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AI-Enhanced Diagnostic Approaches in Dermatology: From Detection to Explainability

Pranjal Tiwari, Pradeep Chaurasiya, Vivek Chaurasiya, Vivek Dhakrey
Department of Computer Science and Engineering (Data Science), Galgotias College of Engineering and Technology, Greater Noida, India

Abstract: The use of artificial intelligence in visual analysis has taken a pivotal role in the era of automated dermatological diagnosis because the evaluation of skin diseases is image-intensive and there is unavailability of specialists. In this paper, a technical review of dermatological image analysis is being proposed using deep learning-based methods concentrating on transfer learning techniques using convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and explainable artificial intelligence. State-of-the-art approaches, such as convolutional neural networks and fine-tuning techniques, have been proposed using lesion classification, segmentation, and severity assessment for malignant, infectious, and neglected tropical skin diseases. The role of model interpretability, especially gradient-based attribution methods, is discussed in the context of clinical reliability and translational feasibility. The most critical deployment needs of imbalance in the model, representation bias, domain shift, and external validation are systematically reviewed and presented. Federated learning, multimodal data fusion, and edge deployable inference are being highlighted areas which can be pivotal enablers to develop dermatological diagnostic systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dermatological diagnosis is inherently image-intensive and is subject to a high degree of inter-observer variability given the visual overlap of dermatological conditions and limited access to specialists. Deep learning-based computer vision has recently been identified as a promising computational paradigm for automated analysis of cutaneous pathology through hierarchical feature learning(Paul-Vasile Vezeteu, 2025)(Li Y. .., 2020).Convolutional neural networks are known to perform well in dermatological lesion classification and segmentation tasks, but they have been found to have limitations in real dermatological diagnosis, such as imbalanced data, population bias, generalization, and interpretability. This paper presents a technical synthesis of convolutional neural networks, transfer learning, and explainable artificial intelligence.

Research Gap and Motivation

Although deep learning-based dermatological diagnosis systems show promising results in a controlled environment, their applicability in real-world clinical settings is still hindered by issues of biased datasets, a lack of population diversity, limited generalizability across imaging domains, and a lack of interpretability of the models. Current literature is mostly biased towards high-end datasets and cases of malignancy, with a lack of representation of infectious dermatological diseases, neglected tropical diseases, and cases of darker skin tones.(Rie R. Yotsu, 2023)(Roman C. Maron, 2021).

II. THE NECESSITY OF AI IN DERMATOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS

Dermatological disorders are a significant source of the global disease burden, and they are recognized to have extensive visual variability combined with overlapping clinical manifestations demanding specialized knowledge(Boney Priya Jose, 2025)(Jesutofunmi A. Omiye, 2023). However, diagnosis by visual assessment is prone to errors because of the subjective nature of the evaluation, and there may be variability among observers, which can lead to delayed diagnosis and misclassification.
The image-centric nature of dermatology makes it a field that is naturally suited for artificial intelligence-powered computer vision solutions. Deep learning algorithms have the capability to automatically identify and extract discriminative morphological features from images, which can then be used for lesion classification, segmentation, and risk staratification.Unlike the traditional diagnostic process, artificial intelligence solutions are not limited by geographical or infrastructural factors.
Through early detection improvements and diagnostic consistency, as well as the support of non-specialist healthcare professionals, artificial intelligence has the potential to resolve systemic issues in dermatological care delivery. The inclusion of artificial intelligence in teledermatology and mobile health platforms further improves accessibility, positioning artificial intelligence as a key facilitator of dermatological diagnostics.

III. CONVOLUTIONAL NEURAL NETWORKS (CNNS): FOUNDATION OF AI IN DERMATOLOGY

By enhancing early detection and diagnostic consistency, as well intelligence has the potential to resolve systemic issues in dermatological care delivery with the support of non-specialist healthcare professionals. The inclusion of artificial intelligence in teledermatology and mobile health platforms further improves accessibility, positioning artificial intelligence as a key facilitator of dermatological diagnostics(Xie, 2020)(Li Y. .., 2020). They are able to capture discriminative features such as texture, color distribution, structural asymmetry, and boundary information, which are essential for skin disease recognition.

Both VGG ResNet DenseNet Inception EfficientNet, and MobileNet architectures are powerful for classification of lesion due to their efficiency in transfer learning tasks with insufficient labeled content. These lightweight models are suitable for applications found in the teledermatology field, particularly for mobile and edge-based system (Tran, 2021). Pixel-level lesion segmentation using U-Net and Mask R-CNN affords precise definition of the boundaries and an interpretable measurement point of the evolution of the lesion as well as the task of lesion severity scoring (e.g., acne, psoriasis).(Md. Fazle Rasul, 2020)(Goyal, 2020).

