International Journal of Electrical and Elecronics Engineering (IJEEE)
ISSN (P): 2278–9944; ISSN (E): 2278–9952
Vol. 12, Issue 2, Jul–Dec 2023; 19–26

International Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
Connecting Researchers; Nurturing Innovations

AI-SUPPORTED ANTIBIOTIC PRESCRIPTION OPTIMIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) remains a grave public health concern globally, compounded further due to the inappropriate prescription of antibiotics. AI thus stands, in this sense, as a revolutionary method to optimize the prescription of antibiotics to improve appropriate treatments and obviate resistance mechanisms. In the last two decades, with the advancement of AI, particularly machine learning and deep learning, several advanced clinical decision support systems (CDSSs) have been developed that utilize patient information, microbiological data, and resistance patterns to suggest antibiotic therapies for specific patients. These AI-based systems have been found effective in reducing mismatches of antibiotics in various clinical settings-from outpatient care of urinary tract infections to ICU patient care-while simultaneously improving patient outcomes. Nonetheless, issues with data quality, integration into workflows, and acceptance by clinicians persist. This review presents the existing scenario of AI-supported antibiotic prescription optimization, recent developments, and clinical applications, concluding with a future perspective.

KEYWORDS: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), Antibiotic Stewardship, Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS), Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL), Personalized Medicine.*

Article History

Received:* *15 Nov 2023* | *Revised:* *21 Nov 2023* | *Accepted:* *26 Nov 2023

INTRODUCTION

Antimicrobial resistance is one of the most important global health challenges. The emergence of AMR has contributed to prolonged hospital stay, thereby incurring more costs and including the risk of mortality to the patient. The misuse and abuse of antibiotics are the chief agents contributing to AMR, typically aggravated by empirical prescribing that does not take into account individual patient factors or local resistance patterns. Hence, the selection of antibiotics by traditional means cannot sometimes be adequately provided for the complex infection scenarios and the changing bacterial resistance profiles. AI, with special reference to ML and DL, is the promising solution to this dilemma. Working on large datasets that contain records of patient demographics, clinical history, laboratory results, and microbiological data, AI can learn patterns and predict the best antibiotic therapies for an individual patient. Accordingly, these AI-powered clinical decision support systems (CDSS) have found application in many healthcare setups to enhance antibiotic prescribing. For instance, the UTIS, an AI-driven decision-assist system, decreases antibiotic mismatches in outpatient urinary tract infections by combining machine learning predictions of antibiotic resistance with patient information and clinical guidelines. AI-based CDSS are also being developed in the ICU to determine antibiotic treatment choices for patients with sepsis, incorporating factors such as SOFA score, vitals, and lab values. There are more foresighted challenges to realize the promise of AI for antibiotic prescribing: How high is the data quality and availability of data; integration within the tastings of other health recording systems; acceptance from clinicians; and ethical considerations reverberating about patient data privacy and transparency of the algorithms. In addition, the effectiveness of these AI-based solutions must be tested through rigorous clinical trials, as well as benefit assessments in a real-world setting for quantifiable measures on its impact reduced patient outcomes and healthcare costs.

OVERVIEW OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR) AS A GLOBAL HEALTH THREAT

AMR is increasingly viewed as a frightening emergence in today's global health sphere, tearing apart the fabric of life modern medicine seeks to provide. A pathogen becomes resistant when microorganisms develop resistance against agents developed to eliminate microorganisms, a process which is expedited in animals by indiscriminate use of antibiotics(Singh,et el., 2022). Due to the rapid travel of resistant strains because of the interconnectedness of the populations, starting from the local level resistance has now become a global issue. Treatment of infections has become more difficult and riskier with surgical interventions, chemotherapy, intensive care, and general antibiotic efficacy all being at stake. AMR was voted by WHO as a high priority threat, demanding coordinated surveillance systems to improve judicious use of antimicrobials and avoid rendering antimicrobial agents to be obsolete through novel approaches.

