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Transferability of Artificial Neural Networks for Clinical Document Classification Across Hospitals: A Case Study on Abnormality Detection from Radiology Reports

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Abstract

Objective. Application of machine learning techniques for automatic and reliable classification of clinical documents have shown promising results. However, machine learning models require abundant training data specific to each target hospital and may not be able to benefit from available labeled data from each of the hospitals due to data variations. Such training data limitations have presented one of the major obstacles for maximising potential application of machine learning approaches in the health-care domain. We investigated transferability of artificial neural network models across hospitals from different domains representing various age demographic groups (i.e., children, adults, and mixed) in order to cope with such limitations.

Materials and methods. We explored the transferability of artificial neural networks for clinical document classification. Our case study was to detect abnormalities from limb X-ray reports obtained from the emergency department (ED) of three hospitals within different domains. Different transfer learning scenarios were investigated in order to employ a source hospital's trained model for addressing a target hospital's abnormality detection problem.

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