

# Diabetes Mellitus Data Classification by Cascading of Feature Selection Methods and Ensemble Learning Algorithms

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Abstract—Diabetes is a chronic disease related to the rise of levels of blood glucose. The disease that leads to serious damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves is one of the reasons of death among the people in the world. There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2. The former is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin by itself. The latter usually in adults, occurs when insulin level is insufficient. Classification of diabetes mellitus data which is one of the reasons of death among the people in the world is important. This study which successfully distinguishes diabetes or normal persons contains two major steps. In the first step, the feature selection or weighting methods are analyzed to find the most effective attributes for this disease. In the further step, the performances of AdaBoost, Gradient Boosted Trees and Random Forest ensemble learning algorithms are evaluated. According to experimental results, the prediction accuracy of the combination of Stability Selection method and AdaBoost learning algorithm is a little better than other algorithms with the classification accuracy by 73.88%.

*Index Terms*—Diabetes mellitus, feature selection, ensemble learning, AdaBoost, Gradient Boosted Trees, Random Forest.

# I. INTRODUCTION

Diabetes is a chronic disease related to the rise of levels of blood glucose [1]. The disease that leads to serious damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves is one of the reasons of death among the people in the world [2]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>1</sup> some of key facts are as follows:

a) 1 in 3 adults aged over 18 years is overweight and

1 in 10 is obese. 1.6 million deaths are related to diabetes each year directly.

- b) 422 million adults have diabetes. Also, it is extrapolated that directly 1.6 million deaths were caused by diabetes in 2015.
- c) There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2. The former is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin by itself. The latter usually in adults, occurs when insulin level is insufficient.

The idea that the identification of best feature sets will lead manifold contributions to the classification of this disease. Furthermore, these features set may help field specialist. In this context, the main aim of this study is to investigate the importance of attributes. The performance comparison of well-known feature selection methods are discussed in order to determine the best feature sets. This study contains two major steps. The first one is to demonstrate the important attributes for the disease. The second one is to present the experimental results based on Gradient Boosted Trees (GBT), AdaBoost (AB) and Random Forest (RF) ensemble learning methods.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 examines related studies. Section 3 states the dataset. Section 4 explains the design process and the methods utilized. Section 5 presents experimental results. Finally, Section 6 contains the conclusion.

# II. RELATED WORKS

There are already many approaches in bordered of classifier algorithms and data mining techniques which were presented in literature for this subject. Dewangan and Agrawal designed an ensemble model by combining Bayesian classification and Multilayer Perceptron [2]. Shetty and Joshi designed and implemented a diabetes prediction and monitoring system. The symptoms rising diabetes are defined and applied to the prediction model

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.who.int/diabetes/en/index.html, 2017.

in this system. This system uses Iterative Dichotomiser 3 algorithm in order to help the user to know whether they are diabetic or non-diabetic [3]. Jain and Raheja presented promising approach in order to correct prediction the diabetes by deal with the different parameters. Their approaches, fuzzy verdict technique, handled out the information gathered from the patients. This technique, which takes into account both rules and physicians' knowledge, has better accuracy as compared to other prediction approaches [4]. Choubey and Paul proposed a methodology which is the combination of Genetic Algorithm and Multilayer Perceptron Neural Network classifier algorithm for Pima Indian Diabetes prediction. Genetic Algorithm is used for feature selection [5]. Bozkurt et al. classified the Pima Indian Diabetes data by using eight classifiers such as neural networks and its derivatives, the artificial immune system, and the Gini algorithm [6]. Osman and Aljahdali pointed out a method improving the accuracy based on the extracted significant diabetes attributes. In this context, they proposed an approach which integrated the Support Vector Machine algorithm with K-means clustering algorithm [7]. Kou et al. sought the ethnicity influences cardiovascular outcomes and complications in patients with type 2 diabetes. For the purpose of this, they determined whether cardiovascular outcomes in type 2 diabetes differ according to ethnicity, and whether ethnicity influences the effect of gender on these outcomes in Caucasians, East-Southeast-Asians, Middle-Easterners, South-Asians and Pacific-Islanders in [8]. Campbell et al. investigated the relationship between individual categories of adverse childhood experience and diabetes in adulthood in a sample of United States adults [9]. Karegowda et al. exemplified the applications of various ensemble methods for enhanced classification accuracy. Their model comprises of two stages. In the first stage, k-means clustering is employed to identify and eliminate wrongly classified instances. In the second stage, ensemble learning methods were performed [10]. In [11], the authors compared the performances of Linear Discriminant Analysis, Quadratic Discriminant Analysis, Naive Bayes and Gaussian process based classifiers in order to classify diabetes data. Gaussian process-based algorithm includes three kernels; linear, polynomial and radial and it is better than others. Moreover, the studies that demonstrate the relationship of this disease which has an important place in human health and other diseases are present too. For example, in [12], the authors focused on whether diabetes is associated with Alzheimer's disease and neurodegeneration in frame of clinical studies. In [13], the authors investigated the relationship between changes in glucose metabolism and various liver diseases as well as the particularities related with the diagnosis and monitoring of diabetes in liver disease patients. In [14], the authors asserted that Alzheimer's disease is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes and vice versa, and a growing body of evidence indicates that these diseases are connected both at epidemiological, clinical and molecular levels. In [15], the authors explored the novel findings in animal model and clinical

