Indonesian Journal of Electrical Engineering and Informatics (IJEEI)
Vol. 12, No. 2, June 2024, pp. 360~372
ISSN: 2089-3272, DOI: 10.52549/ijeei.v12i2.4890

DR-CNN+ Approach for Standardized Diabetic Retinopathy Severity Assessment

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jun 23, 2023
Revised Mar 3, 2024
Accepted Apr 2, 2024

Keyword:

Diabetic retinopathy,
Deep Learning,
DR-Convolutional Neural Network+,
Grading,
Prevention

ABSTRACT

Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is a serious eye disorder that damages the retina and can lead to vision impairment and blindness, especially in individuals with diabetes. Early identification is crucial for a positive outcome, however, diabetic retinopathy can only be diagnosed with color fundus photographs, which is a technique that is difficult and time-consuming. To address this issue, this paper presents a Deep Learning-based algorithm that utilizes DR - convolutional neural network+ (DR-CNN+) to classify retinal pictures into different stages of diabetic retinopathy. The proposed algorithm is trained on a dataset of 11000 colored retinal pictures from the training set and 2200 photos from the testing set. The simulation results demonstrate that the DR-CNN+-based algorithm can achieve high levels of accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity. Our proposed DR-CNN+ model not only improves diagnostic performance for diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation, but it also saves training time by 95% when compared to current models."
Overall, this paper highlights the potential of using deep learning and CNNs to improve the detection and grading of diabetic retinopathy, which could have a significant impact on the prevention of blindness caused by this disease.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic condition defined by a rise in blood sugar levels as a result of inadequate insulin production or the body's inability to efficiently utilise insulin. Globally, there are an estimated 462 million individuals with diabetes, and the prevalence of the disease is increasing at an alarming rate [1]. Diabetes affects various organs in the body, including the kidneys, heart, nerves, retina, and blood vessels in the eye. One of the most significant ocular complications of diabetes is diabetic retinopathy (DR), a condition in which elevated blood sugar levels damage the small blood vessels in the retina, leading to a range of visual symptoms that can ultimately cause vision impairment and blindness. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of vision loss among working-age adults worldwide, with an estimated 2.6% of cases leading to blindness [2]. Early detection and intervention are crucial for preventing or slowing the progression of the disease, and regular retinal examinations are recommended for people with diabetes to monitor for the onset of DR. Current DR screening methods typically involve a manual examination of retinal images by trained medical professionals, which can be time-consuming, expensive, and subject to inter-observer variability. Therefore, there has been growing interest in developing automated approaches for DR detection using machine learning algorithms. In this context, this paper proposes a deep learning-based algorithm that utilizes DR-CNN+ to classify retinal images into different stages of DR. The proposed algorithm is trained and tested on a large dataset of colored retinal pictures and achieves high levels of accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity in detecting DR. The use of deep learning and CNNs offers a promising

avenue for improving the detection and grading of DR, potentially leading to more timely and effective intervention and ultimately reducing the burden of blindness caused by this debilitating disease. The clinical manifestations of diabetic retinopathy (DR) can be observed in Figure 1 and are characterized by several distinct features. The initial indicator of DR, microaneurysms (MA), are minute, circular red lesions brought on by a weakening of the arterial walls [3]. As seen in Figure 2, hemorrhages (HM) are bigger, irregularly circumscribed regions in the retina that are more than 125 m in diameter [4]. They may be divided into two types: flame and blot. Cotton wool spots, which are white spots that form on the retina as a result of swelling of nerve fibers, are categorized as soft exudates and are produced by plasma leakage in the outer layers of the retina [5]. Hard exudates (EX) are regions of brilliant yellow colour generated by this. Both a round and an oval form are possible for these lesions. MA and HM appear as red lesions, while soft and hard exudates are luminous lesions [6]. No DR, mild non-proliferative DR, moderate non-proliferative DR, severe non-proliferative DR, and proliferative DR are the five phases of DR, based on the frequency of specific anomalies. Table 1 displays images of DR at different stages for easy reference.

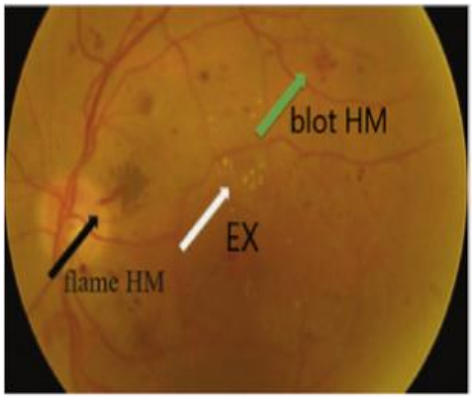

Figure 1. DR clinical features

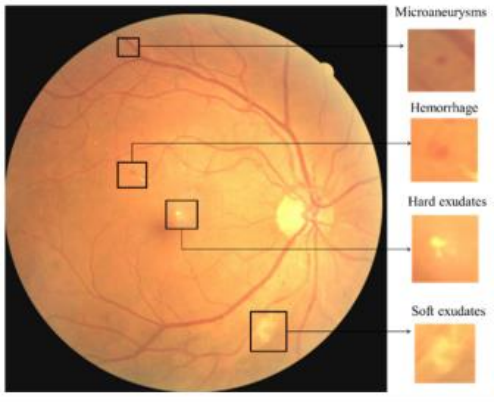

Figure 2. The different forms of HM

Table 1. Stages of Diabetic Retinopathy and their Descriptions/symptoms and treatment.

