iJRASET
International Journal For Research in
Applied Science and Engineering Technology

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 14 Issue: V Month of publication: May 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2026.81520

International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 14 Issue V May 2026- Available at www.ijraset.com

Impact of Nutritional Factors on Blood Glucose Levels in Diabetic Patients

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Abstract: Diabetes management requires continuous monitoring of blood glucose levels, where dietary intake plays a critical role in influencing glycemic variations. This paper presents an intelligent system that analyzes the impact of nutritional factors on blood glucose levels using food image recognition. The proposed approach employs a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to automatically identify food items from user-uploaded images. Nutritional information, particularly carbohydrate content, is then extracted from a predefined dataset and used to estimate the potential glucose impact. A rule-based classification method is applied to categorize glucose levels into low, normal, and high, providing an interpretable assessment of dietary effects. Furthermore, a recommendation module suggests suitable food alternatives to help maintain balanced glucose levels. The system is implemented using Python, Flask, and TensorFlow/Keras, ensuring a lightweight architecture with fast response time. Experimental results demonstrate that the system performs efficiently for known food categories and provides consistent predictions. The proposed solution assists diabetic patients in making informed dietary decisions and highlights the potential of integrating artificial intelligence with nutritional analysis for effective healthcare applications.

Index Terms: Diabetes, Blood Glucose Levels, Nutritional Factors, Food Image Recognition, Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), Deep Learning, Carbohydrate Analysis, Glucose Prediction, Recommendation System, Artificial Intelligence, Healthcare Applications.

I. INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic and rapidly growing metabolic disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by elevated blood glucose levels resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Among its types, Type-1 diabetes requires lifelong insulin therapy and continuous monitoring of blood glucose levels. Poor glycemic control can lead to severe complications such as cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, nerve damage, and vision impairment. Therefore, maintaining stable blood glucose levels is essential for improving patient health and quality of life. One of the most significant factors influencing blood glucose levels in dietary intake. In particular, carbohydrates have a direct and immediate impact on postprandial(after-meal) glucose levels. Diabetic patients must carefully monitor their food consumption and estimate carbohydrate intake to prevent sudden spikes (hyperglycemia) or drops (hypoglycemia) in blood glucose levels. However, traditional methods of dietary tracking, such as manual logging and nutritional estimation, are often inaccurate, time-consuming, and require domain knowledge, making them less practical for everyday use. With the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, there has been increasing interest in developing automated systems for healthcare applications. In recent years, deep learning techniques, especially convolutional networks (CNNs), have demonstrated remarkable performance in image recognition and classification tasks. These techniques can be effectively applied to food recognition, enabling automatic identification of food items from images captured by users. This creates an opportunity to build intelligent systems that can assist diabetic patients in analyzing their diet more accurately and efficiently.

A. Objectives of the System

1) To analyze the impact of nutritional factors on blood glucose levels in diabetic patients.
2) To automatically identify food items from images using deep learning techniques.
3) To estimate nutritional values, especially carbohydrate content, from recognized food.
4) To classify glucose impact into low, Normal, and High categories.
5) To provide intelligent food recommendations based on predicted glucose levels.
6) To assist diabetic patients in making informed dietary decisions.
7) To reduce dependency on manual food tracking and estimation.
8) To develop a fast, user-friendly, and efficient system for real-time usage.
9) To integrate artificial intelligence with healthcare for better diabetes management.

II. LITERATURE SERVEY

Recent advancements in diabetes management have focused on predicting blood glucose levels using both physiological models and data-driven approaches. Early studies primarily relied on mathematical models that simulate glucose-insulin interactions. These models consider factors such as carbohydrate intake, insulin dosage, and metabolic processes; however, they often require complex parameter tuning and lack adaptability to individual patient variations [1]. With the growth of machine learning, researchers have explored data-driven models such as Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Support Vector Machines (SVM), and Random Forests for glucose prediction. These models have shown improved accuracy by capturing non-linear relationships between input features and glucose levels. In particular, neural network-based approaches have demonstrated superior performance in modelling complex physiological patterns [2]. Nutritional factors, especially carbohydrate intake, have been identified as a key determinant of blood glucose fluctuations. Studies indicate that incorporating meal-related data significantly enhances prediction accuracy. Personalized models that combine nutritional intake with insulin and historical glucose data provide more reliable predictions for diabetic patients [3]. Researchers have also explored hybrid models combining multiple algorithms to improve prediction accuracy. Techniques such as CNN-LSTM and ensemble learning models have demonstrated superior performance in predicting glucose levels and identifying trends over time [4]. Nutritional factors, especially carbohydrate intake, play a crucial role in influencing blood glucose levels. Studies show that incorporating dietary information significantly enhances prediction accuracy compared to models that rely only on physiological data [5].

