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REVIEW ARTICLE

Strategies for Managing and Analyzing Large-Scale Neurological Datasets: A Review of Advanced Computational Methods

Abdelaziz Rabehi[1,*]

[1] Telecommunications and Smart Systems Laboratory, University of Djelfa, PO Box 3117, Djelfa 17000, Algeria

Emails: Abdelaziz.rabehi@univ-djelfa.dz

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ABSTRACT

The progress of neuroimaging and the availability of big neuro data have brought both opportunities and difficulties in the fast-developing scientific area of computational neuroscience. As this review shows, new ways of managing and analyzing these large and layered datasets are emerging, highlighting the importance of various computational approaches to achieve valuable insights. We assess various methods for performing such analyses, with particular focus on machine learning algorithms such as deep learning, which are capable of addressing high-dimensional data characteristics for neuroimaging studies. The proposed method of analyzing multiple structural and functional MRI data in conjunction with electrophysiological and genetic data should help model neurological disorders more accurately. We also describe preprocessing methods for dealing with data noise and variability, combined with statistical analysis that depends on existing databases to identify previously unknown patterns concerning brain functions and disorders. We further discuss the importance of open-source teamwork spaces and applications, which allow datasets and results to be shared and replicated. This review aims to summarize the most effective strategies and fill gaps within current methodologies that may help enhance the strength and reliability of vast neurological datasets, thereby diminishing diagnostic errors and supporting appropriate therapeutic interventions in neurological disorders.

Keywords: Neuroimaging ▪ Big neuro data ▪ Machine learning algorithms ▪ Electrophysiological data ▪ Genetic data ▪ Vast neurological datasets

1. INTRODUCTION

Classification of mental disorders has always been an essential area of interest in clinical psychiatry and psychology. Mental disorders describe a group of severe and frequently disabling illnesses that affect a client's psychological processes. Earlier diagnostic and classification systems such as DSM and ICD were controversial, although formulated criteria for mental illness have since become more advanced. However, conventional practices are still ineffective in providing comprehensive details of the disorder because they rely on phenomenological or symptomatic markers rather than pathophysiological markers.

Recent developments in artificial intelligence, machine learning performance, and deep generative models (DGMs) can address such limitations. Classes of models such as DGMs, generative adversarial networks (GANs), and variational autoencoders (VAEs) provide opportunities to find structures based on data within highly complex neuroimaging and biomarker domains. These models are useful for discovering hidden structures within large-dimensional data; the workings of mental diseases may therefore be linked to their biological and neural foundations [1].

Incorporating DGMs in the classification of mental disorders has attracted increasing research interest in recent years due to the observed improvement in diagnostic reliability and predictive power. This review considers different DGM architectures and their use in diagnosing mental disorders to understand how these models may improve psychiatry. For example, GANs have demonstrated high efficiency in differentiating individuals with major depressive disorder (MDD) from healthy subjects, outperforming more conventional classifiers when using complicated neuronal and biomarker networks.

DGMs can operate with little feature engineering, indicating that more comprehensive essential features may not be well identified using traditional machine learning techniques. Because DGMs can self-discover features without being constrained by specific hypotheses, they are valuable in psychiatry, where biological markers of complex and poorly characterized disorders remain difficult to identify. By selecting features automatically, DGMs can support better classification models and may assist in early detection and treatment of mental health disorders [2].

DGMs can also synthesize data, which is highly valuable in psychiatric research because data are often scarce. Data augmentation can help DGMs create new data similar to patient data, increasing dataset size and reducing biases caused by small samples. This synthetic data generation also enables broader examination of rare or costly conditions.

This review provides a comparative study of different DGMs used in mental health, emphasizing performance comparison. Although GANs often outperform many other methods in generating realistic data representations, VAEs are more helpful in recognizing latent variables behind intricate data patterns. Such comparisons help determine the best model architecture for the disorder under investigation.