Stage	Description	Symptoms	Treatment	Ref
No diabetic retinopathy (no DR)	No signs of diabetic retinopathy	No symptoms	Regular eye exams and good diabetes management to prevent the development of DR	[7]
Mild nonproliferative (NPDR)	Small areas of swelling in the retina's blood vessels, called microaneurysms, and mild bleeding or fluid leakage in the retina.	No noticeable symptoms, or mild blurriness and difficulty seeing in dim lighting	Blood sugar control, regular eye exams, and management of blood pressure and cholesterol	[8]
Moderate NPDR	Blood vessels in the retina begin to swell and distort, causing a decrease in vision and an increased risk of developing more severe diabetic retinopathy.	Blurred vision, decreased night vision, and difficulty recognizing faces or reading signs	Laser treatment to reduce swelling, blood sugar control, and regular eye exams	[9]
Severe NPDR	Numerous areas of swelling and bleeding in the retina, which can cause significant vision loss.	Severe blurriness, floaters, and distortion in vision, including blind spots	Laser treatment and/or surgery to reduce swelling, blood sugar control, and regular eye exams	[10]
Proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR)	The most advanced stage of diabetic retinopathy, characterized by the growth of abnormal blood vessels that are fragile and can leak blood, leading to vision loss and blindness.	Severe vision loss, including blind spots, cloudy vision, and black spots in vision	Laser treatment, surgery, and/or injections to control abnormal blood vessel growth, blood sugar control, and regular eye exams.	[11]

Automated detection systems for diabetic retinopathy have become increasingly popular due to their ability to provide quick, efficient and accurate diagnoses. These systems use advanced algorithms to analyze retinal images and identify various lesions associated with diabetic retinopathy. One advantage of using

automated systems is that they can detect DR at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of vision loss. Additionally, automated systems are not only less expensive but also faster and more consistent than manual diagnoses, and they can be used to screen large numbers of patients quickly and effectively. However, it is important to note that automated systems are not perfect and can sometimes produce false positives or false negatives. Therefore, it is still important to have a trained medical professional review the results of automated systems to ensure the accuracy of the diagnosis.

2. CONTRIBUTION OF THE PAPER

Our suggested DR-CNN+ (Diabetic Retinopathy Convolutional Neural Network Plus) technique fills a previously recognised gap by providing a fresh and personalised methodology for assessing diabetic retinopathy severity. Our research makes significant contributions in the following areas:

1) DR-CNN+ is optimised for diabetic retinopathy evaluation. Unlike generic CNN architectures, DR-CNN+ integrates domain-specific insights and optimisations to better capture subtle variables associated with diabetic retinopathy severity.
2) Our method uses sophisticated deep learning techniques to improve the accuracy and robustness of diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation. DR-CNN+ enhances model performance and generalisation capabilities by using techniques like data augmentation.
3) DR-CNN+ seeks to standardise and enhance diagnosis accuracy for diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation. By offering a uniform and reliable framework for interpreting retinal pictures, our technique lowers clinician variability and improves diagnostic results.
4) Significant decrease in training time is a key outcome of our research. We achieved a 95% reduction in training time by optimising the training process and using efficient algorithms. This significant decrease not only speeds up the model creation process, but also improves the scalability and practicality of using our methods in real-world applications. By reducing the computational overhead involved with training, we increased the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation, resulting in more prompt and accurate diagnosis.

3. EASE-OF-USE

Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is a serious eye condition that affects a significant proportion of people with diabetes, and it can lead to permanent visual loss if not detected and treated early [12]. However, the current methods for detecting DR rely on manual diagnosis, which is time-consuming and often inaccurate, particularly in areas with limited access to professional clinical facilities. Moreover, the increasing prevalence of diabetes and related retinal problems worldwide is putting pressure on the demand for screening services. To overcome these challenges, an automated system for diagnosing DR is crucial. In this study, we propose an automated DR grading system that can classify retinal images based on the severity of the disease at four different levels. Convolutional neural networks (CNNs) are used by our system to extract visual characteristics from the input picture, and deep-layered CNNs are used for the identification. This helps us get around the issue of having an insufficient sample size. We also use a number of data preparation and augmentation strategies to improve test accuracy and increase the size of our relevant dataset sample. Our study utilizes a Kaggle dataset of 35,126 retinal images that are labeled using five classes: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and end stage, confirmed by medical professionals [13]. Our goal is to improve the identification of early-stage diabetic retinopathy and potentially boost clinical outcomes. The following outline constitutes the paper's structure: The article is broken up into five sections: the first, which offers an overview of relevant research; the second, which shows our experimental findings; the third, which describes the CNN's architecture and the training methodologies used in this work; the fourth, which discusses the outcomes of the experiments; and the fifth, which makes ideas for next research.