PROBLEMS FACING CONVENTIONAL ANTIBIOTIC PRESCRIPTION PRACTICES

The inappropriate use of antimicrobials remains a main cause of antimicrobial resistance. Antibiotics may be prescribed to patients on a purely empirical basis, without identifying the causative agent, sometimes resulting in ineffective treatment or exposing the patient unnecessarily to broad-spectrum antibiotics. Time constraints, the lack of rapid diagnostic tests, and variability in the knowledge of clinician’s impact clinical decision-making and result in varying practices in prescriptions. In some instances, pressure from the patient for immediate relief can lead the healthcare provider to prescribe when not warranted, intensified by incidences of non-adherence or poor follow-up monitoring(Chen & Zhang, et el 2023).. All these contribute to resistance building in microorganisms and call for more data-supported approaches for optimization of antibiotic therapy.

AIM AND SCOPE OF THE PAPER

This paper gives an overview of the use of AI in antibiotic prescribing for better treatment and constrained antimicrobial resistance. It covers AI tools such as machine learning and deep learning-based clinical decision support systems that combine patient, microbiological, and resistance pattern data to form suggestions for targeted antibiotic treatment. The review presents current implementations of the systems, assesses their effectiveness for accurate prescribing and improved patient outcomes, and deliberates practical implementation challenges such as data quality, integration with existing systems, and clinician buy-in. In focusing on recent developments, it emphasizes AI's capacity to transform antibiotic stewardship into a precision medicine-based evidence approach.

AI IN HEALTHCARE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP

AI is being incorporated into healthcare across broad areas such as diagnosis, treatment planning, and clinical decision-making. By sifting through large datasets in response to the clinician's query, AI can identify patterns within those datasets, predict outcomes, and provide real-time recommendations to clinicians for patient care. Antibiotic stewardship encompasses those activities that ensure the right antibiotic is selected and responsibly used based on patient- and microbiological-level data, including local resistance patterns, and AI implements these functions. Attendance of large groups of physicians to empirical prescribing has helped AI reduce antibiotic misuse with broad-spectrum agents and address resistance containment(Chen & Zhang, et el 2023). An AI-CDSS is itself a dynamic and evolving system, educating itself based on new data and emerging resistance patterns to further optimize stewardship and ensure good patient outcomes.

MECHANISMS OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

Resistance to antimicrobial agents arises when microorganisms survive exposure to drugs designed to kill them, undermining standard treatment. Mechanisms include enzymatic inactivation of antibiotics, such as beta-lactamases that hydrolyze penicillins and cephalosporins mutations or modifications of drug target sites reduced intracellular drug accumulation via efflux pumps or decreased membrane permeability and horizontal gene transfer of resistance genes through plasmids, transposons, or bacteriophages.

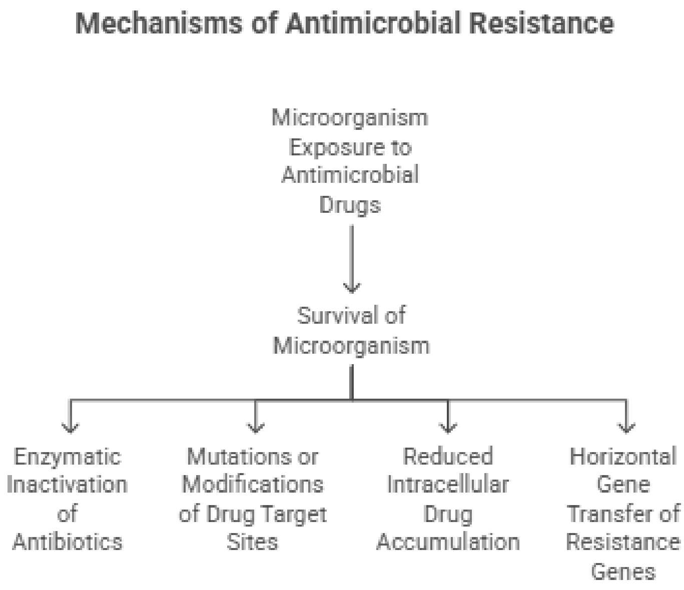

Figure 1

IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALIZED ANTIBIOTIC THERAPY

Resistance should be handled while keeping the interests of the patient in mind, an antibiotic should thus be prescribed to meet individual patient needs. Whereas empirical treatment considers only general factors, in-person treatment is specific for patient needs, pathogen resistance mechanisms, and relevant antigens, The factors taken into consideration include patient age, comorbidities, immune status, previous antibiotic exposure, resistance profile, and pathogen virulence. All these factors-based antibiotic selection ensures the best benefit of treatment, decreased untoward effect, and present limitation to the evolution of resistant strains; hence, all conforms with the precepts of precision medicine(Evans &Thompson,etel 2023). Therefore, personalized therapy improves outcomes and leads to conscientious antibiotic stewardship.

