Histopathology case report machine learning for disease prediction and search on social media and PubMed

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Problem

Large-scale annotated image datasets, e.g. ImageNet, are essential in testing new methods for natural vision tasks.

Diagnosing cancer is a challenging vision task requiring highly-trained pathologists.

Pathologists seek additional opinions for challenging cases, but on-site colleagues are not always immediately available.

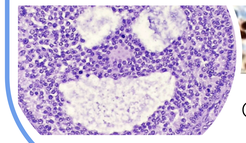


Solution

We obtained a large annotated pathology dataset from social media and PubMed, and implemented a bot (@pathobot) to search and classify.

Mentioning this bot alongside a pathology image leads it to search for similar cases and predict disease states via machine learning.







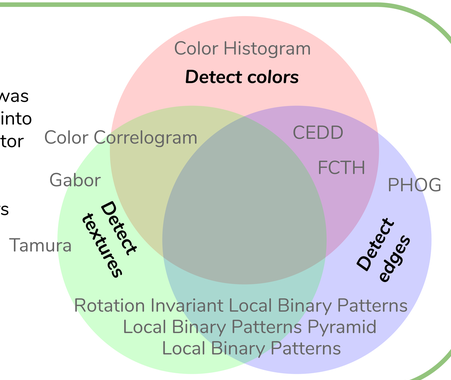


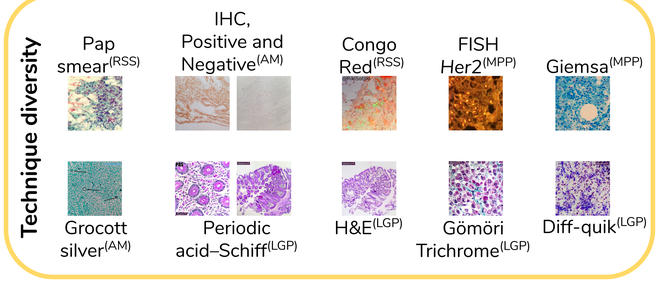
@pathobot

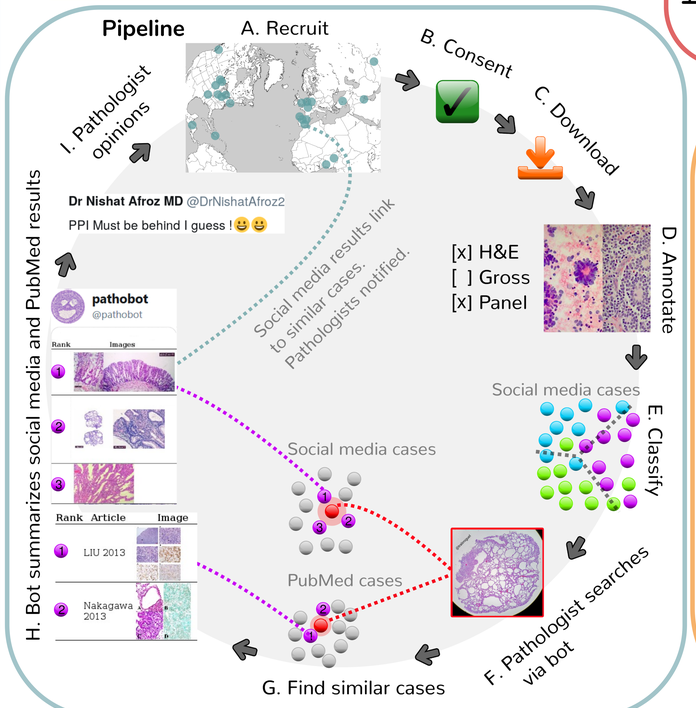
Tweets	Following	Followers
750	405	480

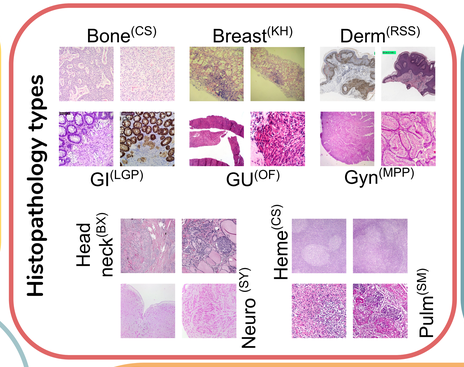
Features

