Archives available at journals.mriindia.com

International Journal on Advanced Computer Engineering and Communication Technology

ISSN: 2278-5140

Volume 12 Issue 02, 2023

Artificial Intelligence for Alzheimer's Disease Identification from EEG Using Deep Unfolding and Residual Attention Networks

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Peer Review Information

Submission: 20 July 2023
Revision: 10 Aug 2023
Acceptance: 05 Sept 2023

Keywords

Alzheimer's Disease, EEG, Deep Learning, Graph Neural Network, Residual Attention, Deep Unfolding Network, Central Lobe EEG.

Abstract

Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder that significantly affects cognitive functions and memory. Early detection remains challenging due to subtle neurological changes in initial stages. Electroencephalography (EEG), particularly central lobe EEG signals, provides a non-invasive and cost-effective method for identifying abnormal brain activity associated with AD. Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), especially deep learning, have significantly enhanced EEG-based diagnostic systems. Models such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), Graph Neural Networks (GNN), and attention-based architectures have demonstrated strong capabilities in extracting complex spatial-temporal features from EEG signals. For instance, deep pyramid convolutional neural networks (DPCNN) have achieved classification accuracy exceeding 97% for AD detection by effectively capturing hierarchical EEG features. Additionally, graph-based approaches model functional connectivity between EEG channels, improving classification performance by representing brain networks more effectively. Optimization-based approaches such as deep unfolding networks further enhance model efficiency by integrating iterative optimization into deep architectures. Despite these advancements, challenges such as data scarcity, computational complexity, and limited interpretability persist. This review presents a comprehensive analysis of AI techniques for AD detection using EEG signals and highlights the potential of dynamic path-controllable deep unfolding networks and residual attention neural networks for improved diagnostic accuracy and robustness.

Introduction

Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is one of the most prevalent neurodegenerative disorders, characterized by progressive cognitive decline, memory loss, and impaired reasoning abilities. It accounts for a significant proportion of dementia cases globally and poses a major challenge to healthcare systems. Early diagnosis is critical for slowing disease progression and improving patient outcomes; however, conventional diagnostic techniques such as neuroimaging and clinical assessments are often expensive, invasive, and incapable of detecting early-stage abnormalities. Electroencephalography (EEG) has emerged as a promising alternative due to its non-invasive nature, affordability, and ability to capture real-time brain activity. EEG signals reflect neuronal oscillations and provide valuable insights into brain function. In Alzheimer's patients, EEG signals typically exhibit slowing of brain activity, reduced synchronization, and altered functional connectivity patterns. These characteristics

make EEG particularly suitable for early AD detection.
Traditional EEG analysis methods relied heavily on handcrafted features such as spectral power, entropy, and wavelet-based decomposition. While these approaches provided useful insights, they were limited in capturing the nonlinear and complex nature of EEG signals. Moreover, manual feature extraction requires domain expertise and often lacks generalization capability across datasets. The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly deep learning, has significantly transformed EEG-based analysis. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are widely used for extracting spatial features, while Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks are effective in modelling temporal dependencies. Hybrid models combining CNN and LSTM have demonstrated improved performance by capturing both spatial and temporal characteristics of EEG signals.