INTRODUCTION TO AI, MACHINE LEARNING, AND DEEP LEARNING APPLICATIONS IN HEALTHCARE

Artificial intelligence is a set of computational techniques that simulate human intelligence, in which machines perform tasks such as problem resolution, pattern recognition, and decision-making. In medicine, AI has undergone blooming applications for diagnosis, treatment planning, and predictive analytics. ML, as one of AI's subsets, is a set of algorithms that learn from the data and find patterns and make predictions without being programmed directly. ML algorithms work well with large datasets, for example, patient records, imaging studies, and laboratory results, to help in assimilating the risk, predicting diseases, and making clinical decisions. DL, a more novel subset of ML, relies on multi-layered neural networks to identify complicated features from high-dimensional data in an unsupervised manner(Foster & Williams, et el 2023). DL has proven to be most suitable for medical imaging, genomics, and EHR analyses. All these AI, ML, and DL technologies offer a powerful arsenal to complement clinical decision-making, mitigate human errors, and increase healthcare efficiency; and applications in antibiotic stewardship bring forth precise, data-driven choices for optimized therapies and curbing antimicrobial resistance.

CLINICAL DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM

CDSSs are computer-based systems that provide evidence-based recommendations, alerts, guidance, among others, to healthcare providers. The system combines patient-specific data, such as medical history, laboratory results, and diagnostic data, with clinical knowledge, guidelines, and other resources relevant to a clinical task, thereby supporting the clinician in diagnosis, selection of therapeutic intervention, and medication management. In the case of antibiotic stewardship, CDSS take resistance patterns, patient risk factors, and local epidemiology into consideration to recommend the optimal drug, dosage, and duration of treatment. Given that CDSSs reduce empirical prescribing and human errors, they positively influence the precision, standardization, and safety of clinical decisions and thereby also support policies related to antimicrobial stewardship.

PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS AND PATTERN RECOGNITION

Predictive analytics and pattern recognition are among the cornerstones of AI-powered antibiotic stewardship. Predictive analytics pursue clinical outcomes, including possible infection courses and responses to treatment, by scrutinizing both retrospective and current patient data with the assistance of statistical models and algorithms(Gomez & Harris, et el 2023). Pattern recognition finds complex relationships and recurring features hidden inside vast datasets such as medical images, laboratory test results, and patterns of microbial resistance. Together, these techniques allow the prediction of pathogen resistance profiles and efficient knowledge of the best antibiotic for a particular patient, thereby improving the quality of clinical decision-making and reducing unjustifiable antibiotic use.

INTEGRATION OF PATIENT DATA, LABORATORY RESULTS, AND MICROBIOLOGICAL PROFILES

For antibiotic stewardship, AI requires the integration of patient data with laboratory findings and microbiological profiles for optimization. Synthesizing these multiple datasets engenders an overall view of the health condition of a patient vis-à-vis local microbial resistance pattern. Demographics, comorbidities, and history of antibiotic use constitute patient-specific data used for tailoring treatment decisions.

