
$$(x + 1)(y + 1) = 2^{2^z} + 1 \tag{3}$$

in positive integers. By Lemma 4, we can transform equation (3) into an equivalent system $\mathcal{G}$ which has 13 variables (x, y, z, and 10 other variables) and which consists of equations of the forms $\alpha \cdot \beta = \gamma$ and $2^{2^\alpha} = \gamma$, see the diagram in Figure 5.
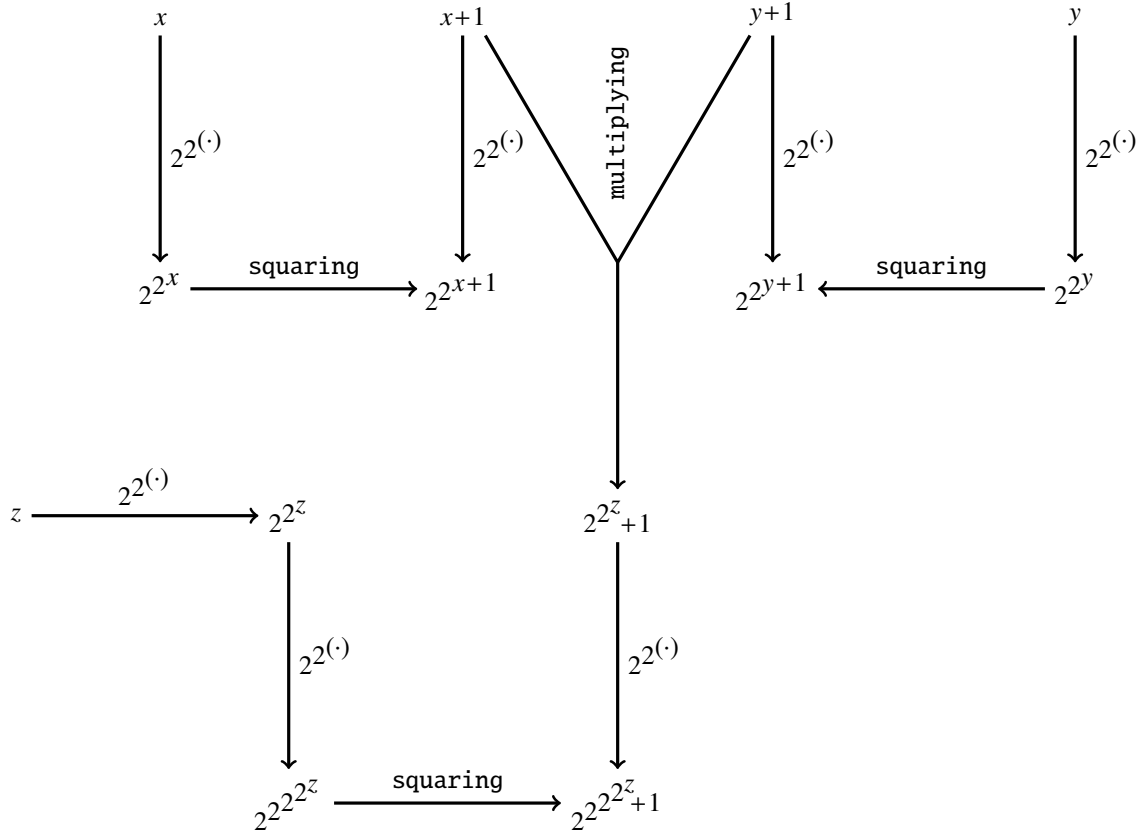
x $x+1$ $y+1$ y

$2^{2^{(\cdot)}}$ $2^{2^{(\cdot)}}$ multiplying $2^{2^{(\cdot)}}$ $2^{2^{(\cdot)}}$

2^{2^x} squaring $\longrightarrow$ $2^{2^{x+1}}$ $2^{2^{y+1}}$ $\longleftarrow$ squaring 2^{2^y}

$z \xrightarrow{\;2^{2^{(\cdot)}}\;} 2^{2^z}$ $2^{2^z}+1$

$2^{2^{(\cdot)}}$ $2^{2^{(\cdot)}}$

$2^{2^{2^{2^z}}} \xrightarrow{\;\text{squaring}\;} 2^{2^{2^{2^z}+1}}$

Fig. 5 Construction of the system $\mathcal{G}$

Since $2^{2^z} + 1 > h(12)$, we obtain that $2^{2^{2^{2^z}+1}} > h(13)$. By this, the statement Γ_{13} implies that the system $\mathcal{G}$ has infinitely many solutions in positive integers. It means that there are infinitely many composite Fermat numbers.   □

9   Subsets of $\mathbb{N}$ whose infinitude is unconditionally equivalent to the halting of a Turing machine

The following lemma is known as Richert's lemma.

