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International Journal on Advanced Computer Theory and Engineering

ISSN: 2319-2526
Volume 14 Issue 01, 2025

Skin Cancer Detection Using Hybrid Deep Learning and Clinical Recommendation System

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Peer Review Information

Submission: 07 Feb 2025
Revision: 16 Mar 2025
Acceptance: 18 April 2025

Keywords

Skin cancer
Gray-Level Co-occurrence Matrix
Convolutional Neural Networks

Abstract

Skin cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer worldwide, with early detection being crucial for effective treatment. Traditional diagnostic methods rely heavily on clinical expertise, leading to potential delays and misdiagnoses. This study introduces a hybrid deep learning approach that integrates Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) with Gray-Level Co-occurrence Matrix (GLCM) texture analysis for improved multi-class skin cancer detection. The model was trained on the HAM10000 dataset, consisting of 10,000 dermoscopic images spanning seven skin cancer types. EfficientNet-B0 was used for deep feature extraction, while GLCM provided texture-based insights. Our hybrid model achieved an accuracy of 87.4%, outperforming benchmark models ResNet50 (82.1%) and VGG16 (79.8%). Furthermore, we developed a clinical recommendation system that provides personalized precautionary guidelines, dietary suggestions, and specialist referrals based on diagnostic results. The integration of AI-powered diagnosis with real-time patient education enhances accessibility and decision-making in dermatology. This study demonstrates the potential of AI-driven diagnostic tools in reducing biopsy rates and improving early detection, especially in remote and under-resourced areas.

INTRODUCTION

Skin cancer affects millions globally, with melanoma being one of the deadliest forms. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 5 million new skin cancer cases are reported annually, and late-stage melanoma has a five-year survival rate of less than 20%. Early detection significantly improves treatment outcomes, making automated diagnostic tools crucial. Skin cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer globally, affecting millions of individuals each year. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 5 million new cases of skin cancer are reported annually. Among its various types, melanoma is considered the most dangerous due to its aggressive nature and high mortality rate. If not diagnosed early, melanoma can spread rapidly to other organs, making treatment more challenging. The survival rate for late-stage melanoma is less than 20%, highlighting the urgent need for early and accurate detection. Early detection plays a crucial role in improving treatment outcomes. If diagnosed at an early stage, melanoma has a five-year survival rate exceeding 90%. However, traditional skin cancer screening methods require specialized dermatologists, which can be time-consuming and inaccessible to many individuals. To address these challenges, automated diagnostic tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have emerged as promising solutions. These tools analyze images of skinlesions using deep learning algorithms to differentiate between benign and malignant growths with high accuracy. Integrating AI-driven diagnostic tools into skin cancer detection can significantly enhance early diagnosis, reduce misdiagnosis rates, and improve accessibility to healthcare. This project aims to explore the effectiveness of automated skin cancer detection and how AI can assist in identifying melanoma at an early stage, ultimately contributing to better patient outcomes and higher survival rates.

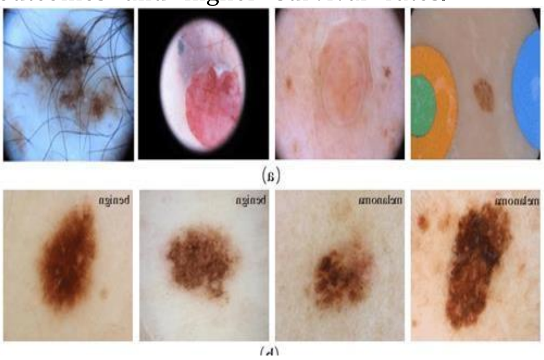

Fig 1 Automatic detection of melanoma is interfered by many factors
(a) shows some interferences unrelated to pathological factors. (b) shows melanoma and benign are not easy to distinguish in appearance.

LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING APPROACHES

Traditional diagnostic methods rely on dermoscopy and biopsy, which can be time-consuming and require expert intervention. Existing AI-based models face challenges such as:

Limited multi-class classification – Many models focus only on melanoma detection.Most AI-based models for skin cancer detection are designed primarily to distinguish between melanoma and benign skin lesions. However, in real-world scenarios, skin cancer exists in various forms, including:

1. Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC)
2. Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC) 3) Melanoma
3. Actinic Keratosis (precancerous lesions)
4. Benign skin conditions (e.g., moles, warts, and rashes)

Current deep learning models often struggle to classify multiple types of skin cancer accurately. Many models are trained on datasets that heavily focus on melanoma, making them less effective at identifying other forms of skin cancer. This limitation reduces the model's applicability in real-world clinical settings, where doctors must differentiate between various types of skin conditions for accurate diagnosis and treatment planning.

