

Explainable AI Techniques and Applications in Healthcare

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Abstract:- Explainable AI techniques are increasingly crucial in healthcare, where transparency and interpretability of artificial intelligence (AI) models are paramount. In domains like medical imaging and clinical decision-making, AI serves to elucidate the rationale behind AI-driven decisions, emulating human reasoning to bolster trust and acceptance. However, the implementation of XAI in healthcare is not without challenges, including algorithmic bias, operational speed, and the necessity for multidisciplinary collaboration to navigate technical, legal, medical, and patient-centric considerations effectively. By providing explanations to healthcare professionals, AI fosters trust and ensures the judicious use of AI tools. Overcoming issues such as bias in algorithmic outputs derived from data and interactions is essential for maintaining fairness in personalized medicine applications. Various XAI techniques, such as causal explanations and interactive interfaces, facilitate improved human-computer interactions by making AI decisions comprehensible and reliable. The development and deployment of XAI in clinical settings offer transparency to AI models but require concerted efforts to address practical concerns like speed, bias mitigation, and interdisciplinary cooperation to uphold the ethical and efficient utilization of AI in healthcare. Through the strategic application of XAI techniques, healthcare practitioners can leverage transparent and trustworthy AI systems to enhance decision-making processes and patient outcomes.

Keywords:- Explainable AI (XAI), Healthcare, Radiomics, Human Judgment, Medical Imaging, Deep Learnings.

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various industries, with deep learning models finding extensive applications in domains such as medical imaging and healthcare. In the intricate landscape of healthcare, where every decision carries inherent risks, the role of AI in augmenting human judgment and decision-making processes is becoming increasingly significant. Medical professionals meticulously evaluate patient conditions, symptoms, and diagnostic results to formulate accurate diagnoses and

treatment plans. The integration of AI, particularly deep learning models, into this process holds immense promise but also poses challenges related to transparency, interpretability, and trust (Caruana, R., Lou, Y., Gehrke, J., & Koch, P. (2015)). The need for AI systems to mimic human judgment and interpretation skills has led to the emergence of Explainable AI (XAI) techniques. XAI aims to demystify the complex decision-making processes of black-box deep learning models, providing insights into how AI arrives at its conclusions. In the context of healthcare and medical imaging, where precision and reliability are paramount, XAI plays a crucial role in enhancing the transparency and interpretability of AI-driven decisions. This paper presents a comprehensive survey of the latest XAI techniques employed in healthcare and medical imaging applications. By categorizing and summarizing various XAI methodologies and highlighting the algorithms that enhance interpretability in medical imaging tasks, this research aims to shed light on the evolving landscape of AI in healthcare. Furthermore, it delves into the challenges faced by XAI in medical settings and offers guidelines for developing more insightful interpretations of deep learning models through XAI principles.

The exploration of XAI concepts in medical image and text analyses not only enhances our understanding of AI-driven decision-making but also paves the way for future advancements in clinical applications. By outlining future research directions and emphasizing the importance of Radiomics, this survey seeks to guide developers and researchers towards prospective investigations that can revolutionize medical imaging applications and contribute significantly to improved patient outcomes (Guidotti, R., Monreale, A., Ruggieri, S., Turini, F., Giannotti, F., & Pedreschi, D. (2018)). This introduction sets the stage for a detailed examination of how XAI is reshaping healthcare practices by providing transparent and interpretable AI solutions that bridge the gap between human expertise and machine intelligence. Through a multidisciplinary approach that combines cutting-edge technology with medical expertise, we aim to unlock the full potential of AI in revolutionizing patient care and clinical decision-making processes.

The objective of this review article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Explainable AI (XAI) techniques in healthcare, focusing on their applications in medical imaging. The review aims to explore the significance of transparency, interpretability, and trust in artificial intelligence (AI) systems within the healthcare domain, particularly in the context of medical imaging tasks. By examining the latest XAI methodologies and algorithms used in healthcare settings, the review seeks to shed light on how XAI can enhance decision-making processes, improve diagnostic accuracy, and foster acceptance of AI technologies among healthcare professionals (Holzinger, A., Langs, G., Denk, H., Zatloukal, K., & Müller, H. (2019)). The review aims to delve into the challenges faced by XAI in medical applications and offer guidelines for developing more insightful interpretations of deep learning models through XAI principles. By outlining future research directions and emphasizing the importance of Radiomics, the review intends to guide developers and researchers towards prospective investigations that can revolutionize medical imaging applications and contribute significantly to improved patient outcomes.