Lemma 17. *([5], [17], [19, p. 152]). Let $\{m_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}$ be an increasing sequence of positive integers such that for some positive integer k the inequality $m_{i+1} \leqslant 2m_i$ holds for all $i > k$. Suppose there exists a non-negative integer b such that the numbers $b + 1$, $b + 2$, $b + 3$, ..., $b + m_{k+1}$ are all expressible as sums of one or more distinct elements of the set $\{m_1, \ldots, m_k\}$. Then every integer greater than b is expressible as a sum of one or more distinct elements of the set $\{m_1, m_2, m_3, \ldots\}$.*

Let $\mathcal{T}$ denote the set of all positive integers i such that every integer $j \geqslant i$ is expressible as a sum of one or more distinct elements of the set $\{m_1, m_2, m_3, \ldots\}$. Obviously, $\mathcal{T} = \emptyset$ or $\mathcal{T} = [d, \infty) \cap \mathbb{N}$ for some positive integer d.

Corollary 3. *If the sequence $\{m_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}$ is computable and the algorithm in Figure 6 terminates, then almost all positive integers are expressible as a sum of one or more distinct elements of the set $\{m_1, m_2, m_3, \ldots\}$. In particular, if the sequence $\{m_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}$ is computable and the algorithm in Figure 6 terminates, then the set $\mathcal{T}$ is infinite.*
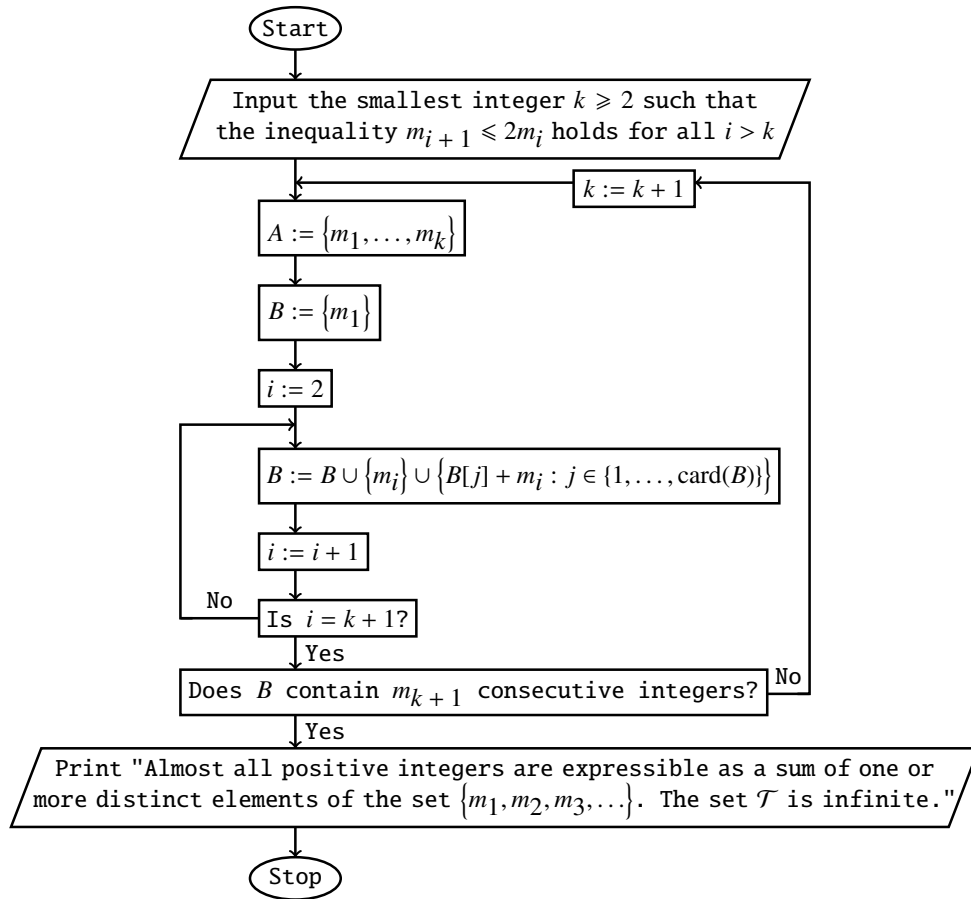
Fig. 6 The algorithm which uses Richert's lemma

