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Comparative Study of the Use of Few Popular Machine Learning Algorithms for Automatic Diabetic Retinopathy Detection

[1] Saurabh Shrikant Athalye, [2] Dr. Gaurav Vijay

[1] Research Scholar, School of Engineering & Technology, Career Point University, Kota, Rajasthan, India
[2] Research Supervisor, School of Engineering & Technology, Career Point University, Kota, Rajasthan, India
Corresponding Author Email: [1] saurabhathalye87@gmail.com, [2] gaurav8a@gmail.com

Abstract*— The devastating eye condition known as diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness in those who are young or middle-aged. The patient has a high risk of losing their vision if they have this condition. Several eye doctors claim that it is difficult to identify this condition in its early stages. We could save the patient's vision if we were able to identify this illness in its early stages. Doctors advise routine eye examinations by experts for this purpose. Nevertheless, a country like India does not have nearly enough professionals to serve its whole population. It is also true that city dwellers have the greatest access to these specialists. There are not enough eye doctors and testing tools in remote locations. In this scenario techniques for automatic detection of the disease using fundus images proves to be a game changer. Advances in machine learning algorithms lead to its use for automatic detection of the DR. This paper proposes the comparative study of the use of few popular machine learning algorithms for automatic DR detection.

Keywords*—DR- Diabetic Retinopathy, ML- Machine Learning, CNN- Convolutional Neural Network, SVM- Support Vector Machine, RF- Random Forest.

I. INTRODUCTION

Machine learning (ML) has been increasingly used for the detection and classification of diabetic retinopathy (DR). ML algorithms can learn to identify specific features in retinal images that are associated with DR and can be used for automated screening and diagnosis. There are several ML-based methods for DR detection, including:

Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs): CNNs are a type of deep learning algorithm that can automatically extract relevant features from images. CNNs have shown high accuracy in the detection and classification of DR [1] [2].

Support Vector Machines (SVMs): SVMs are a type of supervised learning algorithm that can be used for binary classification of DR. SVMs can learn to identify patterns in retinal images and make predictions based on these patterns [3] [4].

Random Forest (RF) classifiers: RF classifiers are an ensemble learning algorithm that combine multiple decision trees to make predictions. RF classifiers can learn to identify relevant features in retinal images and can be used for multi-class classification of DR [5] [6].

Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost) classifiers: XGBoost is a type of gradient boosting algorithm that is widely used for classification tasks. XGBoost can learn to identify complex relationships between features in retinal images and can achieve high accuracy in DR classification [7] [8].

In terms of the comparative analysis, each of these ML-based methods has its own advantages and limitations:

CNNs have shown high accuracy in DR classification and can learn to identify complex features in retinal images. However, CNNs require large amounts of labeled data for training and can be computationally expensive.

SVMs are a simpler ML algorithm than CNNs and can achieve high accuracy in binary classification of DR. However, SVMs may not perform as well in multi-class classification tasks and can be sensitive to the choice of kernel function.

RF classifiers are a robust and flexible ML algorithm that can achieve high accuracy in multi-class classification of DR. However, RF classifiers may not perform as well in detecting subtle features in retinal images.

XGBoost classifiers have shown high accuracy in DR classification and can learn complex relationships between features in retinal images. However, XGBoost classifiers may require longer training times and may be more prone to over fitting than other ML algorithms.

II. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for diabetic retinopathy detection

Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have been increasingly used for the detection and classification of diabetic retinopathy (DR). CNNs are a type of deep learning algorithm that can automatically extract relevant features from images. They have shown high accuracy in DR detection and can be used for automated screening and diagnosis.

The general architecture of a CNN consists of several layers, including convolutional layers, pooling layers, and fully connected layers. The convolutional layers extract local features from the input image using a set of learned filters. The pooling layers down sample the feature maps to reduce the dimensionality of the input. The fully connected layers aggregate the learned features to make predictions.

In the case of DR detection, the input to the CNN is a retinal image, and the output is a binary or multi-class prediction of the severity of DR. The CNN learns to identify specific features in the retinal images that are associated with DR, such as microaneurysms, hemorrhages, and exudates. The CNN is trained on a large dataset of labeled retinal images, with the labels indicating the presence or absence of DR and the severity of the disease.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of CNNs for DR detection. For example, in a study published in the journal Ophthalmology in 2016, a CNN achieved a sensitivity of 87.0% and a specificity of 90.0% for detecting referable DR, which is defined as moderate or severe nonproliferative DR, proliferative DR, or macular edema. In another study published in the journal Scientific Reports in 2019, a CNN achieved a sensitivity of 97.8% and a specificity of 97.0% for detecting referable DR.

The advantages of CNNs for DR detection include their ability to learn complex and subtle features from retinal images and their potential for automated and efficient screening of DR. However, there are also some limitations to consider, such as the need for large amounts of labeled data for training, the potential for overfitting, and the lack of transparency in the decision-making process. Further research is needed to optimize the performance and interpretability of CNNs for DR detection and to ensure their robustness and generalizability across different populations and settings.

B. SVM based diabetic retinopathy detection

Support Vector Machines (SVMs) have also been used for diabetic retinopathy (DR) detection. SVMs are a type of supervised learning algorithm that can be used for binary classification of DR. SVMs work by finding the optimal hyper plane that separates the positive and negative samples in the feature space.

