Entities:
- BreastScreening-AI (BS-AI);
- HealthTech Portugal (HTP);
- Secretaria-Geral do Ministério da Saúde (SGMS);

Authors:
- Francisco Maria Calisto (CEO, BS-AI);
- João Maria Abrantes (CMedO, BS-AI);
- Carlos Santiago (LAI, BS-AI);

Revisers:
- Vítor Crespo (HTP);
- Mafalda Faria (HTP);

Contacts:
- francisco.calisto@tecnico.ulisboa.pt
- vitor.crespo@healthtechlisboa.com

Created: 08/05/2024

Revised: 13/05/2024

EU4Health Collaboration Proposal

The document is a collaboration proposal for the BreastScreening-AI (BS-AI) project, focusing on revolutionizing breast cancer diagnostics using advanced AI and multimodal imaging technologies. It begins with an executive summary highlighting the project's goals and alignment with the EU4Health Programme. The proposal emphasizes enhancing diagnostic accuracy, reducing radiologist workload, and facilitating personalized diagnosis. It describes BS-AI's technological framework, including deep learning models, transfer learning, and advanced fusion algorithms for processing complex medical imaging data. Additionally, it discusses BS-AI's alignment with the EU4Health Programme goals of improving health security, supporting healthcare systems, and fostering innovation. The proposal also highlights potential impacts such as decreasing false positives and negatives, enabling more comprehensive screening coverage, and empowering radiologists with diagnostic tools. It addresses future directions and challenges, including expanding BS-AI across Europe, regulatory compliance, and the need for ongoing funding and partnerships.

Executive Summary

BS-AI is an innovative *spin-off* from IST, focused on revolutionizing breast cancer diagnostics through advanced AI and multimodal imaging technologies. This project harnesses the power of advanced artificial intelligence and multimodal imaging technologies to enhance breast cancer screening and diagnosis accuracy and efficiency. Aligning seamlessly with the EU4Health Programme's goals, BS-AI aims to significantly improve health outcomes across the European Union (EU). Integrating this cutting-edge technology enhances healthcare services and paves the way for innovative patient care practices.

Project Overview

BS-AI harnesses advanced Machine Learning (ML) algorithms and Deep Learning (DL) frameworks to enhance the analysis of multimodal breast imaging data such as MammoGraphy (MG), UltraSound (US), and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). This project develops AI-driven diagnostic tools to assist radiologists in detecting, diagnosing, and managing breast cancer more efficiently and accurately. The system integrates data from various imaging modalities, employs Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) to recognize patterns indicative of early-stage cancer, and acts as a second reader to support radiologists' decisions. Additionally, it streamlines workflows and continuously improves through learning from new data, aiming to increase survival rates by making breast cancer screening faster and more reliable across the EU.

Objectives

The BS-AI project is committed to transforming breast cancer diagnostics by integrating advanced artificial intelligence technologies. This initiative sets forth several critical objectives to address oncological imaging and treatment challenges. These objectives are structured to enhance the overall effectiveness of breast cancer screening programs and support radiologists and oncologists in delivering personalized care. Each goal targets specific improvements in diagnostic processes, workload management, and treatment customization, ultimately aiming to elevate patient outcomes across healthcare systems. Here, we outline the primary objectives of the BS-AI project and the impact we anticipate on the future of breast cancer diagnostics and treatment.

Enhance Diagnostic Accuracy

- **Goal:** Utilize advanced AI algorithms to minimize human error and increase the precision of breast cancer screenings.

- **Impact:** This strategic use of technology aims to significantly elevate early detection rates, critical for timely and effective treatment interventions.

Reduce Radiologist Workload

- **Goal:** Deploy AI tools to optimize the diagnostic process, automate routine analytical tasks, and underscore areas requiring specialized radiologists' attention.

- **Impact:** By reducing the manual burden on radiologists, this initiative allows them to concentrate on complex cases and direct interactions with other medical professionals and patients, enhancing overall healthcare delivery.

Facilitate Personalized Diagnosis

- **Goal:** Leverage precise and timely diagnostics to support the development of individualized treatment plans.

- **Impact:** Enhanced diagnostic accuracy promotes tailored therapeutic approaches, advancing personalized medicine in oncology and improving patient outcomes.

