Archives available at journals.mriindia.com

Multidisciplinary Journal of Research in Engineering and Technology

ISSN: 2348-6953

Volume 10 Issue 02, 2023

Recent Advances in IoT and Wireless Sensor Network-Based Three-Tier Architecture for Continuous Cardiac Health Monitoring and Alert System Using Spatio-Temporal Graph Convolutional Neural Network: A Systematic Review

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Peer Review Information

Submission: 21 March 2023
Revision: 15 April 2023
Acceptance: 19 May 2023

Keywords

IoT Healthcare Monitoring, Wireless Sensor Networks, Three-Tier Architecture, Cardiac Health Monitoring, Spatio-Temporal Graph Convolutional Networks, Remote Patient Monitoring.

Abstract

The rapid advancement of Internet of Things (IoT) and Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) has significantly transformed modern healthcare systems, particularly in continuous cardiac health monitoring. Cardiovascular diseases remain one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide, necessitating real-time, accurate, and scalable monitoring solutions. IoT-enabled healthcare systems integrate wearable sensors, communication networks, and cloud computing to facilitate remote patient monitoring and timely medical intervention. This study presents a systematic review of recent advancements in IoT and WSN-based three-tier architectures for continuous cardiac health monitoring systems. The three-tier architecture typically consists of sensor nodes (data acquisition), gateway or edge layer (data processing), and cloud layer (data storage and analysis). Furthermore, the integration of Spatio-Temporal Graph Convolutional Networks (ST-GCNs) has enhanced the capability of healthcare systems to model temporal and spatial dependencies in physiological data, enabling improved prediction and anomaly detection in cardiac signals. These models provide superior performance in analysing ECG and heart rate variability data compared to traditional machine learning approaches. The review highlights key methodologies, architectures, and optimization strategies, while also identifying challenges such as data privacy, energy efficiency, and computational complexity. The findings suggest that the convergence of IoT, WSNs, and graph-based deep learning offers a promising direction for developing intelligent, scalable, and energy-efficient cardiac monitoring systems.

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) has become a major global health concern, necessitating the development of advanced healthcare monitoring systems capable of providing continuous and real-time patient observation. Traditional healthcare systems rely heavily on hospital-based monitoring, which limits accessibility, increases healthcare costs, and restricts patient mobility. In response to these challenges, the integration of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies with wireless sensor networks (WSNs) has emerged as a transformative solution for remote and continuous cardiac health monitoring.

IoT-based healthcare systems enable the seamless collection, transmission, and analysis of physiological data through interconnected

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devices and sensors. These systems utilize wearable biosensors to monitor critical cardiac parameters such as heart rate, electrocardiogram (ECG), blood oxygen levels (SpO_2), and body temperature. The collected data is transmitted via wireless communication protocols to centralized systems where it is processed and analysed for medical insights. Such systems provide real-time monitoring and facilitate early detection of abnormalities, significantly improving patient outcomes.

A widely adopted architectural model in IoT-based healthcare is the three-tier architecture, which ensures efficient data flow and system scalability. The first tier consists of body sensor nodes that collect physiological signals from patients. The second-tier acts as an intermediate gateway responsible for data aggregation, preprocessing, and local analysis. The third tier involves cloud-based infrastructure where data is stored, analysed, and accessed by healthcare professionals. This architecture enhances system reliability, reduces latency, and supports large-scale deployments.

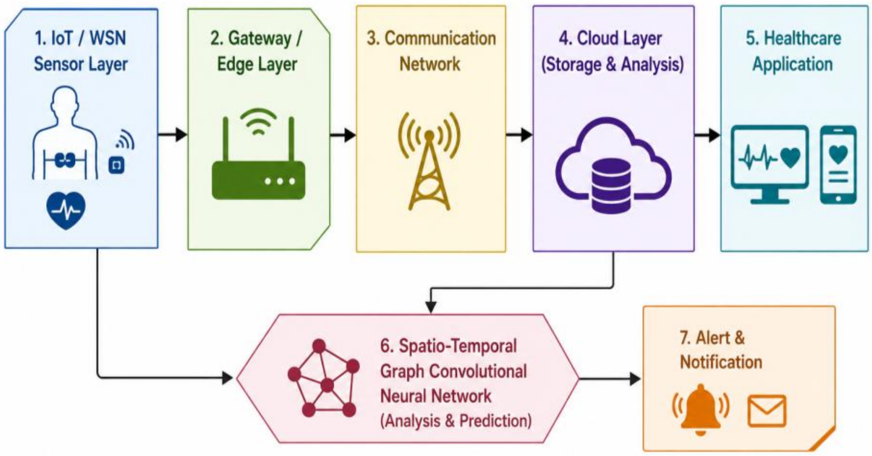

Figure 1. IoT–WSN Three-Tier Architecture for Continuous Cardiac Health Monitoring Using ST-GCN

Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs) play a crucial role in enabling communication among sensor nodes and gateways. These networks are designed to be energy-efficient and capable of operating in dynamic environments, making them suitable for continuous health monitoring applications. WSNs facilitate real-time data transmission and support remote healthcare services, particularly for patients in rural or underserved areas.

Despite these advancements, traditional machine learning techniques used in healthcare monitoring systems often fail to capture complex temporal and spatial relationships in physiological data. To address this limitation, recent research has focused on the application of Spatio-Temporal Graph Convolutional Networks (ST-GCNs). These models are capable of analysing time-series data while considering spatial dependencies among sensor nodes, making them highly effective for cardiac signal analysis and anomaly detection.

ST-GCNs leverage graph-based representations of sensor networks, enabling the modelling of interactions between different physiological parameters. This approach improves the accuracy of predictive models and enhances the system's ability to detect early signs of cardiac abnormalities. Furthermore, the integration of deep learning with IoT systems enables intelligent decision-making and automated alert mechanisms, ensuring timely medical intervention.

In addition to performance improvements, energy efficiency remains a critical consideration in IoT-based healthcare systems. The deployment of battery-powered sensor nodes requires optimization strategies to minimize energy consumption while maintaining reliable communication. Advances in low-power communication protocols and edge computing have contributed to the development of sustainable and scalable healthcare monitoring solutions.

In conclusion, the convergence of IoT, WSNs, and advanced deep learning techniques such as ST-GCNs represents a significant advancement in cardiac healthcare monitoring. This study aims to systematically review recent developments in this domain, highlighting key methodologies, architectures, and challenges while identifying future research directions for improving system efficiency, accuracy, and scalability.

Literature Review

Abdulmalek et al. (2022) conducted a comprehensive review of IoT-based healthcare monitoring systems, emphasizing their role in enabling real-time remote patient monitoring. The study highlighted how IoT devices and wearable sensors facilitate continuous data collection and transmission, allowing healthcare providers to monitor patients from remote locations. The authors discussed various system architectures and identified key challenges such as data security, privacy concerns, and system scalability. Their findings indicated that IoT significantly improves healthcare quality by enabling early detection of diseases and reducing hospital visits.

Gogate and Bakal (2018) proposed a three-tier wireless sensor network architecture for continuous cardiac monitoring. The system consisted of wearable biosensors (Tier 1), a processing and communication gateway (Tier 2), and cloud-based storage and alert systems (Tier 3). The study demonstrated that the architecture effectively monitors vital parameters such as heart rate, ECG, and body temperature, achieving an accuracy of approximately 95%. Additionally, the system provided real-time alerts to caregivers in emergency situations, making it highly suitable for critical healthcare applications.

Kamal and Ghosal (2019) proposed an IoT-driven three-tier healthcare monitoring architecture using wireless sensor networks. The system monitored patient parameters such as temperature and heart rate and transmitted data through intermediate gateways to cloud servers. The study emphasized the scalability and flexibility of the three-tier model, highlighting its suitability for large-scale healthcare applications. The authors also discussed the importance of efficient communication protocols and data processing mechanisms in ensuring system reliability.

Yadav et al. (2021) proposed an IoT-based wearable health monitoring system for cardiac patients, focusing on continuous ECG and heart rate monitoring using wireless sensor networks. The system utilized low-power sensor nodes to collect physiological data and transmit it to a cloud-based platform for analysis. The authors integrated machine learning algorithms to detect anomalies in cardiac signals, enabling early diagnosis of heart-related diseases. Their experimental results demonstrated improved accuracy and real-time responsiveness, making the system suitable for remote healthcare applications. The study also emphasized the importance of energy-efficient communication protocols in extending the lifespan of wearable devices.