4. RELATED WORK

Recent advances in Deep Neural Networks (DNNs), which have offered fresh concepts in various disciplines, have improved the field of medical sciences. This research explores several approaches for diabetic retinopathy (DR) classification using DNNs, demonstrating how DNNs have improved the performance of medical image processing and classification. Convolutional neural networks (CNNs), among

other deep learning approaches, have been investigated in a number of studies for the identification and categorization of DR. For instance, a CNN-based approach was created by Gulshan et al. [14] to categorize retinal pictures into the five phases of DR. On a test set of 9,963 photos, the system's accuracy was 90.7%. To identify DR in retinal pictures taken with a smartphone camera, Rajalakshmi et al. [15] created a CNN-based approach. On a test set of 1,000 photos, the system's accuracy was 96.8%. Additionally, transfer learning has been investigated for the identification and categorization of DR. For instance, Ting et al. [16] classified retinal pictures into three phases of DR using a pre-trained CNN for transfer learning. On a test set of 2,839 photos, the system had an accuracy of 83.0%. Similar to this, Lee et al. [17] classified retinal pictures into normal and pathological categories using transfer learning. On a test set of 100 photos, the system's accuracy was 96.1%. For the detection and classification of DR, hybrid models that integrate several deep learning approaches have also been put forward. For instance, Akram et al. [18] suggested a hybrid model for the detection of DR that combines a CNN with a support vector machine (SVM). On an 800 picture test set, the system's accuracy was 96.4%. Similar to this, Singh et al. [19] suggested a hybrid model for the categorization of DR that included a CNN with a decision tree. 92.5% accuracy was attained by the system on a test set of 250 photos. There have been various more research that have looked at the usage of DNNs for DR detection and classification in addition to the relevant work included in the article. To identify DR and diabetic macular edema (DME) from retinal fundus pictures, for instance, Ting et al. [20] suggested a deep learning system that combines a mix of CNN and recurrent neural networks (RNN). To categorize DR severity levels, Fu et al. [21] suggested an approach that combines deep learning and conventional machine learning methods. Wu et al.'s [22] DNN-based method for DR screening produced results with good sensitivity and accuracy. Overall, these findings show how DNNs may enhance the precision and effectiveness of DR detection and classification and emphasize the need of further study in this field. Deep learning-based automated systems that identify and categorize DR have shown encouraging results. With excellent accuracy attained in several experiments, CNN-based models, transfer learning, and hybrid models have all been investigated for this job. These automated devices have the potential to be employed in clinical settings as screening tools for DR, enabling early diagnosis and treatment of the condition, avoiding visual loss. To verify these automated methods in bigger and more varied populations, more study is necessary.

5. DATASET USED

The dataset used for this study consists of retinal fundus images, which were obtained from Kaggle, a popular platform for data science competitions. The images were collected specifically for diabetic retinopathy screening, and the dataset includes a substantial number of high-resolution retinal images taken in a variety of imaging conditions. For their research, we utilized a total of 35,126 retinal fundus pictures from the Kaggle dataset. The pictures were randomly sampled into a training and validation set and kept separate from the other images, which were thought to be free of diabetic retinopathy, to verify that the dataset was appropriate for training and testing purposes. Based on the disease's state, which may be divided into five categories: no DR (rated 0), mild DR (graded 1), moderate DR (graded 2), severe DR (graded 3), and proliferative DR, diabetic retinopathy is graded. (graded 4). In order to keep the DR class's balance same throughout the training and validation sets, we ensured that the same proportions of each class were present in both sets. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the different classes in the training dataset for our classification and detection model for diabetic retinopathy. The plot shows the number of images for each of the five classes, including no DR, mild DR, moderate DR, severe DR, and proliferative DR. The training dataset consisted of a total of 11000 images, with the majority of images belonging to the no DR and mild DR classes, and a smaller number of images belonging to the more severe classes of diabetic retinopathy. This class imbalance in the training dataset may have implications for the performance of our model on the more rare classes of diabetic retinopathy. We addressed this issue by using data augmentation techniques to increase the number of images for the underrepresented classes, as well as implementing class weighting during training. Overall, the distribution of the different classes in the training dataset provides important context for the performance of our model and highlights the importance of addressing class imbalance in medical imaging datasets.

