RESEARCH PAPER

Attention-Guided Hybrid Machine Learning with Uncertainty Estimation for Personalized Stroke Risk Prediction

Mrs. D. Maalini[1], Ms. C. VishnuPriya[2], Dhanusree P[3], Kaviya K[4], Monisha S[5], Kavya E[6]

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, V.S.B. Engineering College, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

maalinicse@gmail.com

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, V.S.B. Engineering College, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

Vishnupriyaeswari006@gmail.com

[3]Final Year Student, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, V.S.B. Engineering College, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

sreedhanu162004@gmail.com

[4]Final Year Student, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, V.S.B. Engineering College, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

kaviya8903@gmail.com

[5]Final Year Student, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, V.S.B. Engineering College, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

monishasridher12@gmail.com

[6]Final Year Student, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, V.S.B. Engineering College, Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

sumathielango111@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Stroke is among the top causes of incurable death and lifelong disability in the world, and the ability to predict the risk early is essential to ensure timely intervention and prevention. This paper introduces a new hybrid machine learning model for personalized stroke risk identification which combines an Attention-based TabNet framework, gradient boosting ensemble, and Bayesian uncertainty estimation. The suggested system successfully processes patient demographic, clinical, and lifestyle data with the help of a strict preprocessing pipeline, which corrects missing values, normalizes information, and reduces class imbalance.

To increase the interpretability of the model and enhance patient individualization, an attention-guided feature selection mechanism is used to identify the most significant risk factors. The gradient boosting ensemble model captures complex nonlinear correlations among the features, whereas the Bayesian component measures predictive uncertainty, giving clinicians confidence in high-risk predictions. The experimental findings show that the hybrid model is more effective than conventional models such as XGBoost, Random Forest, and standalone TabNet, achieving higher accuracy, F1-score, and area under the ROC curve.

Moreover, explainable AI methods offer practical knowledge about personal risk factors, aiding in individualized prevention strategies. This framework provides a clinically useful tool for early stroke detection, making predictions interpretable and quantifying uncertainty to help health practitioners make decisions, decrease clinical burden, and enhance patient outcomes.

Keywords: Stroke prediction; Hybrid machine learning; TabNet; Gradient boosting; Attention mechanism; Bayesian uncertainty; Feature selection; Explainable AI; Predictive healthcare.

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I. Introduction

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) have been and continue to be among the primary causes of mortality in the world, and therefore there is always a need to monitor them and identify high-risk factors before the clinical outcomes are severe. The growing pressure on health care systems, especially in low- and middle-income nations, has increased the pace of Internet of Things (IoT)-based wearable health monitoring systems. Recent developments show that affordable and mobile monitoring systems can be of great benefit in terms of the CMC of accessibility and lowering delays in treatments. The proposed example is Sumwiza et al., who suggested an inexpensive IoT-based wearable system with the ability to record the Heart rate, blood pressure, and oxygen saturation in real time, with a focus on affordability and energy efficiency in resource-limited settings [1]. In addition to basic monitoring, combined with artificial intelligence, IoT (AIoT) has made it possible to have intelligent decision-support systems in the management of cardiovascular health. Lee et al. designed AI-based early warning system that integrated data collection, machine learning modeling, and deviation detection unit to assist with proactive home-based cardiovascular care [2]. Equally, Gopu et al. presented a Smart Blood Circulation Booster, which combines TS with an IoT sensor, indicating the possibility of smart physiological control in territories with difficult geography [3]. Smart bands which can be worn have also shown to be of practical clinical use. K. D et al. created an IoT-based cardiac monitoring band that can relay ECG and vital parameters to a cloud storage and provide GSM-based alerts in case of abnormalities [4]. Moreover, there is a proposal of fog-assisted IoT architectures to minimize latency and enhance the effectiveness of decisions made in cardiac patient monitoring systems as it is shown by Thacker and Pandey [5]. Though these researches have defined strong IoT-based monitoring frameworks, the majority of them are based on real-time data capture and alerting that is made on the basis of thresholds. The most urgent demands are in the sphere of the development of predictive modeling of the highest level, risk stratification of people personally, and the decision-support based on uncertainty to formulate proactive stroke and cardiovascular risk prediction. The presented research bridges the above gaps by combining the attention-based hybrid machine learning with personalized cardiovascular risk assessment.