studies involving the use of anti-diabetic compounds as promising therapeutics for Alzheimer's disease.

## III. DATASET

The publicly available Pima Indian diabetes dataset<sup>2</sup> is discussed in this study. All patients female at least 21 years old, have the highest prevalence of diabetes [16-17] and incidence of non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus also referred to Type II Diabetes in the world [16, 18]. Table 1 shows the structure of the dataset, which have 9 attributes as 8 input and 1 output.

Table 1. Pima Indian Diabetes dataset attributes.

Attribute no.	Attribute			
1	Number or times pregnant (NTP)			
2	Plasma glucose concentration (PGC)			
3	Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg) (DBP)			
4	Triceps skin-fold thickness (mm) (TSFT)			
5	2-h serum insulin (mu U/mL) (H2SI)			
6	Body mass index (kg/m2) (BMI)			
7	Diabetes pedigree function (DPF)			
8	Age			
9	Class 0 and 1 (Diagnosis of type 2 diabetes			
	disease)			

The dataset consists of 768 patients; 268 patients are diabetic and the rest of them are non-diabetic. The output variable takes '0 or '1' values, where '0' and '1' are depict the non- diabetic instance and diabetic instance respectively. The chart which reflects data distribution is presented in Figure 3. As can be seen in this figure, the prediction of disease based on knowledge of these attributes which have mixed structure is very difficult.



Fig.1. Data distribution.

### **IV. DESIGN PROCESS**

# A. Data Normalization

The min-max normalization which protects the relationships among the original values [19] is a preprocess applied in order to perform the machine learning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/machine-learning-databases/pimaindians-diabetes

more efficiently. Original datum is converted into a value between the minimum and maximum, i.e. zero and one as given in (1) [20].

$$x' = \frac{x_i - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}} \tag{1}$$

where X' is the normalized value, Xi is the processed value, Xmin is the minimum value and Xmax is the maximum value in all X values.

# B. Feature Selection

Irrelevant features in dataset may confuse learning algorithms leading to false results and also consume memory and time [21]. By reducing the entire feature space to the best features set, over-fitting of the classifier can be block [22]. So, the classification performance is better. There are many studies on this subject in the literature. Alia and Taweel developed a new Feature Selection algorithm based on hybrid Binary Cuckoo Search and rough set theory in order to classify the nominal datasets. Their proposed algorithm achieves quite successful [23]. Enshaei and Faith applied the 'Targeted Projection Pursuit (TPP)' dimension reduction technique for feature selection on a range of gene expression datasets. They compared the performance of TPP with other feature selection techniques [24]. Liu and Aickelin proposed a novel concept of feature matrix, which constitutes the foundation for the irregular and big medical data, in order to detect the adverse drug reaction. They performed feature selection methods based on Student's t-test and Wilcoxon rank-sum test on the feature matrix so as to detect the significant features for adverse drug reaction [25]. In this study, the Recursive Feature Elimination (RFE), Stability Selection (SS) and Iterative Relief (IR) methods which were introduced in [26-28] respectively are employed in order to detect the important attributes for the disease.