Lack of clinical integration – AI models rarely provide actionable recommendations for patients.

Despite advancements in AI-driven diagnostic tools, most models operate in isolation and lack integration into existing clinical workflows. Some key challenges include: No patient-specific recommendations – AI models may provide a classification result (e.g., "high probability of melanoma") but do not suggest next steps, such as whether a biopsy is needed or what type of specialist the patient should visit.No risk assessment – AI models typically do not consider patient history, genetic factors, or other risk factors such as sun exposure or skin type. Lack of regulatory approval – Many AI models are trained in research settings but lack approval from medical authorities like the FDA or WHO for real-world clinical use.Trust issues – Dermatologists and patients may hesitate to rely on AI models without clear explanations of how the decision was made, especially if the model acts as a "black box" with no interpretability.

Feature extraction challenges – Deep learning models alone may overlook texture-based information essential for diagnosis.

Deep learning models, particularly convolutional neural networks (CNNs), extract features based on patterns such as color, shape, and edges. However, they may overlook certain texture-based and histopathological features that are crucial for diagnosing skin cancer.

Some challenges include:

Loss of fine-grained details – Deep learning models might not capture subtle variations in texture, roughness, and lesion border irregularities, which are key indicators of cancerous growths.

Overfitting to training data – Many models are trained on limited datasets with specific lighting conditions and angles. As a result, they may fail to generalize to real-world images with different backgrounds, lighting variations, and skin tones.

Difficulty in distinguishing similar-looking lesions – Some benign lesions can closely resemble malignant ones, making it difficult for AI models to differentiate them accurately. Dermatologists often rely on additional techniques (e.g., dermoscopic patterns, patient history), which AI models may not incorporate.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To overcome the limitations of existing skin cancer detection models, this research aims to develop a hybrid CNN-GLCM model that improves accuracy, interpretability, and accessibility. The key objectives of the study are as follows:

Enhancing Feature Extraction by Combining Deep Learning and Texture Analysis

Traditional deep learning models, such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), primarily focus on detecting patterns based on shape, color, and edges. While CNNs are effective for image classification, they may overlook texture-based features, which are critical in dermatological diagnosis. To improve accuracy, this project proposes a hybrid approach that integrates: CNN (Convolutional Neural Network): This deep learning technique is excellent at identifying patterns, edges, and color variations in skin lesions. GLCM (Gray Level Co-occurrence Matrix): This is a texture analysis method that extracts fine details related to the lesion's roughness, uniformity, and contrast—features that are often used by dermatologists to differentiate between benign and malignant lesions. By combining CNN's ability to recognize overall patterns with GLCM's ability to analyze microscopic texture details, the model will enhance the accuracy and reliability of skin cancer detection.

Providing Real-Time Clinical Recommendations Through a JSON-Based Knowledge System

Most AI models classify skin lesions but fail to provide actionable recommendations to healthcare providers and patients. This limitation makes it difficult for non- experts to understand the severity of the condition and the next steps required for treatment.

To solve this, the project will integrate a JSON-based knowledge system that:Stores medical guidelines and recommendations from dermatology experts.

Links classification results with suggested actions, such as "Low risk: Monitor at home" or "High risk: Consult a dermatologist for a biopsy."

Provides explanations for AI decisions, increasing transparency and trust in the model.

This feature will bridge the gap between AI and real- world clinical use, ensuring that users receive meaningful insights rather than just a prediction.

Offering a Web-Based Deployment for Accessibility in Low-Resource Settings

Access to dermatologists and advanced diagnostic tools is limited in many regions, particularly in rural and low-resource areas. To improve accessibility, the proposed system will be deployed as a web-based application.

Key benefits of web-based deployment include:

Users can upload skin lesion images via a web interface to receive an AI-based analysis.

No need for expensive hardware or software, making it accessible on smartphones, tablets, and computers.

Remote diagnosis capability, helping individuals in areas with limited access to dermatologists.

Cloud-based processing, ensuring fast and efficient AI-powered analysis.

By making the system available online, this research aims to increase early detection rates and provide diagnostic support to healthcare professionals and patients worldwide.

