PREDICTING PATIENT OUTCOMES USING ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORKS: A DEEP LEARNING APPROACH TO HEALTHCARE DECISION-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of machine learning techniques, specifically Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machine (SVM), in predicting patient test results and admission types within healthcare environments. The research utilizes a carefully balanced dataset to ensure fair evaluation and applies key performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and AUC-ROC curves to assess the reliability of these algorithms. By leveraging these predictive models, the study aims to enhance healthcare resource allocation, optimize patient management, and support data-driven decision-making in clinical settings. The findings offer valuable insights into the comparative performance of RF and SVM, highlighting their strengths and limitations in handling complex medical data. The results underscore the potential of machine learning in healthcare analytics, ultimately contributing to more efficient and informed medical interventions.

Keywords: Healthcare Resource Allocation , Machine Learning in Healthcare, Random Forest (RF) ,Support Vector Machine (SVM), Patient Outcome Prediction

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of machine learning (ML) in healthcare has significantly improved patient outcome predictions, resource allocation, and clinical decision-making. Among the various ML models, Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machine (SVM) are widely used for classification tasks in medical analytics. While RF leverages ensemble learning for high accuracy and feature importance analysis, SVM excels in handling high-dimensional data and complex decision boundaries. However, selecting the most effective model for predicting patient test results and admission types remains a challenge. This study compares RF and SVM using performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and AUC-ROC to determine the best-suited algorithm for healthcare resource optimization. The findings will help improve hospital management and patient care strategies by identifying the most reliable predictive model.

2. METHODOLOGY

1.1 Dataset Description

The dataset used in this study contains 3001 patient records with key attributes such as Age, Gender, Blood Type, Medical Condition, Admission Type, Medication, and Test Results. The dataset was preprocessed to ensure data consistency, balance, and quality before applying machine learning models.

1.2 Data Preprocessing

To ensure the dataset was suitable for training and evaluation, the following preprocessing steps were performed:

- **Handling Missing Values:** Missing values were imputed using the mean (for numerical variables) and the most frequent category (for categorical variables).

- **Encoding Categorical Variables:** Label Encoding was used for categorical variables like Gender, Medical **Condition, and Admission Type** to convert them into numerical form.

- **Feature Scaling:** Standardization was applied to numerical variables to improve model performance.

- **Data Balancing:** Since class imbalance can lead to biased predictions, oversampling techniques were used to balance the dataset, ensuring fair model evaluation.

1.3 Machine Learning Models

This study compares two supervised machine learning algorithms:

1.3.1 Random Forest (RF)

- **Description:** An ensemble learning technique that builds multiple decision trees and combines their outputs to improve prediction accuracy.
- **Hyperparameters:** Number of estimators (100), max depth (None), min samples split (2).
- **Advantages:** Robust to overfitting, handles non-linear relationships, provides feature importance scores.

1.3.2 Support Vector Machine (SVM)

- **Description:** A classification algorithm that finds the optimal hyperplane to separate different classes.
- **Kernel Selection:** Radial Basis Function (RBF) was used for non-linearity handling.
- **Hyperparameters:** C (1.0), gamma (scale).
- **Advantages:** Works well in high-dimensional spaces, effective for complex decision boundaries.

1.4 Model Training and Evaluation

The dataset was split into 80% training and 20% testing sets using stratified sampling to maintain class distribution. Models were trained using scikit-learn, and their performance was evaluated based on the following metrics:

- **Accuracy:** Measures the percentage of correctly predicted cases.
- **Precision, Recall, and F1-score:** Assess model effectiveness in handling imbalanced data.
- **Confusion Matrix:** Visualizes classification errors.
- **AUC-ROC Curve:** Evaluates model discrimination ability in distinguishing between classes.

1.5 Experimental Setup

- **Programming Language:** Python
- **Libraries Used:** pandas, NumPy, scikit-learn, seaborn, Matplotlib
- **Hardware:** Experiments were conducted on a system with an Intel Core i7 processor, 16GB RAM, and NVIDIA GPU to optimize computational performance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The performance of Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machine (SVM) was evaluated based on key classification metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and the confusion matrix. The Random Forest model achieved an accuracy of 94.84%, outperforming the SVM model, which achieved 93.34% accuracy. The confusion matrix for RF showed fewer misclassifications, with 302 true positives, 268 true negatives, 20 false positives, and 11 false negatives, indicating its strong predictive capability. In comparison, the SVM model had 294 true positives, 267 true negatives, 28 false positives, and 12 false negatives, showing slightly higher misclassification rates.

A comparative analysis revealed that Random Forest outperformed SVM in recall, F1-score, and overall classification performance. The precision for RF was 96% for Class 0 and 93% for Class 1, while SVM had 96% for Class 0 and 91% for Class 1. Similarly, recall values for RF were 94% for Class 0 and 96% for Class 1, compared to 91% and 96% for SVM, respectively. The higher recall for RF indicates its ability to correctly identify more positive cases, making it a preferable choice for medical applications where false negatives could have serious consequences.

The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve further supported RF's superiority, as it had a higher Area Under the Curve (AUC) score, demonstrating better discrimination between positive and negative cases. Additionally, feature importance analysis from RF identified Admission Type, Medical Condition, and Medication as key predictors, providing valuable insights for healthcare decision-making. While SVM remains a strong alternative due to its capability of handling high-dimensional data, its higher false positive rate suggests that further hyperparameter tuning could enhance its performance. Overall, Random Forest proves to be the more reliable model for predicting patient outcomes, making it a better choice for optimizing healthcare resource allocation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the performance of Random Forest (RF) and Support Vector Machine (SVM) for predicting patient outcomes in healthcare resource allocation. The results demonstrated that RF outperformed SVM, achieving 94.84% accuracy compared to 93.34% for SVM. The confusion matrix and classification report showed that RF had higher precision, recall, and F1-score, making it a more reliable model for this task. Additionally, feature importance

analysis from RF highlighted key predictors such as Admission Type, Medical Condition, and Medication, providing valuable insights for healthcare decision-making.

While SVM remains a strong alternative, its higher misclassification rate suggests that further hyperparameter tuning may improve its performance. The findings of this research emphasize the potential of machine learning algorithms in optimizing healthcare resource allocation, reducing patient risks, and improving clinical decision-making. Future work could explore deep learning techniques or hybrid models to further enhance prediction accuracy and support healthcare professionals in making data-driven decisions.

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