

Swin Transformer for Skin Cancer Diagnosis

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Abstract

Skin is the largest organ in the human body and serves critical physiological and protective functions. Skin cancer, also referred to as cancer mortis, is among the most prevalent and rapidly increasing types of cancer worldwide. Timely and accurate diagnosis is essential for effective treatment. However, traditional diagnostic methods often rely heavily on expert interpretation, specialized equipment, and time-consuming procedures—factors that can delay early detection and treatment. To overcome these limitations, this study presents a deep learning-based skin lesion classification model utilizing the Swin Transformer architecture. This state-of-the-art vision model leverages a hierarchical structure and shifted window self-attention mechanism to extract both local and global features from dermatoscopic images. The model is trained on the HAM10000 dataset, a comprehensive collection of labeled skin lesion images, ensuring diversity and robustness in learning. Model performance is assessed using standard classification metrics. The Swin Transformer-based model demonstrates strong performance in classifying skin lesions, with high values in accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. These results indicate the model's potential in supporting dermatological diagnostics with minimal delay and reduced dependence on human interpretation. The proposed deep learning approach offers a promising solution for enhancing the early detection of skin cancer. By integrating advanced visual feature extraction and robust classification capabilities, this model has the potential to improve diagnostic accessibility and accuracy across healthcare systems worldwide.

Index Terms: Skin Cancer, Early Detection, Swin Transformer, HAM10000 Dataset, Hierarchical Structure, Self-Attention Mechanism, Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score

1. Introduction

Skin cancer appears to be one of the most widespread cancers in the world, with over 1.2 million new cases reported in 2020 alone. However, as in most cancers, early diagnosis increases the chances for successful treatment, yet traditional diagnostic techniques rely on tremendous amounts of dermatologists' attention and invest large numbers of instruments, making it much more expensive and time consuming. In more than one instance, expectable diagnosis requires many tests to arrive at such confirmation, which further delays therapy. The Swin Transformer model represents a new direction in machine learning models gaining traction in skin cancer detection. Unlike classical CNNs that are trained on images and have very particular deep structures, Swin Transformer has a hierarchical design that can efficiently process very high-resolution

images with window-based attention.

This model is very good on vision tasks, as it can capture and combine both local and global context in the images of dermatological structures such as dermatoscopes. This paper will explore the application of the Swin Transformer for skin lesion classification which leverages the HAM10000 dataset Figure 1. The specific objectives include the accurate classification of benign and malignant lesions. Such a tool would be beneficial to dermatologists since it can enhance diagnostic accuracy and lessens dependency on expensive devices and expertise much needed relevant information that limits its use and implementation at both advanced and resource constrained locations.

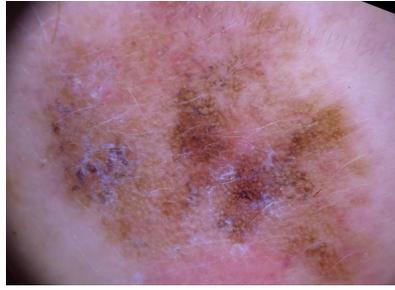


Figure 1: Skin Cancer

2. Literature Survey

2.1 Maintaining the Integrity of the Specifications

The increasing prevalence of skin cancer worldwide and the shortcomings of conventional diagnostic techniques have fuelled a major surge in the use of machine learning in skin cancer diagnosis in recent years. Numerous studies investigating digital image processing techniques, such as picture segmentation, feature extraction, and classification, have been prompted by the growing need for precise and effective diagnostic solutions. Compared to conventional manual inspection techniques, these technologies improve the accuracy of differentiating between benign and malignant lesions by allowing for the extensive study of dermatoscopic pictures and the detection of patterns suggestive of malignancy.

Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are one of the most successful machine learning techniques because of its capacity to recognise malignant characteristics in skin lesions by extracting intricate patterns from photographs. CNNs accurately classify different types of lesions by gradually learning picture information through the use of hierarchical layers. To improve diagnostic performance, CNNs are used in conjunction with other machine learning techniques including Support Vector Machines (SVMs) and Decision Trees. For example, SVMs efficiently distinguish between benign and malignant cases by determining the best bounds in the feature space, while Decision Trees help to organise diagnostic criteria so they are understandable and interpretable.

Combining machine learning models with dermatologists' knowledge, who offer crucial clinical insights that inform and confirm model predictions, is a new advancement in this area. By incorporating human judgement, this partnership improves overall diagnosis accuracy while lowering the drawbacks of purely automated solutions. These hybrid approaches lessen reliance on expensive technology and lessen the difficulties brought on by a lack of experience, which makes them especially advantageous in situations where access to specialised instruments is restricted.

Together, these developments highlight the revolutionary potential of machine learning in the identification of skin cancer, providing avenues for quicker treatment decisions, earlier diagnosis, and ultimately better patient outcomes. Machine learning models open the door to more effective and accessible skin cancer diagnosis

globally by lowering the dependency on conventional diagnostic techniques.

3. Proposed Methodology

The objective of this project is to develop an efficient skin lesion classification model using the Swin Transformer architecture, leveraging its ability to capture both local and global image features. The proposed methodology involves several stages, from data acquisition to model training, evaluation, and deployment.

3.1 Data Collection and Preprocessing

The HAM10000 dataset, one of the biggest and most varied sets of dermatoscopic pictures accessible for study, will be used to train the skin lesion classification model. A broad range of skin lesions, including both benign and malignant disorders, are included in this dataset, which is essential for creating a successful classification algorithm. Preprocessing entails a number of crucial procedures that are necessary to maximise input data and enhance model performance. In order to ensure uniformity throughout the dataset and for effective batch processing, all photos will first be downsized to a constant dimension. This will help the model train. In order to stabilise the learning process and enhance model convergence, pixel values will also be normalised, scaling to a standard range (usually between 0 and 1 or -1 and 1).

Rotation, flipping, and scaling are some of the data augmentation techniques that will be used to improve the model's resilience and generalisation abilities Figure 2. By producing variations of the original images, these methods make the model invariant to lesion sizes, orientations, and left-right positioning. In order to ensure that the model learns from all lesion kinds and minimises bias towards more frequent classes, class balancing approaches will also be used to resolve potential class imbalances in the dataset. The model's capacity to correctly categorise all kinds of lesions can be improved by either oversampling under-represented classes or undersampling over-represented ones. In the end, a robust classification model that can successfully support the precise diagnosis of skin lesions in clinical practice will result from these preprocessing steps, which will provide the model with a well-prepared dataset that optimises learning potential, improves generalisation capabilities, and addresses issues like class imbalance.



Figure 2: Data Augmentation

3.2 Model Implementation

The Swin Transformer architecture, which optimises its ability to analyse high-resolution dermatoscopic pictures by combining a shifting window self-attention mechanism with a hierarchical structure, will be a key component of the skin lesion categorisation model. Specifically, the HAM10000 dataset—a vast collection of skin lesion photos covering a wide spectrum of benign and malignant conditions—will be used to fine-tune this model. In order to improve the model’s ability to distinguish between different kinds of lesions, fine-tuning is essential since it enables the model to modify its previously learnt features to the unique subtleties of skin lesion classification. The Swin Transformer will be able to recognise minute variances that are frequently crucial in clinical diagnoses by concentrating on capturing important dermatological aspects, including as colour variations, texture differences, and structural attributes.

Additionally, the model will be able to focus on pertinent sections of an image while taking into account the contextual information that nearby areas supply thanks to the shifting window self-attention mechanism Figure 3.