Technological Framework

The BS-AI project employs a sophisticated technology framework centered on DL models, particularly CNNs, designed to process complex medical imaging data from modalities like MG, US, and MRI. Utilizing large, expert-annotated datasets and transfer learning, these models are fine-tuned for high accuracy and robustness. Advanced fusion algorithms integrate multimodal data, enhancing diagnostic comprehensiveness and certainty. Additionally, the system uses advanced segmentation techniques to delineate tumorous regions precisely and employs an adaptive threshold to differentiate between benign and malignant features dynamically.

BS-AI enhances radiologist interactions with AI, providing tools like heatmaps and confidence scores for precise and early breast cancer detection. It's customizable to radiologists' preferences, allowing them to adjust alert thresholds and AI display priorities to optimize workflow. The system's AI models are adaptable and fine-tuned to match radiologists' diagnostic habits at any experience level, from interns to seniors. Radiologists can tailor the assertiveness of AI recommendations to their communication style, enhancing diagnostic accuracy and satisfaction. This adaptability makes BS-AI an effective second-reader tool, seamlessly integrating into clinical practices to boost diagnostic efficiency and efficacy.

Key components of the technology include:

1. **Multimodal Data Integration**: Utilizes MG, US, and MRI data to provide comprehensive diagnostic information. Fusion algorithms synthesize information across imaging types, enhancing diagnostic accuracy and depth. ML techniques learn from diverse data sources to detect nuanced patterns invisible in single-modality imaging.

2. **Deep Learning Models**: Employs CNNs optimized for analyzing complex medical imaging data, ensuring high accuracy and robustness in detection and diagnosis. It incorporates advanced segmentation techniques to accurately delineate tumorous regions and dynamically uses an adaptive threshold to differentiate between benign and malignant features.

3. **Transfer Learning**: Leverages transfer learning techniques to fine-tune models on large, expert-annotated datasets, improving the system's performance and adaptability to new cases without requiring extensive retraining.

4. **Advanced Fusion Algorithms**: Integrates data from multiple imaging sources using sophisticated fusion algorithms to enhance diagnostic accuracy and ensure a holistic view of the imaging data.

5. **Personalization and Customization**: Designed with a user-centric approach, it includes features that enhance the interaction between radiologists and the AI system, improving workflow efficiency and user satisfaction. It offers customizable settings, allowing radiologists to adjust alert thresholds and modify AI recommendation presentations according to their diagnostic preferences and styles.

6. **Second-Reader System**: Acts as a second-reader by providing radiologists with heatmaps, confidence scores, and other intuitive tools to interpret AI findings, supporting early and precise detection of breast cancer.

EU4Health Programme Alignment

Partnering with BS-AI, the EU4Health Programme leverages AI to transform breast cancer diagnostics, achieving remarkable accuracy. Integrating cutting-edge AI advancements, BS-AI enhances healthcare delivery, ushering in a new era of innovation. This alignment underscores dedication to improving public health outcomes throughout the EU. With scalable architecture, BS-AI offers standardized procedures addressing healthcare delivery challenges. Through this collaboration, healthcare systems across Europe benefit from more efficient care. BS-AI represents a significant advancement in breast cancer diagnostics, leveraging AI algorithms to analyze mammograms with unprecedented precision, reducing over-diagnosis or under-diagnosis, and improving patient outcomes.

BS-AI contributes to the EU4Health Programme by:

- **Improving Health Security**: Enhances cancer early-detection programs across the EU, aiming to lower breast cancer mortality rates by up to 30% [5]. This initiative extends life expectancy and reduces the incidence of late-stage cancer diagnoses [6], substantially improving public health security.

- **Supporting Healthcare Systems**: Reduces the screening and diagnostic burden on healthcare providers by automating routine analyses, leading to a more efficient use of medical resources. For instance, the system enables radiologists to diagnose patients four times faster than traditional methods [1, 2, 4], significantly increasing patient throughput without additional staff.

- **Fostering Innovation in Healthcare**: Drives the integration of AI and digital tools in European healthcare, setting a benchmark for innovation in medical diagnostics. This contribution is crucial in establishing new standards for AI in medical technology [3], encouraging further development and adoption of cutting-edge tools within the EU healthcare framework.