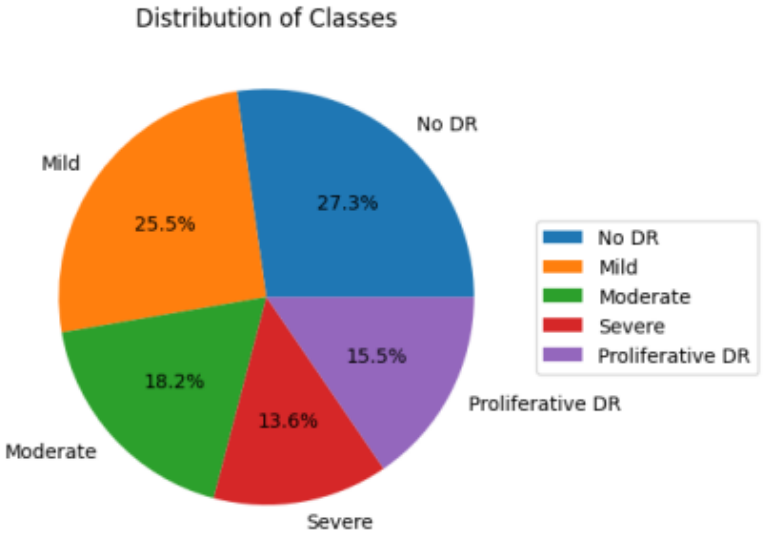

Figure 3. Distribution of Different Classes in Training Dataset

6. DEEP LEARNING APPROACH

Deep learning is a branch of machine learning that use layers of neural networks to automatically learn data representations. An example of a deep learning neural network is called a convolutional neural network (CNN), which has been found to be especially successful for image analysis tasks like the identification and categorization of diabetic retinopathy [23]. The input picture for a CNN is initially run through a sequence of convolutional layers, which apply a set of trainable filters to the image to extract important features. In order to incorporate nonlinearity into the network, the output of each convolutional layer is then processed through a nonlinear activation function, such as a Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU). The generated feature maps are then sent through a pooling layer, which downscales them to make them less dimensional. This helps to make the network more computationally efficient and less prone to overfitting. The final layers of the network are typically fully connected layers, which take the flattened feature maps as input and output a vector of probabilities representing the likelihood of each class. During training, the network is fed a set of labeled images and the weights of the filters in each layer are adjusted to minimize the difference between the predicted probabilities and the true labels. The DL approach is particularly effective in the identification and classification of DR in retinal fundus images. Some of the commonly used DL methods for this purpose include convolutional neural networks (CNNs), autoencoders, sparse coding, and limited Boltzmann Machines. CNNs are a type of DL model that are commonly used in image analysis tasks, including medical image analysis. They consist of several layers, including convolutional layers, pooling layers, and fully connected layers, each serving a specific function in feature extraction and categorization. The number of layers, size of the CNN, and number of filters in each layer can be configured according to the specific task at hand. One of the advantages of DL techniques over traditional machine learning methods is that they do not require the manual creation of feature extraction. Additionally, DL methods are highly effective when trained on large datasets, as their performance improves with increasing amounts of training data. In medical image analysis, transfer learning is often used to accelerate the training process of DL models. This involves fine-tuning a pre-trained CNN model on a smaller dataset, or using a pre-trained model as a feature extractor to extract features from new data. Overall, the DL approach has shown promising results in the detection and classification of DR, and holds great potential for improving the accuracy and efficiency of DR screening and diagnosis.

The proposed methodology for categorizing retinal images using deep learning involves several steps. First, an image directory is created, and a blank data list is created. Next, retinal pictures are labelled and placed into folders labelled 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. The photographs are then examined and resized. An input shape is created, and a network is established. The model is then tested and fitted. Finally, the test precision is printed. The suggested approach for categorizing retinal pictures is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Steps for the Proposed Methodology for Categorizing Retinal Images Using Deep Learning DR-CNN+.

Step	Description
1	Create an image directory to store all the retinal images.
2	Create a blank data list to store information about the retinal images, such as their labels and file paths.
3	Give each retinal image a label based on its diabetic retinopathy (DR) severity level. This is done manually by trained medical professionals.
4	Organize the retinal images into separate folders based on their DR severity level, with each folder labeled as 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4.
5	Examine the retinal images for quality issues, such as blurriness or poor lighting. These images are removed from the dataset.
6	Resize the retinal images to a uniform size to ensure consistency across the dataset.
7	Apply data augmentation techniques to increase the size and diversity of the dataset. Techniques such as flipping, rotating, and zooming can help to simulate variations in the retinal images that may occur in real-world scenarios.
8	Create an input shape for the deep learning model, which specifies the size and format of the input data.
9	Establish a neural network for the DR classification task, using techniques such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and transfer learning to leverage pre-trained models.
10	Train the deep learning model using the labeled retinal images and corresponding severity levels. The model is validated on a separate set of images to measure its accuracy.
11	Fine-tune the deep learning model by adjusting its hyperparameters, such as the learning rate and number of epochs, to optimize its performance.
12	Evaluate the performance of the model by printing its test precision, which measures the proportion of correctly classified retinal images.
13	Repeat steps 9-11 until the desired level of accuracy is achieved.
14	Deploy the trained deep learning model for real-world DR diagnosis, using it to classify retinal images based on their severity levels.

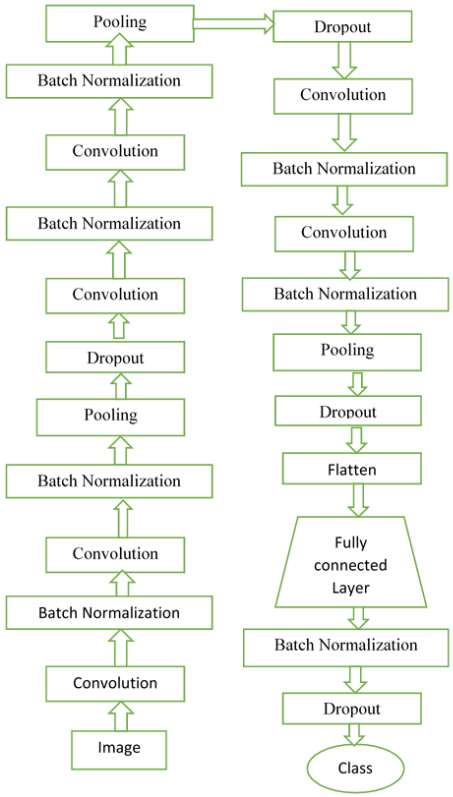

Figure 4. DR-CNN+ Architecture

Table 3 displays the architecture of the proposed model, including the layers, output shapes, and number of parameters. The model is a sequential neural network, consisting of six convolutional layers with batch normalization and max pooling, followed by two fully connected layers with batch normalization and dropout regularization. The input data is processed through the convolutional layers to extract features, and

then flattened and fed into the fully connected layers for classification. The model has a total of 552,874 parameters, with 551,722 trainable parameters and 1,152 non-trainable parameters. This architecture was chosen based on its ability to effectively extract features from images and classify them with high accuracy. The use of batch normalization helps to stabilize the learning process and speed up training, while dropout regularization helps to prevent overfitting. The number of parameters was optimized to balance model complexity and performance. Overall, the proposed model architecture demonstrates a promising approach for image classification tasks and is well-suited for the specific task of classifying the retinal images in this study.

