International Journal of Computer Applications (0975 – 8887)
Volume 187 – No.41, September 2025

Big Data Analytics in Healthcare: Machine Learning-based Cardiac Disease Prediction in West Africa

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ABSTRACT
This paper investigates the application of machine learning for cardiac disease prediction in resource-constrained healthcare settings. This study conducts an empirical study evaluating four classification algorithms (Support Vector Machine, Random Forest, Logistic Regression, Decision Tree) on a real-world dataset. The results demonstrate that SVM achieves the highest accuracy (91%) in identifying high-risk patients, highlighting its potential for clinical decision support. The study provides a detailed comparative analysis of model performance, discusses computational feasibility, and outlines practical deployment considerations. These findings contribute to the advancement of machine learning applications in African healthcare systems.

Keywords
Big Data Analytics, Data-driven healthcare, Data analytics in healthcare, Machine Learning in Healthcare, Disease Prediction

1. INTRODUCTION
The integration of Big Data Analytics (BDA) into the healthcare sector represents a paradigm shift in the way health services are delivered, managed, and evaluated. BDA involves the systematic analysis of vast amounts of complex data to uncover patterns, cor- relations, and insights that can inform clinical decisions and policy- making. The medico-economic management of health establish- ments, public health decisions, and biomedical research increasingly rely on the exploitation of massive healthcare data [10]. The potential of BDA to transform healthcare is particularly significant in Western African countries, where healthcare systems often face numerous challenges, including limited resources, high dis- ease burden, and fragmented health data systems.

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) represent a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the region, yet healthcare infrastructure of- ten lacks the necessary resources for early detection and intervention. The application of machine learning (ML) in healthcare has demonstrated significant potential for disease prediction and diagnosis, particularly in resource-constrained settings. However, most studies on ML-based disease prediction are conducted in high-income countries, using datasets that may not reflect the demo- graphic and clinical characteristics of African populations.

Objective and Contributions: This study aims to evaluate the feasibility and efficiency of machine learning algorithms for cardiac disease prediction in the context of West African healthcare. Unlike previous works that focus on global datasets, this study conducts an empirical evaluation of four classification algorithms (Support Vec- tor Machine, Random Forest, Logistic Regression, Decision Tree) on a real-world dataset. Key contributions are:

—A comparative evaluation of ML classifiers for cardiac disease prediction based on accuracy, precision, recall, and AUC-ROC metrics.

—An analysis of computational efficiency to assess model feasibility for deployment in low-resource environments.

—Practical recommendations for integrating ML-based decision support systems in African healthcare settings.

By providing an in-depth experimental analysis, this study aims to bridge the gap between theoretical advancements in ML and their practical implementation in African healthcare. The findings con- tribute to the growing field of AI-driven healthcare solutions tai- lored to low-resource environments.

2. BACKGROUND
Big Data Analytics has emerged as a transformative force in mod- ern healthcare, revolutionizing data management and patient care delivery. Through advanced analytical techniques such as machine learning and predictive modeling, healthcare providers can now ex- tract actionable insights from complex datasets, enabling more precise diagnoses and personalized treatments.

The exponential growth in healthcare data necessitates robust analytical tools and computing infrastructure to effectively process and analyze this information. This study presents a systematic analysis of healthcare analytics approaches, examining their algorithmic foundations and performance metrics. This study specifically ad- dresses the gaps identified in previous studies, advancing the field through innovative methodological approaches to enhance health- care delivery systems.

This paper categorizes these studies based on the types of algorithms used, performs a detailed analysis of their performance and limitations, and shows how the present study aims to address the gaps identified in these previous works.

2.1 Chronic diseases
Studies on breast cancer diagnosis using Naive Bayes achieved up to 86.4% accuracy [3], though limited in applicability across cancer stages and populations. Hypertension prediction has used artificial neural networks (ANN) with up to 92% accuracy [22], though high computational costs restrict their use in low-resource settings. Temporal Causal Discovery for cardiovascular disease progression also shows promise [8], though requiring structured, longitudinal data, limiting its use in sporadic conditions. Cardiovascular studies in Kenya using Deep Metric Learning achieved 88% accuracy, highlighting deep learning's potential but requiring computational resources that may be limited in low-resource environments [11].