II. Related Works

The recent innovations in the area of IoT-based smart healthcare systems have defined a big improvement in the cardiovascular monitoring and predictive diagnostics. Zhang et al. suggested a deep learning model with a physics-guided strategy to assess functional cardiovascular diseases as part of an IoT-based smart health system [6]. Their model took into account anatomical coronary features and attention mechanisms and an intrinsic physical blood-flow restriction to the loss to enhance interpretability and physical consistency. Although the method developed explainable AI in cardiovascular assessment, it was mainly aimed at functional ischemia assessment as opposed to probabilistic stroke risk prediction by using heterogeneous tabular health records. Structured clinical data has been extensively used to predict stroke using machine learning. Satapathy et al. used the models of stroke probability estimation based on the use of numerical and categorical variables, i.e. Random Forest (RF), Decision Tree (DT), Support Vector Machine (SVM), and Logistic Regression (LR) as the models [7]. Their findings revealed a competitive performance of RF and LR models, showing a high accuracy (more than 90). Nevertheless, the analysis was based on traditional classifiers without considering any attention-based feature weight and any uncertainty measure. On the same note, Xu et al. constructed long term recurrence prediction models of high-risk non-disabling ischemic cerebrovascular events based on national data on stroke screening [8]. Their structure enhanced the predictive value relative to conventional clinical scoring instruments that proved machine learning to be effective in longitudinal risk estimation of stroke. However, their design failed to incorporate hybrid deep-ensemble and uncertainty-aware decision support.

Classical methods of machine learning have also been compared in early detection of strokes. The different algorithms were compared by Srivastav et al. who reported that Logistic Regression performs better in terms of early stroke classification [9]. Deepthi et al. used K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest together in order to improve the predictive accuracy of brain stroke detection [10]. Though these methods show good baseline classification performance, they do not have adaptive feature attention, hybrid deep learning combination, and confidence-based prediction. The effectiveness of machine learning in the prediction of stroke in elderly patients at an early stage with the help of structured demographic and clinical data remains the focus of recent studies. Using logic regression, random forest and decision tree algorithms, Thakur and Gupta developed predictive algorithms of stroke risk with the highest accuracy of 91%, which found the highest accuracy with ensemble tree-based algorithms [11]. Their study supports the usefulness of classical machine learning models in an early diagnosis but is confined to standalone classifiers with no hybrid combinations and probabilistic confidence measures. On the same note, JalajaJayalakshmi et al. undertook a comparative analysis of various classification models in the early stroke detection and found AdaBoost to be the best performing model amongst the models that were assessed [12]. Even though the boosting-based methods provided more accurate classification, the structure did not have adaptive feature weighting and interpretability-driven systems to reveal the contribution of risk factors separately.

Deep learning Hybrid architectures that integrate machine learning and deep learning have also been investigated. V. The ANNRF (Artificial Neural Network-Random Forest) hybrid model suggested by S. E and R. D reaches the accuracy of 94% in classification [13]. Although this strategy showed better results with model fusion, it failed to use attention-based feature selection or uncertainty-based inferences that are essential to clinical reliability. More complex deep learning schemes that incorporate attention mechanisms have also developed in cardiovascular disease prediction. Yadav et al. proposed the optimized BIGRU-Attention Network (BGEAN) to classify cardiovascular risks in healthcare systems based on IoT and it provides high predictive measures [14]. In spite of its good performance, the model concentrated more on sequential sensor information and provided no calibrated uncertainty models in terms of decision confidence.

In a more general view, Lucas et al. critically reviewed the current stroke risk prediction systems and identified issues like a deficit of adequate preprocessing criteria, poor transparency, and an absence of assessable factors [15]. The paper stated that understandable and clinically sound machine learning pipelines are needed to enhance practical implementation. Altogether, the available literature indicates a high advance in the modeling of stroke risks based on the traditional, hybrid, and attention-based approaches. Nevertheless, a discrepancy of integrated frameworks that assemble focus-based feature significance, ensemble learning resilience, and Bayesian uncertainty estimation of individualized and faith-based stroke risk prediction is still present. The proposed work will address this limitation by integrating these elements as a part of a larger and clinically interpretable predictive architecture.

