Cervical cancer diagnosis based on cytology pap smear image classification using fractional coefficient and machine learning classifiers

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords:

Cytology image DCT transform Haar transform Machine learning Pap smear Doctors and pathologists have long been concerned about determining the malignancy from cell images. This task is laborious, time-consuming and needs expertise. Due to this reason, automated systems assist pathologists in providing a second opinion to arrive at accurate decision based on cytology images. The classification of cytology images has always been a difficult challenge among the various image analysis approaches due to its extreme intricacy. The thrust for early diagnosis of cervical cancer has always fuelled the research in medical image analysis for cancer detection. In this paper, an investigative study for the classification of cytology images is proposed. The proposed study uses the discrete coefficient transform (DCT) coefficient and Haar transform coefficients as features. These features are given as a input to seven different machine learning algorithms for normal and abnormal pap smear images classification. In order to optimize the feature size, fractional coefficients are used to form the five different sizes of feature vectors. In the proposed work, DCT transform has given the highest classification accuracy of 81.11%. Comparing the different machine learning algorithms the overall best performance is given by the random forest classifier.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cervix is the lower part of the uterus that connects to vagian where cervical cancer occurs, when normal cells in the cervix change into cancerous cells. The development of the cancer cells normally takes several years to happen. With the proper screening if the abnormal cells are detected at the early stage, the cancer can be healed completely. Cervical cancer can be detectable by cytological study of cells collected from the cervix. There are various screening processes available where pap smear is most widely used [1]. Figure 1 shows the autonomy of women's cervix.

Cervical cancer accounts for around 6% to 29% of all malignancies in women in India. The age adjusted overall incidence of cervical cancer varies significantly between registries, with the high rate 23.07/100,000 at Mizoram and the low rate 4.91/100,000 at Dibrugarh district. Visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA) have sensitivity of 67.65% and specificity of 84.32%, magnified VIA have sensitivity and specificity 65.36% and 85.76% respectively, visual inspection with Lugol's iodine (VILI) has sensitivity of 78.27% and specificity of 87.10%, cytology (pap smear) has sensitivity 62.11% and Specificity 93.51, and

human papillomavirus have 77.8% and 91.54%, respectively [2]. High-quality cytology screening may not be feasible for wide-scale implementation in developing countries due to a lack of necessary infrastructure and quality control. As a result, cervical cancer screening programmes based on automated pap smear image analysis should be implemented as an integral part of primary health-care infrastructure in resource-constrained countries.

The normal cervix when gets infected from the papillomavirus, the normal cell develops into the precancerous lesions [1]. The precancerous lesions can be tested with various screening methods to find the abnormalities in the cervix. If the human papillomavirus (HPV) infection persists for a longer period the precancerous lesions develop into cervical cancer. The overall development of the cervical cancer process is shown in Figure 2.



Various attempts have been made by different researchers to automate the pap smear test which will assist the pathologists to accurately predict cervical cancer and with less time and effort. Most of the work focuses on cytology and histopathology images analysis to predict cancer. Artificial Intelligence also has great potential to provide faster and cheaper screening methods [3] as it is facilitated with a wide range of optimization algorithms [4]-[7]. In the proposed research work the cytology image classification is done by extracting energy coefficients as features from the pap smear cytology image and machine learning classifiers are used to predict the abnormal and normal cancer cells. Following are the main contributions of the proposed work:

- 1) A novel technique for cytology image classification using the transformed image energy coefficient and machine learning classifier.
- 2) Feature extraction from pap smear cytology images using two transforms: discrete cosine transform and Haar transform.
- 3) Classification using machine learning classifiers like simple logistic, Bayesnet, Naïve Bayes, random tree, random forest, decision table, and part.
- 4) Feature size reduction using the fractional energy coefficients.
- 5) Detailed analysis of results obtained by the proposed technique using accuracy, false positive rate precision, recall, mean square error and mean absolute vale of error.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

There is various image classification techniques proposed in literature which are based on the spatial or the transformed contents of the image. The various contents can be the colors, textures or shapes in the images that can be used as features to classify the image in one of the predefined classes. In cytology image classification, the feature vectors are attributes of the nucleus or the cytoplasm of a cell such as shape or morphology of a cell, perimeter, area, eccentricity and thinness ratio.