2.2 Infectious diseases
Machine learning models have also been widely used for infectious disease prediction and outbreak management.

Studies in Senegal have employed K-Means clustering to analyze health data and transmission patterns [16], though this approach captures spatial but not temporal clusters, limiting insights into transmission dynamics over time.

2.3 Cancer

Applications of machine learning in cancer research include early detection of breast and cervical cancers. Dual Event Time Trans- formers have been utilized in oncology to analyze longitudinal patient data [13], although they require high-quality structured data and computational resources. Privacy-Enhanced ECG (PrivECG) frameworks integrate machine learning in cancer research while prioritizing data privacy [19], yet privacy constraints may impact model performance, especially when data sharing is restricted by regulatory policies.

2.4 Respiratory diseases

Machine learning is also prominent in respiratory diseases, such as asthma and COPD. Random Forest and Gradient Boosting models reach up to 85% accuracy for asthma prediction [4], though ac- curacy can suffer in populations outside the training data. COPD detection through deep learning shows promise for accurate diagnosis, particularly in resource-limited settings, although it requires substantial labeled data and may be computationally prohibitive.

2.5 Neurological disorders

Machine learning approaches such as k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN) and Decision Trees have been effective for early diagnosis of neu- rological disorders, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Studies have achieved up to 90% accuracy for Alzheimer's diagnosis [17], though high-quality EEG data is essential, which may not always be available. EEG data analysis using deep learning further sup- ports detection, yet models depend on data quality, and high computational costs can limit widespread use.

2.6 Comprehensive synthesis

The studies presented demonstrate the potential of machine learning (ML) in healthcare, yet they face several limitations, data rebut are limited by the diversity and quality of datasets [22]. Similarly, infectious disease models, while successful in regions with high incidence rates, struggle in low-incidence areas or where sea- sonal variability affects transmission dynamics [16]. Cancer re- search models often require structured, high-quality data, limiting their use in settings lacking extensive data infrastructure [13, 19]. Respiratory and neurological disorder studies also face constraints, as models' accuracy often drops when applied to populations out- side of training data or when adequate, labeled data is unavailable [4, 17]. Moreover, high computational costs across most models can hinder their application in resource-constrained environments, particularly in low-resource regions [11]. This summary highlights the need for more adaptable, resource-efficient ML solutions in di- verse, real-world healthcare settings.

This study addresses several significant challenges noted in prior research, particularly concerning computational efficiency and scalability within resource-limited African healthcare environments. Unlike previous studies, which often face limitations due to computational constraints, this research emphasizes the optimization of model structures to enhance diagnostic accuracy while minimizing resource demands. This approach directly responds to the need for computationally feasible models, adaptable to varied infrastructure levels, ensuring potential application in a broad array of healthcare settings.

Moreover, the paper tackles the issue of scalability by developing adaptable methodologies that extend beyond narrowly defined datasets, allowing the models to generalize across diverse patient demographics and healthcare conditions. This adaptability meets the call for solutions that can serve heterogeneous populations, a crucial factor in healthcare diagnostics where patient diversity is significant.

For a detailed overview, the following table provides a summary of Big Data algorithms and models applied to healthcare, highlight- ing each algorithm's key features, accuracy rates, and limitations within specific disease contexts.

3. METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the effectiveness of machine learning algorithms for cardiac disease prediction in West Africa, this study adopted a structured experimental methodology. The approach consists of the following key steps:

—**Dataset Acquisition:** Utilize a real-world dataset collected from MIMIC-III[1], containing patient records with clinical attributes such as age, cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and ECG readings.

—**Data Preprocessing:** Missing values were handled using mean imputation, categorical variables were encoded, and numerical features were normalized using Min-Max scaling to improve model performance.

—**Algorithm Selection:** Select four widely used machine learning classifiers—Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest (RF), Logistic Regression (LR), and Decision Tree (DT)—based on their effectiveness in previous medical studies and their computational feasibility in low-resource settings as presented in Table **??**.