III. Proposed System

The proposed personalized stroke risk prediction model is formulated as an attention-based hybrid machine learning architecture that has the ability to integrate in a natural way feature understand ability, predictive accuracy, and uncertainty estimation. The following (Figure.1) represents a suggested work architecture design. This system begins with a complete data acquisition and pre-process unit that reads patient information including demographic data, clinical history, lifestyle and laboratory measurements that are handy.

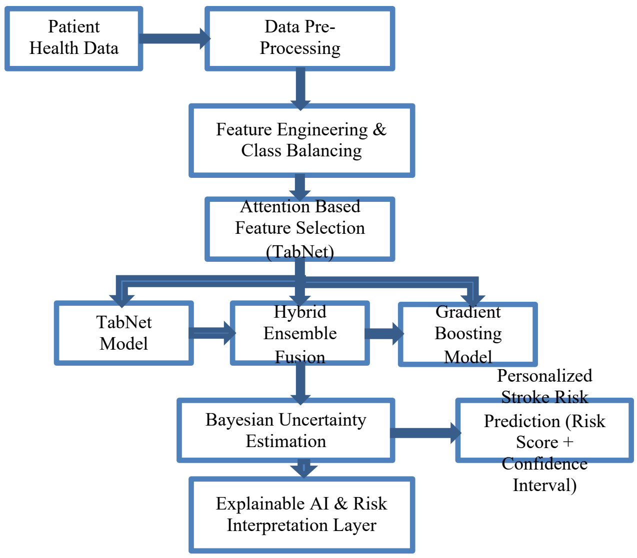

Figure.1 Proposed Work Architecture Diagram

The issues of missing values, noisy data and the imbalance of the classes are addressed through advanced imputation procedures, normalization and synthetic oversampling in this module to ensure the quality of high data input into the subsequent analysis. Predictive engine is adapted on TabNet, which is a sequential attention deep learning model, to train features representation and dynamically emphasize the most significant aspects of risk. The attention scores generated by TabNet are not only used to select features that are important also make the model easier to interpret, and therefore, allow clinicians to visualise the contribution of each feature to stroke risk. The model also incorporates a gradient boosting ensemble model to boost the performance of the prediction even further, to find out the nonlinear interactions of the chosen features and provide strong classification. Bayesian uncertainty estimation is applied on the ensemble outputs, which quantify reliability of the prediction, and single out cases in need of further evaluation, in the perception of the role of confidence in clinical decision-making. Finally, the system offers explainable AI approaches, so that, it is possible to create patient-specific attribution of risks, which allows taking preventive measures and making informed clinical decisions. The given framework using the attention-based feature learning, ensemble modeling, and uncertainty quantification not only surpasses the traditional models in the prospective predication but also provides the information to act upon with clear arguments. The holistic approach will enable the prompt identification of patients at the risk, the active intervention and possibly result in the decrease of the clinical load and the improvement of the outcomes of the patients in the real-life healthcare setting.

IV. Methodology

The suggested algorithm combines the attention-controlled feature learning, the hybrid ensemble modeling and Bayesian uncertainty assessment to effectively obtain precise and understandable stroke risk forecasting. The first stage of the workflow is the complete processing of data, then there is feature selection, hybrid learning, and uncertainty quantification.

A. Data Acquisition and Preprocessing

The first step involves the collection of all patient data, such as demographic data, health history, laboratory results, and lifestyle decisions. Practically, healthcare data include missing values, inconsistencies, and class imbalances; it can significantly affect the performance of the model. The statistical imputation and predictive modeling techniques are used to correct these issues and the normalization is also applied to normalize the scales of the features. In addition, synthetic oversampling of the minority classes removes stroke and non-stroke sample imbalance, which makes the model training less biased.

Patient datasets include demographic attributes, clinical history, lifestyle information, and laboratory results. Given the presence of missing values and class imbalance, preprocessing is applied. Missing values are imputed using mean or predictive imputation, while feature normalization ensures standardized input ranges. For class imbalance, synthetic minority oversampling (SMOTE) generates additional samples for the minority class. Let $X = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$ represent the input feature set, and $y = \{y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n\}$ denote the corresponding labels, where $y_i \in \{0,1\}$ indicates stroke occurrence. Normalization is defined as:

$$\hat{x}_i = \frac{x_i - \mu_i}{\sigma_i} \quad (1)$$

where μ_i and σ_i are the mean and standard deviation of feature x_i.

