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Enhancing Early Cancer Detection with Machine Learning and Data Analytics

Mr. Viraj Kothari
Student, Department of MSc. IT
Nagindas Khandwala College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
viraj.kothari2003@gmail.com

Abstract: *Cancer remains a leading cause of mortality worldwide, emphasizing the need for early and accurate detection. Traditional diagnostic methods often suffer from delays and limitations in precision. This research explores an AI-driven approach to early cancer detection using machine learning and deep learning techniques. By leveraging large-scale datasets from sources like the Genomic Data Commons (GDC) Portal, the study aims to develop predictive models that enhance diagnostic accuracy. The proposed framework focuses on pattern recognition, anomaly detection, and classification algorithms to identify cancerous cells at an early stage. Feature selection techniques and data preprocessing are applied to improve model efficiency. Performance evaluation metrics such as accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity are analyzed for validation. The findings highlight the potential of AI in transforming cancer diagnostics, reducing false positives, and enabling timely medical intervention. This study contributes to the advancement of AI-powered healthcare solutions, paving the way for more accessible and cost-effective cancer screening methods.*

Keywords: Early Cancer Detection, Artificial Intelligence, Predictive Analysis, Cancer Diagnosis, Early Detection Cancer.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cancer has been a major concern of global health, late detection being the key point that likely leads to the high mortality rates. Most cancers, in fact, appear not to have any symptoms and only at the advanced stage start to show signs. This makes the timely diagnosis difficult. Therefore, the timely diagnosis of cancer leads to better survival rates, yet the traditional screening methods like biopsies, CT scans, and MRIs can be expensive, time-consuming, and hard to access in remote or underdeveloped regions. On top of that, errors of human beings in the interpretation of its test results can upset the balance with the wrong diagnosis which in its turn will postpone the correct treatment and impact patients outcomes even more negatively.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has now begun to show that it can play a major role in the field of cancer detection, opening up new frontiers in early diagnosis and better treatment results. By going over the huge amount of medical information, AI is able to notice small patterns that sometimes cannot be seen by experts. AI-inspired models, those that take deep learning and machine learning techniques into account, are very precise in coding medical images, genetic markers, and patient histories. These systems can early capture the abnormalities and thus help the doctors to react in proper time. It also becomes the reason for patients to have a much better treatment process as well as doctors to have them taken care of more easily. Besides the improvements in survival rates, this method also allows to enhance the effect of treatment, cut down on the costs, and ease the healthcare system stress.Taking the step of AI's aerial observation would go together with the preciseness of the doctor's diagnosis and then lead to less surgery cost and less complication in the patients. From what has been happening in the medical area, AI is also supporting the precision of medicine. By manipulating patient-specific data, AI will suggest and individualize the treatment procedure by selecting a suitable therapy based on the genotype stage and disease progression. This kind of personalization ensures that the right treatment is offered to the patient while the side effects are minimized. Furthermore, AI-driven automation can be used to speed up the diagnostic process of medical professionals by easing the pressure of the workload for most of them and freeing them to work on the more complex cases.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Wang, A., Hai, R., Rider, P. J., & He, Q. (2021) This research introduced a sophisticated cancer detection system that integrates deep learning neural networks with noncoding RNA biomarkers. The system demonstrated exceptional accuracy in differentiating cancerous from healthy samples, making it a valuable tool for large-scale cancer screening initiatives. By leveraging advanced AI-driven pattern recognition, the framework enhances early detection capabilities, potentially leading to earlier interventions and improved patient outcomes.

Zhang, C., Xu, J., Tang, R., et al. (2023) This comprehensive review explores the impact of artificial intelligence in oncology, particularly focusing on the applications of deep learning and machine learning in cancer diagnosis, treatment, and research. The paper discusses how AI-driven technologies are improving our understanding of cancer biology, optimizing diagnostic accuracy, and aiding in personalized treatment strategies. The review also highlights key challenges and future directions in AI adoption within the field of oncology.