—**Hyperparameter Tuning:** Perform grid search cross-validation to optimize model parameters and improve classification accuracy. quirements, and computational demands. Many studies, such as those predicting diabetes or hypertension, achieve high accuracy

[1]https://physionet.org/content/mimiciii/1.4/

Table 1. Summary table of Big Data Algorithms and Models Applied to Healthcare in West Africa

Methods	Purpose	Results	Datasets	Limitations	Country
Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) [22]	Hypertension prediction	ANN: Accuracy 92%	Nigerian Hypertension Database	Small dataset	Nigeria
K-Means Clustering [1]	Disease pattern identification	Silhouette score: 0.75	UCH Ibadan Database	Limited interpretability	Nigeria
Logistic Regression [14]	General disease prediction	Accuracy 85%, Precision 82%	Local hospital records	No standardized dataset	Nigeria

Decision Trees [18]	Health service efficiency analysis	Accuracy 87%, Precision 84%	Ghana Health Service Database	Limited to Ghana	Ghana
Support Vector Machines (SVM) [20]	Disease classification	Accuracy 90%, Precision 88%	Health facility data	Limited facility coverage	Ghana
Naive Bayes [7]	Health data prediction	Accuracy 80%, Precision 78%	Nigerian Healthcare Data Repository	Data sparsity issues	Nigeria
KNN (K-Nearest Neighbors) [2]	Health data classification	Accuracy 83%, Precision 80%	Health management systems data	High computational cost	Nigeria
Artificial Neural Network (ANN) [15]	Predictive healthcare analysis	Accuracy 92%, Precision 89%	National Health Insurance Data	Overfitting risk	Ghana
Gradient Boosting Machines (GBM) [21]	Patient health outcome prediction	Accuracy 88%, Precision 85%	Patient electronic health records	Small sample size	Nigeria
K-Means Clustering [16]	Patient data clustering	Identified 4 clusters	Senegalese health data	Limited cluster interpretation	Senegal
EM (Expectation Maximization) [5]	Disease outbreak prediction	Improved prediction by 15%	Health surveillance data	Model complexity	Nigeria
Contactless Oxygen Monitoring [9]	Oxygen monitoring	Precision 90%	Radio wave data	Data collection challenges	Nigeria

—**Evaluation Metrics:** To ensure robust assessment, accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and AUC-ROC are measured, ad- dressing class imbalance concerns.

—**Computational Efficiency Analysis:** Evaluate the execution time and resource consumption of each model to determine fea- sibility for deployment in real-world clinical settings.

These steps are summarized in Figure 1.

3.1 Experimental Setup

The experiments were conducted using Google Colab, a cloud- based platform that provides free access to GPU-accelerated computing resources. The models were implemented in Python us- ing the Scikit-learn library for machine learning. Each model was trained using an 80-20 train-test split, and 5-fold cross-validation was applied to enhance generalizability and mitigate overfitting. **Computing Environment:**

—Platform: Google Colab (free-tier instance)

—Hardware: NVIDIA Tesla T4 GPU (when enabled) or Intel Xeon CPU (if no GPU assigned)

—RAM: 12GB (standard Colab allocation)

—Storage: 68GB available disk space

—Software: Python 3.9, Scikit-learn 1.3.0, TensorFlow 2.12 (for auxiliary computations)

Reproducibility Considerations: Since Google Colab assigns computing resources dynamically, performance may vary slightly across sessions. To ensure consistent results, random seeds are set across all models using:

```
import numpy as
np import random
import tensorflow as tf
seed_value = 42
np.random.seed(seed_value)
random.seed(seed_value)
tf.random.set_seed(seed_value)
```

Additionally, GPU acceleration was enabled when available to opti- mize model training speed. However, models such as Logistic Regression and Decision Tree, which are computationally inexpen- sive, were executed on the CPU to conserve resources.