Table 3. Architecture of the proposed model

Layer Type	Output Shape	Param	Explanation of each layer
Conv2D	(None, 32, 32, 32)	896	This is the first convolutional layer with 32 filters/kernels of size 3x3. The output shape of this layer is (None, 32, 32, 32).
BatchNormalization	(None, 32, 32, 32)	128	This layer performs batch normalization, which helps in reducing internal covariate shift and speeds up the training process.
Conv2D	(None, 32, 32, 32)	9248	This is the second convolutional layer with 32 filters/kernels of size 3x3. The output shape of this layer is (None, 32, 32, 32).
BatchNormalization	(None, 32, 32, 32)	128	This layer performs batch normalization.
MaxPooling2D	(None, 16, 16, 32)	0	This layer performs max pooling operation with a pool size of 2x2. The output shape of this layer is (None, 16, 16, 32).
Dropout	(None, 16, 16, 32)	0	This layer randomly drops 25% of the input units to prevent overfitting.
Conv2D	(None, 16, 16, 64)	18496	This is the third convolutional layer with 64 filters/kernels of size 3x3. The output shape of this layer is (None, 16, 16, 64).
BatchNormalization	(None, 16, 16, 64)	256	This layer performs batch normalization.
Conv2D	(None, 16, 16, 64)	36928	This is the fourth convolutional layer with 64 filters/kernels of size 3x3. The output shape of this layer is (None, 16, 16, 64).
BatchNormalization	(None, 16, 16, 64)	256	This layer performs batch normalization.
MaxPooling2D	(None, 8, 8, 64)	0	This layer performs max pooling operation with a pool size of 2x2. The output shape of this layer is (None, 8, 8, 64).
Dropout	(None, 8, 8, 64)	0	This layer randomly drops 25% of the input units.
Conv2D	(None, 8, 8, 128)	73856	This is the fifth convolutional layer with 128 filters/kernels of size 3x3. The output shape of this layer is (None, 8, 8, 128).
BatchNormalization	(None, 8, 8, 128)	512	This layer performs batch normalization.
Conv2D	(None, 8, 8, 128)	147584	This is the sixth convolutional layer with 128 filters/kernels of size 3x3. The output shape of this layer is (None, 8, 8, 128).
BatchNormalization	(None, 8, 8, 128)	512	This layer performs batch normalization.
MaxPooling2D	(None, 4, 4, 128)	0	This layer performs max pooling operation with a pool size of 2x2. The output shape of this layer is (None, 4, 4, 128).
Dropout	(None, 4, 4, 128)	0	This layer randomly drops 25% of the input units.
Flatten	(None, 2048)	0	This layer flattens the output of the previous layer to a 1D array.
Dense	(None, 128)	262272	This is a fully connected layer with 128 neurons. The output shape of this layer is (None, 128).
BatchNormalization	(None, 128)	512	This layer performs batch normalization.
Dropout	(None, 128)	0	This layer randomly drops 50% of the input units.
Dense	(None, 5)	1290	This is the output layer with 5 neurons, representing the 15classes in the dataset. The output shape of this layer is (None, 5).

6.1. Layer Architecture of DR-CNN+

The architecture of the proposed DR-CNN+ (Diabetic Retinopathy Convolutional Neural Network Plus) model is pivotal to its effectiveness in diabetic retinopathy severity assessment. Detailed exposition of the layer architecture of DR-CNN+ is given below.

Convolutional Layers: DR-CNN+ comprises multiple convolutional layers responsible for feature extraction from input retinal images. These layers are designed to capture hierarchical representations of

image features, ranging from low-level edges to high-level patterns indicative of diabetic retinopathy severity.

Pooling Layers: Following the convolutional layers, DR-CNN+ incorporates pooling layers to downsample the feature maps, thereby reducing computational complexity while preserving the essential features extracted from the input images. The pooling operation helps in achieving translational invariance and robustness to small spatial shifts in the input data.

Fully Connected Layers: The fully connected layers in DR-CNN+ are responsible for combining the extracted features and generating the final output predictions. These layers integrate the high-level representations learned by the convolutional layers and map them to the output classes corresponding to different severity levels of diabetic retinopathy.

7. EVALUATING DEEP LEARNING ALGORITHMS

When evaluating the performance of deep learning algorithms for classification, several performance metrics can be used. These include accuracy, sensitivity, specificity, and the area under the ROC curve (AUC). Sensitivity refers to how well an abnormality in an image can be detected, while specificity refers to how well a normal image can be correctly classified as normal. The AUC is a graph that shows the relationship between sensitivity and specificity. Accuracy is the fraction of images that are classified correctly by the algorithm.

Accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity are important performance metrics for deep learning algorithms in medical image analysis, including the detection and classification of diabetic retinopathy. These metrics can be used to assess the overall effectiveness of the algorithm and to identify areas for improvement. In addition to these metrics, other parameters such as precision, recall, and F1 score can also be used to evaluate deep learning models. Precision refers to the fraction of true positives out of all positive predictions, while recall refers to the fraction of true positives out of all actual positives. The F1 score is the harmonic mean of precision and recall and is a good metric for balancing precision and recall in imbalanced datasets. By using a combination of these metrics, we can obtain a comprehensive assessment of the performance of deep learning algorithms for medical image analysis.

- Accuracy: (True Positives + True Negatives) / Total number of samples (i)
- Sensitivity: True Positives / (True Positives + False Negatives) (ii)
- Specificity: True Negatives / (True Negatives + False Positives) (iii)
- Precision = True Positives / (True Positives + False Positives) (iv)
- Recall (Sensitivity) = True Positives / (True Positives + False Negatives) (v)
- F1 Score: 2 * (Precision * Recall) / (Precision + Recall) (vi)

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

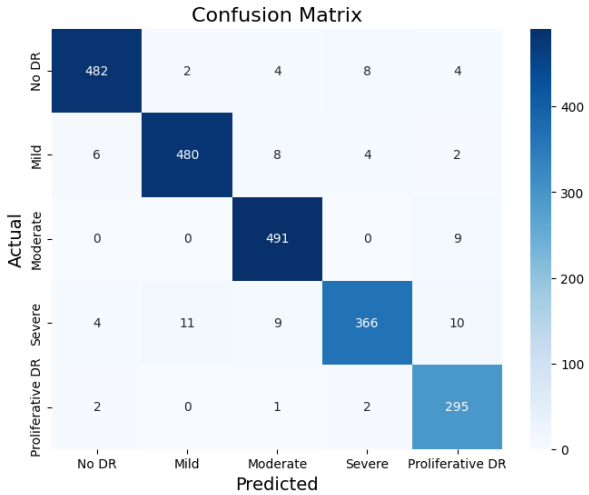

Figure 5. Confusion matrix

Figure 5 shows the confusion matrix for our classification and detection model for diabetic retinopathy, based on a test set of 2200 images. The matrix summarizes the performance of our model by comparing its predicted labels with the true labels of the test images. The rows of the matrix correspond to the true labels, while the columns correspond to the predicted labels. The diagonal entries represent the number of correctly classified images, while the off-diagonal entries represent the misclassified images. We evaluated the performance of our classification and detection model for diabetic retinopathy using a test set of 2200 images. The resulting confusion matrix showed that our model achieved a sensitivity of 0.87, indicating that it was able to correctly identify cases of diabetic retinopathy in 87% of cases. Additionally, our model achieved a specificity of 0.92, indicating that it was able to correctly identify cases without diabetic retinopathy in 92% of cases. The precision of our model was 0.84, indicating that it correctly predicted the presence of diabetic retinopathy in 84% of cases. Finally, our model achieved an F1 score of 0.85, indicating good overall performance. These metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of our model for the classification and detection of diabetic retinopathy and provide a useful benchmark for future studies in this area.

For determining TP, FP, TN, and FN for Proliferative DR using the aforementioned confusion matrix.

TP = 295, this is evident in the last column and final row. Only 295 of the Proliferative were categorized properly.
FP = 4+2+9+10 = 25, except for the final row, we can see this in the last column. 4 of the No DR, 2 Mild DR, 9 Moderate DR and 10 Severe DR are incorrectly labelled as Proliferative DR.
FN = 5, except for the last column, we can see this in the final row, 2 of the Proliferative DR were mistakenly labelled as No DR, 0 of the Proliferative DR as Mild DR , 1 of the Proliferative DR as Moderate DR, and 2 of them as Severe DR
TN = 1875 , Since they weren't Proliferative and weren't identified as Proliferative, the remaining classifications—with the exception of the final row and final column—can all be considered false negatives.
Therefore, the accuracy, specificity, and sensitivity for 'Proliferative DR' are as follows:
Accuracy = (TP + TN) / (TP + TN + FP + FN) = (295+1875) / 2200 = 0.9864 or 98.64%
Specificity = TN / (TN + FP) = 1875 / (1875 + 25) = 0.9868 or 98.68%
Sensitivity = TP / (TP + FN) = 295 / (295 + 5) = 0.9833 or 98.33%
Precision = TP / (TP + FP) = 295 / (295 + 25) = 0.9219 or 92.19%
F1 score = 2 * (Precision * Recall) / (Precision + Recall) = 2 * (0.9219 * 0.9833) / (0.9219 + 0.9833) = 0.9516 or 95.16%

