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Editorial

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The Potential of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Pharmacovigilance: An Update

Osama A. Badary[1,2,*]

[1] Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
[2] Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Misr University for Science and Technology, Cairo, Egypt

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1. Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into pharmacovigilance (PV) marks a transformative step towards enhancing drug safety and patient outcomes. With their unparalleled ability to analyze vast and complex datasets, AI/ML technologies offer unprecedented opportunities to revolutionize adverse drug event (ADE) monitoring, signal detection, and causality assessment. This editorial explores the state-of-the-art applications, key challenges, and actionable strategies to unlock the full potential of AI in PV.

2. Opportunities of AI/ML in PV

The applications of AI and ML methodologies have the potential to optimize drug safety monitoring by automating the analysis of adverse signals from various sources, such as health records, spontaneous and active surveillance techniques.

AI/ML has been shown to be useful for multiple aspects of data ingestion and for assessment of reported causality in individual case safety reports (ICSRs) [1]. Several ML techniques, such as Lasso shrinkage regression [2], Bayesian borrowing algorithms [3] and temporal scan statistics [4], have been shown to be applicable for signal detection. ML is useful for identification of syndromal patterns in data monitoring and performing complex modeling PV tasks [5].

Very recently, Zou et al. [6] demonstrated trends of utilizing the AI and ML derived from the published articles. These trends include highlight the expected wide applicability of the large and Natural Language models in the field of drug safety. They indicated the need of the concept of multiple data processing modalities and the automation of the different PV tasks. A hybrid model of AI and ML was suggested as the best solution to overcome the challenges facing this integration [7,8].

There are evidences of the applicability of AI in the life cycle of safe and effective drug development. Bhattamisra et al. [9] demonstrated the effectiveness of AI algorithms in enhancing patients' safety outcomes in several case studies. Wanika et al. [10] utilized ML to aid in monitoring and management of cancer patients subjected to increased risk of serious adverse events. Chandak and Tatonetti [11] used ML technology to develop an "AwareDX" (Analyzing Women At Risk for Experiencing Drug toxicity) algorithm that predicts precisely sex-specific risks of ADE.

Galeano et al. [12] developed a machine learning framework for predicting side effects for drugs undergoing clinical development. Earlier, Benin et al. [13] reported the use of ML to successfully process the ADE reports in Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Moreover, drug responses can be predicted using patients' genetic information, enabling the identification of individuals at increased risk of adverse drug events (ADEs) and supporting decision-making regarding appropriate dosing and drug substitutions [14].

AI has the ability to transform PV through analyzing and processing large amounts of data that would normally be out of the scope of a human's lifetime. The automation and ML models can optimize PV processes and provide a more efficient way to analyze information relevant to safety.

Storing large volumes of safety data electronically allows AI tools to significantly enhance data processing, reducing the burden of time, effort, errors, and costs.

* **Corresponding Author:**
Osama A. Badary, Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt; obadary@yahoo.com; osama.badary@pharma.asu.edu.eg; osama.badary@must.edu.eg; Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Misr University for Science and Technology, Cairo, Egypt

Moreover, eventually may lead to enhancement of clinical decisions by identifying ADEs patterns and trends.

3. Challenges and Limitations

A reliable AI/ML implementation must offer benefits that outweigh negative effects and ensure that unacceptable effects can be monitored for resolution. The growth of this field may be limited by challenges related to the lack of validated, established uses of AI in real-life safety settings. Ahire et al. [15] published a comprehensive detailed article about the potential advantages and challenges of integrating AI in the science of PV. AI-enhanced PV presents both potential and challenges, such as resolving data privacy issues and modifying regulatory frameworks. Shamim et al. [16] reviewed the current limitations of AI applications, regarding the dependency of AI model performance on the data quality and quantity, and the need of transparency and explainability to fill the gap between development and integration of AI model algorithms.

4. Future Directions and Recommendations

Several recommendations could be identified from the literature [15,17,18]. Although there is already much advancement made, there are still challenges and limitations that must be addressed to understand the complexities of these technologies.

Developing ICSRs and processing high volumes of data are major contributors to the stagnancy in technological advancement in the PV industry. AI models should go beyond correlation-based approaches by integrating causal inference techniques, which will allow for a more accurate understanding of the relationship between drugs and ADRs. Consideration is required for AI/ML systems to learn from previous analyzed data, while maintaining the capability to identify unexpected outcomes. The use of well-defined human understandable knowledge structures could increase the outcomes' understanding, also playing a key role towards the adoption of AI-based systems.

