

神经网络用于心电图诊断房颤的研究进展

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收稿日期: 2023年3月26日; 录用日期: 2023年4月21日; 发布日期: 2023年4月28日

摘要

房颤的发病具有一定的隐匿性, 传统的临床实践对于部分房颤患者的早期识别存在不足; 人工智能在心电图领域的应用越来越深入, 神经网络模型可以对多种不同的心率失常进行识别和预测。本文就神经网络在心电图诊断房颤方面的新进展作一综述。

关键词

心房颤动, 心电图, 神经网络

Research Progress of Neural Network in Electrocardiographic Diagnosis of Atrial Fibrillation

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文章引用: 石文海, 刘婷, 刘娟秀, 王吴婉, 周波, 许勇, 周琳, 黄雄. 神经网络用于心电图诊断房颤的研究进展[J]. 临床医学进展, 2023, 13(4): 6715-6721. DOI: 10.12677/acm.2023.134939

Abstract

As many episodes of atrial fibrillation remain asymptomatic, traditional clinical practice has defects in early identification of some patients with atrial fibrillation. Artificial intelligence is widely used in the field of electrocardiogram. Neural network models can identify and predict various kinds of arrhythmia. This article reviews the progress of neural network in electrocardiographic diagnosis for atrial fibrillation.

Keywords

Atrial Fibrillation, Electrocardiogram, Neural Network

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1. 前言

自 1628 年 William Harvey 首次提出“房颤”的概念至今，房颤已成为全球性的卫生健康问题[1]。总体而言，房颤的患病率随年龄而增加，40 岁左右人群患病率约 1%，而超过 70 岁的人群比例达 6.7% [2]。这一比例有可能被低估，因为部分房颤患者的发病较为隐匿，没有明显的临床症状，尤其是阵发性房颤患者，常规体检心电图往往遗漏，直至出现栓塞并发症才得以诊断[3]。根据美国疾控中心数据，每年有 15 万余人因房颤或其并发症导致死亡；每年有 45 万余人因“房颤”反复住院[4]。因此，降低房颤病死率的关键在于早期筛查和诊断。近 20 年来随着神经网络在心电图领域的突破性进展，让房颤的早期诊断、并发症的预测逐步成为可能[5] [6]。

2. 神经网络对房颤心电图的自动识别

以往基于 12 导联心电图分析模型多是依赖传统的统计学算法，需要严格的特征提取和工程学计算，并且这种模型的误诊率并不低[7]。近期出现的“端 - 对 - 端” (end-to-end) 深度神经网络模型 (deep neural network, DNN) 能自动分析心电图数据特征，省去了计算机提取特征的过程[8]。Hannun AY 等首先通过便携式穿戴设备采集单一导联的心电图，然后利用深度神经网络模型在包含 91,232 个心电图的数据集上进行训练，最终识别出 12 种类型的心律失常，包含房颤、室性心动过速、房性心动过速、室性早搏等[9]。结果显示曲线下面积 (area under the curve, AUC) 等于 0.97，并且将结果与 6 位心电专家相比，DNN 的平均 F1 评分 = 0.837 (阳性预测值和敏感性的调和平均值)，超过了心电专家的平均值 0.780。该研究还显示 DNN 对于房颤的识别也很高 (AUC = 0.96)，但值得注意的是，这个 AUC 值是基于 328 例小样本房颤心电图数据得出的，虽然在外部验证集的选择上，选取了大数据集，但是测试数据并不是随机选取的，因此该模型在房颤识别的可靠性仍值得商榷[9]。

Ribeiro AH 等[10]用 200 万份 12 导联心电图训练 DNN 模型，这个模型可以识别出 6 种异常心电图，但是由于测试集的异常心电图占比并不高 (以房颤为例，只有 13 例进入到测试集中)，其预测的准确性可

能并不高。尽管如此,这个试验仍然是“端-对-端”分析理念的范例,并且强调了在 DNN 建模中扩大测试数据的意义[11]。

在 2017 年美国国家通用医学科学院和国家生物医学成像和生物工程院共同支持的生理信号库、计算心脏病学挑战数据集中[12],75 支参赛团队使用 8528 份共享的单导联心电图数据作为外部验证集,然后对房颤、正常心律、其他心律失常、噪音四种心电图进行识别,各模型结果进行“头对头”比较。胜出的算法有随机森林、卷积神经网络(convolutional neural network, CNN)以及自回归神经网络。但是训练集仍不足以体现复合算法的优势,因为这需要大量的参数和超参数调整。值得注意的是,虽然这个测试集包含了 311 例房颤患者的 3658 份心电图,但仅有 27.3%被用于算法排序[12]。