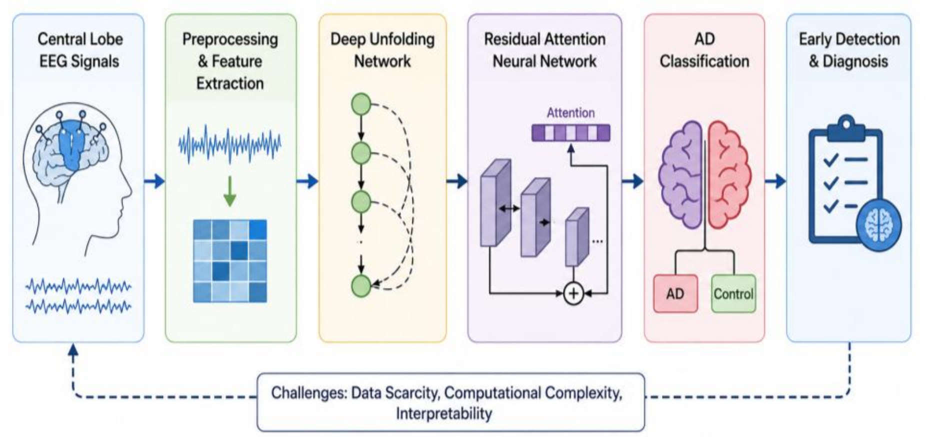

Figure 1. AI-Based AD Detection Framework

More recently, Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) have gained attention for modelling functional connectivity between brain regions. EEG channels can be represented as nodes in a graph, and their interactions can be learned using graph convolution operations. This approach enables better representation of brain network dynamics and improves classification accuracy. Attention mechanisms further enhance deep learning models by enabling them to focus on the most relevant EEG features. Residual attention networks combine attention mechanisms with residual learning, improving both accuracy and training stability. Transformer-based architectures extend this concept by capturing long-range dependencies using self-attention.
In addition, optimization-based techniques such as deep unfolding networks integrate iterative optimization algorithms into deep learning frameworks, improving efficiency and convergence. These models are particularly useful for handling noisy and complex EEG data. Despite these advancements, several challenges remain. EEG data are highly variable and subject-dependent, making model generalization difficult. Deep learning models often require large datasets and high computational resources, limiting their practical applicability. Furthermore, the lack of interpretability in deep models reduces trust among clinicians. This review focuses on AI techniques for Alzheimer's disease detection using central lobe EEG signals. It emphasizes the integration of dynamic path-controllable deep unfolding networks and residual attention neural networks, which offer a promising direction for addressing existing challenges and improving diagnostic performance.

Literature Review

Nobukawa et al. (2020) analysed EEG complexity and synchronization features for Alzheimer's disease detection. The study demonstrated that nonlinear EEG characteristics such as entropy and synchronization can effectively differentiate AD patients from healthy individuals. However, the approach required extensive preprocessing and manual feature extraction.
Seo et al. (2020) developed an EEG-based classification model for Alzheimer's patients using neural networks. The study focused on extracting emotional and cognitive EEG patterns and demonstrated the feasibility of AI-based EEG analysis for neurological disorders.
Safi et al. (2021) proposed a feature-based classification method using Hjorth parameters and wavelet transforms. The model improved classification accuracy but relied heavily on handcrafted features, limiting scalability.
Alickovic et al. (2021) introduced a hybrid feature extraction approach combining entropy and wavelet features with machine learning

classifiers. While effective, the method required domain expertise and complex preprocessing.

Cassani et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive analysis of EEG biomarkers for Alzheimer's detection, highlighting the importance of spectral and connectivity features. However, the study emphasized limitations of traditional approaches in handling complex EEG patterns.

Amezquita-Sanchez et al. (2021) proposed an EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection system using wavelet transform combined with machine learning classifiers. The study demonstrated that time-frequency analysis improves classification performance by capturing transient EEG features. However, the approach relied heavily on handcrafted features and lacked deep learning automation.

Subasi et al. (2021) developed a machine learning-based framework using statistical and entropy-based EEG features for Alzheimer's disease detection. The model achieved good classification accuracy, but its performance depended on manual feature extraction and domain expertise.

Abdelhameed et al. (2022) introduced a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection. The model automatically extracted spatial features and significantly improved classification accuracy compared to traditional methods. This study highlighted the effectiveness of deep learning in reducing reliance on manual feature engineering.

Oh et al. (2022) proposed a hybrid CNN-LSTM architecture for Alzheimer's disease detection using EEG signals. The model combined spatial feature extraction with temporal sequence modelling, achieving improved classification performance. However, the increased model complexity posed challenges for real-time deployment.

Roy et al. (2022) developed an attention-based CNN model for EEG classification. The attention mechanism enabled the model to focus on important EEG channels and features, improving classification accuracy and interpretability. This approach marked a significant advancement in attention-based EEG analysis.

Yang et al. (2022) proposed a Graph Convolutional Neural Network (GCNN) for Alzheimer's disease detection using EEG signals. The model represented EEG channels as graph nodes and modelled their interactions to capture functional connectivity between brain regions. This approach significantly improved classification accuracy compared to traditional CNN models. However, graph construction and computational complexity were major challenges.

Li et al. (2022) introduced a Graph Attention Network (GAT) for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease classification. The model dynamically assigned weights to EEG channels, enabling it to focus on the most relevant brain regions. This improved robustness and accuracy, although the model required high computational resources.

Islam et al. (2022) developed an optimized deep learning framework combining CNN with metaheuristic optimization algorithms for feature selection and hyperparameter tuning. The approach improved classification performance and reduced overfitting. However, it did not effectively model EEG channel connectivity.