B. Feature Learning and Attention Mechanism

The feature learning model that takes the preprocessed data is a TabNet. TabNet uses sequential attention, which dynamically attends to the most important features during each step of the decision-making process and enables the model to discover nonlinear complications between patient features and stroke risk. The scores of attention that are produced during the process of training are ranked according to the degree of importance and the interpretation of the result is greater and the clinicians have insights regarding which factors play the most significant part in risk prediction. The focus-driven process will make sure that global and patient-specific trends are well represented.

The normalized data are processed through a TabNet model, which applies sequential attention masks to learn relevant feature representations. The attention mechanism assigns weights to features dynamically at each decision step. Let a_i denote the attention weight for feature x_i, computed as:

$$a_i = \mathrm{softmax}(Wx_i + b) \quad (2)$$

where W and b are learnable parameters. The feature representation h at each step is then obtained by:

$$h = \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i \cdot x_i \quad (3)$$

This approach ensures that important risk factors contribute more significantly to prediction, enhancing interpretability.

C. Hybrid Ensemble Modeling

The model is an ensemble of gradient boosting to enhance predictive strength that depends on the top-ranked features that have been referred to by the attention mechanism. It is an ensemble which reduces variability and bias and allows generalization of the model in a better way as it obtains complex interactions between features. The hybrid system has a superior predictive power compared to single models through a combination of intensive representation of TabNet and organized learning of the ensemble.

The attention-guided features are input to a gradient boosting ensemble for final prediction. Let $f_m(h)$ represent the prediction from the mmm-th boosting tree; the ensemble prediction $\hat{y}$ is:

$$\hat{y} = \sum_{m=1}^{M} \alpha_m f_m(h) \quad (4)$$

where α_m is the learning rate for tree mmm and M is the total number of trees. This combination captures nonlinear interactions among features and improves model generalization.

D. Uncertainty Estimation and Explainability

As there is a dire need to obtain plausible predictions in making clinical decisions, the ensemble results are estimated by Bayesian uncertainty. This provides the confidence of any given prediction which identifies those scenarios where the clinical assessment may be necessary. Explainable AI methods that are simultaneously simulable can generate risk attributions by patients that can be manipulated to generate individualized preventive actions and actionable information.

To quantify prediction confidence, Bayesian inference is applied. The predictive distribution $p(y|x, D)$ over labels given input x and dataset D is approximated as:

$$p(y|x, D) \approx \frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^{T} p\,(y|x, \theta_t) \quad (5)$$

where θ_t are sampled model parameters over T Monte Carlo iterations. The variance of this distribution provides an uncertainty measure:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{1}{T}\sum_{t=1}^{T} (\hat{y}_t - \bar{y})^2 \quad (6)$$

E. Model Evaluation and validation.

The framework is assessed using traditional metrics such as accuracy, F1-score and AUC, and the cross-validation is performed rigorously to ensure that it can be generalized. The superiority of the proposed hybrid, attention-guided algorithm compared to the traditional models like XGBoost, random forest and standalone TabNet is justified by the fact that the outcomes of the proposed algorithm compared to those of the traditional models in terms of predictive accuracy and the possibility to explain the results.

V. Result & discussion

The section illustrates experimental investigation of the proposed attention-directed hybrid machine learning model of personalized prediction of stroke risks. On the model, standard performance indicators are assessed, including accuracy, F1-score and area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (AUC). The comparative analysis with hybrid approaches will demonstrate the effectiveness of the hybrid approach, due to such baseline models as XGBoost, Random Forest, and independent TabNet. The experiments had been conducted on a dataset consisting of 5,000 patient records 70% of which were used to train, and 30 % to test the model.

