



Prediction of Heart Failure Using Machine Learning Techniques

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Abstract

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) continue to be the leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for approximately 17.9 million deaths each year, which represents about 31% of global mortality. This study presents a comparative analysis of machine learning algorithms, specifically K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest, for predicting cardiovascular events using clinical datasets. The research incorporates thorough data preprocessing and feature selection, emphasizing key clinical indicators and risk factors associated with heart disease. The performance of the models was evaluated using standard metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. The findings indicate that the Random Forest model outperformed KNN, achieving an accuracy of 92%, while KNN recorded an accuracy of 82%. These results highlight the effectiveness of machine learning techniques in cardiovascular risk prediction, offering valuable support for early diagnosis, timely intervention, and improved patient outcomes.

Keywords: Machine learning, Random Forest, K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN), Cardiovascular diseases (CVD), Prediction

i. Introduction

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) remain the leading cause of mortality worldwide, accounting for approximately 17.9 million deaths annually, representing about 31% of global fatalities. The widespread prevalence and serious health implications of CVDs highlight the urgent need for early detection and effective management strategies. Due to the complex and multifactorial nature of these conditions, the development of accurate predictive models is essential for enabling timely interventions, reducing mortality rates, and lowering healthcare costs. In recent years, machine learning techniques have gained considerable attention in the healthcare sector, particularly for disease prediction and risk assessment. These methods have demonstrated strong potential in identifying patterns within large datasets and supporting clinical decision-making. This study focuses on a comparative evaluation of two widely used machine learning algorithms K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest for predicting cardiovascular events using a structured clinical dataset. These algorithms were selected due to their differing computational approaches and their effectiveness in handling classification problems.

The research began with a comprehensive data preprocessing stage, which included data cleaning, handling missing values, and performing feature selection. Emphasis was placed on selecting relevant clinical features and established cardiovascular risk factors to improve the predictive performance of the models. This step was critical in reducing noise within the dataset and ensuring that the models were trained on meaningful and high-quality data.

Following preprocessing, both KNN and Random Forest models were trained and evaluated. Their performance was assessed using key evaluation metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score, providing a detailed comparison of their predictive capabilities. The results indicated that the Random Forest model outperformed KNN, achieving an accuracy of 92%, compared to 82% for KNN. This suggests that Random Forest is more effective in capturing complex relationships among cardiovascular risk factors.

The importance of this study lies in its contribution to improving cardiovascular risk prediction through the application of machine learning techniques. By comparing the effectiveness of KNN and Random Forest, the research provides valuable insights for the development of more reliable predictive models in healthcare. These models can support early diagnosis, enhance treatment planning, and ultimately improve patient outcomes. Additionally, the evaluation of performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and confusion matrix further strengthens the reliability of the findings, offering practical benefits for healthcare professionals and researchers.

ii. Literature Review

Several studies have explored the application of machine learning techniques in predicting cardiovascular diseases and improving clinical decision-making. In [1], data from 299 heart failure patients collected in 2015, consisting of 13 clinical features such as high blood pressure, gender, and smoking habits, were analyzed. The study applied multiple machine learning classifiers to predict patient survival and identify key risk factors. The findings revealed that serum creatinine and ejection fraction were the most significant predictors of survival outcomes.

Shah et al. (2020) [2] emphasized that early detection of cardiovascular disease remains a major challenge due to limitations in current diagnostic methods, particularly in terms of accuracy and processing time. Additionally, the diagnosis and management of cardiac conditions are further constrained by limited access to advanced medical technologies and a shortage of specialized healthcare professionals [3].

In another study [4], a novel machine learning approach using a boosted decision tree algorithm was proposed to predict mortality in heart failure patients. Unlike traditional models, this method utilized eight easily obtainable clinical variables to generate a risk score. The model demonstrated strong performance, achieving an Area Under the Curve (AUC) of 0.88 in the derivation cohort and 0.84 and 0.81 in external validation datasets. These results indicate the effectiveness of machine learning in enhancing clinical risk prediction.

Similarly, in [5], the authors evaluated different machine learning algorithms using the UCI heart disease dataset to improve prediction accuracy. During preprocessing, missing values were handled using mean substitution, which proved effective. The models were assessed using performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Among the evaluated algorithms, the Support Vector Machine (SVM) with a linear kernel demonstrated superior performance.

Another study [6] examined multiple machine learning techniques, including Random Forest, Support Vector Machine, Naïve Bayes, Logistic Model Tree, and K-Nearest Neighbor, using the UCI dataset comprising 303 samples with 14 attributes. The findings showed that the Support Vector Machine outperformed other models, including KNN, Naïve Bayes, and Decision Trees.

