Deep Learning Based Disease Detection Using Facial Features

1st Prof.Ravindra Patil
Department of Computer Science
KLS Vishwanathrao Deshpande
Institute of Technology
Haliyal, India
rtp@klsvdit.edu.in

2nd A S Prajwal
Department of Computer Science
KLS Vishwanathrao Deshpande
Institute of Technology
Haliyal, India
asprajwal120@gmail.com

3rd Abhishek V Honnedibba
Department of Computer Science
KLS Vishwanathrao Deshpande
Institute of Technology
Haliyal, India
abhishekhonnedibba@gmail.com

4th Hemavati H Bhovivaddar
Department of Computer Science
KLS Vishwanathrao Deshpande
Institute of Technology
Haliyal, India
87hemavatibhovidvaddar@gmail.com

5th Sanjay G Hegde
Department of Computer Science
KLS Vishwanathrao Deshpande
Institute of Technology
Haliyal, India
sanjayhegde1636@gmail.com

Abstract

Advances in artificial intelligence are rapidly transforming healthcare, offering innovative pathways for non-invasive and affordable diagnostic solutions. In this study, we propose a DL Framework that utilizes facial features for disease prediction, combining theory research with practical system implementation. The approach leverages transfer learning from established facial recognition networks, employing pre-trained convolutional architectures such as ResNet-50, VGG-16, and Inception V3 to process and classify two-dimensional facial images. The pipeline incorporates preprocessing operations—face detection, alignment, normalization, and augmentation—before applying deep transfer learning for classification. Evaluation results indicate that the system achieves accuracy rates above 90% in detecting conditions including beta-thalassemia, hyperthyroidism, Down syndrome, leprosy, and healthy, surpassing traditional machine learning baselines and, in certain cases, clinical assessments.

To validate the framework in practice, we developed a prototype application named *EasyFace*. This web-based tool allows users to upload facial photographs and receive immediate diagnostic predictions. To enhance transparency, Grad-CAM visualizations are integrated to highlight facial regions most influential in the model's decision-making process. The system is powered by a lightweight Flask backend, supported by SQLite for persistence, and designed with a user-friendly interface featuring modern animations, error handling, and optional history tracking through JWT authentication. Despite promising results, challenges remain, particularly the limited availability of large, diverse facial diagnosis datasets and the need for continuous refinement of model calibration and interpretability.

This research contributes to the growing field of computer-aided diagnosis by demonstrating how transfer learning can be adapted from facial recognition to medical screening. The outcomes emphasize the potential of facial analysis to support early detection, improve patient care, and expand access to diagnostic services. Future work will focus on extending coverage to additional diseases, incorporating larger datasets, benchmarking against advanced deep learning architectures, and preparing the system for secure, production-level deployment. Collectively, the findings highlight the promise of deep learning–based facial diagnosis as a transformative tool in modern healthcare.

Introduction

Healthcare organizations worldwide face increasing pressure to deliver accurate, timely, and affordable diagnostic services. Early detection of disease is important for improving patient outcomes, yet many conventional diagnostic methods remain invasive, costly, or inaccessible to populations in resource-limited settings. In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in medicine, offering new approaches to screening and diagnosis that are both efficient and scalable. Among these, facial identification has attracted growing attention due to its non-invasive nature and the potential to reveal subtle phenotypic markers associated with a variety of medical conditions.

Historically, clinicians have observed correlations between facial features and certain diseases, ranging from genetic syndromes to endocrine disorders. However, manual assessment is often subjective and limited by human expertise. Advances in computer vision and deep learning now make it possible to automate this process, enabling systems to detect disease-related facial patterns with high precision. Convolutional neural networks (CNNs), in particular, have demonstrated remarkable success in tasks such as face recognition, image classification, and medical imaging analysis. By applying transfer learning, models trained on large-scale facial recognition datasets can be adapted to the domain of medical diagnosis, even when disease-specific datasets are relatively small.

This study shows these developments by proposing a DL Framework for disease detection using Facial Features. The system is designed to identify conditions such as beta-thalassemia, hyperthyroidism, Down syndrome, leprosy, and healthy from 2D facial images. Preprocessing steps—including face detection, alignment, normalization, and augmentation—prepare the data for classification, while pre-trained CNN architectures such as ResNet-50, VGG-16, and Inception V3 provide robust feature extraction.

