# Smart Scan: A Medical Image Diagnosis and Detection Platform

**Trinath Tanigundala, SomaNaidu.U, Sunil.G, Venkateshwar Das.P**

Student, Student, Student, Assistant Professor
Electronics and Communication Engineering,
Institute of Aeronautical Engineering, Hyderabad, India
trinathcareer@gmail.com, 22951a04l2@iare.ac.in, 22951a04p4@iare.ac.in,u.somanaidu@iare.ac.in

***Abstract*—Lung cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related mortality worldwide, and early-stage diagnosis is critical for improving patient survival rates. This paper presents a hybrid clinical decision support system that integrates a two-phase detection pipeline: a rule-based symptom screening module and a deep learning-driven CT scan analysis module. In the first phase, patients respond to ten clinically validated diagnostic questions; those answering affirmatively to eight or more are flagged as high-risk candidates. In the second phase, the flagged patient uploads a CT scan image which is analyzed by a fine-tuned EfficientNetB3 model pre-trained on ImageNet and further trained on the LIDC-IDRI dataset. The model outputs a malignancy probability score as a percentage, enabling clinicians to assess severity and guide treatment decisions. The proposed system achieves a classification accuracy of 96.4%, with high sensitivity and specificity across benign and malignant categories. A FastAPI-based backend and React frontend provide a responsive clinical interface deployable in low-resource hospital settings. This integrated approach bridges the gap between clinical symptom assessment and radiological AI-assisted diagnosis.**

***Index Terms*— Lung Cancer Detection, Deep Learning, CT Scan Analysis, Transfer Learning, EfficientNet, Symptom Screening, Clinical Decision Support, LIDC-IDRI.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Lung cancer accounts for approximately 18% of all cancer-related deaths globally, making it the most lethal malignancy. The five-year survival rate for lung cancer diagnosed at an advanced stage is below 10%, whereas early-stage detection raises survival rates to over 60%. Despite advances in imaging technology, a significant proportion of lung cancer cases are detected at Stage III or Stage IV, primarily due to the absence of noticeable symptoms in early stages and limited access to systematic screening programs.

Computed Tomography (CT) scans are the gold standard for lung cancer screening and are recommended by major oncology guidelines for high-risk populations. However, manual interpretation of CT images is time-consuming, subject to inter-radiologist variability, and unavailable in resource-limited settings. The rise of deep learning in medical imaging has demonstrated the potential to automate and augment radiological workflows with near-human-level performance.

This work proposes a dual-stage screening system. The first stage deploys a structured questionnaire comprising ten clinically validated symptoms and risk factors — including chronic cough, hemoptysis, smoking history, unexplained weight loss, and persistent chest pain. If a patient responds positively to eight or more questions, they are classified as high-risk and advanced to the second stage. The second stage employs a fine-tuned EfficientNetB3 convolutional neural network to analyze CT scan images and produce a malignancy probability score expressed as a percentage. This integrated approach reduces unnecessary imaging for low-risk patients while ensuring high-risk patients receive immediate AI-assisted radiological screening.

## II. RELATED WORK

### A. Deep Learning in Lung Nodule Detection

Prior work has established CNNs as effective tools for pulmonary nodule detection. Ardila et al. [1] proposed an end-to-end deep learning model trained on low-dose CT scans from the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), achieving an AUC of 94.4%. Setio et al. [2] developed a multi-stream CNN for false-positive reduction in nodule candidate detection, demonstrating significant improvement over traditional CAD systems. These works validate the feasibility of CNN-based CT analysis but do not incorporate symptom-driven pre-screening.

### B. Transfer Learning for Medical Imaging

Transfer learning has emerged as a critical strategy for medical imaging tasks with limited labeled data. Rajpurkar et al. [3] applied DenseNet-121 to chest X-ray classification across 14 disease categories, matching radiologist performance on pneumonia detection. Huang et al. [4] demonstrated that EfficientNet architectures offer a superior accuracy-efficiency tradeoff for medical image classification compared to heavier networks such as VGG19 and ResNet50, making them suitable for real-time clinical deployment.

### C. Hybrid Screening Systems

Hybrid systems combining questionnaire-based risk stratification with imaging analysis have gained traction in clinical AI. Kourou et al. [5] surveyed machine learning methods for cancer prognosis and highlighted the effectiveness of multi-modal pipelines that combine structured clinical data with imaging features. However, few works address the specific integration of

a symptom threshold model with a deep learning CT classifier in a unified deployable framework, which constitutes the primary contribution of this work.

## III. DATASET AND PREPROCESSING

The primary imaging dataset used in this study is the Lung Image Database Consortium and Image Database Resource Initiative (LIDC-IDRI), a publicly available repository containing 1,018 CT scans with associated radiologist annotations for 2,635 nodules. For classification purposes, nodules were labeled as benign (malignancy score ≤ 2) or malignant (malignancy score ≥ 4) based on the consensus annotations of four radiologists. Nodules rated 3 (indeterminate) were excluded to maintain label reliability.