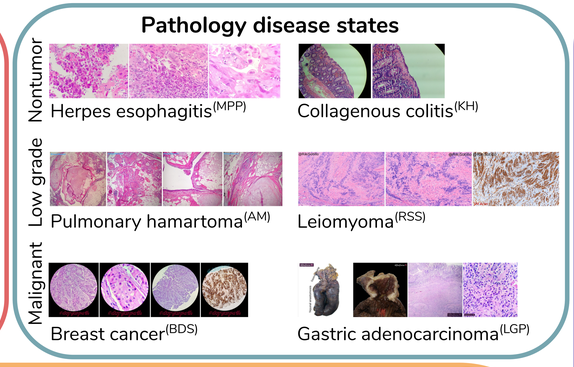
Each image was transformed into a feature vector of 2412 numbers. These vectors are used for machine learning, prediction, and search.

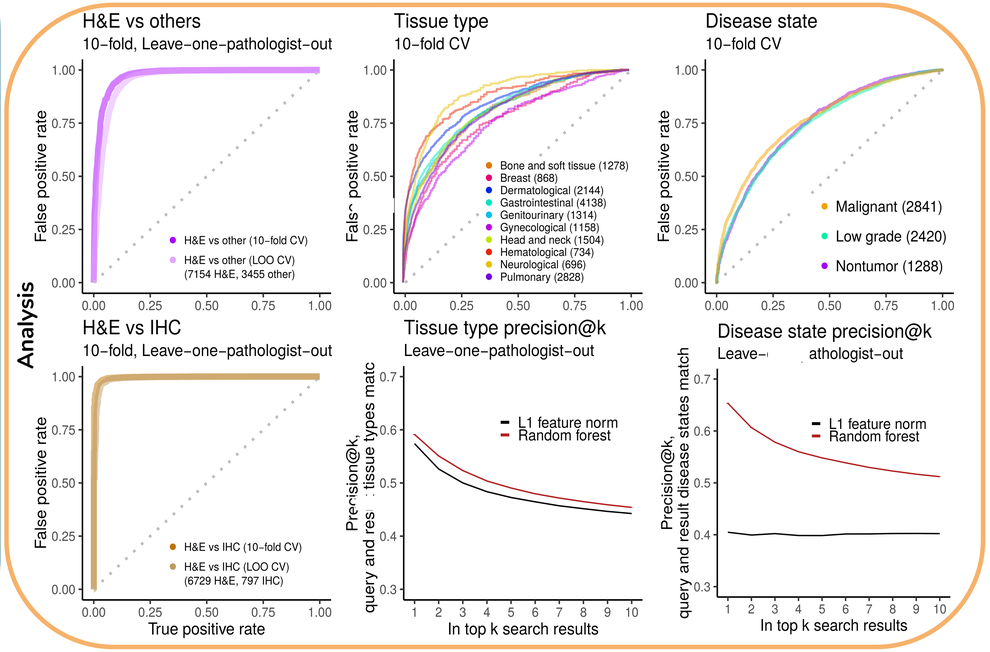












Conclusions

We constructed a dataset of 6,351 Twitter messages from 25 pathologists worldwide, and used it for machine learning. This was supplemented with 113,161 H&E stained images from PubMed, for sampling rare diseases.

Machine learning on these images, in conjunction with pathologist dialogue, facilitates diagnoses and decisions about next steps in patient care. This is accomplished by connecting pathologists all over the world, searching for similar cases, and generating predictions about disease states in shared images.

To our knowledge, this is the first use of social media data for pathology case search, and the first pathology study prospectively tested in full public view on social media. We expect our project to cultivate a more connected world of physicians and improve patient care worldwide.