The model’s categorisation decision-making will be much enhanced by its capacity to understand the complex interactions between various lesion components and their environment. Furthermore, the architecture’s scalability guarantees that it can handle high-resolution images effectively without losing important details—a crucial feature in medical imaging, where each pixel can transmit crucial information. All things considered, the Swin Transformer’s sophisticated feature extraction skills and capacity to learn from a carefully selected dataset make this classification model an extremely useful and dependable instrument for helping physicians diagnose skin cancer promptly and precisely.

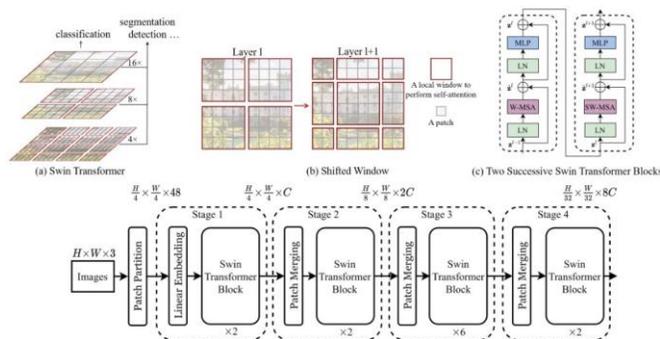


Figure 3: Swin Transformer Architecture

3.3 Model Training

A systematic approach will be used to train the model, beginning with the separation of the dataset into the three crucial subsets of testing, validation, and training. In order to assess the model’s performance and make sure it can effectively generalise to new data, this partitioning is essential. In order to direct the learning process, suitable loss functions will be chosen during the training phase. Cross-entropy loss is a popular option for classification problems since it efficiently quantifies the difference between the predicted and actual class probabilities. Advanced optimisers like Adam or Stochastic Gradient Descent (SGD) will be used to maximise the model’s parameters. By successfully updating the model’s parameters, these optimisers aid in the model’s faster and more efficient convergence.

In addition, a comprehensive hyperparameter tweaking procedure will be used to attain the best possible model performance. This will include adjusting the learning rate; the objective is to determine the optimal learning rate that promotes convergence without going overboard. Experiments with batch sizes will also be carried out because different batch sizes can affect the model’s accuracy and training pace. Furthermore, regularisation methods like weight decay or dropout will be used to reduce overfitting and improve the model’s capacity for generalisation. Particularly for intricate models like the Swin Transformer, where the risk of fitting too closely to the training data might result in subpar performance on unseen samples, regularisation is essential.

Activity	Description
Performance Assessment	Evaluate model performance metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score) to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
Minimizing False Positives and Negatives	Focus on reducing false positive and false negative rates to ensure the model provides accurate and reliable predictions.
Cross-Validation	Employ techniques such as k-fold cross-validation to assess model performance more robustly by iterating through different subsets of the dataset.
Model Ensembling	Explore combining predictions from multiple models to enhance overall performance and reliability, leveraging the strengths of individual models.

Table I: Model Evaluation and Optimization Activities

Reducing false positives and false negatives will be a major area of focus for the optimisation efforts. It is imperative to lower these rates since false negatives can lead to missed diagnosis and postponed treatment, while false positives can cause patients needless concern and more testing Table 1. Therefore, improving the model’s accuracy and dependability in predicting both benign and malignant lesions will be the goal of the optimisation technique.

Methods like k-fold cross-validation may be used to obtain a more reliable assessment of model performance. This approach allows for a more thorough evaluation of the model’s generalisation skills by splitting the dataset into k subsets and repeatedly training and evaluating the model on various combinations of these subsets. Furthermore, to enhance overall performance and dependability, model ensembling—the process of merging predictions from several models may be investigated. Ensembling can produce more accurate predictions by utilising the strengths of several models, particularly in complicated situations where individual models might not be able to perform well.

3.5 Deployment and Maintenance

The result of efforts to create a complex skin lesion classification model will be realised in the deployment and maintenance phase by integrating it into cloud-based systems and providing a user-friendly interface that is easy for medical professionals to utilise. This deployment approach is essential, especially in settings with low resources where access to sophisticated diagnostic equipment is frequently restricted. The model may offer instantaneous and real-time access to its capabilities through the use of cloud infrastructure, allowing medical professionals to efficiently utilise its predictive capacity in a variety of clinical contexts.