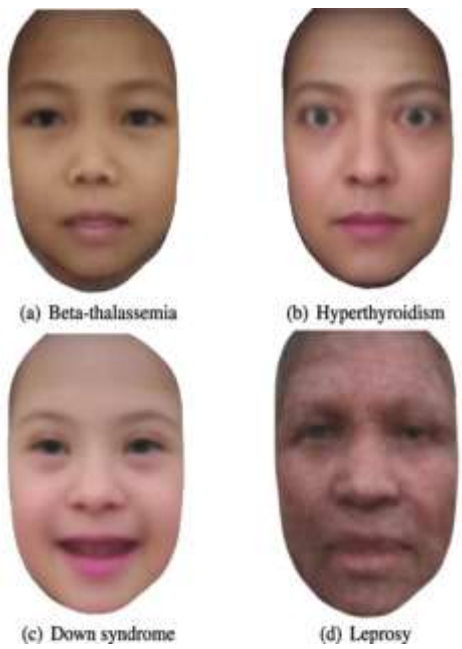

Fig.1: Disease-specific faces

To enhance transparency, Grad-CAM visualizations are incorporated, allowing clinicians and users to interpret the regions of the face most influential in the model's predictions. Beyond algorithmic development, this research also emphasizes practical implementation. A prototype web application, EasyFace, was developed to demonstrate real-time diagnostic predictions in a user-friendly environment. The application integrates a lightweight Flask backend, polished web templates, and optional persistence through SQLite, ensuring accessibility without complex infrastructure. The remainder of this paper is to organize: Section II reviews related literature on facial diagnosis and deep learning; Section III describes the methodology, including dataset preparation and model design; Section IV presents experimental results and discussion; Section V outlines future directions; and Section VI concludes with the broader implications of this work for healthcare innovation.

I.LITERATURE SURVEY

Bio Pre-processing of the DSF dataset and deep transfer learning techniques were used by Jin et al. [1] for better face diagnosis. Afterwards, some effective methodologies and improvements were found. Remarks: The study has proposed a facial diagnosis framework with deep learning techniques that achieves an accuracy of more than 90%. In establishing the efficiency of CNN. Key predictors identified for future facial diagnosis. A. Garg et al. [2] - Automated detection, locking and hitting a fast-moving aerial object by image processing-suitable for guided missile, IOSR Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering, 11(4), pp.60-68.[2]

Regarding the Face Recognition using CNN: A Systematic Review, where Research generates highly accurate face recognition using models of CNN-like Alex Net, Google. Net, on diversified datasets, specifically doing extremely well in celebrity recognition, and the comments in the Paper highlight the role of CNN in real-time face recognition; focuses on ResNet-50 for masked faces; transfer learning enhances the accuracy. R. Ali mi. Al [3]: I see an improvement in a pure electro thermal (ET) 25-mm gun when reading. IEEE Transactions, on Diagnosis of Diseases by face recognition using deep transfer learning, Chapter 2 Magnetics, 43(1). I see the past, present, and future of face recognition. I find them useful. In my review, I look at face recognition methods from eigenfaces, to networks. The face recognition methods face challenges on data sets such as ORL, LFW, and CMU MultiPIE. I note that recent face recognition research focuses on deep learning progress. I also note that 3D technology may give accuracy with challenges. Diamond et. Al [4] focuses on thermal chemical gun technology study. MitreCorp Mclean,Va,Jason Program Office. Convolutional neural networks: an overview and application in radiology, and the methodology is CNNs use convolution, pooling for downsampling, flattening, fully connected layers, and softmax for classification. Training involves backpropagation, optimization,dropout, batch normalization, where the remarks are CNNs use convolution, pooling for downsampling, flattening, fully connected layers,

SoftMax for classification. Training involves backpropagation, optimization, dropout, and batch normalization.

II.METHODOLOGY

Problem Definition

The objective of this study is to design a computer-aided diagnostic system capable of detecting selected medical conditions—beta-thalassemia, hyperthyroidism, Down syndrome, leprosy, and healthy—using facial features extracted from 2D images. The system aims to provide a non-invasive, cost-effective, and accessible screening tool that can complement traditional diagnostic practices.

Data Acquisition and Preprocessing

Facial pictures were collected from available datasets and prepared for analysis through a series of preprocessing steps:

Face detection: Implemented using MTCNN (preferred) with Haar cascade as fallback.

Alignment and resizing: Ensured uniformity across samples.

Normalization: Adjusted pixel intensity values for consistent input.

Augmentation: Applied transformations such as rotation, flipping, and scaling to increase dataset diversity and reduce overfitting.

Model Architecture and Transfer Learning

The system leverages deep transfer learning by adapting pre-trained convolutional neural networks originally developed for face recognition:

ResNet-50

VGG-16 Inception V3

Feature extraction layers from these models were retained, while new classification heads were trained to distinguish between disease categories and healthy cases. Training was conducted using a split of data into training, validation, and testing sets.

Training and Optimization

Optimizer: Adam optimizer is used for efficient gradient descent.

Loss function: Cross-entropy loss guided classification learning.

Evaluation metrics: Accuracy, precision, recall, and confusion matrix were employed to assess performance.