In [9], a comparative analysis of five machine learning algorithms—Logistic Regression, Naïve Bayes, Random Forest, Support Vector Machine, and K-Nearest Neighbor—was conducted using the Cleveland Heart Disease Dataset. The dataset was preprocessed and split into training and testing sets using an 80/20 ratio. Hyperparameter tuning was applied to improve model performance, with Logistic Regression emerging as the most effective classifier.

Furthermore, in [10], an ensemble-based approach was proposed for heart disease detection using the Cleveland dataset. The study combined multiple algorithms, including Random Forest, Gradient Boosting,

and Extreme Gradient Boosting, to improve predictive accuracy. The ensemble model demonstrated strong performance, highlighting the effectiveness of combining multiple classifiers for improved disease prediction.

Overall, existing literature demonstrates the growing importance of machine learning techniques in cardiovascular disease prediction. However, variations in model performance across studies indicate the need for continuous evaluation and comparison of algorithms to identify the most suitable approaches for accurate and reliable prediction.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Preprocessing and Splitting:

The study utilized a comprehensive dataset that contained detailed clinical information relevant to cardiovascular health. The initial phase of the study involved meticulous data preprocessing, as depicted in the diagram. The dataset was first subjected to data cleaning to handle any inconsistencies or errors. Addressing missing data was crucial, as missing values could significantly compromise the accuracy and performance of machine learning models. For columns with minimal and random missing values, imputation was carried out using the mean or median values, preserving the dataset's overall structure while minimizing potential bias. However, columns with a substantial amount of missing data were excluded to maintain the dataset's integrity. Categorical variables within the dataset, such as sex and chest pain type, were transformed into numerical values using one-hot encoding. This transformation converted each categorical variable into binary columns, each representing a unique category. One-hot encoding was essential to prevent the machine learning algorithms from incorrectly assuming ordinal relationships between non-ordinal categories. Following the encoding of categorical variables, feature scaling was applied to standardize the numerical features across the dataset. This standardization process, which rescaled features to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one, was particularly important for distance-based algorithms like K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN). Without this step, features with larger numerical ranges might have disproportionately influenced the model's calculations. The pre-processed data was then split into training and testing subsets, following an 80-20 ratio. Eighty percent of the data was allocated for training the models, while the remaining twenty percent was set aside for testing. This division ensured that the models were trained on a significant portion of the data while retaining a reliable evaluation set for testing model performance on unseen data to guarantee reproducibility, the split was performed using a random seed.

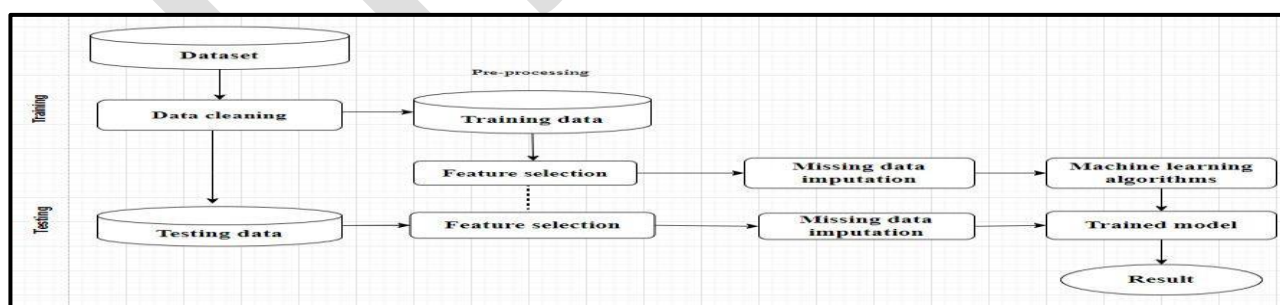


Fig1. Flow diagram of Model

B. Model Training:

Two machine learning models were selected for this study: K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest. K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN): – The KNN algorithm predicts the outcome based on the proximity of data points. It was configured with an optimal number of neighbors (K), which was determined through cross-

validation to balance bias and variance. The chosen distance metric was typically Euclidean distance, appropriate for the nature of the data.

Random Forest: – The Random Forest model is an ensemble learning technique that builds multiple decision trees during training. It predicts the class that is the most frequent among the classes predicted by the individual trees. Hyper parameters, including the number of trees, tree depth, and the minimum number of samples required to split a node, were fine-tuned using grid search and cross-validation.

C. Model Evaluation:

The performance of the models was evaluated using several key metrics:

Accuracy: Measures the proportion of correct predictions relative to the total number of predictions made.