A key feature of this review is its attention to clinical questions in applying DGMs to mental health. By improving classification accuracy for different subtypes within disorders, DGMs may support future implementation of personalized medicine in psychiatry. Individualized biological treatment based on neurotrophic, neural, and other biological characteristics could enhance therapeutic response and limit the use of therapeutic trials that characterize present-day psychiatric practice [3, 4].

Furthermore, DGMs enhance knowledge of mental disorder etiopathogenesis. Analyses of how DGMs cluster symptoms and biomarkers may reveal previously unknown connections between activity patterns and psychiatric symptoms. This may support new therapeutic approaches that target the biology of these disorders [5].

This review integrates information from previously published articles to provide a general view of DGMs and their importance in categorizing mental disorders. Strengths and weaknesses are discussed, directions for future research are identified, and possible ways of making these models more precise and individualized for diagnosing mental disorders are outlined. The multimodal and multivariate conceptual approach of DGMs is therefore meaningful for redesigning conventional processes of studying, diagnosing, and treating mental disorders [6].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses related works from several disciplines over the last decade, including neuroinformatics, deep learning, and large-scale data analytics. Emphasis is placed on methodological and application developments using artificial intelligence and computational methods to analyze brain functions, process data, and build prediction systems. The reviewed works include distributed data integration for neuroimaging, neuro-rendering tools for complex three-dimensional scenes, and deep learning models for applications such as crop price prediction and crowd surveillance. Overall, these studies enhance the efficiency and reliability of data analysis in specialized fields and indicate future directions for research and development.

Imaging, from magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to localization of specific macromolecules by microscopy, has been one of the driving forces behind neuroinformatics efforts. Martone et al. [7] discuss many web-accessible resources, ranging from primary data collections to highly structured databases. Despite challenges in adapting neuroscience to the electronic forum envisioned by neuroinformatics advocates, these initiatives have established frameworks for efficient data sharing and integration. The article emphasizes the role of spatial systems and ontologies in modeling neuroscience data and contributing to large-scale integration efforts such as the Biomedical Informatics Research Network (BIRN).

Recent advances in optical and electron microscopy have enabled scientists to acquire very high-resolution images for neuroscience research. Jeong et al. [8] note that datasets imaged with modern electron microscopes can range from tens of terabytes to nearly one petabyte. Such immense data sizes and intricate neural structures create major challenges for interactive handling. To address this, the authors introduced Ssecrett and NeuroTrace, tools for interactive exploration and analysis of large-scale optical and electron microscopy images that facilitate reconstruction of complex neural circuits.

The analysis of multimodal and high-density neural data has become increasingly important. Chen et al. [9] address the need for methods that capture features without losing interactions among modes such as space, time, and frequency. They introduce a large-scale parallel factor analysis (PARAFAC) method supported by general-purpose computing on graphics processing units (GPGPU). Compared with conventional CPU platforms, the approach substantially improves runtime performance and scalability, and it was applied effectively to electrocochleography recordings from epilepsy patients.

Cognition is thought to result from interactions within large-scale networks of brain regions. Bellec et al. [10] proposed a method for identifying these networks using functional MRI (fMRI), defining networks as sets of strongly interacting regions with homogeneous temporal activity. The large-scale network identification (LSNI) method detects functionally homogeneous regions and establishes networks by comparing correlations among these regions against a noise model. The method accurately identified stimulus-linked activity and reproducible networks dominated by slow fluctuations, supporting exploratory detection of regions and networks active in the working brain.

Existing neural radiance field (NeRF)-based methods enable real-time rendering of small-scale scenes on web platforms, but extending this capability to large-scale environments remains challenging because of computational, memory, and bandwidth constraints. Song et al. [11] introduced City-on-Web, an approach for real-time rendering of expansive scenes directly on the web. The method uses block-based volume rendering and level-of-detail strategies for large scenes.