➤ *XAI Utilization*

Studies must clearly describe the use of XAI methods in explaining the behavior of Deep Learning (DL) models, particularly in the context of medical imaging tasks.

➤ *Medical Image Data*

Included studies should utilize medical image data as input for DL model development to ensure relevance to healthcare applications.

➤ *Post Hoc and Ad Hoc Analysis*

Studies are classified based on post hoc methods (used after DL model development) and ad hoc methods (used during DL model development), providing insights into different stages of XAI application.

➤ *Transparency and Explanation*

XAI methods employed should be transparent, explainable, and safe for all stakeholders involved in healthcare decision-making processes.

➤ *Comparison and Evaluation*

The review includes a comparison of different XAI methods, highlighting their advantages, disadvantages, and performance variations to guide researchers in selecting appropriate methods for specific AI tasks.

➤ *Taxonomy of XAI Methods*

The review categorizes XAI methods based on a taxonomy to provide a structured overview of different approaches used in explaining AI model behavior.

➤ *Performance Assessment*

Studies are evaluated based on their ability to provide class-discriminative and target-specific explanations, with a focus on the effectiveness of post hoc and ad hoc XAI methods in enhancing interpretability and transparency.

Key concepts and terminology in Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) encompass crucial aspects of transparency, interpretability, and trustworthiness in AI systems. Explainability refers to the ability of AI models to provide clear and understandable explanations for their decisions, ensuring transparency in the decision-making process. Interpretability focuses on the capacity of AI systems to be interpreted by humans, enabling users to comprehend the rationale behind AI-driven conclusions. Transparency emphasizes the openness and clarity of AI systems, allowing stakeholders to understand the reasoning behind AI decisions. Understanding, explicability, perspicuity, and intelligibility all contribute to the clarity and coherence of explanations provided by AI models, aiding users in grasping complex AI processes. These key concepts play a vital role in shaping discussions around XAI, particularly in healthcare applications like medical imaging, where clear and understandable explanations are essential for fostering trust and acceptance of AI technologies. A comprehensive understanding of these terms is fundamental for researchers and practitioners seeking to develop effective XAI methodologies that enhance transparency and interpretability in healthcare settings.

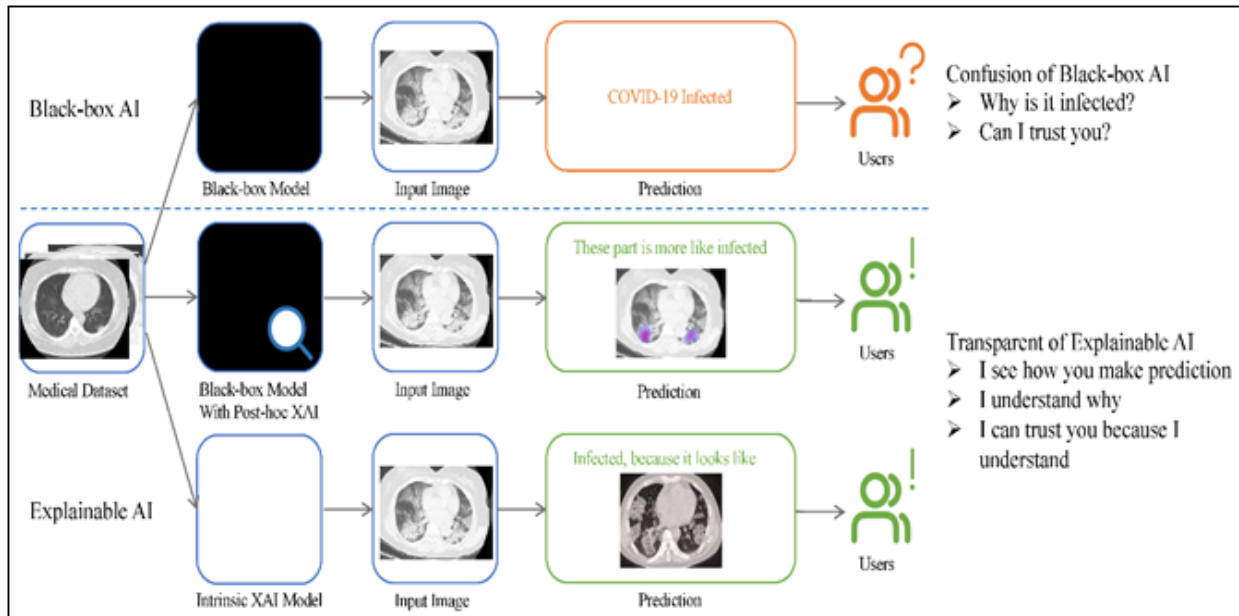


Fig 1: Flowchart of visual comparison between black-box and explainable artificial intelligence, and how the results affect the user