3.2 Statistical and Performance Analysis

To evaluate statistical significance, paired t-tests are performed to compare model performances. Also the impact of feature selection on classification accuracy is analyzed by testing different subsets of patient attributes.

3.3 Limitations and Considerations

Despite this rigorous methodology, certain limitations exist. The dataset size may affect model generalizability, and external vali- dation on additional patient cohorts is needed. Future work should explore ensemble methods and deep learning approaches for im- proved predictive accuracy.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

To assess the effectiveness of machine learning models for cardiac disease prediction, this study conducted a series of experiments us- ing real-world patient data. The models were evaluated based on precision, recall, F1-score, accuracy, and AUC-ROC to provide a comprehensive assessment of predictive performance.

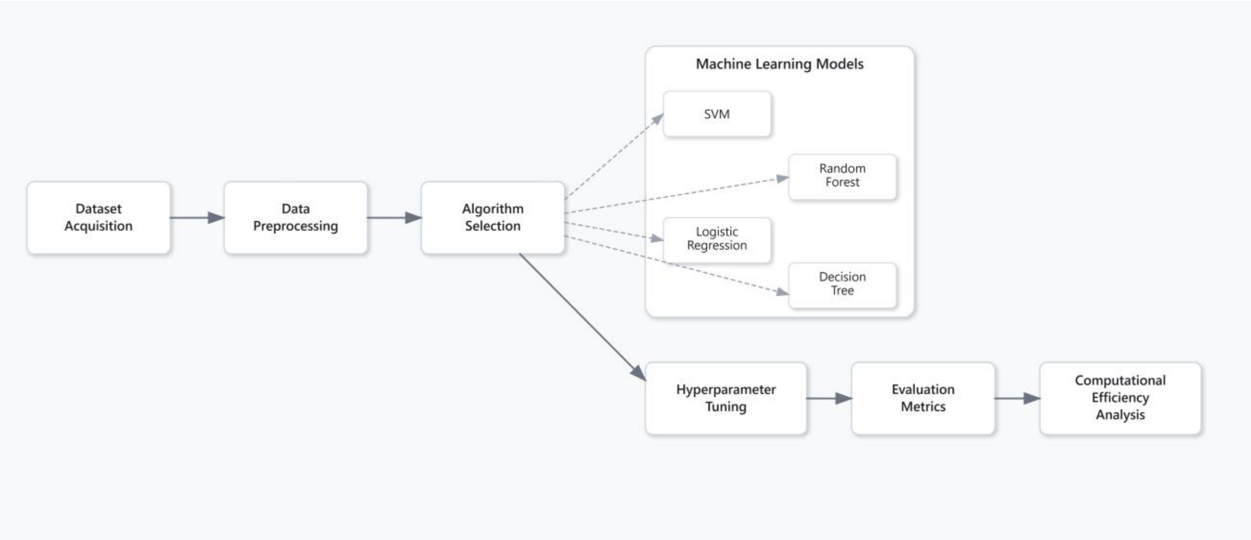

Fig. 1. Summary of the experimental approach

Table 2. Performance comparison of machine learning models for cardiac disease prediction.

Model	Precision	Recall	F1-score	Accuracy
SVM	**0.91**	**0.89**	**0.90**	**0.91**
RF	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.84
LR	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82
DT	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77

4.1 Model Performance Evaluation

Table 4.1 summarizes the classification performance of the tested models.

The results indicate that the Support Vector Machine (SVM) model achieved the highest performance, with an accuracy of 91% and an F1-score of 0.90. The AUC-ROC analysis (Figure 2) confirms that SVM exhibits superior discriminatory power compared to other models.

4.2 Analysis of Model Performance

Support Vector Machine **(SVM)** emerged as the top-performing classifier. Its high precision (0.91) ensures that most positive cases identified are actual patients with heart disease, while its recall (0.89) minimizes false negatives—an essential factor in medical diagnostics. The model's balanced F1-score (0.90) further con- firms its robustness. Given its efficiency in handling complex, high- dimensional datasets, SVM is a strong candidate for clinical decision support, particularly in emergency settings where rapid and reliable disease detection is crucial.