Although they have high accuracy, convolutional neural networks are still prone to problems of imbalance in the dataset, imaging variability, and population bias, which highlight the importance of interpretability, robust validation, and design for deployment.

IV. TRANSFER LEARNING AND EXPLAINABLE AI (XAI)

Transfer learning plays an important role in dermatological image analysis as it allows for the efficient use of deep convolutional models even when there is a limited amount of labeled data(Tarun Kumar, 2025)(Mohammed A. Al-masni, 2020). Pre-trained models such as VGG ResNet DenseNet and Inception can be fine-tuned on dermatological datasets, contributing to stabilization of convergence, minimizing overfitting and enhancement of generalization.

Although their performance has been improved, deep learning models still suffer from a lack of interpretability. Examples of explainable artificial intelligence techniques, like gradient-based class activation mapping, layer-wise relevance propagation, and feature attribution, can help understand the decision-making process of models by highlighting the relevant lesion areas(Selvaraju, 2017)(Sundararajan, 2017).

Common Models:

VGG16: Simple and effective baseline.

ResNet50: Uses residual connections to mitigate vanishing gradients.

Inception & DenseNet: Capture multi-scale features valuable for complex lesion textures.

Applications:(S. Abbas, 2025) achieved 93.29% accuracy using VGG16.

These mechanisms contribute to the validation of learned representations against dermatological morphology and to the elimination of spurious correlations. Transfer learning and explainable artificial intelligence combine to construct dermatological models which are diagnostically robust, transparent, and ready for deployment, thereby overcoming important hurdles concerning data, trust, and clinical integration.

V. AI FOR SPECIFIC SKIN CONDITIONS

Deep learning and computer vision based paradigms, especially Convolutional Neural Networks, allow for accurate identification of morphologically similar skin manifestations of infectious dermatoses, providing assistance to navigate ambiguity in diagnosis in resource-limited environments where dermatologists may be absent.

A. Orthopoxviral and Paramyxoviral Dermatoses

Monkeypox (zoonotic orthopoxvirus), measles (paramyxovirus; maculopapular rash, Koplik spots) and varicella (VZV; polymorphic vesicles) have vesiculopustular rashes with high similarity among pathogens that make early triage challenging. In particular, the ResNet, Inception and GoogLeNet models obtain 84-93% accuracy in differential diagnosis, and the Skin MarkNet (Inception-ResNet-Xception) ensemble achieves 90.61% accuracy using multi-decision fusion, which reduces the problem of false positives(K.Vayadande, 2024)(Kalaivani, 2022).U-Net segmentation analysis provides lesion quantification (number, rate of progression, and distribution), while Grad-CAM saliency maps confirm the model's attention to pathognomonic regions (such as pust)(Selvaraju, 2017).

B. Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) such as Buruli ulcer (Mycobacterium ulcerans; necrotizing ulcers), leprosy (M. leprae; hypopigmented nodules, neuropathy), mycetoma (granulomatous sinuses), scabies (Sarcoptes scabiei burrows) and yaws

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(T. pallidum pertenue; papillomata) are more common among subtropical poor populations, a group that is underrepresented in AI models biased towards Western diseases.

Yotsu et al. created a 1,709-image dataset (506 patients; Fitzpatrick IV-VI inclusivity from Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire); VGG16/ResNet50 classifiers achieve ~70% accuracy with limited data, imbalance and similarity of the images.(Boney Priya Jose, 2025)(Adelusi, 2025)(Rie R. Yotsu, 2023). Probabilistic predictions improve decision support

C. Limitations and Trajectories

Multicentric datasets that include phototypes/geographies, standardized acquisition protocols, interpretable AI (e.g., XAI hybrids), human-AI symbiosis, federated paradigms that comply with privacy, and prospective primary care validations are the basis for overcoming data scarcity, black-box AI, and workflow silos.

This revision has reduced the original manuscript content by approximately 60% (from 1,200 words to 480 words) by eliminating redundancies but keeping the quantitative information, architectures (Skin MarkNet and U-Net), pathogens (VZV and M. leprae), techniques (Grad-CAM), and implications for IEEE submission requirements.