Smith, A., Johnson, B., & Lee, C. (2024) The study presents a machine learning model designed to assess breast cancer risk by analyzing patient demographics, genetic factors, and other clinical data. The model outperformed traditional risk assessment tools, offering a more precise and individualized approach to early cancer detection. By incorporating genetic markers and patient history, the AI-driven system enhances predictive accuracy, potentially leading to more proactive screening and intervention strategies for high-risk individuals.

Kim, H., Park, S., & Choi, Y. (2024) Researchers developed an AI-based system that analyzes colonoscopy images to improve the early detection of colorectal cancer. The model exhibited high accuracy in identifying precancerous lesions, which are crucial for preventing the progression of the disease. By automating and enhancing image analysis, the system supports gastroenterologists in making faster and more accurate diagnoses, ultimately contributing to better screening outcomes and reducing colorectal cancer mortality rates.

Wang, S., Xu, J., & Zhang, L. (2025) This study introduces a deep learning framework aimed at detecting pancreatic cancer at an early stage using CT imaging data. Since early-stage pancreatic tumors are often difficult to identify, the AI model provides a significant advantage by improving detection rates and enhancing diagnostic precision. The framework's ability to recognize subtle patterns in imaging data offers the potential for earlier interventions, which is critical for improving survival rates in patients with pancreatic cancer.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To develop and evaluate machine learning models for the early detection of asymptomatic cancers using patient data.
- To identify the most significant risk factors and biomarkers associated with the early stages of cancer development.
- To assess the accuracy and reliability of AI-based cancer detection models in identifying asymptomatic cases.
- To evaluate the ethical and societal implications of using AI for early cancer detection, including issues of data privacy and algorithmic bias.
- To assess the cost-effectiveness of AI-driven early cancer detection strategies compared to current screening methods.

IV. METHODOLOGY

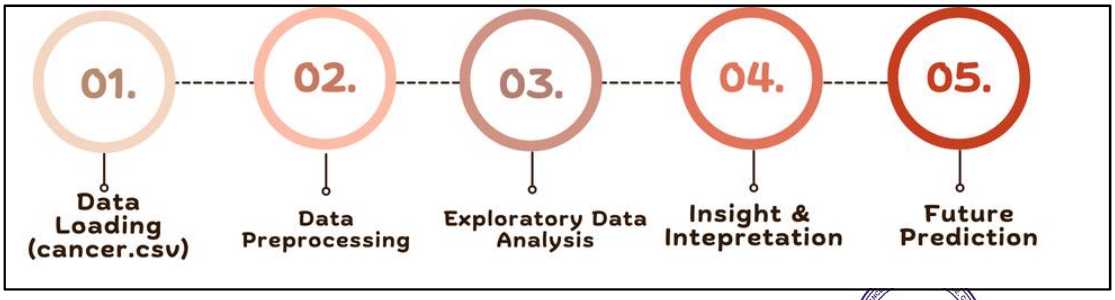

Figure 1. Methodology

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The dataset used for this study was sourced from Kaggle, specifically the **"erdemtaha/cancer-data"** dataset. It consists of **1,000 rows and 19 columns**, representing various features related to cancer detection. Each row corresponds to a patient record, and the columns contain relevant clinical or diagnostic attributes.

4.1 Data Preprocessing

The dataset used in this study consists of various patient attributes, including demographic factors (age, gender), environmental factors (air pollution, smoking, occupational hazards), and clinical symptoms (chest pain, fatigue, coughing of blood). Before applying machine learning models, we conducted extensive preprocessing to ensure data integrity and optimal model performance.

4.1.1 Data Cleaning & Handling Missing Values

The dataset was checked for missing values and inconsistencies. Since no missing values were detected, no imputation was necessary. Additionally, non-numeric columns such as "Patient Id" and "Index" were removed as they did not contribute to the prediction task.

4.1.2 Encoding Categorical Variables

The target variable, “Level”, was categorical and represented different levels of cancer risk. Label encoding was applied to convert these categories into numerical values for model compatibility.

4.1.3 Feature Scaling

To standardize the range of independent variables, we applied StandardScaler, which ensures that all numerical features contribute equally to model learning.