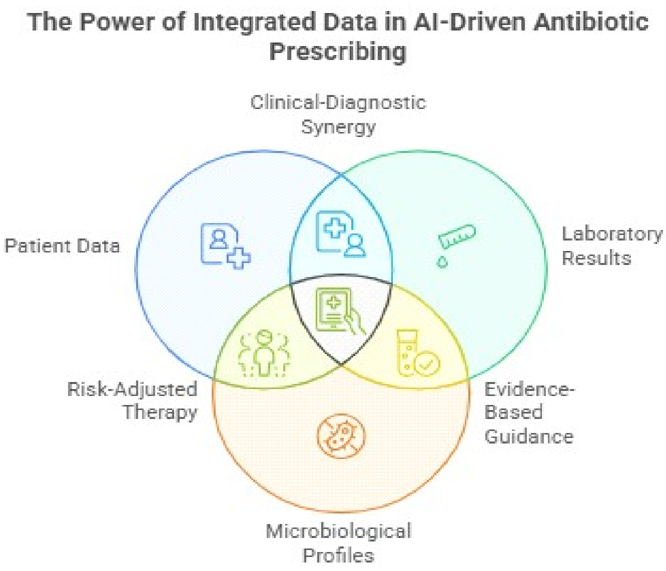

Figure 2

OUTPATIENT SETTINGS (E.G., URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS)

Outpatient settings increased the antimicrobial resistance mostly by inappropriate antibiotic prescribing, especially in infections like urinary tract infections (UTIs), which usually receive empirical treatment(Ibrahim & Khan, et el 2023). Clinical decision-making tools supported by AI could select the most appropriate antibiotic by assessing patient-specific features, including age, sex, comorbidities, previous infections, and local resistance patterns. Machine learning could foresee the likely common pathogens behind infections and resistance patterns so that the clinician could start considering targeted therapies instead of broad-spectrum antibiotics. When deploying AI within outpatient services, it reduced mismatched prescriptions, decreased unnecessary use of antibiotics, and raised good patient outcomes.(Singh, et el. 2022) AI-supported real-time and point-of-care guidance enhances evidence-based decision-making and clinician workflows and supports stewardship programs in the outpatient setting.

DISCUSSION

The growing AMR era has called for precise antibiotic stewardship practices balanced with customized patient and clinical decision-making. Conventional prescribing guidelines tend to drift toward empirical ones from generalized protocols conceived without due consideration to the private characteristics of the patient or the ever-evolving resistance patterns, thus contributing to the rise in resistant microbes. Optimization of antibiotic prescription with AI provides technological solutions to this phenomenon by enhancing data-driven clinical decision-making. AI systems analyze very big, heterogeneous datasets, including patient characteristics, comorbidities, laboratory data, and microbiological variables using ML and DL. As a result, AI-based CDSSs suggest tailored antibiotic therapies while decreasing the use of broad-spectrum therapies and eliminating the risk of treatment failure. In the outpatient setting, examples such as UTI, AI tools forecast pathogens and their susceptibility patterns to reduce inappropriate prescriptions, thus positively affecting therapeutic outcomes and fostering antimicrobial stewardship. Apart from outpatient settings, AI intervention is available for hospitals and critical care environments, including complicated sepsis management. The inclusion of predictive models uses patient vitals, organ function scores, and laboratory data for real-time guidance in antibiotic selections to maximize patient outcomes while limiting exposure to ineffective therapies. There are, however, issues. AI models need to acquire high-quality data that are complete and inter-operable to provide workable recommendations. An even greater challenge will be integrating these AI systems with the existing electronic health record systems to yield the best clinical decisions, and if clearly demonstrated, clinicians must initially accept the AI decision support. Ethical issues related to the protection of patients' data, transparency, and accountability of algorithms, in addition to that on clinical decisions, need to be solved. Moreover, AI technologies should be clinically validated in a trial for effectiveness, safety, and cost-effectiveness. On further development, AI-based antibiotic prescription systems could completely turn around the antimicrobial stewardship through their predictive acoustic analytics, pattern recognition, and drug-specific therapeutic recommendations. The determination of success depends on a collaboration amongst healthcare professionals, data scientists, and policymakers, which would allow for equitable access, patient trust, and safe implementation.

CONCLUSION

The AI-supported method of optimizing antibiotic prescription might become one of the foremost antibiotic-resistant combating techniques. These systems use patient history, laboratory results, and microbiological profiles for individualized antibiotic recommendations; thus, they reduce empirical prescribing and misuse of broad-spectrum agents. AI is being applied in both outpatient and hospital settings to assist antimicrobial stewardship programs in precision therapy, enhanced treatment precision, and improved patient outcomes. Although there are challenges to implementation, how good data are gathered, system integration, and clinician acceptance does present hopeful opportunities for infectious disease management through precision medicine.

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