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for the review article on Explainable AI (XAI) in healthcare, with a focus on medical imaging, involves a systematic and comprehensive approach to selecting and analyzing relevant studies. The inclusion criteria dictate that studies must explicitly detail the utilization of XAI methods to elucidate the behavior of Deep Learning (DL) models, particularly within the realm of medical imaging tasks. Emphasis is placed on the use of medical image data as input for DL model development to ensure the applicability of findings to healthcare contexts. The review categorizes studies based on post hoc and ad hoc XAI methods, providing insights into the different stages of XAI application and their impact on interpretability. Exclusion criteria are applied to studies that do not meet the specified XAI usage or lack relevance to medical imaging or DL models (Chen, J. H., & Asch, S. M. (2017). The evaluation process focuses on assessing the effectiveness of XAI methods in providing accurate and understandable explanations for AI decisions, utilizing both human-centered and computer-centered evaluation approaches. Additionally, a taxonomy is employed to classify XAI methods, offering a structured overview of the diverse approaches used in explaining AI model behavior. Comparative analysis is conducted to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and performance variations of different XAI techniques, aiding researchers in selecting suitable methods for specific AI tasks. Through this rigorous methodology, the review aims to provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis of XAI applications in healthcare, contributing to advancements in AI-driven decision-making processes within clinical settings.

The significance and contribution of the review on Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) in healthcare, particularly in medical imaging, lie in its ability to shed light on the invaluable role of XAI in providing insights into the workings of AI algorithms, especially within the medical field. By synthesizing key concepts and methodologies from various studies, the review aims to highlight the critical importance of transparency, interpretability, and trustworthiness in AI systems, particularly in healthcare applications (Ribeiro, M. T., Singh, S., & Guestrin, C. (2016). This review contributes to the existing body of knowledge by emphasizing the value of XAI in guiding ethical decisions, enhancing decision-making processes, and fostering trust among healthcare professionals and patients. Furthermore, by outlining challenges, research directions, and opportunities in XAI for medical imaging tasks, the review aims to pave the way for responsible AI development and improved patient outcomes. Through a systematic analysis of current literature and methodologies, this review seeks to advance understanding and application of XAI in healthcare settings, ultimately contributing to the evolution of AI technologies in improving healthcare delivery and decision-making processes.

➤ XAI Techniques Related to Medical Imaging

Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques play a crucial role in enhancing transparency, interpretability, and trustworthiness in medical imaging applications. In the context of radiology and nuclear medicine, XAI serves as a promising imaging biomarker, providing valuable insights into normal and pathogenic biological processes to support clinical decision-making. Various XAI methods are employed to explain Deep Learning (DL) models in medical imaging, with distinctions between post hoc and ad hoc approaches. While post hoc methods may lack class-discriminative and target-specific explanations compared to ad hoc methods, the

performance of XAI techniques varies significantly (Rudin, C. (2019). Ensuring quality control and transparency in XAI explanations is essential for fostering trust in clinical practice. Technical validation, clinical validation, and cost-effectiveness assessments are critical for bridging translational gaps and facilitating the reliable deployment of DL algorithms in healthcare settings. Future directions emphasize the need for systematic assessment of XAI methods, adherence to regulatory standards like the European Medical Device Regulation (EU MDR), and a deeper understanding of current practices to ensure transparent and trustworthy implementation of AI technologies in medical imaging for improved patient care outcomes.

These seven requirements are summarized as follows.

- **Transparency:** AI systems must be transparent in their decision-making processes, providing clear and understandable explanations for their actions to users and stakeholders.
- **Interpretability:** The ability of AI models to be interpreted by humans is crucial, enabling users to understand how the system arrives at its conclusions and fostering trust in AI technologies.
- **Trustworthiness:** AI systems should be trustworthy, ensuring that they operate reliably, ethically, and in alignment with user expectations to build confidence among users.
- **Responsibility:** Ethical responsibility in AI deployment is essential, requiring organizations to consider the impact of AI systems on individuals, society, and the environment.
- **Privacy:** Data privacy is a fundamental requirement for AI systems, especially in healthcare settings, where sensitive patient information must be protected from unauthorized access or misuse.
- **Accountability:** Establishing mechanisms for accountability in AI systems is crucial, enabling organizations to trace decisions back to their sources and hold responsible parties accountable for outcomes.

- **Security:** Ensuring the security of AI systems is paramount, safeguarding against internal and external threats that could compromise data integrity, system functionality, or user privacy.