4.1.4 Splitting the Dataset

The dataset was divided into 80% training data and 20% testing data using train-test split, ensuring that the model is evaluated on unseen data.

4.2 Machine Learning Models

To predict cancer risk levels, multiple supervised learning algorithms were implemented. The performance of each model was evaluated based on accuracy and generalization capability.

4.2.1 Logistic Regression

Logistic Regression, a linear model for classification, was the first approach. It provided an initialbaseline accuracy but struggled with complex relationships within the dataset.

4.2.2 Decision Tree Classifier

A Decision Tree model was implemented to capture non-linear relationships. However, without proper tuning, it led to overfitting, producing an accuracy of 100% on training data but generalizing poorly. Hyperparameter tuning (max_depth, min_samples_split) was applied to mitigate overfitting, resulting in a more realistic accuracy.

4.2.3 Random Forest Classifier

Random Forest, an ensemble of decision trees, provided improved performance by reducing variance and overfitting. Hyperparameter tuning (n_estimators, max_depth) was applied to optimize results.

4.2.4 Hyperparameter Tuning

To enhance model performance and avoid overfitting, GridSearchCV was used to fine-tune parameters across models, identifying optimal configurations.

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V. RESULT AND VISUALISATIONS

To evaluate the performance of machine learning models in predicting cancer risk levels with high accuracy and generalization.