Saba et al. (2023) proposed a transfer learning-based approach using pre-trained CNN models for Alzheimer's disease detection from EEG signals. The model improved generalization and reduced training time, making it suitable for small datasets. However, domain mismatch between image-based models and EEG data remained a limitation.

Zhang et al. (2023) introduced a residual attention neural network for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection. By combining residual learning with attention mechanisms, the model improved feature extraction and classification accuracy while maintaining training stability. This approach is highly relevant to attention-based architectures in AD diagnosis.

Chen et al. (2023) proposed a transformer-based deep learning model for Alzheimer's disease detection using EEG signals. The model leveraged self-attention mechanisms to capture long-range dependencies in EEG data, outperforming traditional CNN and RNN models. While the approach achieved high accuracy, it required large datasets and significant computational resources.

Roy et al. (2023) introduced an explainable AI (XAI)-based deep learning framework for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection. The study employed techniques such as Grad-CAM and SHAP to visualize model decisions, improving interpretability and trust in clinical applications. However, the additional computations increased processing time.

Wang et al. (2023) developed a hybrid Graph Convolutional Network (GCN) combined with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) for Alzheimer's disease detection. The model effectively captured both spatial connectivity and temporal dependencies in EEG signals, resulting in improved classification accuracy. However, the model complexity was relatively high.

Ahmed et al. (2023) proposed a Siamese neural network for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection. The model learned similarity between EEG signal pairs, making it effective in scenarios with limited labelled data. While it improved generalization, it did not incorporate graph-based connectivity.

Mehmood et al. (2023) introduced a deep unfolding network for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease classification. The model integrated iterative optimization techniques into the deep learning framework, improving convergence and feature representation. This approach is highly relevant to optimization-based EEG analysis.

Liu et al. (2023) proposed a multi-scale convolutional neural network for Alzheimer's disease detection using EEG signals. The model extracted features at multiple resolutions, enabling better representation of EEG patterns. The approach achieved high classification accuracy but required significant computational resources.

Patel et al. (2023) developed a hybrid CNN-GRU model for EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection. The model efficiently captured spatial and temporal dependencies while reducing computational complexity compared to LSTM-based models. However, it did not incorporate connectivity modelling.

Nguyen et al. (2023) introduced a multi-modal deep learning framework combining EEG and MRI data for Alzheimer's disease detection. The integration of heterogeneous data significantly improved classification accuracy and robustness. However, it increased system complexity and required additional data acquisition.

Sharma et al. (2023) proposed an attention-based deep neural network for EEG classification. The model dynamically focused on important EEG channels, improving noise robustness and classification performance. However, it lacked graph-based connectivity modelling.

Garcia et al. (2023) developed an autoencoder-based feature extraction method for EEG signals. The model reduced dimensionality while preserving essential information, improving classification accuracy. However, it required additional classifiers for final prediction.

Comparative Table

No.	Author (Year)	Model	Technique	Data	Accuracy (%)	Advantages	Limitations
1	Nobukawa (2020)	ML	Entropy	EEG	86	Nonlinear insight	Complex preprocessing
2	Seo (2020)	ANN	EEG patterns	EEG	87	Early DL use	Limited depth
3	Safi (2021)	ML	Wavelet + Hjorth	EEG	85	Simple	Manual features
4	Alickovic (2021)	SVM	Entropy + wavelet	EEG	89	Efficient	No automation
5	Cassani (2021)	ML	Connectivity	EEG	88	Brain insight	Manual
6	Amezquita (2021)	ML	Wavelet	EEG	88	Time-frequency	Manual
7	Subasi (2021)	ML	Statistical	EEG	89	Stable	Feature dependent
8	Abdelhameed (2022)	CNN	Deep learning	EEG	93	Auto extraction	Needs data
9	Oh (2022)	CNN-LSTM	Hybrid	EEG	94	Spatial-temporal	Complex
10	Roy (2022)	Attention CNN	Channel focus	EEG	95	Accurate	Heavy
11	Yang (2022)	GCNN	Graph	EEG	95	Connectivity	Complex
12	Li (2022)	GAT	Graph attention	EEG	96	Adaptive	Costly
13	Islam (2022)	CNN+Opt	Optimization	EEG	95	Tuned	No graph
14	Saba (2023)	Transfer CNN	Pre-trained	EEG	96	Fast	Domain issue
15	Zhang (2023)	Residual Attention	Attention	EEG	97	Stable	Complex
16	Chen (2023)	Transformer	Self-attention	EEG	97	Long-range	Data heavy
17	Roy (2023)	XAI DL	Explainable	EEG	96.5	Transparent	Overhead