➤ *Applications of Explainable AI in Healthcare:*

Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) is revolutionizing healthcare by enhancing transparency, interpretability, and accountability in decision-making processes. In the realm of health services management, XAI is being leveraged to optimize healthcare services and resource allocation, leading to more efficient and effective healthcare delivery. Predictive medicine benefits from XAI's ability to predict patient outcomes and disease progression, enabling early interventions and personalized treatment plans. Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS) powered by XAI assist healthcare professionals in making well-informed decisions by providing explanations for recommendations and diagnoses (Goldstein, A., Kapelner, A., Bleich, J., & Pitkin, E. (2015). Medical diagnosis has seen significant advancements with XAI, improving diagnostic accuracy and offering transparent insights into the reasoning behind specific diagnoses. In surgical applications, XAI supports surgical decision-making processes, leading to improved surgical outcomes and patient safety. Interpretability methods in healthcare AI applications focus on providing transparency, fairness, accuracy, and generality in AI-driven decisions, ensuring that healthcare professionals can trust and understand the recommendations made by AI systems. Ethical implications are a crucial consideration in the application of XAI in healthcare, addressing legal, ethical, and societal questions related to AI explainability. By ensuring that AI systems are ethically sound and align with regulatory standards, XAI can enhance trust among patients and healthcare providers. Patient-centered care is another key area where XAI plays a significant role, focusing on the human perspective to ensure that AI systems meet patient needs and expectations while providing clear explanations for treatment recommendations.

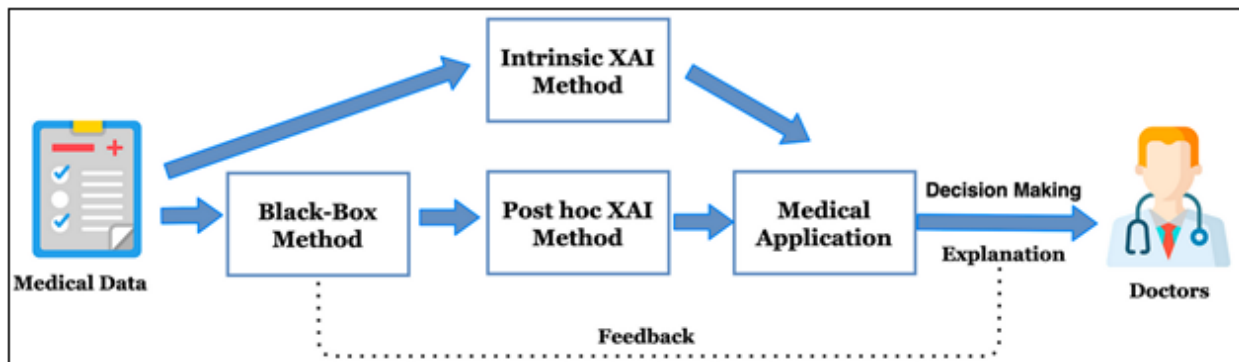


Fig 2: The overall pipeline of a medical XAI application

III. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The research in this paper has reviewed many articles, which identify the gaps in XAI. The domain gaps which have been viewed in this article are related to healthcare. The paper has identified many of the challenges related to XAI in the healthcare domain, which include System Evaluation, Organizational, Legal, socio-relational, and Communicational issues, XAI. A few papers from the literature have identified some solutions for the identified issues but, others have suggested it as a research gap that needs to be filled in the future. Systematic plans for AI implementation management can improve the Organizational challenge of XAI in healthcare. Communicational issues can be resolved by the doctor's awareness on how the patients will perceive the system and by double-check of health information with patients. The socio-organizational issue or challenge can be resolved by patient education that will be helpful in AI usage [21]. The paper has identified the need to work on the improvement of abstraction and lack of explain ability of models by including feature importance, which will help in prediction or classification of ML models [22]. Another study proposed developing more transparent models for major diseases such as diabetes and cancer, as well as doctors and health professionals with basic AI knowledge, in order to achieve the goal of XAI.

Solutions to Address Challenges in Implementing Explainable AI (XAI) in Healthcare:

- **Human-Centered Design Approach:** Prioritize human-centered design principles in XAI development to ensure that AI systems are user-friendly, understandable, and aligned with the needs of healthcare professionals and patients.
- **User-Centric Explanations:** Develop XAI models that provide explanations tailored to the end users' perspectives, enhancing usability and acceptance of AI systems in healthcare settings.
- **Ethical Frameworks and Compliance:** Establish robust ethical frameworks and ensure compliance with regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA to address data privacy concerns and maintain patient confidentiality in XAI applications.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Teams:** Foster diversity and inclusivity in AI development teams to incorporate a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and expertise, leading to more comprehensive and fair XAI solutions.
- **Cybersecurity Measures:** Implement robust cybersecurity measures to address security threats in XAI systems, including the explanation of black-box attacks and the deployment of secure AI technologies to safeguard healthcare data.