Arya *et al.* [8] has used the texture features and to recognize the contour of the nucleus and cytoplasm 1st order histogram, discrete wavelet transform local binary patterns and gray-level co-occurrence matrix are used. To classify the single cell images artificial neural network and support vector machine are used. Chankong *et al.* [9] proposed a single core thresholding method based on edge and patch based fuzzy C-means clustering to remove cell edges to preserve sharpness of nucleus boundaries. Bora *et al.* [10] extracted

color and texture features using generalized gaussian density descriptors of ripplet type I transform and the second order statistics of gray level co-occurrence matrix. Edge detection with a fuzzy system is used to segment cytoplasm and nucleus. Hemalatha and Rani [11] suggested that the proposed enhanced edge detection technique based on a fuzzy approach gives better accuracy for cervical cancer detection. Bhargava *et al.* [12] extracted histogram of oriented gradients features from segmented cervical cells and performed classification to categorize the cervical cells into cancer and non-cancerous using artificial neural network, k-nearest neighboring and support vector machine. All the methods proposed above depend particularly on the segmentation of nucleus and cytoplasm features; they usually detect only round shapes, are rigid rules that are not flexible, edge detection subject to user-defined parameters, and energy minimization consumes time. To overcome these problems, deep learning methods are proposed by other researchers.

The deep learning approach reviewed in [13] can directly process raw images and offers automated learning of features based on specific objective functions such as detection, segmentation and classification. Different existing pre-trained models like ResNet-50, ResNet-152, and visual geometry group (VGG) are used in the literature for classification of pap smear images. For segmentation the mask R-CNN is applied on the whole slide cell image, outperforming the previous segmentation method in precision, recall and ZSI. For classification, VGG-like Net is used on whole segmented cells in [14]. In the case of cervical cancer, Xiang *et al.* [15] developed a deep learning method based on convolutional neural networks (CNN) with YOLOv3 as the baseline model. To improve classification performance, an additional task-specific classifier was added. The presence of untrustworthy annotation was handled by smoothing the distribution of noisy labels. The evaluation revealed that the model has a high sensitivity but a low specificity. Rahaman *et al.* [16] proposed a hybrid deep feature fusion that archives high classification accuracy with deep feature and commented it is better than other methods that depend on segmentation of nucleus and cytoplasm hand crafted features.

Various models for cervical cancer diagnosis based on deep convolutional neural networks, including Alexnet, VGGnet, Resnet, and GoogleNet architectures are explored in literature [17]. In [18] authors proposed transfer learning-based feature extraction using DarkNet19 or DarkNet53 networks in an exemplar pyramid structure and the proposed feature generator creates 21,000 features. Table 1 shows the summary of recent research for automatically classifying the pap smear cytology images using deep learning.

Reference	Year	Dataset	Method	Number of classes
[19]	2021	Mendeley LBC SIPaKMed	ResNet-50 + VGG-16+	4
			DenseNet-121 + Inception v3) and PCA,	
			GWO	
[20]	2021	SIPaKMed	Graph convolutional network	5
		Motic Subset1		7
[21]	2021	SIPaKMeD	Deep learning – ResNet-152	5
[22]	2021	SIPaKMeD	Deep learning- Compact VGG	5
[23]	2021	SIPaKMeD	Ensemble of CNN Models	2
[24]	2020	SIPaKMeD	AlexNet	5

Table 1. Summary of recent work done on pap smear cytology image classification using deep learning

The deep learning models have proven to have high accuracy but the implementation of the deep learning architectures necessitates a large amount of data and memory computation [25]. So along with these basic contents the transform domain is explored for image compression and image classification. To generate the transformed content of the images different orthogonal transforms are used. Orthogonal transforms help in better energy compaction. Various transforms proposed in literature are Cosine, Sine, Walsh, Kekre, Haar, Hartley, Slant, and Hardmard [26]. Up to our knowledge transform contents are not yet used to classify the cytology pap smear image. In this paper discrete coefficient transform (DCT) and Haar transform are used.