F1 Score: Balances precision and recall, making it particularly useful for datasets with imbalanced classes.

Recall: Also known as sensitivity, this metric evaluates the model's ability to correctly identify all positive instances. $\square$ **precision:** The ratio of true positive predictions to the total number of positive predictions made by the model. It indicates how many of the predicted positive instances are actually correct.

Confusion Matrix: This matrix provides a detailed breakdown of the types of errors made by the model, displaying the number of true positives, true negatives, false positives, and false negatives.

D. Comparative Analysis:

The comparative analysis of the KNN and Random Forest models was based on the mentioned evaluation metrics. The analysis highlighted that both models performed well in predicting cardiovascular events, but the Random Forest model demonstrated a slight edge in accuracy and robustness. The confusion matrix for each model revealed the distribution of prediction errors, providing insights into their respective strengths and weaknesses. The Random Forest model's ensemble approach contributed to its superior performance by reducing variance and avoiding over-fitting, which is often a challenge with single decision trees. Overall, the detailed preprocessing, splitting, and model training procedures ensured that the dataset was in an optimal state for machine learning. This rigorous approach led to accurate and reliable predictions, contributing significantly to the study's findings and underscoring the effectiveness of advanced machine learning techniques in enhancing cardiovascular risk assessments.

iv. Implementation

A comprehensive analysis to predict heart disease using two machine learning algorithms: K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest (RF). The study utilized a heart disease dataset, which includes 11 clinical features such as age, sex, chest pain type, resting blood pressure, cholesterol level, fasting blood sugar, resting ECG results, maximum heart rate, exercise-induced angina, ST depression induced by exercise, and the slope of the peak exercise ST segment. The target variable, heart disease, indicates whether a patient has heart disease. Preprocessed the data by handling missing values and encoding categorical variables. We then split the dataset into training and testing sets. Both KNN and RF models were trained using the training set, and their performance was evaluated on the testing set. Key metrics such as accuracy, recall, F1-score, and confusion matrix were calculated to assess the models' effectiveness. Additionally, we have visualized chestpain type vs heartdisease to further analyze their performance.

A. Performance Metrics Analysis:

The performance of K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest models was evaluated using several metrics. The results are summarized in Table.

Table	KNN	RF
Accuracy	0.82775	0.92503
Recall	0.85959	0.93696

Precision	0.83565	0.92897
F1 Score	0.84745	0.93295

TABLE PERFORMANCE OF KNN AND RF

Table I shows the performance metrics for the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest models. The KNN model recorded an accuracy score of 0.82775, representing the proportion of instances correctly classified. Its precision score was 0.83565, indicating the proportion of true positive predictions out of all positive predictions made. The F1 score was 0.84745, which balances precision and recall, while the recall score was 0.85859, reflecting the proportion of actual positive cases that were accurately identified and the Random Forest model demonstrated an accuracy score of 0.92503, which is higher than that of KNN, suggesting better overall classification performance. The precision score for Random Forest was 0.92897, the F1 score was 0.93295, and the recall score was 0.93696. These metrics indicate that Random Forest performed better in terms of identifying and classifying positive instances accurately, providing a complete robust classification compared to KNN.

B. Confusion Matrix for KNN model:

The confusion matrix graph provides a clear view of how well the model classified instances of "Heart Disease" versus "No Heart Disease." It shows that the model correctly identified 219 cases of heart disease (true positives) and 300 cases of no heart disease (true negatives). However, it also misclassified 59 cases as positive when they were negative (false positives) and missed 49 cases that were actually positive (false negatives). This indicates that while the model has a high overall accuracy, it may be overfitting to the training data, meaning it could struggle to make accurate predictions on new data. To improve its generalization, techniques like regularization and cross-validation could be beneficial. By looking closely at the confusion matrix and other performance metrics, we can better understand the model's strengths and weaknesses, ultimately working toward a more reliable tool for diagnosing heart disease and improving patient care.

C. Confusion Matrix for Random Forest model:

The confusion matrix for the random forest model indicates the following performance metrics: it correctly classified 253 instances of heart disease (true positives) and 327 instances of no heart disease (true negatives). However, there were also 25 instances misclassified as positive when they were actually negative (false positives), and 22 instances missed as positive when they were indeed positive (false negatives). These results suggest that the model is performing well overall, with a significant number of correct classifications. However, the presence of false positives and false negatives highlights areas where the model could improve. Specifically, the false positives might lead to unnecessary anxiety or further testing for patients incorrectly identified as having heart disease, while false negatives could result in missed diagnoses, potentially endangering patients' health. To enhance the model's accuracy, further analysis could be conducted to understand the causes of these misclassifications. Techniques such as adjusting the classification threshold or further tuning model parameters may help in reducing these errors. Overall, the confusion matrix provides critical insights into the model's strengths and weaknesses, guiding efforts for improvement.