### C. Performance Evaluation

The experimental and the actual results are evaluated by calculating the sensitivity (Sen), the specificity (Spe) and the Accuracy (Acc) metrics which are as follows:

$$Acc = (TP + TN)/(TP + FP + TN + FN)$$
(1)

$$Sen = TP/(TP+FN)$$
(2)

$$Spe = TN/(TN + FP)$$
(3)

where TP, TN, FP and FN are the numbers of true positive, true negative, false positive and false negative instances respectively. The Sen metric is the ratio of the number of actual positives found as disease to the number of total positives. The Spe metric is the ratio of the number of actual negatives found as non-disease to the number of total negatives. The Acc value is the ratio of the number of correctly diagnosed positive and negative instances to the total number of instances [29].

# V. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2 describes the block diagram of the proposed study. As shown in the flowchart, firstly, the dataset is normalized into range from 0 to 1 values by using the min-max normalization. After this step, this dataset is shuffled. And then, the dataset is divided into 60-40% 70-30% and 80-20% split of training and test sets respectively. That is, the dataset is separated randomly 3 times, part of 80,70 and 60% of dataset are used for learning step and part of 20-30 and 40% of dataset which are remaining parts are used for the testing step. Thus, three different train and test sets are obtained. In other words, 460 training and 308 test instances, 537 training and 231 test instances, 614 training and 154 test instances are obtained respectively. The information about obtained datasets is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Train and test data.

	Dataset 1 60 % Train and 40% Test		<b>Data</b> 70 % and 30 <sup>o</sup>	Train	Dataset 3 80 % Train and 20% Test	
	Train	Test	Train	Test	Train	Test
No	308	192	358	142	408	92
Yes	152	116	179	89	206	62



Fig.2. The block diagram of the proposed study.

Next, the RFE, SS and IR feature selection methods are applied to these datasets in order to find the best attributes set for outcome variable. The information of importance of attributes which are obtained by each algorithm is presented in Figure 3. Later, these datasets which include best attributes as input data are sent to the learning algorithms, and machine learning is performed for each one. So, the performances of the combination of feature selection and machine learning algorithms are handled.