➤ *Integration of Explainable AI (XAI) with Regulatory Frameworks in Healthcare:*

Explainable AI (XAI) plays a crucial role in enhancing regulatory compliance, accountability, and transparency in healthcare settings. By providing clear explanations for AI decisions, XAI ensures that healthcare organizations adhere to regulatory standards and ethical guidelines. Here are key insights from the search results:

- *Transparency and Accountability*

XAI enhances transparency by making AI decision-making processes clear-cut and comprehensible, addressing the challenges posed by opaque AI systems. In healthcare, XAI enables doctors to understand the reasons behind AI predictions, fostering trust in the models and facilitating compliance with regulations that require explainable clinical decisions.

- *Regulatory Compliance*

XAI simplifies compliance with regulatory frameworks such as the EU Artificial Intelligence Act (AIA) by providing clear explanations for AI decisions and ensuring adherence to legal requirements. The EU AIA emphasizes the importance of technical documentation for AI systems, including detailed descriptions of functioning, monitoring, and risk management, aligning with the transparency goals of XAI

- *Ethical Considerations*

XAI helps manage risks associated with AI systems by promoting transparency and explain ability, which are essential components of ethical AI governance. By documenting decision-making processes and ensuring accountability, XAI solutions enhance credibility, trustworthiness, and compliance with evolving regulatory standards.

IV. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The future directions and implications of Explainable AI (XAI) in healthcare are promising, with a strong emphasis on enhancing transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance. XAI plays a pivotal role in ensuring regulatory adherence and upholding industry standards by providing transparent and explainable AI decision-making processes. By offering a clearer window into the complex world of AI, XAI not only reveals what decisions AI makes but also 'why,' fostering trust among stakeholders and validating AI predictions. In healthcare, XAI provides understandable explanations for AI predictions, building trust among practitioners, validating clinical decisions, and ensuring compliance with regulations that require transparent clinical decision logic. Furthermore, XAI assists organizations in navigating intricate regulatory landscapes efficiently by providing clear explanations for AI decision-making processes, thereby promoting fairness, accountability, and ethical practices in healthcare operations. The future implications of XAI in healthcare underscore its potential to

enhance transparency, trustworthiness, and equitable decision-making processes, ultimately benefiting both patients and healthcare providers.

Advancements in medical sciences, driven by technologies like wearable devices, telemedicine, 3D printing, nanotechnology, and gene editing, are revolutionizing healthcare practices. These innovations offer personalized treatments, improved disease management, and enhanced patient outcomes. The potential for these advancements to reshape healthcare is significant, with wearable technology enabling remote monitoring of chronic illnesses and promoting early disease identification. Gene editing technologies like CRISPR-Cas9 and mRNA vaccines have opened new treatment avenues, while nanotechnology and regenerative medicine offer groundbreaking solutions for previously incurable diseases. Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare, such as predictive analytics for patient mortality and disease onset, showcases the transformative power of technology in improving healthcare delivery and patient safety. As the healthcare industry embraces these technological advancements, further research is needed to validate their effectiveness, enhance system usability, integrate them into workflows seamlessly, and address ethical considerations to ensure their successful implementation. The ongoing innovation and investment in healthcare technologies hold the promise of a healthier future with improved patient care and outcomes.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) stands as a pivotal tool in revolutionizing healthcare practices by enhancing transparency, interpretability, and accountability in decision-making processes. The significance of XAI lies in its ability to provide clear explanations for AI decisions, fostering trust among stakeholders, ensuring regulatory compliance, and upholding ethical standards in healthcare settings. As the healthcare industry continues to embrace technological advancements, the integration of XAI offers promising solutions for improving patient care outcomes, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing clinical decision support systems. By leveraging XAI technologies, healthcare organizations can navigate complex regulatory landscapes, address ethical considerations, and promote fairness and accountability in AI-driven decision-making processes. The transformative potential of XAI in healthcare is vast, with implications for personalized medicine, predictive analytics, and improved patient safety. As we look towards the future, further research and advancements in XAI will continue to shape the healthcare industry, driving innovation, enhancing patient care, and ultimately revolutionizing the way healthcare is delivered and experienced.

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