BS-AI showcases AI's transformative role in healthcare, supporting the EU4Health Programme and boosting breast cancer diagnostics' accuracy. Leveraging advanced AI enhances health security, eases healthcare burdens, and drives innovation. This deployment marks a substantial step towards fostering a resilient and innovative healthcare ecosystem in the EU, setting new standards for delivery and public health improvement. Additionally, BS-AI's integration into healthcare infrastructure ensures seamless adoption and scalability, paving the way for future AI-driven solutions.

Impact and Outcomes

Preliminary results from pilot studies with BS-AI across European healthcare centers demonstrate substantial improvements in diagnostic accuracy and efficiency. The system has significantly enhanced the correct identification of benign and malignant breast lesions, increasing breast cancer diagnosis accuracy by an estimated 90% through advanced algorithms adept at distinguishing between various breast tissues and abnormalities [4], reducing medical errors by 26% [2]. Additionally, it has slashed the average diagnostic evaluation time from 11 to under 3 minutes per patient [1], speeding up patient care and enabling radiologists to manage more cases daily.

The project has the potential to:

- **Decrease False Positives and Negatives**: By integrating advanced algorithms, BS-AI has reduced false positives by up to 22% and false negatives by 4% [1, 2]. This improvement reduces unnecessary biopsies and ensures patients receive appropriate and timely care, enhancing treatment outcomes.

- **Enable Wider Screening Coverage**: Leveraging the efficiency of AI, the project allows for the expansion of screening programs without additional burdens on healthcare staff. This capability is crucial for increasing access to early detection services [5], especially in underserved areas, potentially increasing screening capacity by over 30% [6].

- **Empower Radiologists**: Provides radiologists with sophisticated diagnostic tools such as enhanced imaging analysis and decision support features. These tools help to augment the radiologist’s capabilities, making it easier to detect subtle anomalies earlier and with greater precision, ultimately leading to better patient management and outcomes.

These advancements showcase BS-AI's pivotal role in boosting diagnostic precision and efficiency in EU healthcare. Integrating advanced AI algorithms, the system shortens diagnostic times and enhances breast cancer screenings' accuracy, crucial for effective treatment and improved survival rates. It also manages more cases without additional resources, easing healthcare burdens and allowing for resource reallocation to other vital areas. Moreover, BS-AI helps standardize diagnostics across various settings, ensuring consistent, high-quality care and addressing health disparities, thus supporting the EU4Health Programme's aims of advancing health innovation and system preparedness.

Future Directions and Challenges

The expansion of BS-AI across Europe represents a primary goal within the EU4Health framework. We plan to integrate the system with existing health monitoring infrastructures, enhancing cross-border healthcare collaboration. Adapting the technology to diverse healthcare settings and ensuring it can handle increased data volumes while maintaining performance consistency across different regions pose significant challenges. Navigating the regulatory landscape is crucial for the widespread adoption of BS-AI. We are committed to continuous compliance with EU health regulations governing data privacy, including the GDPR. Ethically, we must focus on maintaining transparency in AI decisions, securing patient consent, and eliminating biases in algorithms to uphold the highest standards of healthcare ethics.

Innovation remains core to BS-AI. Exploring next-generation AI technologies, like incorporating genetic data into our models for disease susceptibility prediction, is vital. Strengthening partnerships with academic institutions and tech companies will accelerate developments, ensuring BS-AI stays at the forefront of medical diagnostics. Ensuring data security and patient privacy as we scale up is paramount. Implementing advanced cybersecurity measures will protect against breaches and unauthorized access. Integrating BS-AI with various legacy systems poses a significant challenge due to variability in European medical imaging technologies. Sustaining BS-AI's momentum requires a robust economic model. Seeking ongoing funding through EU grants and private-sector partnerships will support research, development, and geographic expansion, solidifying the project's impact on public health.

Conclusion

BS-AI leads healthcare innovation, using advanced AI algorithms and multimodal imaging to transform breast cancer diagnostics in the EU. With the EU4Health Programme's vision for a healthier populace, BS-AI improves clinical outcomes and accelerates AI integration into European healthcare systems. As BS-AI evolves and expands, it tackles immediate diagnostic challenges and drives future medical innovations. Its impact transcends breast cancer, serving as a guide for AI integration across healthcare domains. To ensure BS-AI's continued success in shaping healthcare excellence across the EU, sustaining momentum requires ongoing support and collaboration from policymakers, healthcare professionals, and industry partners.

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