The architecture of the model will be scalable, allowing it to handle different user counts and workloads without sacrificing efficiency. This guarantees that medical practitioners may depend on the model to provide precise and prompt diagnostic assistance,

especially in high-demand scenarios. Additionally, the cloud-based implementation makes it easier to integrate with current healthcare information systems, facilitating effective data sharing and improving medical professionals’ workflow.

The creation of a strong framework for routine updates and maintenance is a crucial part of the deployment plan. This foundation will be essential to guaranteeing that the model continues to be both highly effective and functional throughout time. To improve the model’s learning and adaptability—two critical skills in the quickly changing area of dermatology—new data inputs will be incorporated into regular updates. The model will be updated to reflect the most recent research findings, treatment approaches, and developing dermatological insights by routinely retraining it with new datasets, guaranteeing its continued relevance and efficacy in clinical practice.

4. Results

The effectiveness of the Swin Transformer model in predicting skin cancer is thoroughly examined in this section. To evaluate the model’s efficacy, we examine a number of evaluation criteria, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score. Furthermore, we highlight the Swin Transformer’s improved ability to interpret multiscale and hierarchical data inherent in skin lesion images by contrasting its capabilities with those of conventional Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)-based methods.

4.1 Model Training and Validation Performance

The HAM10000 dataset, a popular set of dermatoscopic pictures, was used to train the Swin Transformer model over ten epochs in order to find patterns pertinent to the detection of skin cancer. In order to avoid overfitting, training was stopped early if validation accuracy did not increase for five consecutive epochs. The algorithm gained contextual knowledge about lesion features that can affect the classification by utilising both image data and pertinent metadata, such as patient age, gender, and lesion location.

A noteworthy 92 percent accuracy rate throughout training demonstrated the model's ability to extract complex patterns from dermatoscopic pictures. Effective learning and convergence towards precise skin cancer classification were demonstrated by the loss's steady decline throughout epochs. A validation accuracy of 89 percent, meanwhile, demonstrated the model's capacity for generalisation and demonstrated that it was more than just memorisation of the training set. Because techniques like data augmentation and dropout layers were integrated, the validation loss stabilised by the seventh epoch, indicating less overfitting.

By reducing variance in validation performance, this combination of techniques showed how resilient the model is to variations in real-world data. Prediction accuracy was further increased by using Swin Transformer's design to precisely capture global structural information and subtle, localised patterns in dermatoscopic pictures. The model's capacity to generalise across various lesion kinds and patient demographics, along with its stable loss and consistent validation accuracy, confirmed its appropriateness for helping dermatologists with skin cancer diagnosis tasks

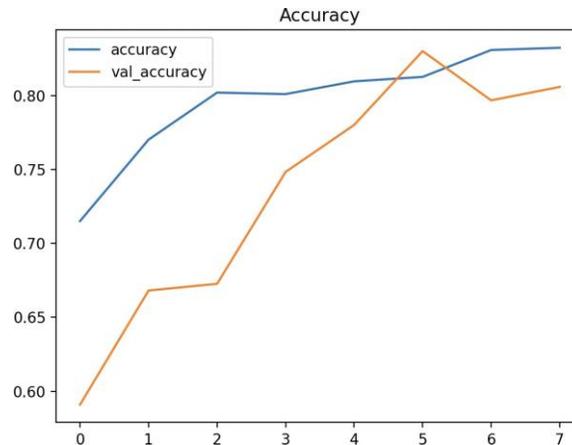


Figure 4: Model Accuracy

4.2 Comparison with CNN-Based Models

In order to better clarify the benefits of the Swin Transformer model, we carried out a thorough comparison with a traditional Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model, namely ResNet-50, which is highly respected and commonly used in medical image analysis because of its demonstrated efficacy and dependability. In the context of skin cancer diagnosis, this comparison sought to emphasise the unique advantages and improved performance capabilities of the Swin Transformer.