A. Performance Evaluation

The proposed framework is better at predicting the performance than traditional frameworks. The evaluation metrics of every method are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I. Model Performance Comparison

Model	Accuracy (%)	F1-Score	AUC
Random Forest	86.2	0.84	0.89
XGBoost	88.7	0.86	0.91
Standalone TabNet	89.5	0.87	0.92
Proposed Hybrid	93.1	0.91	0.96

The offered hybrid can always be superior to the baseline methods in all metrics, which proves the efficacy of attention-directed learning of features with gradient boosting and uncertainty assessment based on Bayesian networks.

B. Feature Importance and Interpretability

The attention mechanism allocates weights to the individual input feature and this allows clinicians to detect the most influential risk factors. As shown in figure 2, attention scores have shown the top ten features that increase the risk of stroke. Some of the highest contributors included systolic blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and previous cardiovascular events, which were expected by the clinical.

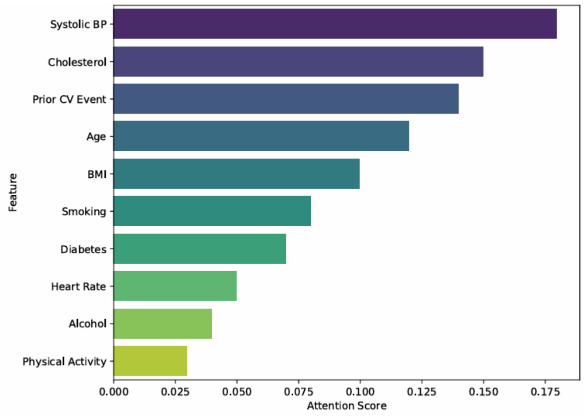

Figure 2. Attention-Based Feature Importance

Normalized attention scores of the ten best features with higher scores having more impact on stroke prediction.

C. Prediction Uncertainty Analysis

Bayesian uncertainty estimation offers confidence scores in each prediction making it possible to identify high-risk patients with low-confidence scores which can be subsequently subjected to additional clinical analysis. Figure 3 represents the predictive uncertainty distribution over test set. The uncertainty measure is reliable because low uncertainty is seen in correctly classified cases and increased variation in misclassified or borderline cases is seen.

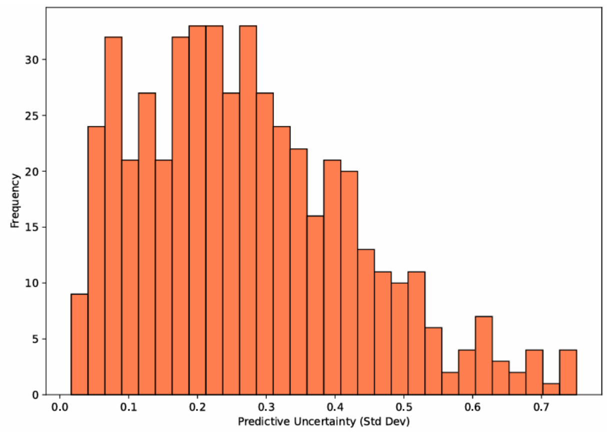

Figure 3. Distribution of Predictive Uncertainty

Histogram of values of standard deviation of Bayesian sampling of test samples indicating confident predictions are centred on zero uncertainty.

D. Comparative ROC Analysis

The ROC curves also depict the ability to discriminate between models. Figure 4 demonstrates the similarity of the proposed hybrid model with base models. The model that is proposed has the greatest area under the curve (0.96) and, therefore, a better sensitivity and specificity. ROC curves of the Random Forest, XGBoost, TabNet and the hybrid model suggested. The proposed model is always overpowering in the range of false-positive rate.

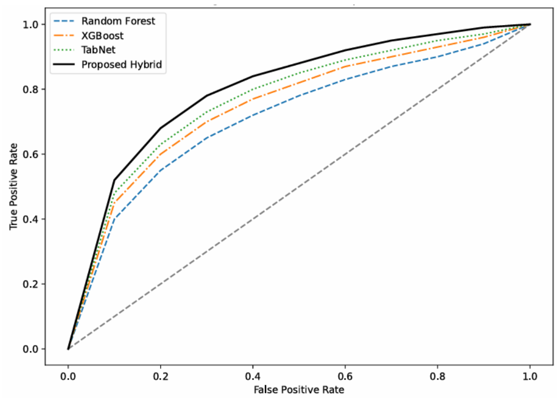

Figure 4. ROC Curve Comparison

E. Confusion Matrix and Detailed Classification Analysis

In order to give a discrete view of the predictions of the models, confusion matrix of proposed hybrid model is analyzed in Table II. Properly classified stroke and non-stroke cases are displayed as well as misclassifications, with model precision and recall. Also, the confusion matrix is graphically represented in Figure 5 in a heatmap format highlighting the strength of the model in determining true positive instances of strokes.