				Lear	ning Algo	orithms				
Datasets		AB		GBT				RF		
		No	Yes		No	Yes		No	Yes	
	No	157	35	No	158	34	No	167	25	
Dataset 1	Yes	52	64	Yes	54	62	Yes	58	58	
		A	cc:71.75		Ac	c:71.43		A	cc:73.05	
		Sen:55.17			Sen:53.45			Sen:50.0		
		S	pe:81.77		Sp	e:82.29			pe:86.98	
		No	Yes		No	Yes		No	Yes	
	No	123	19	No	118	24	No	125	17	
	Yes	38	51	Yes	41	48	Yes	46	43	
Dataset 2		A	cc:75.32		A	cc:71.86		A	cc:72.73	
			Sen:57.3			en:53.93			en:48.31	
			pe:86.62			Spe:83.1	Spe:88.0			
		No	Yes		No	Yes		No	Yes	
	No	81	11	No	78	14	No	81	11	
	Yes	31	31	Yes	33	29	Yes	31	31	
Dataset 3		A	cc:72.73		A	cc:69.48		A	cc:72.73	
		Sen:50.0				en:46.77		Sen:50.0		
		Spe:88.04				pe:84.78		Spe:88.04		
A 11000 00	Acc: 73.	60	•	Acc: 70.92			Acc: 72.84			
Average	Acc. 75.	.00		Acc. 70	.92		Acc. 72.	.04		
FE-based models	5									
<b>FE-based models</b> Datasets	5	AB		GBT			RF			
		No	Yes		No	Yes		No	Yes	
	No	No 166	Yes 26	No	158	34	No	167	25	
		No	Yes							
Datasets	No	No 166 55	Yes 26	No	158 54	34	No	167 58	25 58	
Datasets	No	No 166 55 A S	Yes 26 61 cc:73.70 en:52.59	No	158 54 Ac Se	34 62 c:71.43 n:53.45	No	167 58 Ac	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0	
Datasets	No	No 166 55 A S	Yes 26 61 cc:73.70	No	158 54 Ac Se	34 62 c:71.43	No	167 58 Ac	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0	
Datasets	No	No 166 55 A S	Yes 26 61 cc:73.70 en:52.59	No	158 54 Ac Se	34 62 c:71.43 n:53.45	No	167 58 Ac	25	
Datasets	No	No 166 55 A S S	Yes 26 61 cc:73.70 en:52.59 pe:86.46	No	158 54 Ac Se Sp	34 62 c:71.43 n:53.45 e:82.29	No	167 58 Ad	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98	
Datasets Dataset 1	No Yes	No 166 55 A S S No	Yes 26 61 cc:73.70 en:52.59 pe:86.46 Yes	No Yes	158 54 Ac Se Sp	34 62 c:71.43 n:53.45 e:82.29 Yes	No Yes	167 58 Ad 55 Sj	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes	
Datasets	No Yes No	No       166       55       A       Si       No       123       47	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19	No Yes No	158 54 Ac Se Sp No 122 46	34 62 c:71.43 n:53.45 e:82.29 Yes 20	No Yes No	167 58 Au S S No 125 47	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17	
Datasets Dataset 1	No Yes No	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42	No Yes No	158 54 Ac Se Sp No 122 46	34     62       c:71.43     n:53.45       e:82.29     Yes       20     43	No Yes No	167 58 Au S S J No 125 47 Au	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17 42 cc:72.29	
Datasets Dataset 1	No Yes No	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43	No Yes No	158 54 Ac Se Sp No 122 46	34     62       c:71.43    53.45       e:82.29     Yes       20     43       cc:71.43    53.45	No Yes No	167 58 Sj No 125 47	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17 42 cc:72.29 en:47.19	
Datasets Dataset 1	No Yes No	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43       en:47.19	No Yes No	158 54 Ac Se Sp No 122 46	34     62       c:71.43    53.45       e:82.29     Yes       20     43       cc:71.43    63       en:48.31    63	No Yes No	167 58 Sj No 125 47	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17 42	
Datasets Dataset 1	No Yes No	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S       S	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43       en:47.19       pe:86.62	No Yes No	158     54       Ac     Se       Sp     122       46     Ac       Si     Si       Si     Si	34     62     c:71.43     n:53.45     e:82.29     Yes     20     43     cc:71.43     en:48.31     pe:85.92	No Yes No	167 58 No 125 47 A4 S6 S1	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17 42 cc:72.29 en:47.19 pe:88.03	
Dataset 1 Dataset 2	No Yes No Yes	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S       No       No	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43       en:47.19       pe:86.62       Yes	No Yes No Yes	158     54       Ac     Se       Sp     122       46     Ac       No     122       46     Se       No     No	34     62     c:71.43     n:53.45     e:82.29     Yes     20     43     cc:71.43     en:48.31     pe:85.92     Yes	No Yes No Yes	167 58 No 125 47 At S0 S1 No	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes cc:72.29 en:47.19 pe:88.03 Yes	
Datasets Dataset 1	No Yes No Yes	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S       No       No       No       33	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43       en:47.19       pe:86.62       Yes       12       29	No Yes No Yes	158     54       Ac     Se       Sp     122       46     Ac       Si     Si       No     122       46     Si       Si     Si       No     82       33     Si	34   62   c:71.43   n:53.45   e:82.29   Yes   20   43   cc:71.43   en:48.31   pe:85.92   Yes   10   29	No Yes No Yes No	167     58       Ad     S       S     S       No     125       47     Ad       S     S       No     79       34     S	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 17 42 cc:72.25 en:47.15 pe:88.03 Yes 13 28	
Dataset 1 Dataset 2	No Yes No Yes	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S       No       80       33       A	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43       en:47.19       pe:86.62       Yes       12	No Yes No Yes	158     54       Ac     Se       Sp     122       46     Ac       Si     Si       No     82       33     Ac	34     62     c:71.43     n:53.45     e:82.29     Yes     20     43     cc:71.43     en:48.31     pe:85.92     Yes     10	No Yes No Yes No	167     58       Sg     Sg       No     125       47     A       Sg     Sg       No     125       47     A       Sg     Sg       No     79       34     A	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17 42 cc:72.29 en:47.19 pe:88.03 Yes 13 28 cc:69.48	
Dataset 1 Dataset 2	No Yes No Yes	No       166       55       A       S       No       123       47       A       S       No       123       47       A       S       No       80       33       A       S	Yes       26       61       cc:73.70       en:52.59       pe:86.46       Yes       19       42       cc:71.43       en:47.19       pe:86.62       Yes       12       29       cc:70.78	No Yes No Yes	158     54       Ac     Se       Sp     122       46     Ac       No     122       46     Ac       Sg     No       82     33       Ac     Sg	34     62     c:71.43     n:53.45     e:82.29     Yes     20     43     cc:71.43     en:48.31     pe:85.92     Yes     10     29     cc:72.08	No Yes No Yes No	167     58       S     S       No     125       47     A       So     S       No     79       34     So	25 58 cc:73.05 Sen:50.0 pe:86.98 Yes 17 42 cc:72.29 en:47.19 pe:88.03 Yes 13	