Anthony H. Kashou 等[13]基于 72 万患者的 250 万份 12 导联心电图研发了一种将“注意力机制”和 DNN 相结合的模型,该复合模型能将结局转换成 66 个可读取的诊断代码,并且可实现多标签的预测。该模型已在 49 万份心电图的测试集中显现其效能(AUC > 0.98)。最近,该研究团队还将该模型与传统的计算机预测软件、人工判读进行头对头比较。结果显示,模型的可靠判读率为 91%,计算机软件为 86%,最终心电图专家人工判读为 94%。这表明该模型在一些疑难心电图的判读潜力上已逐步接近专家意见[14]。

3. 神经网络对房颤的预测模型研究

鉴于部分房颤发病的隐匿性,Attia ZI 等[15]研发了一个独特的 AI-ECG-AF (artificial intelligence-electrocardiogram-atrial fibrillation)模型,在没有任何额外信息的情况下,通过“正常窦性心律”的心电图预测潜在房颤患者的可能性。这个模型的基本原理是基于房颤患者心肌的病理结构异常,例如心肌肥大、纤维化、腔室扩大等引起的心脏电结构改变在心电图上产生的细微特征,这些特征是我们用人工方法无法观察到的[16]。研究团队分析了 18 万名房颤患者和 60 万名正常人心电图数据。患者被随机分为三组,70%用于训练数据集,10%用于内部验证集,20%用于测试集。房颤组在心电图确诊之前有 1 个月的窗口期,在这个时间段内,将心电图中房颤和左心房重构相关的潜在标签纳入其中。为优化模型效能,选取了 8 个导联(I、II、V1-V6),在 13 万份窦性心律心电图、3 千个确诊房颤的数据集上测试该模型。模型的效力表现良好,AUC 值波动在 0.87~0.90 [15]。

AI-ECG-AF 模型可以用于健康人群的广泛筛查,这样能更有效地纳入可能患有房颤的人群,以进一步随访和诊断;高度疑诊房颤的患者需要更长时间的心电监测[14] [17]。此外,AI-ECG-AF 模型可以作为预测房颤风险评分的补充,既往的评分多是基于“弗莱明汉房颤评分”或“CHARGE-AF 评分”[18] [19]。AI-ECG-AF 模型作为未来房颤独立预测指标的实用性,已在梅奥诊所的一项研究中得到了验证[20]。在该研究中,CHARGE-AF 评分和 AI-ECG-AF 模型都显示出相同的预测效能(C 统计值均为 0.69),将两者结合后,整体预测性能略有提高。模型输出值 > 0.5 的志愿者,2 年的累积发病率为 21.5%,10 年的累计发病率为 52.2% [20]。

Kashou AH 等[21]基于心电图研发出一种类似于 AI-ECG-AF 模型的房颤预测算法。该模型在基线时使用窦性心律的心电图进行训练,并且重点分析房颤确诊前 1~3 年的心电图。研究团队使用英国生物数据库评估了该模型的性能,并显示出与 CHARGE-AF 风险评分相当的可比性。在 CHARGE-AF 风险评分中添加该模型后,模型的预测效能有所提高,这表明通过心电图预测房颤潜力巨大,并且 CHARGE-AF 包含的特征可能正是模型预测的重要节点。在临床应用中,这些模型可以早期筛查出常规体检人群中的隐匿性房颤患者,为早期干预房颤、预防严重并发症提供先机[21]。

4. 神经网络评估房颤负荷

目前,房颤分为阵发性、持续性或永久性,但治疗方案的拟定通常依据是否确诊房来评判是否启动

抗凝,因而对于隐匿性房颤的患者,房颤负荷重,却没有得到及时的抗凝治疗[22]。近期已提出用定量的方法来评估房颤的负荷,旨在特定监测期内反映出患者房颤发作次数或时间比例[23]。房颤负荷对于卒中具有预测价值,可以指导预防性抗栓治疗[24]。然而,即使可穿戴和可植入器械可以实现更长时间的监测,房颤的负担也很难确定。此外,抗凝所需的最小房颤持续时间也没有明确的界定[25]。更容易忽略的是无症状患者房颤负荷的评估,传统的CHA₂DS₂-VASc评分对于高卒中风险、口服抗凝药物的患者受益较大,而对于低-中危患者关注不足,并且强调权衡栓塞与出血风险,但是二者往往没有明确的界限,多数情况下是参考医生的经验制定管理方案[26][27]。