Theorem 16. *([7, Theorem 2.3]). If there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that the inequality $m_{i+1} \leqslant (2 - \varepsilon) \cdot m_i$ holds for every sufficiently large i, then the algorithm in Figure 6 terminates if and only if almost all positive integers are expressible as a sum of one or more distinct elements of the set $\{m_1, m_2, m_3, \ldots\}$.*

Corollary 4. *If there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that the inequality $m_{i+1} \leqslant (2 - \varepsilon) \cdot m_i$ holds for every sufficiently large i, then the algorithm in Figure 6 terminates if and only if the set $\mathcal{T}$ is infinite.*

We show how the algorithm in Figure 6 works for a concrete sequence $\{m_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}$. Let $[\cdot]$ denote the integer part function. For a positive integer i, let $t_i = \dfrac{(i + 19)^i + 19}{(i + 19)! \cdot 2^i + 19}$, and let $m_i = [t_i]$.

Lemma 18. *The inequality $m_{i+1} \leqslant 2m_i$ holds for every positive integer i.*

Proof. For every positive integer i,

$$\frac{m_i}{m_{i+1}} = \frac{[t_i]}{[t_{i+1}]} > \frac{t_i - 1}{t_{i+1}} = \frac{t_i}{t_{i+1}} - \frac{1}{t_{i+1}} \geqslant \frac{t_i}{t_{i+1}} - \frac{1}{t_2} =$$

$$2 \cdot \frac{i + 20}{i + 19} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{i + 20}\right)^{i+20} - \frac{21! \cdot 2^{21}}{21^{21}} > 2 \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{21}\right)^{21} - \frac{21! \cdot 2^{21}}{21^{21}} = \frac{4087158528442715204485120000}{5842587018385982521381124421}$$

The last fraction was computed by *MuPAD* and is greater than $\frac{1}{2}$. $\square$

Theorem 17. *The algorithm in Figure 6 terminates for the sequence $\{m_i\}_{i=1}^{\infty}$.*

Proof. By Lemma 18, we take $k = 2$ as the initial value of k. The following *MuPAD* code

```
k:=2:
repeat
C:={floor((i+19)^(i+19)/((i+19)!*2^(i+19))) $i=1..k+1}:
A:={floor((i+19)^(i+19)/((i+19)!*2^(i+19))) $i=1..k}:
B:={A[1]}:
for i from 2 to nops(A) do
B:=B union {A[i]} union {B[j]+A[i] $j=1..nops(B)}:
end_for:
G:={y $y=B[1]-1..B[nops(B)]+1} minus B:
H:={G[n+1]-G[n] $n=1..nops(G)-1}:
k:=k+1:
until H[nops(H)]>C[nops(C)] end_repeat:
print(Unquoted, "Almost all positive integers are expressible"):
print(Unquoted, "as a sum of one or more distinct elements of"):
print(Unquoted, "the set {m_1,m_2,m_3,...}. The set T is infinite."):
```

implements the algorithm in Figure 6 because *MuPAD* automatically orders every finite set of integers and the inequality `H[nops(H)]>C[nops(C)]` holds true if and only if the set B contains m_{k+1} consecutive integers. The author checked that the execution of the code terminates.   □

MuPAD is a general-purpose computer algebra system. *MuPAD* is no longer available as a stand-alone computer program, but only as the *Symbolic Math Toolbox* of *MATLAB*. Fortunately, the presented code can be executed by *MuPAD Light*, which was offered for free for research and education until autumn 2005.

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