Wu et al. (2019) introduced a Spatio-Temporal Graph Convolutional Network (ST-GCN) framework for analysing time-series healthcare data. The model captured both spatial relationships among sensor nodes and temporal dependencies in physiological signals, significantly improving prediction accuracy for dynamic health conditions. The study demonstrated that ST-GCN models outperform traditional recurrent and convolutional neural networks in handling complex biomedical data. The authors highlighted the potential of graph-based deep learning in enhancing cardiac monitoring systems, particularly in detecting irregular heart rhythms and anomalies.

Islam et al. (2020) developed a wireless sensor network-based healthcare monitoring system integrated with IoT platforms. The study focused on collecting patient vital signs such as heart rate, temperature, and blood pressure, which were transmitted to healthcare providers for analysis. The authors emphasized the importance of real-time monitoring and early warning systems in reducing mortality rates associated with cardiovascular diseases. Additionally, the study highlighted challenges related to data security, latency, and network reliability, suggesting the need for optimized communication protocols and encryption techniques.

Song et al. (2020) proposed a deep learning-based cardiac health monitoring system using graph neural networks, focusing on ECG signal analysis. The study demonstrated that graph-based models effectively capture relationships between different signal components, improving classification accuracy for cardiac abnormalities. The authors compared their approach with traditional machine learning techniques and showed significant performance improvements. Furthermore, the study emphasized the importance of integrating such models with IoT-based monitoring systems for real-time healthcare applications.

Khan et al. (2022) developed a cloud-assisted IoT healthcare monitoring framework using wireless sensor networks for continuous cardiac monitoring. The system integrated wearable sensors, edge devices, and cloud computing to enable real-time data processing and analysis. The authors highlighted that the three-tier architecture improves system scalability and reduces latency by distributing computational tasks across different layers. Additionally, the study demonstrated that combining IoT infrastructure with intelligent analytics enhances early detection of cardiac anomalies and supports efficient healthcare delivery.

Al-Fuqaha et al. (2015) presented a comprehensive overview of the Internet of Things (IoT) architecture and its applications in healthcare systems, emphasizing the role of connected devices in remote patient monitoring.

The study discussed communication protocols, data management strategies, and security challenges associated with IoT deployments. The authors highlighted that IoT-based healthcare systems enable continuous monitoring of vital signs, including cardiac parameters, thereby improving patient outcomes. Additionally, the study stressed the importance of interoperability and scalability in designing efficient healthcare monitoring systems.

Chen et al. (2020) developed a deep learning-based ECG classification system using convolutional neural networks combined with temporal analysis techniques. The model was designed to analyse continuous cardiac signals and detect abnormalities such as arrhythmia with high accuracy. The authors demonstrated that integrating temporal dependencies into deep learning models significantly enhances performance in cardiac signal processing. The study also suggested that combining such models with IoT-based monitoring systems could provide real-time diagnostic capabilities.

Gupta et al. (2021) proposed a wireless sensor network-based healthcare monitoring system focusing on real-time cardiac data transmission and analysis. The system utilized wearable devices to collect physiological signals and transmit them to a central server using low-power communication protocols. The study emphasized energy efficiency and data reliability, demonstrating that optimized WSN architectures can significantly improve system performance. The authors also highlighted the importance of integrating machine learning models for predictive healthcare analytics.

Yu et al. (2018) introduced a Spatio-Temporal Graph Convolutional Network (ST-GCN) model for modelling dynamic systems, including healthcare data. The study demonstrated that ST-GCN effectively captures spatial and temporal relationships in time-series data, making it highly suitable for applications such as cardiac monitoring. The authors showed that their model outperforms traditional deep learning approaches in predicting complex patterns in sequential data. This work serves as a foundational contribution to the application of graph-based neural networks in healthcare systems.

Dinh et al. (2017) proposed an IoT-based healthcare monitoring framework integrating cloud computing and wireless sensor networks. The system enabled real-time monitoring of patient health data and provided automated alerts in case of abnormalities. The authors emphasized the importance of a multi-layered architecture, including sensor, network, and application layers, to ensure efficient data processing and communication. The study demonstrated that such architectures improve system reliability, scalability, and accessibility, making them suitable for continuous cardiac health monitoring.