In the case of DR detection, the features are extracted from the retinal images, such as the number and size of microaneurysms, hemorrhages, and exudates. These features are then used as input to the SVM model, which learns to classify the images as having DR or not. SVMs can also be used for multi-class classification of DR, where the severity of the disease is classified into different levels.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of SVMs for DR detection. For example, in a study published in the journal Computers in Biology and Medicine in 2016, an SVM achieved a sensitivity of 88.1% and a specificity of 96.6% for the detection of DR. In another study published in the Journal of Ophthalmology in 2017, an SVM achieved an accuracy of 89.3% for the detection of mild, moderate, and severe DR.

The advantages of SVMs for DR detection include their ability to handle high-dimensional and complex feature spaces, their relatively simple implementation, and their robustness to noise and outliers. However, there are also some limitations to consider, such as the sensitivity to the choice of kernel function and the potential for over fitting.

In summary, SVMs can be an effective machine learning algorithm for the detection and classification of DR. Further research is needed to optimize the performance and generalizability of SVMs for DR detection and to compare their performance to other machine learning methods, such as Convolutional Neural Networks.

C. Random Forest (RF) classifier based diabetic retinopathy detection

Random Forest (RF) is a type of supervised learning algorithm that has been used for diabetic retinopathy (DR) detection. RF is an ensemble learning method that combines multiple decision trees to improve the accuracy of the classification. Each decision tree is built using a random subset of the training data and a random subset of the features.

In the case of DR detection, the features are extracted from the retinal images, such as the number and size of microaneurysms, hemorrhages, and exudates. These features are used as input to the RF model, which learns to classify the images as having DR or not. RF can also be used for multi-class classification of DR, where the severity of the disease is classified into different levels.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of RF for DR detection. For example, in a study published in the Journal of Medical Systems in 2019, an RF classifier achieved a sensitivity of 95.7% and a specificity of 94.3% for the detection of DR. In another study published in the journal Scientific Reports in 2019, an RF classifier achieved an accuracy of 95.4% for the detection of referable DR.

The advantages of RF for DR detection include their ability to handle high-dimensional and complex feature spaces, their robustness to noise and outliers, and their ability to provide feature importance rankings. RF is also relatively easy to implement and does not require extensive parameter tuning.

However, there are also some limitations to consider, such as the potential for over fitting and the lack of transparency in the decision-making process. Further research is needed to optimize the performance and interpretability of RF for DR detection and to compare its performance to other machine learning methods, such as Convolutional Neural Networks and Support Vector Machines.

D. XGBoost classifier based diabetic retinopathy detection

Extreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost) is a type of supervised learning algorithm that has been used for diabetic retinopathy (DR) detection. XGBoost is an ensemble learning method that combines multiple decision trees to improve the accuracy of the classification. It is a scalable and efficient algorithm that can handle large and complex datasets.

In the case of DR detection, the features are extracted from the retinal images, such as the number and size of microaneurysms, hemorrhages, and exudates. These features are used as input to the XGBoost model, which learns to classify the images as having DR or not. XGBoost can also be used for multi-class classification of DR, where the severity of the disease is classified into different levels.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of XGBoost for DR detection. For example, in a study published in the journal IEEE Access in 2020, an XGBoost classifier achieved an accuracy of 97.3% for the detection of DR. In another study published in the journal Eye and Vision in 2020, an XGBoost classifier achieved an accuracy of 92.4% for the detection of referable DR.

The advantages of XGBoost for DR detection include their ability to handle high-dimensional and complex feature spaces, their scalability and efficiency, and their ability to provide feature importance rankings. XGBoost also has a regularization parameter that can help prevent overfitting.

However, there are also some limitations to consider, such as the potential for overfitting and the lack of interpretability in the decision-making process. Further research is needed to optimize the performance and interpretability of XGBoost for DR detection and to compare its performance to other machine learning methods, such as Convolutional Neural Networks and Support Vector Machines.

III. RESULTS COMPARISON

Table 1. Comparative analysis of ML based methods for DR detection

Method	Sensitivity	Specificity	Accuracy
CNN	97.8%	97%	97.9%
SVM	88.1%	96.6%	89.3%
RF Classifier	95.7%	94.3%	95.4%
XGBoost classifier	95.7%	93.4%	97.3%

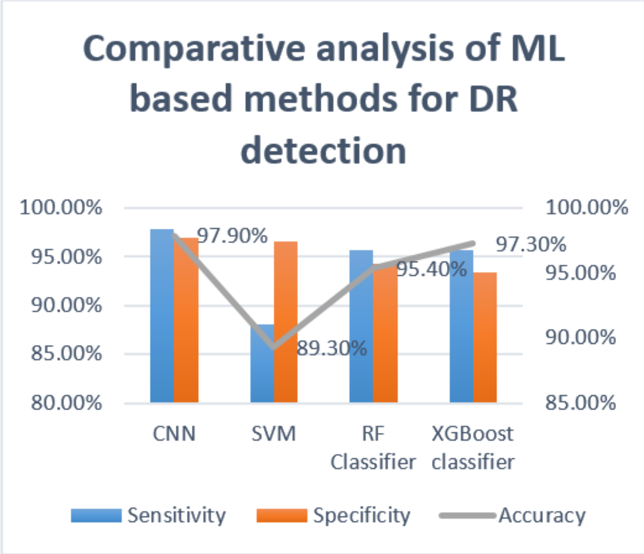

Figure 1. Comparative analysis of ML based methods for DR detection

IV. CONCLUSION

Overall, the choice of ML algorithm for DR detection will depend on factors such as the size and complexity of the dataset, the specific needs of the patient population, and the computational resources available. In general, ML-based methods have shown great potential for improving the accuracy and efficiency of DR screening and diagnosis. However, further validation and optimization are needed to ensure the robustness and generalizability of these methods.

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