Table 3. Experimental	results fo	or all training	and test datasets.



The experimental results are presented in confusion matrix structure and the performance metrics of algorithms are given related in parts in Table 4. The best results are bolded. According to the results for example, out of 116 data which is considered as positive, the SS-AB model found that 69 of them are positive. Also, out of 192 data which is considered as negative, it found that 165 of them is negative. Therefore, the SS-based AB model gives the values of 73.38% Acc on the Dataset 1. Out of 89 data which is considered as positive, the same model found that 43 of them are positive. Also, out of 142 data which is considered as negative, it found that 124 of them is negative. Therefore, the SS-based AB model gives the values of 72.29% Acc on the Dataset 2. Out of 62 data which is considered as positive, the same model found that 32 of them are positive. Also, out of 92 data which is considered as negative, it found that 81 of them is negative. Therefore, the SS-based AB model gives the values of 73.38% Acc on the Dataset 3. The overall averages of the experimental results, which are obtained from each model, are given in Table 4. In this direction, this table presents the performance comparison of these learning algorithms.

Table 4. Overall	accuracy	results
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	Learning Algorithms			
Feature Selection Algorithms	AB	GBT	RF	
IR	73.60	70.92	72.84	
RFE	71.97	71.65	71.61	
SS	73.88	73.16	73.45	



Fig.3. The importance of attributes; a) The results obtained with IR Method, b) The results obtained with RFE Method, c) The results obtained with SS Method.

# VI. CONCLUSION

Diabetes which is a common cause of death is a chronic, metabolic disease related to the rise of levels of blood glucose. Besides many studies carried out, in this study the authors investigated the performances of the three ensemble learning methods. This study includes two phrases. In the first phrase, the dataset is divided 3 times randomly, parts of 60%, %70 and 80% of dataset for learning step and parts of 40%, 30% and 20% of dataset which are remaining parts for the testing step. Afterwards, feature selection algorithms are employed on these datasets in order to identify important attributes. In the second stage, the performances of the ensemble learning methods are evaluated. These datasets including important attributes as the input data sent to these learning algorithms. And so the best model is investigated. The proposed method is tested on public Pima Indian Diabetes dataset which has been well-placed in the literature. For this purpose, the performances of the cascade models which include well-known feature selection algorithms and the ensemble learning algorithms are evaluated on pre-processed dataset. The experimental results show that SS feature selection method more successful than other methods and SS-AB cascade model is more successful than other learning algorithms for all three datasets. Based on the experimental results, it may be stated that feature selection improves the performance of diabetes mellitus prediction. However, the fact that the performances of these studies are between 70% and 80%. The successes of the models are not very well even if machine learning is performed using important variables for outcome variable. Consequently, there is no strong discrimination of sample data space used for this disease. In other words, it can be interpreted that there are many other unknown factors for the disease.

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