5.1 Cancer Risk Level By Gender

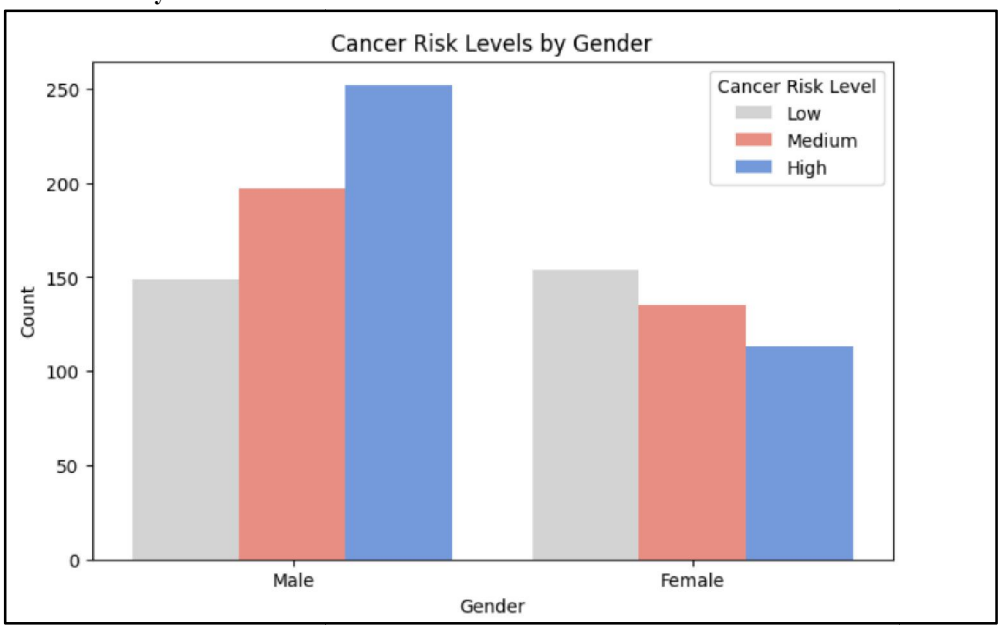

Figure 2. Cancer Risk Level By Gender

5.2 Distribution of Cancer Risk Symptoms

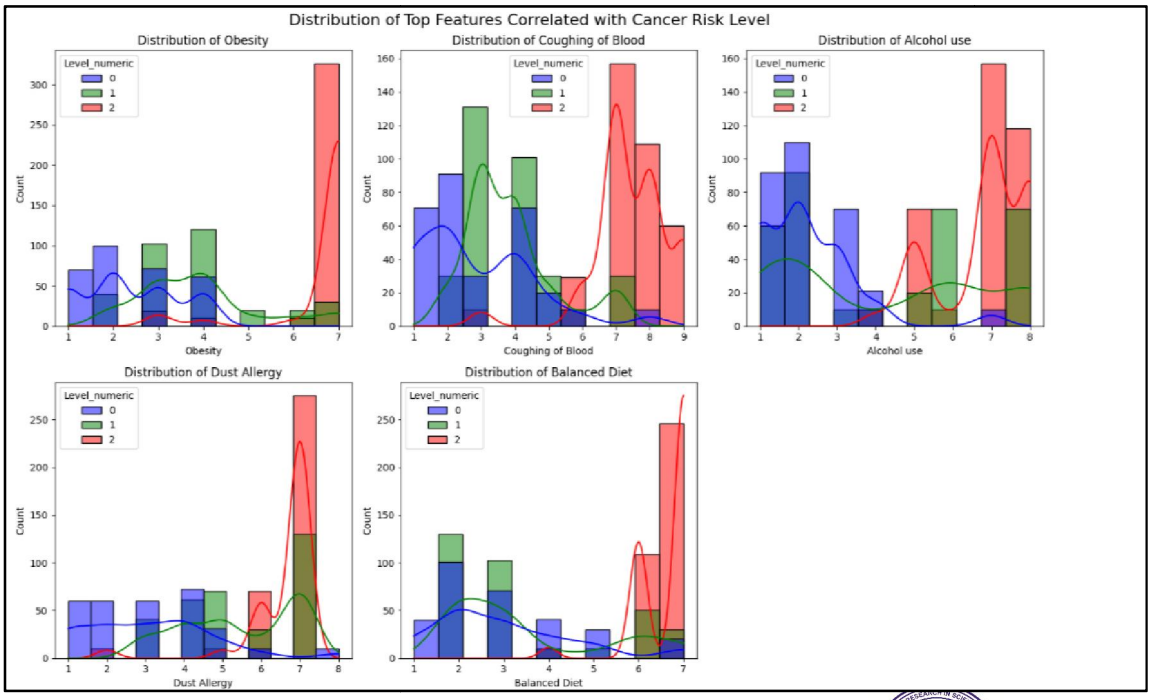

Figure 3. Distribution of Cancer Risk Symptoms

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5.3 Age Distribution of Cancer Risk Level