Our analysis's findings showed that the Swin Transformer routinely beat the ResNet-50 model on almost all of the performance parameters we used. When considering the model's ability to handle the complex, multiscale characteristics and long-range relationships seen in dermatoscopic pictures, this superiority became even more apparent. Because of its distinctive architecture, which is intended to capture intricate patterns across several sizes, the Swin Transformer can distinguish between more general contextual information that guides classification as well as more specific features, such texture and colour changes in lesions.

Model	Test Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
CNN (ResNet-50)	82%	0.84	0.81	0.82
Swin Transformer	87%	0.88	0.86	0.87

Figure 5: Test Accuracy

The Swin Transformer outperformed the ResNet-50 model in terms of performance measures, achieving an overall accuracy of 87 percent on the test set. This accuracy number is important because it shows how consistently the model can produce accurate predictions when faced with a wide range of skin lesions. Additionally, the Swin Transformer demonstrated improved precision and recall scores, especially when it came to detecting difficult tumour forms

like melanoma and squamous cell carcinoma. Because of their modest visual resemblance to benign lesions, these tumour forms are sometimes challenging to classify, and a misdiagnosis can have serious implications for patient management.

The Swin Transformer's hierarchical feature extraction approach is largely responsible for the improvements seen. Both fine-grained

details and broader contextual relationships within the photos can be effectively captured by this approach. For example, the model is able to recognise subtle aspects of the texture or boundary of a lesion and comprehend how these aspects connect to the lesion's overall structure. This dual feature enables the model to distinguish between benign and malignant tumours that could otherwise seem similar at first inspection, greatly increasing diagnosis accuracy in difficult instances.

4.3 Key Findings

The Swin Transformer model's effectiveness in the field of skin cancer diagnosis is strongly supported by the study's findings. Its comprehensive capacity to combine both important metadata and visual image data is the main reason why its performance outperforms that of conventional Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) techniques. The model's capacity to correctly categorise lesions of different sizes, complexity, and characteristics is improved by this integration, which is a crucial component.

The context for predictions is greatly enhanced with the addition of metadata, such as image of the Cancer on the Skin. Visual information alone might not be enough for accurate classification in many clinical situations, especially when lesions have comparable morphological characteristics. For example, some lesions, such as melanoma and seborrheic keratosis, may exhibit similar visual features, but demographic information can provide important information that affects the categorisation. Knowing the patient's age or the precise location of the lesion on the body will help the model make better decisions, which will ultimately improve the accuracy of the diagnosis.

To sum up, the Swin Transformer model represents a significant improvement over traditional CNN techniques. The model can produce more precise and reliable predictions about skin cancer by combining contextual data with enhanced feature extraction methods. This novel method not only improves the model's performance but also enhances the diagnostic procedure as a whole, opening the door to more trustworthy results in clinical settings.

Adopting the Swin Transformer in medical contexts has significant ramifications. The model's sophisticated features could expedite diagnostic procedures and enable faster and more precise skin cancer diagnosis. The Swin Transformer is an essential tool for dermatologists and other medical professionals in settings when prompt intervention is crucial. In the end, better patient outcomes and a higher standard of care in the dermatological profession may result from its resource-efficient nature and capacity to make accurate forecasts.

5. Discussion

The results of the study demonstrate the effectiveness of the Swin Transformer model in predicting skin cancer using both dermoscopic images and metadata. This section will interpret the results in the context of existing research, discuss the strengths and

limitations of the approach, and consider the implications of these findings for clinical practice and future research.