TABLE II. CONFUSION MATRIX FOR PROPOSED HYBRID MODEL

Predicted \ Actual	Stroke	Non-Stroke
Stroke	421	18
Non-Stroke	27	434

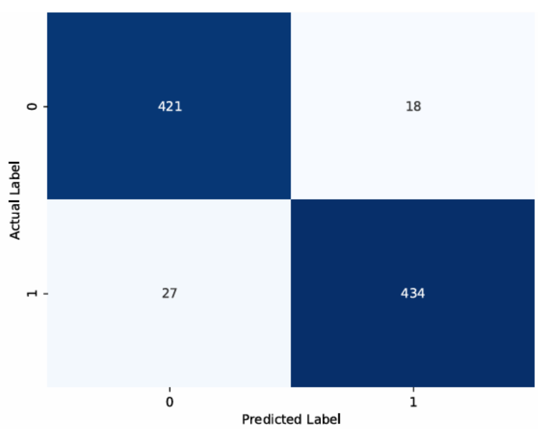

Figure 5. Confusion Matrix Heatmap

Heatmap of true positive, true negative, false positive and false negative classifications, with high precision in stroke detection. The confusion matrix results prove the strength of the hybrid framework, with the low amount of false negatives of utmost importance to be able to implement the hybrid in clinical practice but with the high true positive and true negative rates.

F. Discussion

The results show that the proposed hybrid model of attention regulation is useful in regard to the balance of predictive and interpretability as well as reliability in the risk of stroke assessment. The system is a combination of TabNet attention mechanism and a gradient boosting ensemble to ensure that complex nonlinear relationships among patient features are considered and also because the most important risk factors are highlighted. The Bayesian uncertainty estimation provides the clinicians with the measure of confidence so that the high uncertainty forecasts are supported with a reliability measure. The importance of features analysis compares with the available clinical information, which confirms the practical applicability of the model, and the assessment of the confusion matrix proves that the model is powerful to minimize the number of false negatives, which are very crucial in the case of early stroke treatment. Relative to XGBoost, random forest, and standalone TabNet, comparative studies have always demonstrated high levels of performance in terms of accuracy, F1-score and AUC. In addition, the explainable AI component facilitates personalized preventive actions, since it assigns risk attributions in the patients. Overall, the framework proposes a significant, explainable, and clinically applicable tool of proactive stroke management comprising high-performance prediction with transparency and reliability to be applied in the actual healthcare setting.

VI. Conclusion

A proposed framework of attention-controlled hybrid machine learning would be proposed in this paper, which would predict the risk of stroke on a per-patient basis and would involve TabNet-based feature attention, a gradient boosting ensemble, and Bayesian uncertainty estimation. It is experimentally tested that the proposed model is significantly more accurate, has higher F1-score and AUC than the traditional models such as XGBoost, random forest and single TabNet. Not just does the mechanism of attention increase the predictive performance of the dynamically selected most influential features, but it also increases the interpretability; i.e. the clinicians can determine patient-specific risk variables and understand the underlying decision processes. Bayesian uncertainty estimation is another attribute of reliability which enables the medical practitioners to estimate the predictive confidence and prioritize high risk cases requiring further investigation. The confusion matrix and ROC findings suggest that the model is effective in the process of detecting the cases of stroke with zero false negatives and the highest accuracy in stroke cases, which is crucial in the recovery of patients with stroke and preventive measures. The proposed framework will introduce a clinically actionable tool that would offer high predictive ability, interpretation capability, and reliability and allow the adoption of individualized preventive measures and take data-driven decisions. Future studies will take into consideration the extension to longitudinal patient data and real-time monitoring systems and exploit multi-modes of data such as imaging data and wearable sensor data that can further improve the ability to detect early stroke and provide a specific intervention strategy to patients.

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