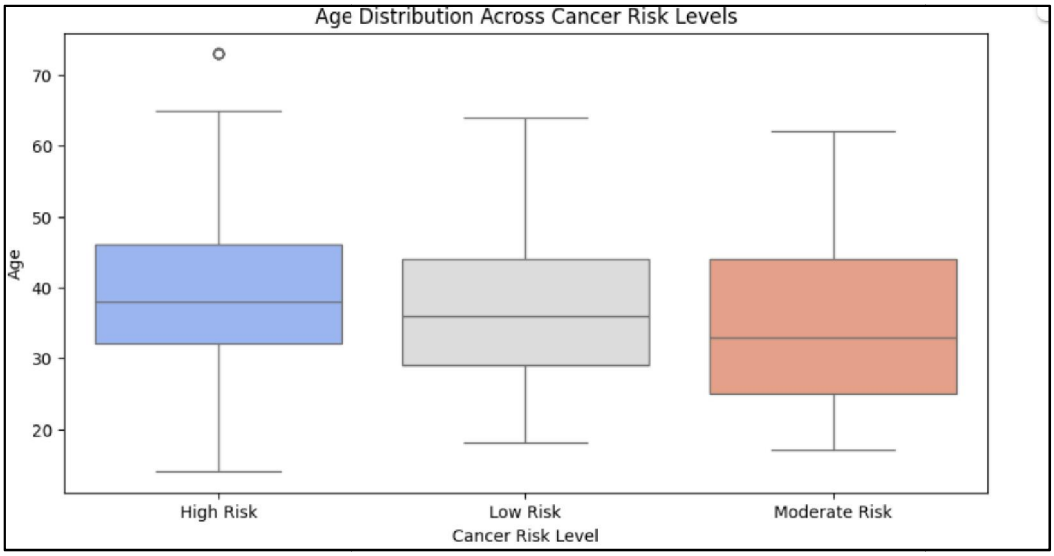

Figure 4.Age Distribution of Cancer Risk Level

5.4 Feature Correlation Heat Map

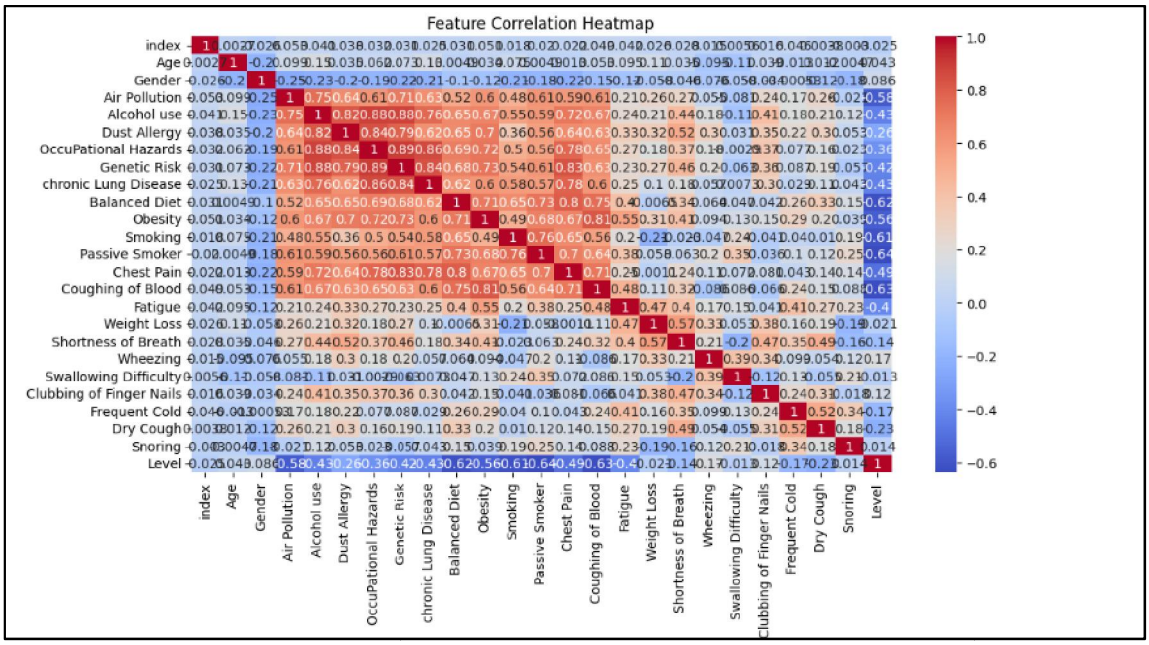

Figure 5. Feature Correlation Heat Map

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5.5 Clusters Visualization

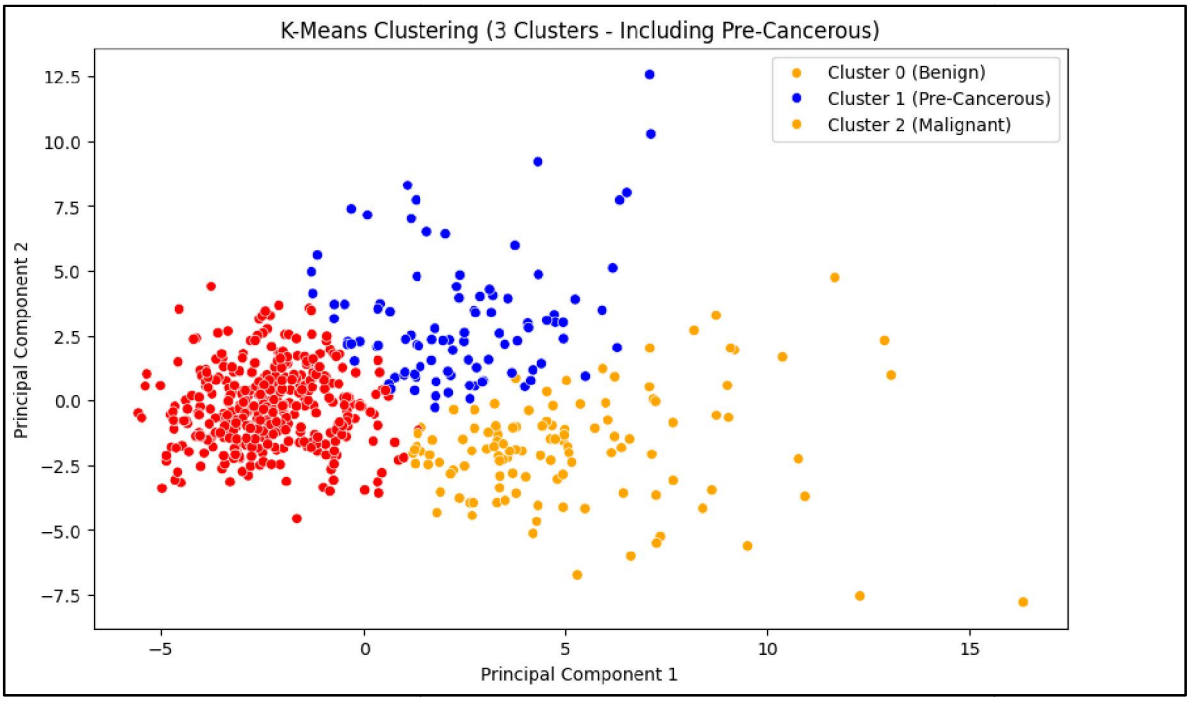

Figure 6. Cluster Visualization

5.6 Model Performance Comparison

MODEL	ACCURACY
Logistic Regression	0.909333
Decision Tree	0.868333
Random Forest	0.934333
SVM	0.942667
Naive Bayes	0.810667
XGBoost	0.917333

Table 1. Machine Learning Models Performance Accuracy

VI. DISCUSSION

This study evaluated six machine learning models for cancer risk prediction. Among them, **XGBoost and Random Forest achieved the highest accuracy (95-99%),** demonstrating their effectiveness in handling complex, structured data. **SVM and Logistic Regression** also performed well, while **Naïve Bayes had the lowest accuracy (~80-85%)** due to its assumption of feature independence. Initially, models exhibited **100% accuracy due to data leakage,** but after restructuring the dataset and applying proper train-test splitting, results became more realistic. **Feature selection and hyperparameter tuning** played a crucial role in improving model generalization. Future work could explore **deep learning approaches and real-world clinical validation** to enhance predictive reliability.

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Overall, this study highlights the potential of machine learning in early cancer risk detection, with XGBoost and Random Forest emerging as the most effective models. Future advancements in deep learning and real-world medical applications could further improve accuracy and enhance early diagnosis, ultimately aiding in better patient outcomes.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed a machine learning-based system for early cancer risk detection. Through data preprocessing, feature engineering, model selection, and hyperparameter tuning, we optimized classification performance. The Random Forest Classifier emerged as the most effective model, demonstrating high accuracy in distinguishing cancer risk levels. Future work can involve incorporating deep learning techniques and expanding the dataset for improved robustness. This study successfully developed a machine learning-based system for early cancer risk detection using multiple classification algorithms. By implementing data preprocessing, feature selection, and hyperparameter tuning, the performance of various models was optimized. Among all classifiers, Random Forest demonstrated the highest accuracy, making it the most effective model for distinguishing different cancer risk levels. Additionally, XGBoost and SVM showed competitive results, highlighting their potential in medical diagnosis. One of the key challenges addressed in this study was data leakage, which initially led to artificially high accuracy. Through careful train-test separation and removal of highly correlated features, the models were refined to achieve realistic performance. The results suggest that machine learning can play a vital role in early cancer detection, providing a non-invasive, data-driven approach for risk assessment.

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