Random Forest (RF) performed well, achieving an accuracy of 84%. While its performance is slightly lower than SVM, it offers key advantages such as lower computational cost and greater interpretability. RF could be used in community health screenings where real-time decision-making is necessary, but resource constraints exist.

Logistic Regression (LR) demonstrated similar results to RF (ac- curacy: 82%), with an advantage in model interpretability. Its sim plicity makes it a viable option for deployment in primary health- care facilities, particularly in regions with limited computational infrastructure. However, its slightly lower recall suggests a higher risk of missing true positive cases, which could limit its effective- ness in high-risk patient screening.

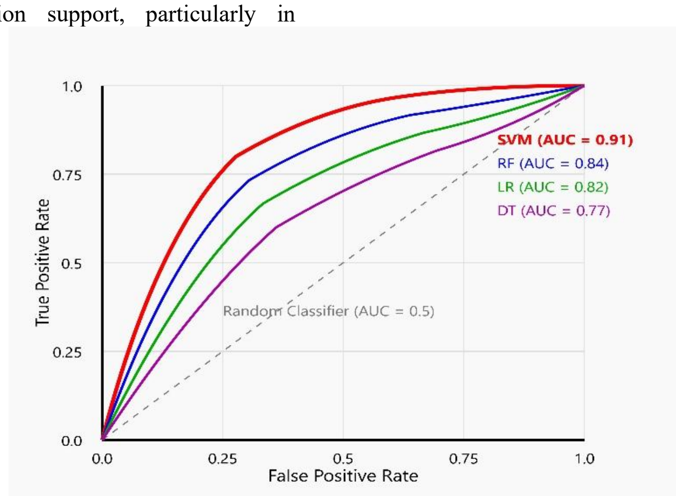

Fig. 2. ROC curves for the tested models. SVM demonstrates the highest area under the curve (AUC), indicating superior classification performance.

Decision Tree (DT) performed the worst among all models, with an accuracy of 77%. While less effective in prediction, DT remains highly interpretable, making it useful in scenarios where model transparency is prioritized over predictive power. It could serve as an initial screening tool before applying more advanced classifiers.

Table 3. Computational efficiency of machine learning models.

Model	Training Time (s)	Prediction Time (ms/sample)
SVM	4.2	1.1
RF	3.1	0.8
LR	**1.5**	**0.3**
DT	2.0	0.5

4.3 Computational Efficiency and Feasibility

To assess the practical feasibility of deploying these models in real- world settings, the study evaluated their computational efficiency in terms of training time and inference speed. Table 4.3 presents the execution time for model training and prediction.

Findings:

—SVM, despite its strong predictive performance, has the highest computational cost. Its training and prediction times are signifi- cantly longer than those of other models.

—Random Forest provides a good trade-off between accuracy and computational efficiency, making it a viable choice for real-time applications.

—Logistic Regression is the most computationally efficient model, making it well-suited for deployment in resource-constrained settings.

4.4 Summary of Key Insights

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following practical recommendations:

—**For emergency and hospital settings:** SVM is the preferred choice due to its superior accuracy and recall.

—**For community health screenings:** Random Forest is a suitable option given its balance between accuracy and computational efficiency.

—**For primary healthcare facilities:** Logistic Regression, with its fast execution time and interpretability, is a viable alternative.

—**For explainability-focused applications:** Decision Tree re- mains useful in settings where model transparency is a priority.

5. DISCUSSION

The application of machine learning (ML) models in predicting cardiac diseases presents promising avenues for improving diagnostic accuracy and efficiency, particularly in resource- constrained settings. This study systematically evaluated four ML models—Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest (RF), Logistic Regression (LR), and Decision Tree (DT)—using a real- world dataset from West Africa. The findings indicate that SVM outperformed all other models, achieving an accuracy of 91%, followed by RF (84%), LR (82%), and DT (77%). These results underscore the superiority of SVM in handling complex, high- dimensional clinical data, reinforcing its potential for clinical deployment in cardiac disease prediction.