3. PROPOSED WORK

Basic principle used for cervical cancer diagnosis is the cytology image classification. During the classification process; there are three phases: pre-processing, feature extraction and classification in one of the predefined classes; here in the pre-processing stage image resizing is done to get the equal size of the feature vectors. The two different transforms are experimented to get the energy coefficients that are used as the feature from the cervical cytology images. The different feature size vectors are formed by using the proposed row mean of the fractional energy coefficient method. These different size feature vectors are experimented with seven different machine learning classifiers to get the best classification accuracy. The block diagram of the proposed methodology is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Proposed methodology block diagram

3.1. Preprocessing

The size of the input image should be same for all the images as feature formed should also be of the same size. The images from the standard dataset are of different sizes so the input images are resized before extraction of features. All the training and testing images are resized to 256×256 .

3.2. Feature extraction

In the proposed work DCT and Haar transform are used to obtain features from color cytology images. To reduce the complexity, transforms are applied to the columns of the images. Then the row mean of the column transformed images are calculated and used as the features for classification. The performance of feature vectors in various sampling sizes in image classification are experimented [27].

3.3. Column transformed image

A column transformed cytology image is one in which the transform is only applied to each column of the image. The (1) can be used to generate a column transformed image.

$$[T] \times I(x,y) = I'(i,v) \tag{1}$$

Where, T = orthogonal transform matrix and I' = column transformed image.

3.4. Row mean

Row mean refers to the set of averages of the intensity values of the respective rows [28]. The row mean is depicted in (2). Row mean is calculated of the column transformed images to reduce the size of the feature vector.

$$Row Mean Vector = \frac{Mean of Row 1}{Mean of Row n}$$
(2)

3.5. Feature vector generation

Step for feature vector generation are [10]:

- Step 1: extract the planes red, blue and green of cytology pap smear image.
- Step 2: apply transform (DCT and Haar) on the column of red, green and blue plane to get the column transformed image.
- Step 3: as shown in (2) calculate row mean.
- Step 4: generate a feature vector by considering fraction coefficients of each plane. For instance, consider the first 25 coefficients of the red plane, first 25 coefficients of the blue plane and first 25 coefficients of the green plane which will generate a feature vector of 75 sizes.

3.6. Feature vector variations

Feature vectors are generated by considering fractional coefficients of five different sizes. The process of forming the feature vectors is demonstrated in Figure 4. The first feature vector is generated by taking all the coefficients with size of 256×3 . Then the first 100 coefficients are considered which resulted in a size of 100×3 feature vector. Next, the first 75 coefficients are used to generate a feature vector of size 75×3 . Then only the first 50 coefficients were used to generate a feature vector of size 5×3 and finally the 15×3 feature vector was generated using just the first 15 coefficients.



Figure 4. Formations of feature vectors

3.7. Machine learning classifiers

Classification is a machine learning method that determines which class a new object belongs to based on a set of predefined classes [29]. There are numerous classifiers that can be used to classify data, including decision trees, bays, functions, rules, lazy, meta, and so on. In this work we have used different classifiers belonging to the different families and performance comparison is to evaluate the best classifier. From the Bayes family Bayesian Net and Naïve Bayes are used. Simple logistic method of function family, part and decision table methods is used from the rule family.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the experimentation and result analysis. Following sections are as 4.1 describes experimentation environment, 4.2 describes the various performance measures used, and 4.3 describes the performance analysis of the proposed methodology. In detail analysis of the results obtained are presented further.

4.1. Experimentation environment

The proposed technique is implemented using Matlab with Intel core i5 processor and 4 GB RAM. To classify the smear cytology images into normal and abnormal we have used the standard Herlev dataset. The Herlev dataset [30] consists of 917 single cell images that belong to seven different classes. Seven classes dataset is converted to normal and abnormal. Normal class contains 242 images while 675 images belong to malignant class. Figure 5 shows the sample images from the Herlev dataset.