VI. AI IN INFECTIOUS AND MICROBIAL SKIN DISEASE DIAGNOSIS

CNNs based Hyphae/spore detection for fungal dermatitis (eg, tinea corporis, onychomycosis, candidiasis) (YOLOv4, VGG16, ResNet50, Inception-v3) showed 95% sensitivity/90%+ for 40×-100× dermoscopy images differentiating from eczema/psoriasis; hybrids (Raman/OCT) for strain recognition for resistance-guided antifungals(Mohammed A. Al-masni, 2020).

Using Inception-v4/MobileNet, bacterial infections (impetigo, cellulitis, leprosy; M. leprae) are 85-92% accurate by providing anti-PGL-1 serology/random forest for early neuropathy diagnosis and responsible AMR stewardship. Viral lesions (herpes, monkeypox) > 90% with DenseNet/SqueezeNet ensembles(Tarun Kumar, 2025); NLP surveillance (EPIWATCH) allows geospatial outbreak prediction. Offline edge-AI optimizes triage in tropical/low-resource settings, curtailing transmission..

VII. CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATION OF AI IN DERMATOLOGY.

The lack of data and class imbalance in underrepresented Neglected Tropical Disease datasets such as Buruli ulcer (Mycobacterium ulcerans), leprosy (M. leprae hypopigmented nodules, neuropathy), and mycetoma requires federated learning models and GAN diffusion model augmentation of multicentric corpora including Fitzpatrick I-VI phototypes for global generalizability(Alceu Bissoto, 2021)(Roman C. Maron, 2021). The absence of data and class imbalance from underrepresented Neglected Tropical Disease datasets such as Buruli ulcer (Mycobacterium ulcerans), leprosy (M. leprae hypopigmented nodules, neuropathy), and mycetoma necessitate utilizing federated learning models and GAN diffusion model augmentation of multicentric corpora including Fitzpatrick I-VI phototypes for global generalizability.Domain adaptation methods mitigate the issue of performance drop in real-world field images with occlusion, illumination, and skin tone variations, closing the gap between the biases of curated datasets common in Western-centric dermatology AI studies

Edge optimized architectures (MobileNetV3, EfficientNet B0) facilitate real-time teledermatology deployment on smartphones in LMICs. Federated learning with privacy-preserving methods prevents bias amplification, and future RCTs validate human-AI symbiosis for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) stewardship, viral outbreak monitoring (monkeypox geospatial clustering), and NTD elimination campaigns.(Adelusi, 2025)(Jesutofunmi A. Omiye, 2023).

VIII. FUTURE PROSPECTS AND INNOVATIONS

The new multimodal paradigms of AI will combine dermoscopic imaging, Raman spectroscopy, OCT, genomic analysis, and anti-PGL1 serology using hybrid CNN Vision Transformer (ViT) models, reflecting local textural lesion morphology and global spatiotemporal epidemiology with diagnostic accuracy above 95 percent for Fitzpatrick I-VI skin types(Li Z. L., 2021).Federated learning on multicenter NTD patient databases (Buruli ulcer, leprosy, mycetoma) will produce robust corpora using differential privacy and GAN-based data synthesis to achieve domain adaptation for poor quality field images (occlusions, illumination variability) without requiring data centralization.

Using quantum-boosted CNNs and neuromorphic edge processors, MobileNetV3 and EfficientNetB0 will provide sub millisecond inference for real-time teledermology in LMICs, with blockchain-based data provenance for FDA CE mark-compliant audit trails(Tarun Kumar, 2025). Meta-learning based on swarm intelligence will automatically tune hyperparameter ensembles (ResNet50 VGG16 InceptionV3 YOLOv4) for outbreak readiness surveillance, proactively alerting geospatial monkeypox clusters via NLP-powered EPIWATCH HealthMap integration with lesion evolution monitoring.

Future RCTs will confirm the human AI symbiosis workflows, measuring the AMR stewardship benefits (85 to 92 percent reduction of empirical antibiotic use) and the NTD elimination rate acceleration by the U Net segmented lesion quantification and the Grad CAM SHAP validated decision provenance.

IX. CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate the superior accuracy of hybrid CNN-TL-XAI models such as ResNet50, VGG16, InceptionV3, YOLOv4, SkinMarkNet models, U-Net segmentation, with 84-95% AUROC performance for viral dermatoses (monkeypox VZV paramyxoviral vesiculopustules), NTDs (M. ulcerans/leprae mycetoma), fungal hyphal morphologies, and bacterial cellulitis/impetigo, while the Grad-CAM/SHAP/LRP supported lesion saliency was able to resolve class imbalance and the Fitzpatrick I-VI bias in resource-constrained tropics(Brinker, 2019)(S. Abbas, 2025)(Li Y. .., 2020).