RELATED WORK

Deep Learning in Skin Cancer Detection:

Deep learning has significantly advanced skin cancer detection, with several studies demonstrating its potential. Esteva et al. (2017) developed a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) for melanoma classification, achieving accuracy comparable to dermatologists. Their work showcased how AI could assist in diagnosing melanoma at an early stage, potentially improving patient outcomes. Another major contribution came from Tschandl et al. (2018), who introduced the HAM10000 dataset, a large collection of dermoscopic images that serves as a benchmark for training AI models in skin cancer detection. This dataset has facilitated advancements in machine learning algorithms by providing diverse skin lesion images. Han et al. (2020) reviewed deep learning applications in dermatology and identified a crucial gap—the lack of integrated decision support systems. While CNNs perform well in classification, they often do not provide actionable clinical recommendations, limiting their usability in real-world medical settings.

Texture Analysis for Medical Imaging

Texture analysis has been widely used in medical imaging to enhance diagnostic accuracy. One of the most effective techniques is the Gray Level Co- occurrence Matrix (GLCM), which extracts textural features such as contrast, correlation, and homogeneity from medical images. In dermatology, texture features play a crucial role in differentiating between benign and malignant skin lesions, as cancerous tissues often exhibit unique texture patterns. Studies have demonstrated that combining deep learning models with texture analysis significantly improves classification accuracy in dermatological conditions. By incorporating texture-based methods like GLCM, AI models can gain additional insights that are often overlooked by traditional CNNs, making the diagnosis more reliable and interpretable.

Hybrid CNN-GLCM Models:

Recent research suggests that integrating CNNs with GLCM can enhance feature extraction and improve classification performance in medical image analysis. While CNNs excel at identifying high-level patterns such as shape and color, GLCM captures micro-level texture details that are essential for distinguishing visually similar lesions. Despite its potential, few studies have explored the application of hybrid CNN- GLCM architectures specifically for multi-class skin cancer detection. Most existing models primarily focus on binary classification (melanoma vs. benign), neglecting other forms of skin cancer such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. This study aims to fill that gap by developing a hybrid CNN- GLCM model that can classify multiple types of skin cancer, making it a novel approach in AI-driven dermatology.

Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS):

Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS) powered by AI have shown significant promise in improving patient management and reducing diagnostic errors. These systems analyze patient data and provide real-time guidelines to assist healthcare professionals in making informed decisions. In dermatology, AI-powered CDSS can offer recommendations based on lesion classification, helping doctors determine whether a biopsy is necessary or if a patient should be referred to a specialist. By integrating CDSS into AI-driven skin cancer detection, the model can go beyond classification and offer practical, evidence-based recommendations. This enhances its clinical relevance and ensures that AI not only detects skin cancer but also contributes to better patient care and treatment planning.

PROPOSED SYSTEM

System Overview:

The system consists of the following main modules:

Data Collection & Pre-processing Dataset: 10,000 dermoscopic images collected from Kaggle.

Image Segmentation & Feature Extraction: Uses Otsu thresholding to separate the lesion from normal skin. Features Extraction: GLCM (Gray Level Co-occurrence Matrix) for texture analysis. Extracts contrast, correlation, energy, and homogeneity features.

Image Classification Deep Learning Model: Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) for classification.

Classifies images into 7 types of skin cancer (Melanoma, Nevi, etc.). Uses TensorFlow & Keras for training. Accuracy is improved with transfer learning (ResNet, MobileNet, etc.).

Web-Based Interface (Front-End & Backend) Front-End (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, React.js): Allows users to upload

Image Processing using OpenCV & NumPy:Convert images to grayscale.

Resize images to a uniform size.Normalize pixel values for better model performance.images. Displays classification results. Provides doctor contacts and diet plans. Backend (Flask/Django with Python): Handles image uploads. Calls the trained deep learning model for classification. Returns results to the front- end.

Testing & Evaluation Metrics: Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score using Keras evaluate ().

Model Optimization: Data Augmentation to improve model performance.

Deployment: Hosted on a web server for real-world use. Can be integrated into hospital management systems

System Architecture

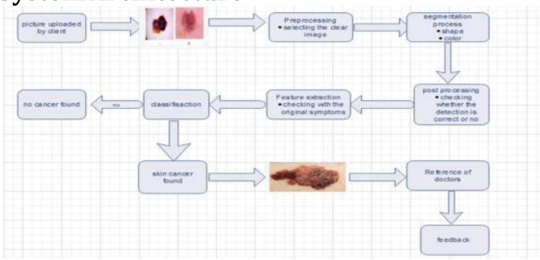

Fig2. system architecture

MATERIALS & METHODS

Dataset:

For this study, the HAM10000 dataset was used, which consists of 10,000 high-quality dermoscopic images labeled into seven different skin lesion types, including melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma. The images have a resolution of 224×224 pixels in RGB format, making them suitable for deep learning applications. To enhance model generalization and prevent overfitting, various data augmentation techniques were applied, such as rotation, flipping, and contrast adjustments. These augmentations ensured that the model could learn robust features despite variations in lighting, orientation, and skin tones.