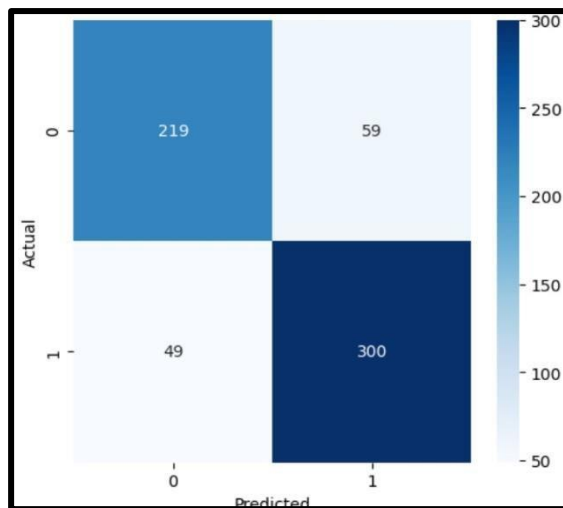


Fig 2. KNN Confusion Matrix

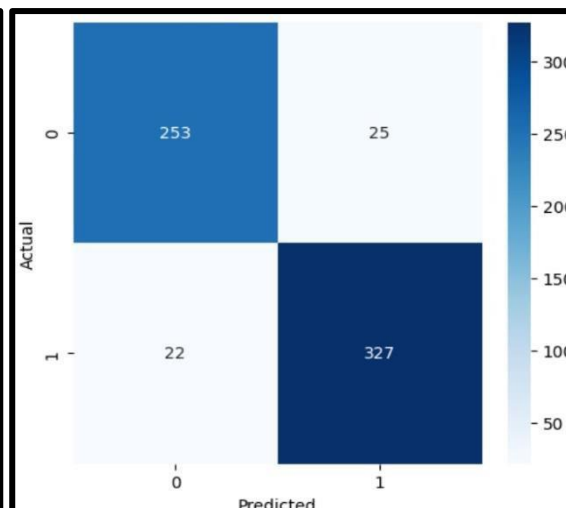


Fig 3. RF Confusion Matrix

D. Chestpain types vs heart disease:

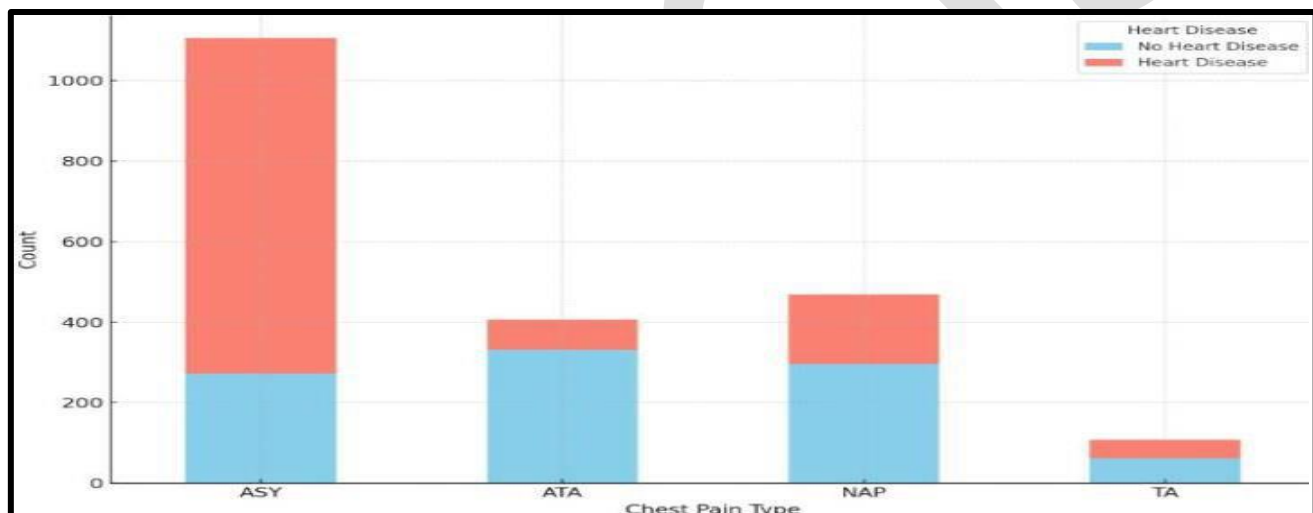


Fig 4. Stacked bar plot of Chestpain types vs heart disease

This stacked bar plot visualizes the relationship between chest pain type and the presence or absence of heart disease. The x-axis represents the four different types of chest pain: ASY (asymptomatic), ATA (typical angina), NAP (nonanginal pain), and TA (atypical angina). The y-axis represents the count of individuals within each category. The bars are stacked, with the blue portion representing individuals without heart disease and the orange portion representing individuals with heart disease. The plot reveals a clear trend: individuals with ASY chest pain have a significantly higher prevalence of heart disease compared to the other chest pain types. Conversely, individuals with TA chest pain have the lowest prevalence of heart disease. This suggests that ASY chest pain may be a more indicative symptom of heart disease than other chest pain types, while TA chest pain might be a less reliable indicator. The plot also highlights that individuals with ATA and NAP chest pain types exhibit an intermediate prevalence of heart disease, suggesting that these pain types may be less strongly associated with heart disease compared to ASY but more strongly associated than TA. This information could be valuable for medical professionals in assessing the risk of heart disease based on chest pain type. Further analysis could explore the underlying reasons for

these observed associations and investigate if specific subgroups within each chest pain type exhibit different heart disease prevalence.

v. Comparative Analysis of Model Performance

The comparative analysis of model performance between the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest models for heart disease classification highlights significant distinctions in their effectiveness. The KNN model achieved an accuracy of 0.82775, indicating that approximately 82.8% of instances were correctly classified. Its precision score of 0.83565 suggests that about 83.6% of positive predictions were true positives, while the recall score of 0.85859 reflects that roughly 85.9% of actual positive cases were accurately identified. The F1 score of 0.84745 demonstrates a reasonable balance between precision and recall, but the model's confusion matrix reveals concerning misclassifications. Specifically, the KNN model correctly identified 219 cases of heart disease (true positives) and 300 instances of no heart disease (true negatives). However, it misclassified 59 cases as positive when they were negative (false positives) and missed 49 cases that were genuinely positive (false negatives). This suggests that KNN may be prone to overfitting, where it performs well on training data but struggles with generalization to unseen instances. The implications of false positives could lead to unnecessary anxiety for