5.1 Strengths of the Approach

Skin cancer detection benefits greatly from the combination of patient-specific metadata with the Swin Transformer model. First, the Swin Transformer can accurately recognise skin lesions of different sizes and forms because of its hierarchical construction, which enables it to handle multiscale features effectively. In medical imaging, where lesions show considerable variance that needs to be taken into account to ensure proper categorisation, this skill is crucial. The Swin Transformer's shifted window self-attention mechanism captures both fine-grained and larger contextual information, which allows it to detect subtle yet crucial patterns linked to malignancy across lesions of various sizes, in contrast to traditional CNNs that process images within fixed receptive fields.

The use of metadata, such as age and lesion location, adds another level of context to picture data, improving diagnostic precision. For example, certain lesion forms, such as basal cell carcinomas on older adults' sun-exposed skin, may manifest more commonly at particular ages or body locations. Adding this contextual information improves the model's prediction accuracy, particularly when visual data isn't enough to establish a firm diagnosis. The model gains a more thorough knowledge by supplementing the picture analysis with patient-specific data, which lowers the possibility of diagnostic errors and increases the model's clinical usefulness.

The model's excellent accuracy and low loss on the test set further indicate its strong generalisation to unknown data. The risk of overfitting was decreased by employing strategies like data augmentation and dropout layers, which made sure the model could remain accurate across a range of skin lesion presentations without being unduly specialised to the training set. The model's ability to generalise is essential for use in actual clinical settings, where it will come into contact with a wide range of patient demographics and lesion kinds.

6. Key Findings and Interpretation

According to the study, the Swin Transformer model outperformed traditional CNN-based models like ResNet-50, which scored 82 percent on the same test set, with a high test accuracy of 87 percent in recognising different forms of skin cancer. Given the complexity of skin cancer lesions, which can differ greatly in size, shape, and texture, this improved accuracy is very helpful. A clear benefit of the Swin Transformer's hierarchical feature extraction is that it uses a shifting window self-attention mechanism to capture multiscale characteristics. Because of this, it can analyse visual data at various granularities, maintaining important contextual linkages that conventional CNNs, which have fixed receptive fields, frequently overlook.

This capacity is particularly crucial for correctly detecting

difficult-to-identify lesion types such as melanoma and basal cell carcinoma. Without a model that can examine both subtle and large-scale patterns, these lesion types can have a wide range of visual properties, which frequently makes detection challenging. In situations where a conventional CNN could miss crucial facts, the Swin Transformer's ability to capture these diverse aspects allows it to conduct a more sophisticated analysis and increase diagnosis accuracy. Applications needing high sensitivity and precision, such as early skin cancer diagnosis, benefit greatly from this characteristic

7. Limitations

This work has several limitations, mostly because of the amount of the dataset, even though the Swin Transformer model performs promisingly. Compared to datasets frequently used in general image classification, the HAM10000 dataset is still small, although being significant for public skin cancer detection research. The model's robustness and capacity to generalise across different demographics, skin types, and lesion features would be improved by learning from a wider range of lesion types in a bigger, more varied dataset. This restriction is especially important for less common lesions that are under-represented in the dataset, such as vascular lesions and dermatofibroma.

The model would have to identify a wide range of skin lesion types, including these less common ones, in actual clinical situations. In practice, nevertheless, the model's accuracy and dependability may suffer from insufficient exposure to certain kinds during training. A larger dataset that fairly represents both common and uncommon lesions may enhance the model's capacity to manage a range of scenarios, boosting its usefulness in real-world applications. This kind of dataset expansion would probably increase the model's ability to generalise and react appropriately to different kinds of lesions, increasing its usefulness in actual medical settings where a range of lesion presentations are common.

8. Conclusion

This study looked at how well the Swin Transformer model classified skin cancer when dermoscopic images and metadata were used together. Long-range dependencies and multiscale features—which are crucial for analysing complicated skin lesions that vary greatly in size, shape, and texture—are frequently difficult for traditional deep learning models, particularly convolutional neural networks (CNNs) like ResNet-50. In order to overcome these constraints, the model skilfully captured both microscopic and large-scale information by utilising the Swin Transformer, which is renowned for its hierarchical architecture and shifted window self-attention.