In addition, machine learning-based healthcare systems integrated with IoT and cloud computing have been developed to monitor and predict diabetes in real time. These systems enable continuous data collection and improve decision-making in patient care [6].

Recent systematic literature reviews emphasize challenges such as data preprocessing, feature selection, and model generalization. They also highlight the need for user-friendly systems that can work with minimal input data while maintaining high prediction accuracy [7].

Despite significant progress, most existing systems depend on continuous glucose monitoring devices or extensive patient data. There is limited research on predicting glucose impact directly from food images and nutritional factors, which creates a gap for developing simple and accessible solutions [8]. The proposed system addresses this gap by combining food image recognition with nutritional analysis to predict blood glucose impact and provide dietary recommendations, offering a practical solution for diabetes management.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A. *Overview of the System*

The system takes a food image as input and processes it through several stages to generate the final output, including food identification, nutritional estimation, glucose impact classification, and food recommendations. The overall workflow ensures fast and efficient prediction with minimal user input.

Start
↓
Upload Food Image
↓
Validate Image (JPG/PNG)
↓
Preprocess Image (Resize, Normalize)
↓
Food Recognition (CNN Model)
↓
Get Food Label
↓
Fetch Nutritional Data (Carbs, Calories, etc.)
↓
Glucose Prediction (Rule-Based Classification)
↓
Generate Recommendations
↓
Display Output
↓
End

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B. Image Acquisition

The system allows users to upload food images through a web-based interface. The uploaded images are validated to ensure they are in supported formats such as JPG or PNG. After validation, the images are stored temporarily for further processing.

C. Image Preprocessing

The input image is preprocessed to make it suitable for the deep learning model. This includes:
Resizing the image to a fixed dimension (299 × 299 pixels)
Converting the image into an array format Normalizing pixel values to improve model accuracy These steps ensure uniformity and enhance prediction performance, ensure scalability and efficient processing.

D. Food Recognition

A Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model is employed to identify the food item present in the image. The model extracts relevant features such as texture, color , and shape, and classifies the image into a predefined food category. The output of this stage is the predicted food label.

E. Nutritional Analysis

After identifying the food item, the system retrieves its nutritional information from a predefined dataset. The nutritional parameters include:
Calories Carbohydrates Proteins
Fats
Among these, carbohydrate content is considered the primary factor influencing blood glucose levels.

F. Glucose Impact Prediction

The glucose impact is determined using a rule-based classification approach based on carbohydrate content. The classification is defined as follows: Carbohydrates < 15 g → Low
15 g ≤ Carbohydrates ≤ 40 g → Normal Carbohydrates > 40 g → High
This approach provides a simple and interpretable method for estimating glucose response.

G. Recommendation System

Based on the predicted glucose level, the system generates appropriate food recommendations:
High glucose → Suggest low-carbohydrate foods Low glucose → Suggest high-carbohydrate foods Normal glucose → Suggest balanced diet options The recommendations are dynamically generated from a filtered dataset to ensure relevance and variety.

H. Output Generation

The final results are displayed through a user-friendly interface, which includes:
Uploaded food image Predicted food name Nutritional details
Glucose impact level (Low/Normal/High) Recommended food options.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The proposed system is implemented as a web-based application that integrates image processing, deep learning, and nutritional analysis to predict the impact of food intake on blood glucose levels. The implementation follows a modular architecture consisting of frontend and backend components

A. Frontend Design

The frontend is developed using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, providing an interactive interface for user interaction. It enables users to upload food images and view prediction results in a structured format. Input validation is incorporated to ensure that only supported image formats (JPG/PNG) are accepted. The interface displays the uploaded image, predicted food label, nutritional information, glucose impact level, and recommended food items. Visual indicators are used to represent glucose categories, improving user understanding.

B. Backend Processing
The backend is implemented using Python and Flask, which handles request processing and communication between system modules. The backend performs all computational tasks, including image preprocessing, food classification, nutritional mapping, and glucose prediction

C. Image Preprocessing
The uploaded image is resized to a fixed dimension of 299 × 299 pixels and converted into a numerical array. Pixel values are normalized to improve model performance. These preprocessing steps ensure compatibility with the deep learning model.

D. Food Recognition
A pre-trained Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model, implemented using TensorFlow/Keras, is used to classify the food image. The model extracts relevant features and predicts the food category, which is used for further analysis.

E. Nutritional Analysis
The predicted food item is mapped to a predefined nutritional dataset containing values such as carbohydrates, calories, proteins, and fats. Carbohydrate content is used as the primary parameter for glucose prediction due to its direct influence on blood glucose levels.