已有一些临床研究尝试解决这些问题。Shashikumar SP等[28]利用DNN模型对24小时动态心电图数据进行分析来评估房颤负荷,这是第一次运用神经网络和注意力模型对长时程心电图数据进行分析处理。Freedman B等通过采集植入式心电设备的数据建立了多种模型,包括逻辑回归、随机森林、CNN、嵌入CHA₂DS₂-VASc评分的复合模型。其中CNN模型的AUC值为0.6,敏感性0.57,特异性0.66,表现一般。随机森林、复合模型则出现过拟合现象[29]。尽管这些研究初步证明了研发长期心电图监测数据模型的可行性,借助动态心电图能监测24~72h内的心律变化;可植入电子设备监测时间更长[30][31],但临床应用尚需要进一步探索和验证,才能准确评估房颤负荷、指导抗凝治疗,起到进一步提高房颤患者预后的目的。

5. 神经网络与光电体积描记结合

光电体积描记(photoplethysmography, PPG)是利用光源和光电检测器检测的脉冲压力波形来测量数据,这项技术已成熟用于检测氧饱和度、心率和呼吸频率[32]。在PPG数据中,房颤表现为可变的脉冲间间隔和形态,DNN模型通过提取这些图像自分析来诊断房颤[33]。研发一个新的DNN模型过程较为繁琐,目前已有研究将大数据集的模型经过微调应用于小数据集,例如将12导联的心电图数据的DNN模型降阶应用到PPG来源(如移动穿戴设备)的单导联心电图,结果显示模型的效力仍然优异(AUC 0.97)[28]。运动手环、智能手表就是运用这一原理来检测房颤。在“华为智能穿戴-心脏研究”中,总共有187,912名志愿者使用智能穿戴设备进行PPG分析,0.23%的人群收到“疑似房颤”预警信息,对这些人进行规律随访,其中87%最终临床诊断为房颤[34]。在“苹果手表-心脏研究”中,总共419,297名患者,只有2161名(0.52%)收到了脉搏不规则的预警信息,进一步进行远程医疗就诊,患者邮寄得到心电图贴片,规律佩戴7天,在450名返回数据的患者中,只有34%的患者被诊断为房颤[35]。Fitbit心脏研究是正在进行中的大型前瞻性研究[36]。正如作者所指出的,与传统的逻辑回归、随机森林等算法,DNN模型表现出了优异的性能;但是,为了得出更准确的结论,需要在相同的测试数据集上进行头对头比较[36]。

PPG与DNN相结合为全人群房颤筛查提供了一种简单、无创的方法,但也突显出大规模筛查房颤的困难,需要考虑效益与风险问题[37]。目前的局限性主要在于:1)数据的准确性和有效性不高;2)缺乏统一的可穿戴设备临床诊断标准;3)穿戴设备的购买成本偏高[38][39]。其次,在低危人群中发送潜在心律失常的通知可能导致更高的假阳性率,增加不必要的焦虑和医疗费用;而在高危人群中进行PPG筛查也需谨慎判断结果,目前发现可穿戴设备采集的PPG数据中大约有40%是无效的,多数是干扰、噪音和伪影[40]。

6. 局限性

迄今为止,大多数DNN模型都没有经过大规模、严格的评估,它们的结果仍然局限于自己的数据集,需要对其泛化能力进行不断改进。其次,DNN固有的“黑盒子”特征让许多专业医疗工作者持保留态度[41],因此,可解释的DNN模型是下一步需要研究的重点。

7. 总结

目前各种基于心电图的 DNN 模型层出不穷, 这些模型在诊断房颤、预测并发症方面显示出巨大的临床潜力。在未来这种新的诊断方法可能成为临床常规工作的一部分。但是严格的、大样本的测试是新模型用于临床的前提, 要经过反复的外部验证和临床试验以优化模型的泛化能力, 这也有助于提升患者、临床医生对人工智能诊断的接受度。

基金项目

四川省中医药管理局专项课题(2020LC0019)。

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