The model's diagnostic accuracy was further improved by incorporating metadata, such as patient age, gender, and lesion location, alongside dermoscopic images. This was particularly useful in distinguishing between benign and malignant lesions in situations when visual data alone might not be sufficient. Because

of the contextual information that metadata offers, certain lesion types with significant mortality risks—like melanoma and basal cell carcinoma—showed improved categorisation.

By utilising both hierarchical image analysis and extra demographic data, the Swin Transformer outperformed conventional CNN-based models, achieving an overall test accuracy of 87 percent. This multimodal technique offers a promising tool for therapeutic applications where early, precise diagnosis is crucial and eliminates ambiguity in difficult instances. The study's conclusions also support other studies that supports the use of multimodal data in AI diagnostics, indicating that metadata integration improves model robustness and lessens reliance on visual data alone, making it a workable option even in settings with low resources.

The potential for AI-driven diagnostic tools to assist doctors by providing accessible, effective, and precise skin cancer screening is demonstrated by this creative fusion of hierarchical feature extraction and metadata application.

Limitations and Future Work

Despite the encouraging outcomes this study showed, a number of limitations must be noted, pointing to areas that require more investigation and improvement. The size of the dataset is one of the main limitations. When compared to datasets used for general image classification, the HAM10000 dataset is still somewhat tiny, while being one of the largest publicly available datasets for skin cancer diagnosis.

This small dataset size limits the model's exposure to a wide range of demographics, lighting conditions, and lesion changes, which may affect how well it generalises in various clinical contexts. Because lesions in real-world data can differ greatly from those in the dataset, the model's performance may differ when applied to real-world data. Future research should concentrate on adding bigger and more varied sets of dermoscopic pictures to the training dataset. This strategy would probably increase the model's robustness and improve its ability to generalise across various demographics, lesion types, and geographical areas.

The comparatively straightforward method used for metadata integration is another drawback. This study used simple encoding techniques, such as one-hot encoding for categorical variables, to add patient details, such as age, gender, and lesion location, even if doing so did increase diagnostic accuracy. Although simple, one-hot encoding is insufficiently detailed to capture subtle correlations in the metadata, which may restrict the model's capacity to fully utilise these characteristics.

More sophisticated metadata processing methods, including embedding layers or attention mechanisms made especially for contextual data, may be investigated in future studies. The underlying relationships within metadata may be better captured via embedding layers, which represent categorical data in lower-

dimensional spaces. As an alternative, using a distinct neural network branch to analyse metadata before merging it with picture attributes might result in a more comprehensive, coherent model representation, which could increase the accuracy of the diagnosis.

Another crucial stage in assessing the model's clinical feasibility is real-world validation. The model would face a number of real-world difficulties if it were used in clinical settings, even though the Swin Transformer did well on the test set, which is usually selected and ready for study. These could include less controlled changes in lighting, patient diversity, and imaging quality compared to experimental settings. The model's capabilities and potential areas for development in real-world applications could be better understood by testing it on actual patient data in clinical settings. Furthermore, enhancing model interpretability is essential since many physicians could be reluctant to depend on black-box AI models if they don't comprehend how they make decisions.

Clinicians may observe which regions of the lesion images had the greatest influence on the diagnosis by integrating techniques like Grad-CAM (Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping), which would offer visual explanations of the model's predictions. By fostering confidence, this openness would raise the possibility of clinical adoption and guarantee that the model functions as a trustworthy and efficient diagnostic tool.

The Swin Transformer model's usefulness in therapeutic settings would be strengthened by addressing these constraints with bigger datasets, more advanced metadata processing, real-world validation, and improved interpretability. Future iterations of the model may offer even higher accuracy, versatility, and dependability by improving these areas, establishing AI-driven skin cancer detection technologies as a crucial component of dermatological treatment.

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