Figure 5. Cervical cell cytology images of Herlev dataset

4.2. Performance measure

To test the performance of classification systems various performance measures are used in literature. True positive (TP) is the number of correctly labeled positive samples, true negative (TN) is the number of correctly classified negative samples, false positive (FP) is the number of negative samples classified as positive, and false negative (FN) is the number of positive instances predicted as negative (FN). Following measures are used to measure the performance of the proposed work. Accuracy: the number of successfully classified points (predictions) divided by the total number of predictions. Accuracy is calculated as shown in (3).

$$Accuracy = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$
(3)

False positive rate (FPR): it is the percentage of false positives against all positive predictions. In (4) shows the false positive rate.

$$False \ Positive \ Rate = \frac{FP}{FP + TN} \tag{4}$$

Precision: precision is the number of positive class predictions that are actually positive class predictions. It is calculated as shown in (5).

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$
(5)

Recall: recall is the number of correct positive class predictions made out of all correct positive examples in the dataset. In (6) shows the formula for the calculating recall.

$$Recall = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$
(6)

MAE: measures the average magnitude of the errors in a set of forecasts, without considering their direction.

$$MAE = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} |y_j - \hat{y}_j|$$
(7)

RMSE: it is a quadratic scoring rule which measures the average magnitude of the error.

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} (y_j - \hat{y}_j)^2}$$
(8)

4.3. Performance analysis

The proposed technique for cervical cytology image classification is analyzed using various performance measures. DCT and Haar transformed contents considering the energy coefficient are used as features to classify the pap smear cytology image into abnormal and normal. Seven different machine learning classifiers are compared based on the classification accuracy.

Feature vectors are generated by using the fractional energy coefficients of different sizes to minimize the feature vector size. Table 2 shows the results of using the DCT transform and feature vector of size 256×3 . The highest accuracy of 81.11% is given by the Decision table classifier. By considering the first hundred coefficients the feature vector of size 100×3 was formed. Table 3 shows the results with 100×3 feature vector size. Random forest has given the highest accuracy of 76.14%.

Table 2. Performance of proposed technique with 256×3 feature vector using DCT transform

Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	74.23%	0.622	0.703	0.742	0.35	0.43
Naïve bays	78.16%	0.331	0.784	0.782	0.21	0.46
Bays net	75.98%	0.329	0.772	0.76	0.23	0.48
Random tree	70.08%	0.468	0.701	0.701	0.29	0.54
Random forest	79.91%	0.446	0.787	0.799	0.3	0.4
Decision table	81.11%	0.402	0.801	0.811	0.28	0.38
Part	75.76%	0.416	0.749	0.758	0.24	0.48

	Table 3. Performance of	proposed	l technique	with 100×3	feature vector	using C)CT	transform
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Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	75.05%	0.622	0.724	0.751	0.35	0.42
Naïve bays	73.30%	0.41	0.734	0.733	0.26	0.5
Bays net	75.71%	0.399	0.752	0.757	0.24	0.46
Random tree	67.50%	0.457	0.691	0.657	0.32	0.57
Random forest	76.14%	0.611	0.752	0.761	0.331	0.41
Decision table	72.97%	0.614	0.685	0.73	0.351	0.43
Part	71.55%	0.45	0.713	0.716	0.28	0.52

Table 4 shows the results of the variation by considering the first 75×3 features for classification. Bayes net classifiers have the 75.24% highest accuracy. The next Feature vector was formed by considering the first fifty energy coefficients as features. Table 5 shows the results computed where 75.79% highest classification accuracy was given by random forest machine learning classifier

Table 4. Performance of proposed technique with 75×3 feature vector using DCT transform

Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	73.96%	0.641	0.691	0.736	0.35	0.42
Naïve bays	74.15%	0.4	0.742	0.742	0.26	0.5
Bays net	75.24%	0.407	0.747	0.752	0.25	0.46
Random tree	67.39%	0.4505	0.674	0.674	0.32	0.57
Random forest	74.70%	0.624	0.716	0.747	0.34	0.42
Decision table	71.97%	0.636	0.66	0.72	0.35	0.44
Part	69.90%	0.486	0.694	0.699	0.3	0.54