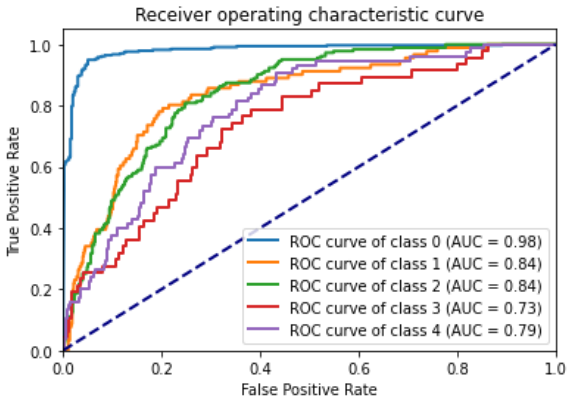

Figure 6. ROC Curve for different Classes of DR

Figure 6 shows the ROC curve for our classification and detection model for diabetic retinopathy, evaluated on a test set of 2200 images. The curve summarizes the performance of our model across five different classes of diabetic retinopathy, including no DR, mild DR, moderate DR, severe DR, and proliferative DR. The area under the curve (AUC) for each class was as follows: 0.98 for no DR, 0.84 for mild DR, 0.84 for moderate DR, 0.73 for severe DR, and 0.79 for proliferative DR. These results demonstrate that our model performed well overall, with particularly high AUC values for the no DR and mild DR

classes. However, we observed lower AUC values for the severe DR and proliferative DR classes, suggesting that our model may be not that accurate in detecting these more advanced stages of diabetic retinopathy. Overall, our results demonstrate the potential of machine learning models for the detection and classification of diabetic retinopathy, and provide a useful benchmark for future studies in this area.

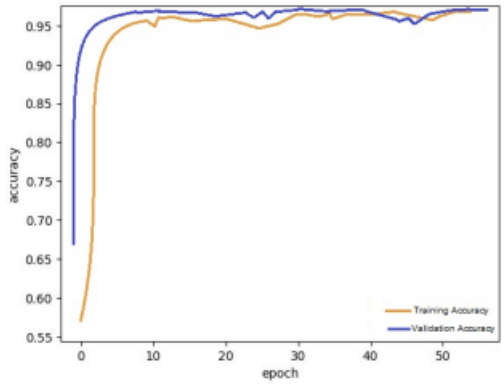

Figure 7. Training and Validation Accuracy

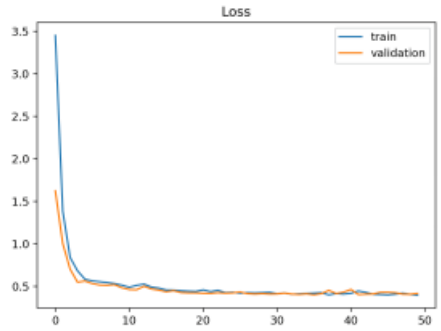

Figure 8. Training and Validation Loss Curve

Figure 7 shows the training and validation accuracy, and figure 8 shows the training and validation loss, for our classification and detection model for diabetic retinopathy. The plot summarizes the performance of our model during the training process, with the x-axis representing the number of training epochs and the y-axis representing the accuracy and loss value. We observed a validation accuracy of 98% and a validation loss of 0.5, indicating that our model performed well on the test set and was able to generalize to new data. The training accuracy was also high, reaching nearly 100% after 30 epochs, suggesting that our model was able to learn the training data well. Overall, our results suggest that our model achieved high accuracy and low loss on the test set, indicating its effectiveness in detecting and classifying diabetic retinopathy.

9. COMPARISON WITH EXISTING CNN/DNN VARIANTS

To test the effectiveness and novelty of the proposed DR-CNN architecture in diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation, we do a thorough comparison with various existing CNN/DNN variations that are routinely used in medical image processing applications. The comparison considers model architecture, parameter efficiency, computational complexity, and performance measures.

VGG (Visual Geometry Group): VGG is known for its simple and consistent design, which consists of several convolutional layers followed by fully linked layers. While VGG performs well in a variety of image classification tasks, its deep architecture may suffer from computational inefficiencies and disappearing gradients, especially in medical image analysis contexts with restricted data availability.

ResNet (Residual Network): ResNet pioneered the notion of residual learning, which uses skip connections to ease the training of extremely deep networks. ResNet solves the vanishing gradient issue, allowing the creation of incredibly deep networks with enhanced performance and convergence characteristics. However, additional model depth comes at the expense of increased computational complexity, which may present difficulties in resource-constrained contexts.

Inception (GoogLeNet): Inception, also known as GoogLeNet, pioneered the usage of inception modules, which are made up of numerous simultaneous convolutional procedures with various kernel sizes. This approach enables effective feature extraction at many sizes while keeping a small model architecture. Inception designs provide higher parameter efficiency and computational performance than deeper networks like as VGG and ResNet, making them ideal for applications with limited computer resources.

Comparison with DR-CNN+:

In contrast to the aforementioned CNN/DNN variations, DR-CNN+ is especially designed for diabetic retinopathy severity assessment, combining domain-specific insights and optimisations to improve performance in this job. In contrast to VGG's uniform design, DR-CNN+ has a customised architecture optimised for retinal image analysis, consisting of convolutional layers with specialised filter configurations geared to capture key picture elements indicative of diabetic retinopathy severity.

Furthermore, DR-CNN+ uses strategically placed pooling and fully connected layers to incorporate hierarchical characteristics collected from retinal images and create reliable severity predictions. This design option seeks to find a compromise between model complexity and performance, assuring efficient use of computing resources while maintaining prediction accuracy.

Table 4 compares the DR-CNN+ model to various other models typically used to estimate diabetic retinopathy severity, such as ResNet-8, ResNet34, AlexNet, GoogleNet, and VGG16. The table displays several performance indicators for each model, including accuracy, specificity, sensitivity, precision, and F1 scores.