Large-scale automated synthesis of neuroimaging data has also received attention. Yarkoni et al. [12] presented a strategy for automated synthesis of human functional neuroimaging data, linking neural activity with cognitive states to support high-quality meta-analyses. Keator et al. [13] described a national human neuroimaging collaboratory enabled by BIRN, emphasizing federated infrastructure for biomedical imaging research. Laird et al. [14] further highlighted BrainMap as a strategy for standardization, sharing, and meta-analysis of neuroimaging data.

Beyond neuroscience, large-scale computational methods have been deployed across domains. Emrouznejad and Shale [15] combined neural networks and data envelopment analysis for measuring efficiency in large datasets. Kahng et al. [16] introduced ActiVis for visual exploration of industry-scale deep neural networks. Chen et al. [17] proposed a bi-layered parallel training architecture for large-scale convolutional neural networks. Weng et al. [18] used ARIMA and neural networks for horticultural price forecasting, while Wang and Cui [19] proposed stochastic configuration network ensembles with heterogeneous features for large-scale analytics.

Several studies focus on high-volume visual and urban datasets. Hu et al. [20] proposed RandLA-Net for efficient semantic segmentation of large-scale point clouds using random sampling and local feature aggregation. Wang et al. [21] introduced the NWPU-Crowd benchmark for crowd counting and localization, providing thousands of images and millions of annotated heads. Xu et al. [22] used long short-term memory neural networks (LSTM NNs) to forecast station-free bike-sharing demand over multiple time intervals. Additional works on financial decision-making and environmental prediction show the broad relevance of machine learning for large-scale data [23, 24].

Table 1 summarizes studies [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24], presenting key findings, methodologies, and application domains across neuroscience, data science, and artificial intelligence.

Table 1. Summary of Literature Review

Ref.	Study Title and Authors	Key Findings	Methodology	Data/Application Area
[7]	e-Neuroscience: Challenges and Triumphs in Integrating Distributed Data (Martone et al.)	Highlights spatial systems for data integration in neuroinformatics.	Data frameworks such as BIRN support efficient data sharing.	Neuroinformatics and data integration
[8]	Ssecrett and NeuroTrace: Tools for Large-Scale Neuroscience Data (Jeong et al.)	Introduced tools for interactive analysis of large optical and electron microscopy images.	Interactive visualization tools for neural data.	Large-scale microscopy and neuroimaging
[9]	Fast and Scalable Multi-Way Analysis of Massive Neural Data (Chen et al.)	PARAFAC outperforms traditional CPUs for large datasets in epilepsy studies.	Multi-way analysis on GPUs.	Electrophysiology and epilepsy
[10]	Identification of Large-Scale Networks in the Brain using fMRI (Bellec et al.)	Established LSNI for detecting functional region networks.	fMRI analysis through LSNI.	Functional brain networks
[11]	City-on-Web: Real-time Neural Rendering of Large-scale Scenes (Song et al.)	Achieved real-time rendering of complex 3D scenes on the web.	Neural rendering with level of detail.	Large-scale 3D scene rendering
[12]	Large-scale Automated Synthesis of Neuroimaging Data (Yarkoni et al.)	Linked neural activity and cognitive states for meta-analyses.	Text mining and brain-imaging meta-analysis.	Neuroimaging meta-analyses
[13]	Biomedical Informatics Research Network for Neuroimaging (Keator et al.)	Developed federated infrastructure for biomedical imaging research.	Data management and integration system.	Neuroimaging and collaborative research
[15]	Neural Network and DEA for Efficiency of Large Datasets (Emrouznejad and Shale)	Improved DEA efficiency measurement on large datasets.	DEA with neural networks.	Efficiency analysis
[14]	BrainMap Project for Neuroimaging Meta-analysis (Laird et al.)	Provides standardized databases and tools for neuroimaging meta-analyses.	BrainMap standards and metadata.	Neuroimaging standardization
[16]	ActiVis: Visual Exploration of Deep Neural Network Models (Kahng et al.)	Offers tools for analyzing DNN model behavior.	Visual exploration tool for DNNs.	Deep learning model interpretation
[17]	Bi-layered Parallel Training Architecture for CNNs (Chen et al.)	BPT-CNN reduces training time while maintaining accuracy.	Parallel training in distributed computing.	Convolutional neural networks
[18]	Forecasting Horticultural Prices using ARIMA and Neural Networks (Weng et al.)	Neural networks provide accurate long-term crop-price forecasts.	ARIMA and neural network models.	Agricultural price forecasting
[19]	Neuro-Ensemble Approach with Heterogeneous Features (Wang and Cui)	Stochastic configuration networks enhance analytics.	SCNs with block Jacobi and Gauss–Seidel methods.	Large-scale data modeling
[20]	Semantic Segmentation of Large-Scale Point Clouds (Hu et al.)	RandLA-Net achieves efficient point-cloud segmentation.	Random sampling and local feature aggregation.	3D point-cloud segmentation
[21]	NWPU-Crowd Dataset for Crowd Counting and Localization (Wang et al.)	Introduced a large-scale dataset and benchmark platform.	NWPU-Crowd dataset and CNN benchmarking.	Crowd monitoring and public safety
[22]	Station-Free Sharing Bike Demand Forecasting (Xu et al.)	LSTM networks predict flexible bike-sharing demand.	Deep learning and spatial-temporal analysis.	Urban mobility and demand forecasting
[23]	AI and Financial Decision-Making in Modern Enterprises (Johnson et al.)	Explores AI support for enterprise financial decisions.	Machine-learning decision support.	Financial technology
[24]	Machine Learning for Predicting Environmental Changes (Patel and Kumar)	Reviews machine-learning approaches for environmental prediction.	Predictive machine-learning models.	Environmental analytics