patients, while false negatives pose a significant risk of missing actual cases of heart disease. In contrast, the Random Forest model demonstrated superior performance, achieving an accuracy score of 0.92503, which indicates a more robust classification capability. Its precision score of 0.92897 means that approximately 92.9% of positive predictions were accurate. The recall score of 0.93696 indicates that about 93.7% of actual positive cases were identified, while the F1 score of 0.93295 reflects excellent harmony between precision and recall. The confusion matrix for the Random Forest model shows it correctly classified 253 instances of heart disease and 327 instances of no heart disease. The model reported only 25 false positives and 22 false negatives. Although misclassifications still exist, the lower counts compared to KNN signify greater reliability in accurately identifying true cases of heart disease. This aspect is particularly critical in healthcare, where precise diagnosis is vital for effective patient management.

Overall, the Random Forest model's superior performance metrics higher accuracy, precision, and recall, combined with fewer misclassifications position it as the more effective tool for heart disease classification. This analysis emphasizes the importance of selecting models based on comprehensive performance metrics, especially in healthcare contexts, where accurate and timely diagnoses are crucial for improving patient outcomes. In summary, while both models have merits, the Random Forest's enhanced reliability underscores its potential to significantly improve diagnostic accuracy in heart disease detection.

vi. Conclusion and Future Work

In conclusion, the comparison between the K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Random Forest (RF) models clearly highlights the superior performance of RF in heart disease prediction tasks. The Random Forest model consistently outperforms KNN across all key metrics, including accuracy, recall, precision, and F1 score. Its confusion matrix indicates fewer misclassifications, underscoring its reliability and robustness in effectively identifying cases of heart disease. While KNN demonstrates reasonable performance, its tendency for overfitting leads to lower effectiveness in diverse scenarios, resulting in a higher number of false positives and false negatives. These challenges reveal limitations in KNN's ability to maintain consistent performance. Overall, the findings affirm that the Random Forest model serves as a more effective and reliable tool for heart disease prediction, offering enhanced accuracy and a better balance between precision and recall. This study emphasizes the critical importance of model selection in clinical applications, where precise and trustworthy predictions are essential. Future research could explore further enhancements

to the Random Forest model, focusing on advanced techniques and improving interpretability to provide clear and actionable insights for medical decision-making.

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