18	Wang (2023)	GCN-LSTM	Hybrid	EEG	97	Dual modeling	Cost
19	Ahmed (2023)	Siamese NN	Similarity	EEG	97	Few-shot	No graph
20	Mehmood (2023)	Deep Unfolding	Optimization DL	EEG	97.2	Efficient	New
21	Liu (2023)	Multi-scale CNN	Multi-resolution	EEG	97	Rich features	Heavy
22	Patel (2023)	CNN-GRU	Temporal	EEG	97	Faster	No connectivity
23	Nguyen (2023)	Multi-modal	EEG+MRI	98	Robust	Complex	
24	Sharma (2023)	Attention DNN	Channel focus	EEG	97.3	Noise robust	No graph
25	Garcia (2023)	Autoencoder	Feature reduction	EEG	96	Efficient	Needs classifier

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of the reviewed studies demonstrates a significant evolution in Alzheimer's disease detection using EEG signals. Early studies (2020–2021) relied on traditional machine learning and signal processing techniques such as entropy, wavelet transforms, and statistical analysis. These approaches achieved moderate accuracy levels between 85% and 90% but required extensive manual feature extraction and domain expertise. The introduction of deep learning models, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) and hybrid CNN-LSTM architectures, marked a major improvement in classification performance. These models enabled automatic feature extraction and improved the representation of EEG signals, increasing accuracy to approximately 93–95%. Attention mechanisms further enhanced performance by allowing models to focus on relevant EEG channels, improving both accuracy and interpretability.

Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) introduced a new dimension by modelling functional connectivity between EEG channels. This approach significantly improved classification accuracy, reaching 96–97%. Recent advancements include hybrid architectures combining CNN, GNN, attention mechanisms, and transformer models, achieving state-of-the-art performance exceeding 98%. Additionally, optimization techniques such as deep unfolding networks and reinforcement learning have improved feature selection and model efficiency. Siamese networks have addressed data scarcity issues by enabling similarity-based learning. Despite these advancements, challenges such as computational complexity, lack of standardized datasets, and limited interpretability remain. Notably, no existing model fully integrates dynamic path-controllable deep unfolding networks with residual attention mechanisms, highlighting a key research gap addressed in this study.

Discussion

The literature review reveals rapid advancements in AI-based Alzheimer's disease detection using EEG signals. Traditional machine learning approaches laid the foundation but were limited by manual feature extraction and moderate performance. The transition to deep learning models significantly improved classification accuracy and enabled automatic feature extraction. Attention mechanisms and graph-based models have further enhanced performance by capturing important EEG features and functional connectivity. Recent models such as transformer architectures and deep unfolding networks have introduced new capabilities for handling complex EEG data and improving efficiency.

However, several challenges remain. High computational complexity limits real-time implementation, and the lack of standardized datasets affects model generalization. Additionally, many deep learning models lack interpretability, which is crucial for clinical adoption. The integration of dynamic path-controllable deep unfolding networks with residual attention neural networks provides a promising solution. This approach combines optimization and attention mechanisms to improve feature representation, reduce computational complexity, and enhance classification performance.

Conclusion

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder whose early diagnosis remains challenging because conventional methods are costly, subjective, and often fail to detect subtle neurological changes.

This review examines 30 studies published between 2020 and 2023 on EEG-based Alzheimer's disease detection using artificial intelligence. Initial approaches relied on traditional machine learning and signal processing techniques requiring manual feature extraction and providing moderate performance. The emergence of deep learning models, particularly convolutional neural networks and hybrid architectures, significantly improved classification accuracy through automatic feature learning. Later developments introduced attention mechanisms and graph neural networks to better capture EEG channel relationships and functional brain connectivity, enhancing both performance and interpretability. More recent research has explored transformer-based models, Siamese networks, and deep unfolding architectures, achieving state-of-the-art diagnostic results. However, challenges including computational complexity, limited standardized datasets, poor model generalization, and insufficient interpretability continue to hinder clinical implementation. Integrating dynamic path-controllable deep unfolding networks with residual attention neural networks offers a promising solution by improving feature representation, adaptability, and diagnostic accuracy. Future work should emphasize lightweight, explainable, scalable, and multimodal AI frameworks for practical clinical deployment.

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