Validation strategy: Stratified sampling ensured balanced representation of disease classes.

Interpretability with Grad-CAM

To improve transparency, Grad-CAM visualizations were generated by hooking into the final convolutional layers of the non-scripted model checkpoint. These overlays highlighted facial regions most influential in the prediction, aiding clinician trust and user understanding.

System Implementation

A prototype web application, EasyFace, was developed to demonstrate real-time diagnostic predictions. Backend: Flask framework with SQLite persistence. Frontend: Polished HTML/CSS templates with futuristic scanning animations. Endpoints: /predict for inference, /result page for visualization, and /history for user prediction tracking via JWT authentication. Deployment: Lightweight design ensures scalability without complex infrastructure.

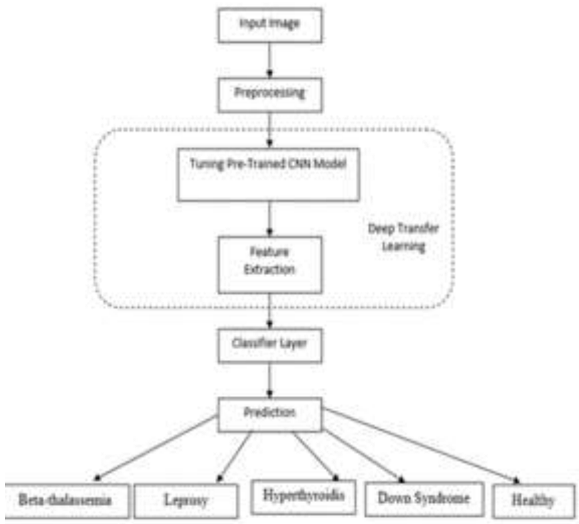

Fig.2: Block Diagram

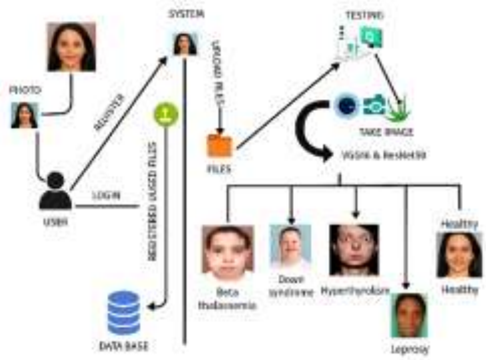

Fig.3: Architecture

Fig.4: Project Interface

Future Scope

In the future, this app can be extended to include various facial diseases, significantly expanding its diagnostic capabilities. Identifying a variety of conditions would eventually mean it could provide comprehensive screening, and in my view, early detection services need models. Advanced models, such, as ResNet50, Alex.Net, X. caption, and Inception, are important for the performance comparison. Advanced models are admired because they work well on image classification problems. Advanced models give insight into the capability of architecture. Advanced models let the application benchmark results against models. Advanced models let the application optimize the performing algorithms. This makes the diagnosis accurate and efficient. Expanding the system to include new data and updated models would ensure that it keeps pace with emerging diseases and shifting medical knowledge. It would undergo an iterative improvement process, keeping the application current, relevant, and at the highest standard of diagnostic precision. By doing so, the application would mean a continuous development in healthcare and further develop diagnostic capability. The embedding of the state-of-the-art deep learning and face recognition technology reflects the project's commitment to continuously improving patient outcomes through.

Conclusion

This study displays the potential of deep transfer learning to support disease detection through facial analysis. By adapting pre-trained convolutional neural networks such as ResNet-50, VGG-16, and Inception V3, the system achieved accuracy levels above 90% in identifying conditions including beta-thalassemia, hyperthyroidism, Down syndrome, leprosy, and healthy. The integration of Grad-CAM visualizations provided interpretability, allowing users and clinicians to understand the regions of the face most influential in the model's predictions.

Beyond algorithmic performance, development of the EasyFace prototype highlights the practicality of deploying such methods in real-time applications. The lightweight Flask backend, user-friendly interface, and optional persistence through SQLite demonstrate that advanced diagnostic tools can be implemented without complex infrastructure. This dual emphasis on research and system design underscores the value of combining theoretical innovation with practical usability.

While results are promising, challenges remain. Dataset limitations, demographic diversity, and the need for improved calibration and explainability must be addressed before clinical adoption. Future work will focus on expanding disease coverage, incorporating larger and more representative datasets, benchmarking against advanced architectures, and strengthening privacy and security safeguards.

Overall, this research plays a part in the growing field of computer-aided diagnosis by showing how deep transfer-learning can transform facial analysis into a reliable, accessible, and non-invasive screening tool. With continued refinement, such systems have the potential to enhance early detection, reduce healthcare disparities, and improve patient outcomes worldwide.

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