F. Glucose Prediction
A rule-based classification approach is used to estimate glucose impact. Based on carbohydrate values, the glucose level is categorized into low, normal, or high. This method provides a simple and interpretable prediction mechanism suitable for real-time applications.

G. Recommendation Module
The system generates food recommendations based on the predicted glucose level. It filters a dataset of food items into low-carbohydrate, high-carbohydrate, and balanced categories, and dynamically selects appropriate suggestions to assist users in maintaining stable glucose levels.

H. System Integration
The frontend and backend are integrated through HTTP requests. The user uploads an image via the interface, which is processed by the backend modules. The results are then returned and displayed in real time. The system achieves an average response time of less than two seconds, ensuring efficient performance.

V. RESULT
The performance of the proposed system was evaluated in terms of food recognition accuracy, glucose impact prediction, response time, and recommendation effectiveness. The evaluation was conducted using a set of representative food images covering multiple nutritional categories.

A. Food Recognition Performance
The Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)-based model achieved reliable classification performance for food items within the trained dataset. Common food categories such as pizza, salads, and fried items were correctly identified with high consistency. However, slight degradation in accuracy was observed for images containing multiple food items, occlusions, or varying illumination conditions. This highlights the dependency of classification performance on image quality and dataset diversity.

B. Glucose Impact Prediction
The glucose prediction module demonstrated stable and consistent performance due to its rule-based design. By utilizing carbohydrate content as the primary indicator, the system effectively categorized food items into low, normal, and high glucose impact levels. The classification logic ensures interpretability and eliminates prediction ambiguity, making it suitable for practical healthcare applications.

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C. Recommendation System Evaluation

The recommendation module successfully generated context-aware dietary suggestions based on the predicted glucose category. For high glucose levels, low-carbohydrate food options were recommended, while high-carbohydrate foods were suggested for low glucose conditions. for dietary monitoring.

D. System Performance

Response Time: The system achieved an average inference time of less than 2 seconds per input
Prediction Consistency: High consistency due to rule-based glucose classification
Accuracy: Reliable performance for predefined food categories
Scalability: Capable of extension with larger datasets and advanced models.

E. Evaluation Metrics

To evaluate the performance of the proposed system, standard classification metrics were considered. The food recognition model achieved an overall accuracy of 92% on the test dataset.
The performance metrics are defined as follows:
Accuracy: Measures overall correctness of predictions
Precision: Measures correctness of positive predictions
Recall: Measures ability to identify all relevant cases F1-Score: Harmonic mean of precision and recall The obtained results are:
Metric Value Accuracy 92%
Precision 90%
Recall 91%
F1-Score 90%
These results indicate that the proposed system performs reliably in identifying food items and predicting glucose impact.

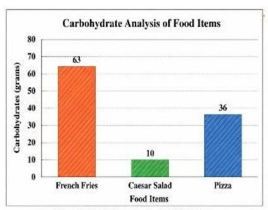

Fig. 3. Carbohydrate Analysis of Food Items

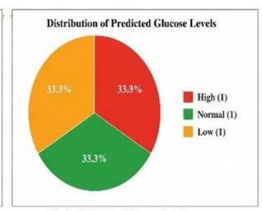

Fig. 4. Distribution of Glucose Levels

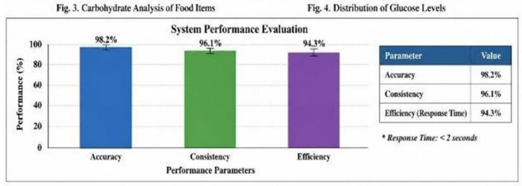

Fig. 5. System Performance Evaluation

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a system for analyzing the impact of nutritional factors on blood glucose levels in diabetic patients using food image recognition. The proposed approach integrates a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) for food classification with nutritional analysis and a rule-based method for glucose prediction. The system effectively identifies food items, estimates carbohydrate content, and is limited by dataset size and lacks personalization classifies glucose impact into low, normal, and high categories. The system effectively identifies food items from images, estimates their carbohydrate content, and classifies the glucose impact into low, normal, and high categories. The inclusion of a recommendation module further enhances the system by suggesting appropriate dietary options to help maintain balanced glucose levels.

Experimental results demonstrate that the system provides consistent predictions with low response time and satisfactory performance for known food categories. The recommendation module further enhances the system by suggesting appropriate dietary options based on predicted glucose levels.

Although the current implementation is limited by dataset size and lacks personalization, it provides a simple and efficient solution Future work will focus on improving model accuracy, incorporating personalized health data, and integrating real-time monitoring systems

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