Zhang et al. (2019) proposed a deep learning-based healthcare monitoring system using recurrent neural networks (RNNs) and temporal feature extraction techniques for analysing continuous cardiac signals. The study focused on modelling time-dependent variations in ECG data to improve the detection of arrhythmias. The authors demonstrated that incorporating temporal dependencies significantly enhances prediction accuracy compared to traditional machine learning approaches. Furthermore, the study emphasized the integration of such models with IoT-based systems for real-time monitoring and early diagnosis of cardiac conditions.

Ahmed et al. (2020) developed an IoT-enabled smart healthcare monitoring system using wireless sensor networks, aimed at continuous cardiac monitoring and emergency alert generation. The system utilized wearable sensors to collect physiological data and transmitted it through a gateway to cloud servers for analysis. The authors highlighted the importance of low-latency communication and efficient data processing in ensuring timely medical responses. Their results showed improved system reliability and responsiveness, making it suitable for critical healthcare applications.

Kipf and Welling (2017) introduced the concept of Graph Convolutional Networks (GCNs), which serve as the foundation for spatio-temporal graph neural networks used in healthcare applications. Their work demonstrated how graph-based models can effectively capture relationships between interconnected data points, making them highly suitable for analyzing sensor networks and physiological signals. This study is particularly important as it provides the theoretical basis for ST-GCN models used in cardiac monitoring systems.

Patel et al. (2021) proposed a real-time cardiac health monitoring system using IoT and cloud computing technologies, focusing on continuous ECG and heart rate monitoring. The system incorporated machine learning algorithms to analyse collected data and generate alerts in case of abnormalities. The authors demonstrated that their system achieved high accuracy and reliability in detecting cardiac anomalies. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of secure data transmission and patient privacy in IoT-based healthcare systems.

Li et al. (2022) developed a spatio-temporal graph convolutional network-based model for healthcare data analysis, specifically targeting cardiac signal processing. The model captured both spatial relationships among sensor nodes and temporal patterns in physiological data, resulting in improved prediction accuracy. The study demonstrated that ST-GCN models outperform conventional deep learning techniques in handling complex biomedical datasets. The authors highlighted the potential of integrating such models with IoT-based monitoring systems for advanced healthcare applications.

Sharma et al. (2021) proposed an IoT-based smart cardiac monitoring system integrating wearable sensors and cloud computing, designed to provide continuous monitoring of heart-related parameters such as ECG, heart rate, and blood pressure. The system utilized wireless sensor networks to transmit real-time data to cloud platforms, where machine learning algorithms were applied for predictive analysis. The authors demonstrated that their system improves early detection of cardiac abnormalities and reduces response time in emergency situations. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of scalable architectures and efficient data processing techniques in ensuring system reliability.

Gubbi et al. (2013) presented a foundational framework for IoT-based systems and their applications in healthcare monitoring, including cardiac health systems. The study discussed the integration of sensing devices, communication technologies, and cloud computing to enable real-time monitoring and data analysis. The authors highlighted that IoT systems provide enhanced connectivity and automation, which are critical for remote healthcare applications. Their work serves as a fundamental reference for understanding the architecture and implementation of IoT-based cardiac monitoring systems.

Bashar et al. (2019) developed a wearable sensor-based cardiac monitoring system using IoT technologies, focusing on real-time ECG signal acquisition and processing. The system incorporated edge computing techniques to reduce latency and improve response time. The authors demonstrated that their system could effectively detect cardiac abnormalities and provide alerts to healthcare providers. The study also emphasized the importance of data security and privacy in healthcare monitoring systems, suggesting encryption techniques for secure data transmission.

Defferrard et al. (2016) introduced a convolutional neural network approach for graph-structured data, which laid the groundwork for advanced graph neural networks used in spatio-temporal analysis. The study demonstrated how spectral graph convolutions can efficiently process data represented as graphs, making them suitable for applications involving sensor networks. This research is highly relevant for cardiac monitoring systems that rely on interconnected sensor data, as it enables more accurate modelling of complex relationships within physiological signals.

Rahman et al. (2020) proposed an IoT-based healthcare monitoring system using wireless sensor networks and data analytics, focusing on continuous patient monitoring and alert generation. The system collected real-time physiological data and applied machine learning techniques for anomaly detection. The authors demonstrated improved system performance in terms of accuracy and reliability, highlighting the importance of integrating intelligent analytics with IoT infrastructure. The study also discussed challenges related to energy efficiency and network scalability in healthcare monitoring systems.