Table 5. Performance of proposed technique with 50×3 feature vector using DCT transform

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Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	74.70%	0.604	0.713	0.747	0.34	0.42
Naïve bays	70.99%	0.453	0.71	0.71	0.291	0.52
Bays net	72.51%	0.451	0.725	0.735	0.27	0.47
Random tree	66.32%	0.527	0.663	0.663	0.337	0.58
Random forest	75.79%	0.576	0.732	0.758	0.32	0.41
Decision table	74.26%	0.605	0.706	0.743	0.34	0.43
Part	70.99%	0.463	0.707	0.71	0.29	0.51

With the DCT transformed energy coefficient the minimum fifteen energy coefficients were considered to form the feature vector. Performance of machine learning classifiers is shown in Table 6. Here the decision table has the highest accuracy which is followed by the random forest with 77.57% and 77.02% respectively.

Table 6. Performance of proposed technique with 15×3 feature vector using DCT transform

1.	simulate of pro	posed teel	innque	with 15×5	reature	100101	using DV
	Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
	Simple logistic	75.80%	0.58	0.734	0.758	0.34	0.41
	Naïve bays	71.88%	0.472	0.71	0.719	0.291	0.47
	Bays net	72.21%	0.492	0.707	0.722	0.32	0.43
	Random tree	67.79%	0.392	0.671	0.678	0.32	0.56
	Random forest	77.02%	0.543	0.751	0.77	0.31	0.4
	Decision table	77.57%	0.535	0.76	0.776	0.32	0.41
	Part	74.72%	0.488	0.727	0.747	0.303	0.44

Performance of proposed techniques with the Haar transform is elaborated with the following tables. Similar to the DCT transformed contents Haar transformed energy coefficient is used to generate the feature vector. Table 7 shows the performance of proposed techniques with 256×3 feature vector size where highest classification accuracy is 75.38% by simple logistic classifier. For feature vector size 100×3 the random forest classifier has highest classification accuracy 75.73% which is demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 9 shows the results computed with feature vector size of 75×3 where random forest classifier has highest classification accuracy 75.93%. With the feature vector size of 50×3 the highest classification accuracy 77.18% is given by the random forest and decision table which is demonstrated in Table 10. Table 11 shows the performance with 15×3 feature vector size where the highest classification accuracy is 78.24% by random forest classifier. The average overall performance of DCT transform is then Haar transform.

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Figure 6 and Figure 7 shows the comparison of the machine learning classifiers with different feature vector sizes for DCT and Haar transform. Among all the experimentation the highest accuracy is given when DCT transform is used with a 256×3 feature vector and decision table is used. By considering the fractional coefficient, an attempt is made to reduce the feature vector size. The performance of considering the fractional coefficients has not shown the better performance than considering the all energy coefficients.

Table 7. Performance of proposed technique with 256×3 feature vector using Haar transform

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Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	75.38%	0.56	0.72	0.75	0.34	0.41
Naïve bays	73.33%	0.34	0.75	0.73	0.26	0.51
Bays net	74.20%	0.34	0.75	0.74	0.26	0.49
Random tree	65.46%	0.509	0.66	0.65	0.34	0.58
Random forest	74.86%	0.622	0.717	0.749	0.34	0.41
Decision table	71.58%	0.639	0.664	0.716	0.35	0.45
Part	67.86%	0.51	0.67	0.679	0.322	0.56

Table 8. Performance of proposed technique with 100×3 feature vector using Haar transform

Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	75.37%	0.603	0.73	0.75	0.34	0.41
Naïve bays	72.13%	0.419	0.726	0.721	0.28	0.51
Bays net	68.08%	0.407	0.711	0.681	0.32	0.52
Random tree	66.88%	0.58	0.66	0.66	0.33	0.57
Random forest	75.73%	0.59	0.717	0.749	0.34	0.41
Decision table	73.33%	0.648	0.683	0.733	0.36	0.44
Part	69.83%	0.482	0.695	0.698	0.31	0.54
Part	69.83%	0.482	0.695	0.698	0.31	0.54