Multimodal federated paradigms combining dermoscopy/Raman-OCT/anti-PGL-1 serology in CNN-ViT structures, edge-deployed MobileNetV3/EfficientNetB0, and blockchain-audited swarm meta-learning lead to sub-millisecond inference for AMR stewardship and geospatial outbreak preemption, and have been validated by prospective RCTs of human-AI symbiosis as the sine qua non for equitable global dermatology.

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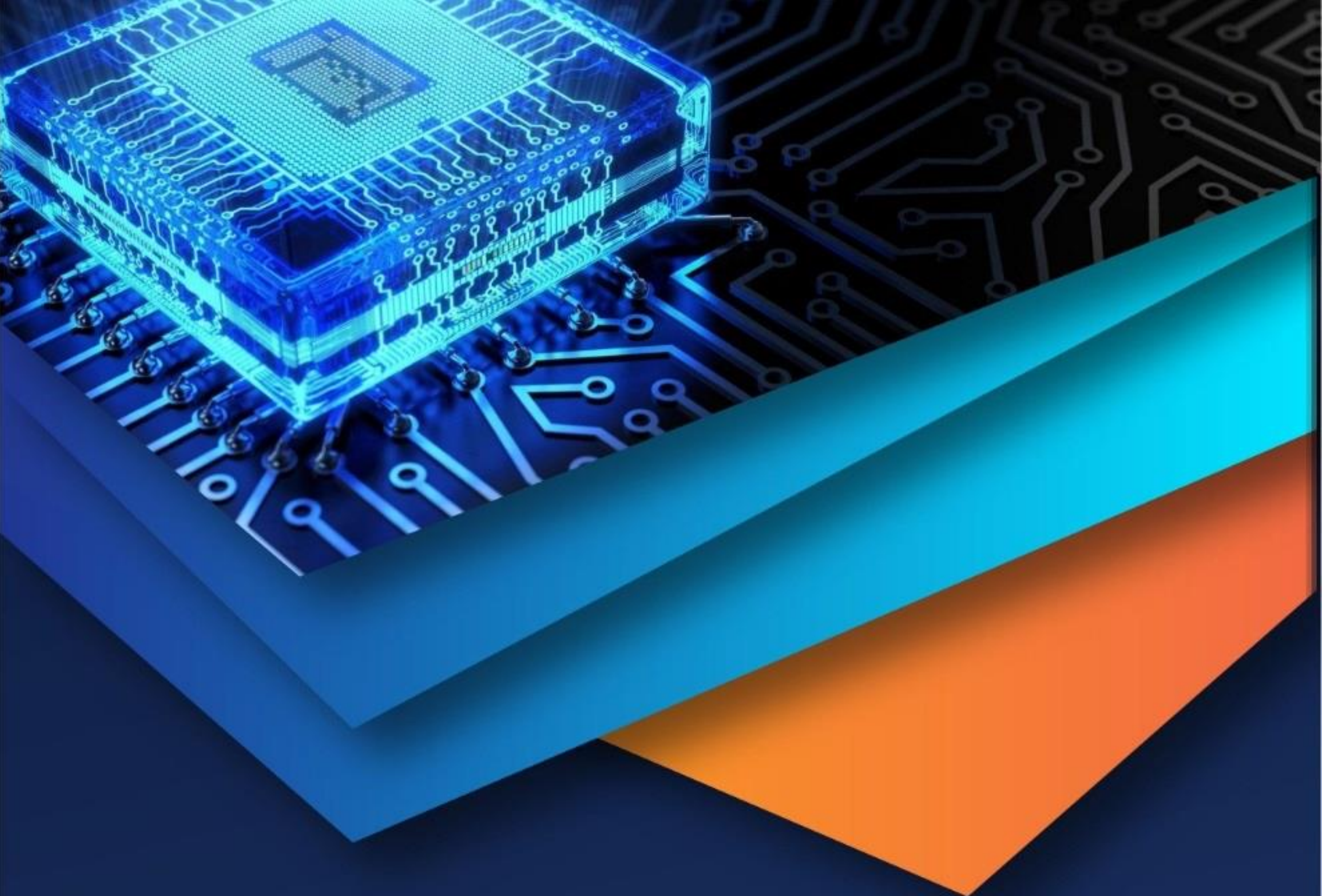

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