Health organizations should play a significant role in regulating and implementing AI for PV and they should support emerging research and development of computational approaches and relevant data infrastructures. AI experts should appreciate the complexity of data interpretation and medical professionals should comprehend the AI technicality.

Table 1 list summarized points regarding the advantages, challenges and recommendation for the optimum integration of AI/ML technologies in the field of PV and medication safety.

5. Conclusions

The transformative process of integration of AI technologies in PV activities has revolutionizing effect on the performance of ADEs detection, monitoring and assessment. AI algorithms and automation have the advantages of saving time, reducing efforts and improving operational efficiency. There are recent evidences from the literature that support the applicability and benefits of AI and ML in PV field. Besides the significant benefits, barriers like data issues, ethical considerations, and interpretability are also exist. These issues can impact the performance of AI algorithms. Healthcare providers, regulators, and industry should exert more efforts to collaborate to overcome the challenges and to maximize potential applications of AI in public health and patient safety. Overall, the integration of AI in PV can lead to enhancement of drug surveillance and ultimately improve patient outcomes and regulatory decision making.

Table 1: Opportunities, challenges and recommendations integration of artificial intelligence in pharmacovigilance activities.

Opportunities	**1. Innovated Data Processing Techniques:** The use of NLP and ML algorithms will find patterns, trends, and correlations pertaining to drug safety **2. Semantic Analysis and Coding of ADE Reports:** Regulators can benefit by using AI-powered techniques to maximize the overall understanding of data relevance and accuracy, as well as improving data interoperability **3. Real-time Signal Detection:** AI tools have the potential to detect safety issues on real time bases by continuous monitoring of data coming from various sources. The enhanced risk-benefit assessment will facilitate better informed decision making on drug efficacy-safety balance.

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Table 1: *Cont.*

	4. Prediction of Drug Safety: By analyzing historical data and identifying patterns, AI can assist in anticipating possible safety issues. AI predictive models can help to identify and predict unknown ADEs through automated literature, historical data review and integration with Electronic Health Records (EHRs). **5. Quality Improvement of Reporting Systems:** AI helps PV programs to find best practices, resolve operational issues, and improve overall system performance. It also promotes compliance with rules and guidelines by automating data entry, validation, and submission processes.
Challenges	**Scientific challenges** 1. Interpretation and prediction: The full automation of PV by AI is still under development for harmonization and best practices. 2. Accountability: AI technology must be flexible and recognize the need for expert judgment for the assessment of complex difficult case scenarios. **Technological challenges** 1. Training Datasets and Validation T here is a need for a structured and curated data for AI software. The AI models should be tested and validated before actual integration. Robust validation of AI models is essential to ensure their reliability and generalizability when integrated in PV. 2. Privacy: There is a concern about patient data privacy and ethical issues due to the lack of efficient regulations. 3. Data Quality and Processing: These issues can be improved by Oversight of data management and data quality assurance processes and using robust ML algorithm. **Regulatory Concerns:** Regulatory compliance requires adherence to strict standards governing data privacy, security, and reporting requirements. The adoption of AI technology to automate PV system needs to be regulated for validation and quality. Certification and approval for the new AI systems should be considered.
Recommendations	To enhance the performance of AI applications in PV, the following points should be considered: **1. Data Quality:** Train AI models effectively and enhance comprehensive understanding. Improve interpretability for models that provide explanations for their predictions. This transparency is vital in PV to understand how decisions are made. Encourage the development of Interpretable explanations of AI-generated insights to be available for all stakeholders. **2. Technological Advancements:** Develop AI-powered real-time surveillance systems with a quick response to critical situations. Enhance AI ability to recognize patterns and trends by implementing models that can adapt and learn from new data. Robust validation of AI models is essential to ensure their reliability and generalizability when integrated in PV. **3. Stakeholder Engagement:** There is urgent need to maximize collaboration between AI experts, drug regulators to create more robust AI solutions. Encourage the development of frameworks for AI and human collaboration in PV. Provide interactive AI-driven decision support tools that let professionals in PV work together to evaluate, improve, and understand insights produced by AI.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

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