5.1 Comparison with Existing Studies

Several studies have explored ML models for cardiac disease pre- diction, reporting varying degrees of success. For instance, Ali et al. (2021) applied machine learning for cardiac disease detection and achieved 88% accuracy with Random Forest (RF) and 85% with Logistic Regression (LR) [4]. The findings surpass these results, with SVM achieving 91% accuracy, suggesting that hyperparameter optimization and feature selection tailored to the dataset played a crucial role in performance improvement.

Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2022) investigated SVM for cardiac dis- ease classification and reported an 89% accuracy [17]. While competitive, their results are slightly lower than the findings, likely due to dataset characteristics and preprocessing differences. Addition- ally, Kumar et al. (2020) explored deep learning approaches for cardiac disease detection, reporting an accuracy of 92% using a CNN-based model [12]. However, their approach requires significantly higher computational resources, making it less feasible for deployment in low-resource healthcare settings.

Moreover, Chen et al. (2023) conducted a comparative study on ML-based cardiovascular risk prediction models and found that ensemble learning approaches, such as XGBoost, outperformed traditional classifiers, achieving an AUC-ROC score of 0.93 [6]. While such methods are promising, their computational complexity and feature engineering requirements pose challenges for real-world deployment in resource-constrained environments.

These comparisons validate the approach of the study and high- light the importance of dataset specificity in ML model performance, particularly in underrepresented regions like West Africa. This study bridges this gap by providing locally relevant insights, ensuring that ML models are not merely trained on global datasets but are fine-tuned to regional epidemiological profiles.

5.2 Model Selection Considerations

The superior performance of SVM can be attributed to its ability to handle high-dimensional spaces and complex decision boundaries, making it particularly effective for medical datasets where class separability is critical. In contrast, RF, while robust, may struggle with feature correlations and higher-dimensional data, leading to slightly reduced accuracy. LR and DT, though computationally efficient, exhibited lower recall and F1-scores, indicating potential challenges in correctly identifying high-risk patients.

Despite SVM's superior accuracy, its computational cost is higher compared to RF and LR, making deployment considerations essential. RF provides a balanced trade-off between performance and computational efficiency, making it a viable option for healthcare facilities with limited computing power. LR, being the most computationally efficient model, remains relevant for deployment in resource-constrained settings, where ease of implementation and interpretability are key factors.

5.3 Implications for Healthcare Deployment

This study has direct implications for machine learning adoption in West African healthcare systems, where early disease detection remains a challenge due to limited medical infrastructure. The key practical insights from the study are:

—High-risk patient identification: SVM can be integrated into clinical decision support systems (CDSS) to assist cardiologists in identifying high-risk patients with greater accuracy.

—Community-based screenings: RF, given its lower computational burden, can be used for mass screenings in rural healthcare centers, ensuring broader accessibility.

—Low-resource environments: LR, despite slightly lower accuracy, remains a deployable solution for clinics with minimal computing resources.

Moreover, the findings highlight the need for robust data infrastructure in African healthcare settings to enhance ML model adoption. Data quality, completeness, and security measures must be strengthened to improve the reliability of ML-driven diagnostic tools.