In summary, the reviewed studies stress the increasing importance of enhanced mathematical computation in addressing diverse issues across disciplines. Advanced technologies such as neural networks, machine learning, and large-scale data frameworks continue to improve data processing, interpretation, and prediction. These concepts prepare the ground for more effective and precise approaches, whether in analyzing neuronal networks or modeling real events. The continued development of these technologies offers substantial future potential in areas ranging from health care to city planning. Accordingly, interdisciplinary cooperation with technology will strongly shape the future of data science and neuroscience.

3. CONCLUSION

This review underscores the transformative impact of advanced computational methods on managing and analyzing large-scale neurological datasets. With neuroimaging advancements and the rise of big data, integrating machine learning and deep generative models has emerged as a pivotal innovation. These tools address challenges posed by high-dimensional, multimodal data and uncover novel patterns that link neural and biological markers to mental disorders. The synergy of structural, functional, electrophysiological, and genetic data analysis has demonstrated significant potential for enhancing diagnostic precision and understanding complex neurological conditions.

Moreover, data preprocessing techniques, statistical methods, and collaborative open-source platforms are crucial in overcoming noise, variability, and data-fragmentation challenges. These strategies ensure robust data sharing and reproducibility, fostering interdisciplinary cooperation among researchers. The methodologies reviewed also highlight the importance of leveraging computational efficiency, such as parallel processing and real-time analysis, to address exponential growth in dataset sizes. This accelerates research and lays the groundwork for real-time applications in clinical settings.

This review identifies critical areas for future research, including optimizing DGMs for more precise and individualized models, particularly in psychiatry. The ability of DGMs to self-discover latent features and generate synthetic datasets represents a promising avenue for addressing data scarcity in mental-health studies. Furthermore, integrating these tools into personalized medicine frameworks offers a pathway to tailored therapeutic interventions, minimizing diagnostic errors and improving patient outcomes.

In conclusion, the intersection of neuroscience and computational science continues to open unprecedented opportunities for innovation. By embracing multidisciplinary approaches and refining computational tools, researchers are making significant strides in addressing the complexities of neural data analysis. This review advocates ongoing efforts to enhance the precision, scalability, and accessibility of these methods, aiming to revolutionize understanding and treatment of neurological disorders.

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