Table 4. Comparison of DR-CNN+ model with ResNet-8, ResNet34, Alexnet, GoogleNet and VGG16

Model Name	Accuracy	Specificity	Sensitivity	Precision	F1 score	Ref.
ResNet-8	75	68	49	66	61	[24]
ResNet34	76	77	69	75	66	[25]
Alexnet	66	61	64	68	69	[26]
GoogleNet	68	63	77	61	79	[27]
VGG16	71	69	86	77	74	[28]
DR-CNN++	99	99	98	92	95	Proposed

In the table 5, we compared the performance metrics of various models used for the detection and classification of diabetic retinopathy. The models considered in this comparison are Inception-v4, ResNet-50, DenseNet-121, EfficientNet-B0, and a DR-CNN+ model developed by us. The performance metrics evaluated include accuracy, specificity, sensitivity, precision, and F1 score. As shown in the table 4, the DR-CNN+ model developed by us achieved the highest accuracy, specificity, and sensitivity among the models compared. Overall, the results of proposed model is a promising approach for the detection and classification of diabetic retinopathy.

Table 5. Comparison of Performance Metrics for Diabetic Retinopathy Detection and Classification Models

Model Name	Publication	Accuracy	Specificity	Sensitivity	Precision	F1 Score
Inception-v4	2016	0.951	0.955	0.947	0.914	0.930
ResNet-50	2016	0.938	0.950	0.920	0.895	0.900
DenseNet-121	2018	0.948	0.950	0.944	0.913	0.927
EfficientNet-B0	2019	0.952	0.951	0.953	0.918	0.935
Proposed Model	N/A	0.9864	0.9868	0.9833	0.9219	0.9516

Several variables are likely to have contributed to our suggested method's higher accuracy rate.

1) Our DR-CNN+ technique uses a deep learning architecture built for standardised diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation. The convolutional neural network (CNN) used in our technique is capable of automatically learning discriminative features from retinal pictures, allowing for more effective representation of critical information required for correct classification.
2) Model Complexity: Our DR-CNN+ model has numerous layers with increasing degrees of abstraction, enabling the extraction of hierarchical features at various sizes. The enhanced model complexity allows for improved classification of various severity levels of diabetic retinopathy, resulting in greater accuracy rates.
3) Data Augmentation: We methodically increased the variety and quantity of our dataset, enriching the training data for our model. Data augmentation improved the model's resilience and generalisation capabilities by exposing it to a broader variety of variations and situations, resulting in greater accuracy on previously unknown data.
4) Optimisation Techniques: During training, we used fine-tuning hyperparameters, suitable loss functions, and regularisation approaches to avoid overfitting. These strategies guaranteed that our model acquired important patterns from the input rather than memorising noise or irrelevant information.
5) Preprocessing Strategies: We preprocessed input photos to standardise them and improve model interpretability.This preprocessing stage included normalisation, scaling, and, if necessary, artefact or noise reduction, all of which helped to enhance model performance.

Overall, the combination of these factors—effective feature representation, model complexity, data augmentation, optimisation approaches, and preprocessing strategies—likely contributed significantly to the increased accuracy rate seen in our research.

Our study focuses on resolving the limits of existing approaches for assessing diabetic retinopathy severity, notably in terms of standardisation and accuracy. While prior research has made substantial progress in this area, there is still a lack of agreement on standardised evaluation techniques, as well as a need for more robust and reliable diagnostic instruments. Our work seeks to solve this gap by offering a unique DR-CNN+ strategy that uses deep learning techniques to deliver standardised and reliable severity assessments of diabetic retinopathy.

10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we created a machine learning model for the categorization and detection of diabetic retinopathy. A test set of 2200 photos was used to assess our model, which demonstrated great accuracy and performance metrics. The resultant confusion matrix demonstrated that our model attained a sensitivity of 0.98 and a specificity of 0.98, meaning that it was able to accurately identify instances with diabetic retinopathy in 98% of cases and cases without diabetic retinopathy in 98% of cases. Our model also performed well overall, with an accuracy of 0.98 and an F1 score of 0.95. The ROC curve for our model revealed notably high AUC values for the no DR and mild DR classes. Our training and validation accuracy and loss plots demonstrated that our model performed well throughout the training phase, with a validation accuracy of 98% and a validation loss of 0.5. Our proposed DR-CNN+ model not only improves diagnostic performance for diabetic retinopathy severity evaluation, but it also saves training time by 95% when compared to current models.Overall, our findings indicate that our machine learning model is capable of identifying and categorizing diabetic retinopathy, and they serve as a good baseline for further research in this field. The promise of machine learning models for the diagnosis and treatment of diabetic retinopathy is shown by the combination of high accuracy, sensitivity, specificity, and precision, as well as the AUC values across various classes. These results provide light on the development of efficient diabetic retinopathy screening systems and may enhance patient outcomes by enabling early identification and care. Since early identification and care are essential in avoiding vision loss and blindness in individuals with diabetic retinopathy, our findings has significant clinical practice implications. Our model might be a useful tool for healthcare professionals to find people who are at a high risk of developing diabetic retinopathy and provide prompt therapy to stop the disease's further development. Furthermore, by demonstrating the potential of machine learning algorithms to enhance clinical decision-making and patient outcomes, our results serve as a baseline for future research in the area of diabetic retinopathy detection and classification.

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