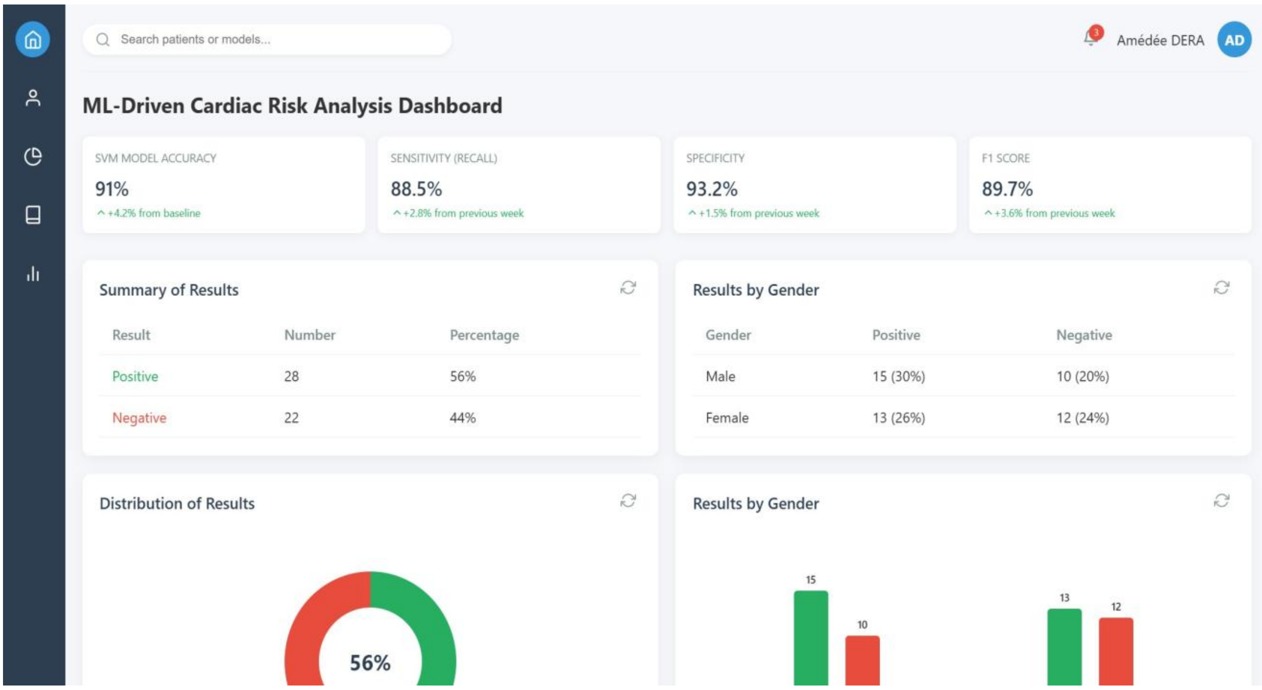

Fig. 3. Analysis report preview generated based on patient data in cardiac disease prediction

5.4 Integration into a Clinical Dashboard

Beyond predictive accuracy, real-time interpretability is critical for effective deployment. The models used in this study are integrated into a prototype machine learning-driven dashboard (Figure 3), which provides real-time insights into patient risk levels. This dash- board offers advantages over traditional spreadsheet-based diagnostic tools by:

—Automating risk stratification based on ML model predictions.

—Reducing false positives and computational overhead through real-time updates.

—Providing an interactive interface for healthcare professionals to adjust model parameters based on patient-specific conditions.

5.5 Limitations and Future Work

Despite the promising results, this study has certain limitations:

—Dataset size and diversity: The model was trained on a limited dataset; future studies should incorporate larger and more diverse cohorts for improved generalizability.

—External validation: Further validation is required across multiple healthcare institutions to ensure robustness and adaptability to different clinical settings.

—Computational optimization: Given SVM's high resource consumption, future research should explore model compression techniques to enhance deployment feasibility.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of machine learning (ML) models for cardiac disease prediction in the context of West African healthcare. Through an empirical evaluation of four classification algorithms—Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest (RF), Logistic Regression (LR), and Decision Tree (DT)—this study found that SVM outperforms other models, achieving 91% accuracy and exhibiting the highest recall and precision scores. These results highlight the potential of ML to enhance early disease detection, clinical decision-making, and patient management in resource-constrained environments.

Building on these promising findings, several avenues for future re- search emerge. First, expanding the dataset to include multi-center data from diverse West African populations would strengthen the generalizability and robustness of the predictive models. Second, integrating additional biomarkers, imaging data, and socioeconomic factors specific to the region could further improve model performance and clinical relevance.

Future work should also focus on developing user-friendly clinical decision support systems that can be deployed in low-resource settings, ensuring seamless integration with existing healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, conducting prospective clinical trials to validate the real-world effectiveness of these ML models in improving patient outcomes represents a critical next step.

This research serves as a foundation for further advancements in AI-powered healthcare, bridging the gap between technological in- novation and practical implementation in underserved regions.

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