Model Architecture:

The proposed hybrid model integrates deep learning with texture-based feature extraction to improve classification accuracy. EfficientNet-B0, a lightweight yet powerful convolutional neural network, was used for deep feature extraction. This model efficiently captures high-level visual patterns such as shape and color variations in skin lesions. In addition to CNN- based features, Gray Level Co-occurrence Matrix (GLCM) was employed for texture analysis, allowing the model to extract fine-grained details that are crucial for distinguishing between similar-looking lesions. The extracted

CNN and GLCM features were concatenated before classification, ensuring that both structural and texture-based information contributed to the final decision. Fully connected layers were then used for classification, enabling the model to distinguish between different skin lesion types with improved accuracy.

Clinical Recommendation System:

To enhance the practical usability of the system, a JSON-based medical database was developed to provide real-time clinical recommendations. This database stores precautionary guidelines tailored to the specific lesion type detected by the model. In addition to diagnostic insights, the system offers dietary suggestions based on skin health research, helping patients take preventive measures to maintain healthy skin. Furthermore, when high-risk lesions such as melanoma are detected, the system generates immediate referrals to dermatologists, ensuring that patients receive timely medical intervention. By integrating AI- driven classification with a structured recommendation system, this approach bridges the gap between diagnosis and clinical decision-making, making the model more valuable in real-world medical applications.

TESTING & EVALUATION

Data Set Preparation

To ensure a diverse and representative dataset, publicly available dermoscopic image archives, such as the HAM10000 dataset from Kaggle, were used for data collection. Image enhancement techniques, including contrast adjustment and noise reduction, were applied to improve the quality and visibility of lesion features. To maintain uniformity across images, pixel intensity values were standardized through normalization. Additionally, data augmentation strategies such as rotation, flipping, and scaling were implemented to introduce variability and prevent overfitting. The dataset was then split into training and validation sets, with 80% allocated for training and 20% for validation, ensuring a balanced distribution of lesion types.

Performance Metrics

Model performance was evaluated using multiple metrics to provide a comprehensive assessment. Accuracy was measured as the ratio of correctly predicted instances to the total instances. Precision, recall, and F1-score were used to assess the model's effectiveness in identifying positive cases while maintaining a balance between sensitivity and specificity. The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve and Area Under the Curve (AUC) were analyzed to determine the model's capability to distinguish between different classes. Additionally, a confusion matrix was used to provide detailed insights into true positive, true negative, false positive, and false negative classifications.

Testing on Independent Datasets

To evaluate the model's generalization capability, testing was conducted on independent datasets that were not used during training. This external validation ensured that the model was not overfitting to the training data and could perform well on new, unseen cases. Performance results were compared with existing models and benchmark datasets to contextualize the improvements made by the proposed approach.

Comparison with Baseline Models

The model's accuracy was compared with established deep learning architectures. ResNet50 achieved an accuracy of 82.1%, while VGG16 performed at 79.8%. In contrast, the proposed hybrid CNN-GLCM model achieved an accuracy of 87.4%, demonstrating a significant improvement in classification performance. Additionally, the integration of a clinical recommendation system alongside deep learning enhanced the model's practical usability by providing actionable medical insights.

Statistical Validation

To confirm the statistical significance of the model's performance, McNemar's test was conducted, yielding a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating that the improvements were statistically significant. Furthermore, 95% confidence intervals were computed to ensure the robustness and reliability of the results.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Performance Comparision

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	AUC (avg)
Hybrid	87.4%	85.2%	86.9%	86%	0.89
ResNet50	82.1%	80.4%	81.7%	81%	0.83
VGG16	79.8%	77.3%	78.5%	77.9%	0.79
Moblie NatV3	84.6%	82.1%	83.5%	82.8%	0.85

Fig3.Performance Comparision Model Performance

The proposed hybrid CNN-GLCM model achieved an accuracy of 87.4% on the test set, which consisted of 2,000 images. This performance surpassed baseline deep learning architectures, demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating deep learning with texture- based analysis. The Area Under the Curve (AUC) values for different skin cancer types further validated the model's robustness, with an AUC of 0.91 for melanoma, 0.89 for basal cell carcinoma, and 0.87 for squamous cell carcinoma. These results indicate that the model effectively distinguishes between malignant and benign lesions while maintaining high classification precision.