Table 9. Performance of proposed technique with 75×3 feature vector using Haar transform

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Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	75.38%	0.56	0.72	0.75	0.34	0.41
Naïve bays	71.66%	0.41	0.725	0.717	0.29	0.51
Bays net	66.84%	0.406	0.706	0.668	0.33	0.52
Random tree	68.92%	0.509	0.682	0.689	0.301	0.55
Random forest	75.93%	0.612	0.743	0.759	0.32	0.41
Decision table	75.82%	0.59	0.735	0.758	0.34	0.42
Part	70.02%	0.431	0.711	0.7	0.3	0.53

Table 10. Performance of proposed technique with 50×3 feature vector using Haar transform

Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	75.43%	0.58	0.726	0.754	0.34	0.41
Naïve bays	71.83%	0.392	0.732	0.718	0.291	0.5
Bays net	67.46%	0.426	0.701	0.675	0.33	0.51
Random tree	67.79%	0.524	0.671	0.678	0.32	0.56
Random forest	77.18%	0.547	0.755	0.772	0.32	0.41
Decision table	77.18%	0.588	0.758	0.772	0.34	0.419
Part	68.88%	0.468	0.694	0.689	0.31	0.5

Table 11. Performance of proposed technique with 15×3 feature vector using Haar transform

Classifier	Accuracy	FPR	Precision	Recall	MAE	RMSE
Simple logistic	72.66%	0.439	0.717	0.727	0.37	0.43
Naïve bays	70.71%	0.379	0.702	0.707	0.31	0.48
Bays net	67.08%	0.394	0.674	0.671	0.32	0.48
Random tree	69.45%	0.382	0.692	0.695	0.3	0.55
Random forest	78.24%	0.364	0.786	0.782	0.32	0.57
Decision table	73.50%	0.466	0.742	0.735	0.37	0.43
Part	73.91%	0.371	0.73	0.739	0.3	0.46

Table 12 shows the average classification accuracy for Haar and DCT transforms with different machine learning classifiers. It can be clearly observed that the highest average classification accuracy for Haar transform is given by the random forest classifier. For DCT transform in figure it can be analyzed that the random forest is giving the highest average classification accuracy. So the overall best performance is given by random forest classifier among all the experimented classifiers. Figure 8 and Figure 9 shows the comparative analysis of average classification accuracy of different machine learning classifiers of Haar and DCT respectively.

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Figure 6. Performance comparison of machine learning algorithms using DCT features



Figure 7. Performance comparison of machine learning algorithms using Haar features



Figure 8. Performance comparisons of different machine learning classifiers with Haar transform





Classifiers	Average classification accuracy	
	Haar	DCT
Simple logistic	75.04%	74.75%
BayeNet	68.98%	74.37%
Navie Bayes	72.03%	73.70%
Random forest	76.39%	76.71%
Random tree	67.70%	67.82%
Decision table	74.30%	75.38%
Part	70.14%	72.58%

Table 12. Average classification accuracy of Haar and DCT transform for different machine learning classifiers

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the transform domain is experimented for classification of the pap smear cytology images for diagnosis of cervical cancer. Investigative study is done to analyze if energy coefficients can be used as features with different machine learning classifiers to classify the cytology images. In addition, to reduce the complexity, orthogonal transforms are applied to columns of the cytology images. To reduce the size of the feature vector, fractional energy coefficients are used and different sizes of feature vectors are experimented. Among the different experimented machine learning classifiers, the random forest and decision table classifiers have outperformed over the other classifiers. Comparing the transformed contents of cytology images as features, DCT has given better results than the Haar transform. With the Haar transform, it can be observed that considering the fractional coefficients of just 15×3 features has given better accuracy than using the whole energy coefficients. The Herlev dataset experimented in the study has low image resolutions which might be one of the reasons that affected the overall classification accuracy. In order to further improve the classifier's performance, additional datasets with good quality of cytology images can be experimented. Also other orthogonal transforms can be experimented for increasing the classification accuracy with less computational complexities.

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