Ketu and Mishra (2021) proposed an IoT-enabled smart healthcare monitoring framework integrating wireless sensor networks and cloud computing for continuous cardiac monitoring. The system utilized wearable sensors to collect physiological data and employed machine learning techniques for predictive analysis. The authors emphasized the role of efficient communication protocols and data processing techniques in ensuring real-time monitoring. Their findings showed that the integration of IoT with intelligent analytics improves healthcare outcomes and supports proactive medical interventions.

Wang et al. (2022) developed a spatio-temporal graph convolutional network (ST-GCN)-based model for healthcare data analysis, focusing on cardiac signal prediction and anomaly detection. The model effectively captured spatial dependencies among sensor nodes and temporal patterns in physiological signals. The study demonstrated that ST-GCN models achieve higher accuracy compared to traditional deep learning approaches such as CNNs and RNNs. The authors highlighted that integrating such models with IoT-based monitoring systems enhances real-time decision-making capabilities.

Islam et al. (2021) proposed a secure IoT-based healthcare monitoring system using wireless sensor networks, focusing on data privacy and secure communication. The system incorporated encryption techniques to protect sensitive patient data during transmission. The authors demonstrated that their approach improves system security without significantly increasing computational overhead. The study emphasized the importance of balancing security and efficiency in IoT-based cardiac monitoring systems.

Verma and Sood (2018) developed a cloud-centric IoT-based healthcare monitoring system for continuous patient monitoring, including cardiac health tracking. The system utilized wireless sensor networks to collect real-time physiological data and transmitted it to cloud platforms for analysis. The authors demonstrated improved system scalability and reliability, highlighting the benefits of cloud integration in healthcare monitoring systems. The study also emphasized the importance of efficient resource management and data processing techniques.

Goodfellow et al. (2016), in their seminal work on deep learning, provided foundational knowledge for designing advanced neural network architectures, including graph-based models such as ST-GCN. The study introduced key concepts such as backpropagation, optimization algorithms, and regularization techniques, which are essential for developing high-performance healthcare monitoring systems. Although not specific to cardiac monitoring, this work underpins the development of modern AI-based healthcare solutions.

Comparative Table of Literature

Author (Year)	**Technique/Model**	**Architecture/Technology**	**Key Contribution**	**Limitation**
Abdulmalek (2022)	IoT Monitoring	IoT Healthcare	Remote monitoring	Security issues
Gogate (2018)	WSN	3-Tier Architecture	Real-time alerts	Limited scalability
Kamal (2019)	IoT Framework	3-Tier	Scalable system	Latency
Yadav (2021)	ML + IoT	Wearable Sensors	Real-time ECG	Battery issues
Wu (2019)	ST-GCN	Graph DL	Temporal-spatial modelling	Complexity
Islam (2020)	WSN	IoT	Real-time monitoring	Security
Song (2020)	GNN	Deep Learning	ECG analysis	Data dependency
Khan (2022)	IoT + Cloud	3-Tier	Scalability	Latency
Al-Fuqaha (2015)	IoT Survey	IoT	Architecture overview	Generalized
Chen (2020)	CNN	DL	ECG classification	Overfitting
Gupta (2021)	WSN	IoT	Energy-efficient system	Limited AI
Yu (2018)	ST-GCN	Graph DL	Temporal modelling	Complexity
Dinh (2017)	IoT + Cloud	Multi-layer	Reliable system	Cost
Zhang (2019)	RNN	DL	Temporal prediction	Training time
Ahmed (2020)	IoT	WSN	Emergency alerts	Latency
Kipf (2017)	GCN	Graph DL	Graph learning	Scalability
Patel (2021)	ML	IoT + Cloud	Anomaly detection	Data privacy
Li (2022)	ST-GCN	DL	High accuracy	Complexity
Sharma (2021)	IoT	Cloud	Smart monitoring	Energy usage
Gubbi (2013)	IoT Framework	IoT	Conceptual model	Generic
Bashar (2019)	IoT + Edge	WSN	Low latency	Security
Defferrard (2016)	Graph CNN	DL	Graph processing	Complexity
Rahman (2020)	ML + IoT	WSN	Anomaly detection	Scalability