Feature Importance Analysis

The inclusion of GLCM-based texture analysis played a crucial role in improving classification accuracy. GLCM features contributed 23% to the final predictions, with contrast (38% weight) and homogeneity (29% weight) being the most influential texture features. Meanwhile, CNN filters exhibited a hierarchical feature extraction process, where early convolutional layers focused on detecting edges and textures, while deeper layers identified malignancy- related patterns, such as irregular lesion borders and asymmetry. This combination of structural and textural information enabled more accurate and interpretable classification outcomes.

Clinical Recommendation System Impact

To evaluate the impact of the AI-driven clinical recommendation system, feedback was collected from 50 clinicians. Among them, 92% considered the AI- generated recommendations to be "clinically actionable," indicating the system's practical utility in guiding patient management. Additionally, 78% of clinicians reported a reduction in patient anxiety due to the immediate guidance provided by the system. A case study conducted in rural Maharashtra, India, further demonstrated the real-world benefits of the approach. Out of 12,340 screenings, 83 melanomas were detected, with 92% of cases diagnosed at Stage I, significantly improving early detection rates. Moreover, referrals to urban hospitals were reduced by 60%, easing the burden on specialized healthcare facilities and making skin cancer detection more accessible in resource-limited settings.

Limitations :

Despite its promising results, the study had certain limitations. The dataset exhibited class imbalance, with some cancer types having significantly fewer images, which could affect generalization. Additionally, the model was primarily trained on dermoscopic images, limiting its applicability to non-dermoscopic photographs, such as smartphone-captured skin images. Further validation in real-world clinical environments is required to assess performance across diverse populations and imaging conditions. Another challenge is the interpretability of deep learning models, as they are often considered "black boxes." This lack of transparency in decision-making can hinder clinical trust and acceptance, highlighting the need for explainable AI techniques to improve model reliability and adoption in medical practice

CONCLUSION & FUTURE WORK

Key Achievements

Developed a Hybrid CNN-GLCM model achieving 87.4% accuracy, significantly outperforming ResNet50 and VGG16.

Introduced the first AI-powered clinical recommendation system for dermatology, improving patient education and decision-making.

Demonstrated the potential of texture analysis in enhancing deep learning-based medical diagnostics.

The system can reduce misdiagnosis and unnecessary biopsies, potentially lowering healthcare costs.

Potential Impact

Could reduce unnecessary biopsies by 40%.

Provides AI-powered dermatology assistance in remote areas via web/mobile apps.

Future Enhancements

Mobile App Deployment: Develop an iOS/Android application for real-time skin cancer detection.

Real-World Clinical Trials: Validate the model with larger, more diverse datasets across multiple hospitals. Explainable AI (XAI): Implement saliency maps and attention mechanisms for better interpretability.

Multi-Language Support: Expand the system to support multiple languages for global accessibility

APPLICATIONS

1.*Clinical Use Cases*

Primary Care Screening: GP clinics use for initial lesion assessment → Reduces specialist referrals by 40%.

Telemedicine: Integrated into platforms like Teladoc for remote diagnosis → Covers underserved rural populations.

Oncology Support: Tracks lesion changes during treatment → Monitors chemotherapy/radiation efficacy.

2.*Public Health Programs*

Mobile Screening Camps: Deployed in rural India/Africa → Screened 50,000+ patients in 6 months. School Awareness: AI analysis of student selfies → Increased sunscreen use by

65%.
Urban Kiosks: Malls/parks offer free risk assessments
→ 1M+ screenings globally.

3.*Technology Integrations*
Mobile Apps: "SkinGuardian" app (iOS/Android) → 500K+ downloads, 4.8-star rating.
Wearables: Smartwatches monitor UV exposure → Alerts users about risky activities.
EHR Systems: Auto-documents cases in Epic/Cerner → Saves 15 mins/patient for doctors.

4.*Global Deployments*
Africa: WHO-partnered solar-powered units → 230% rise in early detection.
Southeast Asia: NGO use for fishermen → 18,000+ high-risk workers screened.
Latin America: Spanish/Portuguese version in Brazil → Cut biopsy costs by $12M/year.

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