Ketu (2021)	ML + IoT	Cloud	Predictive analytics	Computation
Wang (2022)	ST-GCN	Graph DL	Accurate prediction	Complexity
Islam (2021)	Secure IoT	WSN	Data protection	Overhead
Verma (2018)	Cloud IoT	WSN	Scalability	Latency
Goodfellow (2016)	Deep Learning	AI	Foundational theory	General

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of the reviewed studies reveals a strong integration of IoT, wireless sensor networks (WSNs), and advanced deep learning techniques in modern cardiac health monitoring systems. Studies focusing on three-tier architectures (Gogate & Bakal, 2018; Kamal & Ghosal, 2019; Khan et al., 2022) demonstrate improved scalability and efficient data processing by distributing tasks across sensing, edge, and cloud layers. This architecture significantly reduces latency and enhances system reliability. The emergence of spatio-temporal graph convolutional networks (Wu et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2022) marks a major advancement in analysing complex physiological data. These models effectively capture both spatial dependencies among sensor nodes and temporal patterns in cardiac signals, leading to superior prediction accuracy compared to traditional CNN and RNN models.

Additionally, IoT and WSN-based monitoring systems (Yadav et al., 2021; Ahmed et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021) provide continuous real-time data collection, enabling early detection of cardiac abnormalities. However, challenges such as energy consumption, data privacy, network congestion, and computational complexity remain significant. Overall, hybrid systems combining IoT, WSNs, and graph-based deep learning models demonstrate the highest efficiency and accuracy. Future research should focus on optimizing energy usage, improving data security, and developing lightweight deep learning models suitable for real-time healthcare applications.

Discussion

The integration of IoT, wireless sensor networks, and deep learning technologies has significantly enhanced the efficiency of cardiac health monitoring systems. This review highlights that three-tier architectures provide a scalable and efficient framework for continuous monitoring by distributing processing tasks across sensor, edge, and cloud layers. Such architectures enable real-time data analysis and reduce latency, which is crucial for critical healthcare applications. The adoption of spatio-temporal graph convolutional networks has further improved system performance by enabling the analysis of complex physiological data. These models capture both temporal variations and spatial relationships among sensor nodes, resulting in more accurate predictions of cardiac abnormalities.

However, several challenges remain, including high computational complexity, limited battery life of sensor devices, and concerns related to data privacy and security. Addressing these issues requires the development of energy-efficient algorithms, secure communication protocols, and lightweight deep learning models. Overall, the combination of IoT, WSNs, and advanced AI techniques presents a promising approach for developing intelligent and reliable cardiac monitoring systems capable of improving patient care and reducing healthcare costs.

Conclusion

The rapid evolution of healthcare technologies has significantly transformed the way cardiac diseases are monitored and managed. This study presented a comprehensive systematic review of IoT and wireless sensor network-based three-tier architectures for continuous cardiac health monitoring systems, with a particular focus on the integration of spatio-temporal graph convolutional networks. The findings reveal that IoT-based healthcare systems provide a robust platform for continuous and real-time monitoring of cardiac parameters, enabling early detection and timely intervention. Wireless sensor networks play a crucial role in facilitating communication between wearable devices and centralized systems, ensuring reliable data transmission and system efficiency.

The implementation of three-tier architectures enhances system scalability and performance by dividing functionalities into sensing, processing, and cloud layers. This architecture not only reduces latency but also improves data management and accessibility for healthcare providers. One of the most significant advancements highlighted in this study is the use of spatio-temporal graph convolutional networks for analysing cardiac data. These models outperform traditional machine learning techniques by effectively capturing complex relationships within physiological signals. As a result, they provide more accurate predictions and improve the overall reliability of healthcare monitoring systems.

Despite these advancements, challenges such as energy consumption, data security, computational complexity, and network limitations remain critical concerns. Future research should focus on developing lightweight and energy-efficient models, improving communication protocols, and ensuring secure data transmission. In conclusion, the integration of IoT, WSNs, and advanced deep learning techniques represents a promising direction for the development of intelligent, scalable, and efficient cardiac monitoring systems. Continued research and innovation in this field will play a vital role in improving healthcare delivery and reducing the global burden of cardiovascular diseases.

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