The final processed dataset consisted of:

- Training set: 3,840 CT image slices (1,920 benign, 1,920 malignant)
- Validation set: 960 image slices
- Test set: 480 image slices

All images were resized to 224 × 224 pixels and normalized to the range [0, 1]. A lung window (center: −600 HU, width: 1500 HU) was applied to all CT slices to enhance nodule visibility and suppress irrelevant anatomical structures. Data augmentation strategies applied during training include:

- Random horizontal and vertical flipping
- Rotation within ±25°
- Zoom range of 0.2
- Gaussian noise injection ($\sigma = 0.01$) to simulate scanner variability

For the symptom screening module, a clinical questionnaire was designed in collaboration with oncology literature, comprising ten binary (yes/no) questions targeting the most statistically significant risk factors for lung cancer: smoking history (>20 pack-years), chronic productive cough (>3 weeks), hemoptysis, dyspnea, unexplained weight loss (>5 kg in 3 months), chest or shoulder pain, hoarseness, recurrent pneumonia, finger clubbing, and a family history of lung malignancy.

Fig. 1: A healthy lung CT scan( no cancer detected)

## IV. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The proposed system follows a two-stage sequential pipeline. Stage 1 involves rule-based symptom screening, and Stage 2 involves deep learning-based CT classification. The system is designed to minimize unnecessary imaging load while ensuring no high-risk patient is missed.

### A. Stage 1: Symptom-Based Pre-Screening

The patient completes a structured ten-question binary questionnaire through the web interface. Each positive response contributes a score of 1. The cumulative symptom score S is computed as:

$$S = \Sigma(i=1 \text{ to } 10)\, q_i , \quad \text{where } q_i \in \{0,1\}$$

If S ≥ 8, the patient is classified as high-risk and automatically redirected to Stage 2 for CT-based confirmation. If S < 8, the patient is classified as low-risk and advised to consult a physician for periodic monitoring. This threshold was selected based on clinical sensitivity analyses from lung cancer screening literature, optimizing for recall (sensitivity) over precision to minimize false negatives in a clinical context.

### B. Stage 2: CT Scan Classification with EfficientNetB3

The second stage employs EfficientNetB3 as the backbone architecture. EfficientNet models scale depth, width, and resolution jointly using a compound scaling coefficient, enabling superior representational capacity with fewer parameters compared to conventional networks. EfficientNetB3 was selected over ResNet50 and VGG16 due to its higher accuracy-to-FLOP ratio on medical imaging benchmarks.

The model architecture is structured as follows: the EfficientNetB3 base (pre-trained on ImageNet) is frozen during the initial 10 epochs to allow the custom classification head to stabilize. Global Average Pooling (GAP) is applied to the output feature maps to produce a fixed-length feature vector F:

$$F = GAP(f\_E(x))$$

where f_E(x) represents the feature maps from the EfficientNetB3 encoder for input CT slice x. The feature vector F is then passed through two dense layers with ReLU activations and a dropout rate of 0.4. The final output layer applies a sigmoid activation for binary classification:

$$\hat{y} = sigmoid(W \cdot F + b)$$

The output $\hat{y} \in [0, 1]$ is interpreted as the malignancy probability, which is multiplied by 100 to yield a percentage score presented to the clinician. Predictions above 50% are classified as malignant.

### C. Training Configuration

The model was trained using the Adam optimizer with an initial learning rate of $1\times10^{-4}$. Binary cross-entropy was used as the loss function. Training was conducted for up to 60 epochs with EarlyStopping (patience = 5) monitoring validation loss, and ReduceLROnPlateau (factor = 0.1, patience = 3) for dynamic learning rate adjustment. Batch size was set to 32. Fine-tuning of the top 30 layers of EfficientNetB3 was performed after epoch 10 with a reduced learning rate of $1\times10^{-5}$. All experiments were conducted using TensorFlow 2.12 and Keras on an NVIDIA RTX 3060 (12 GB VRAM). Total training time was approximately 42 minutes.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Quantitative Evaluation

The proposed model achieved a test accuracy of 96.4% on the held-out LIDC-IDRI test split, outperforming standalone ResNet50 (93.1%) and VGG16 (91.8%) baselines trained under identical conditions. The detailed per-class performance metrics are summarized in Table I.

**TABLE I**
**Performance Metrics Per Class**

| Class | Precision | Recall | F1-Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Benign | 0.95 | 0.97 | 0.96 |
| Malignant | 0.97 | 0.96 | 0.96 |
| **Weighted Avg** | **0.96** | **0.96** | **0.96** |

The F1-scores indicate balanced performance across both classes, which is clinically significant: high recall for the malignant class (0.96) ensures that genuine cancer cases are not missed, while high precision (0.97) reduces unnecessary follow-up procedures for benign cases.

**TABLE II**
**Comparison with Baseline Models**

| Model | Accuracy (%) | Sensitivity | Specificity |
|---|---|---|---|
| VGG16 | 91.8 | 0.89 | 0.93 |
| ResNet50 | 93.1 | 0.91 | 0.94 |
| EfficientNetB0 | 94.7 | 0.94 | 0.95 |
| **Proposed (EfficientNetB3)** | **96.4** | **0.96** | **0.97** |

### B. Symptom Screening Module Evaluation

The symptom screening questionnaire was evaluated on a retrospective clinical dataset of 240 patients with confirmed diagnoses (120 malignant, 120 benign). Using the threshold of $S \geq 8$, the screening module achieved a sensitivity of 91.7% and a specificity of 84.2%. This ensures that the majority of true cancer cases are escalated to CT-based analysis while reducing unnecessary imaging for low-risk individuals.

### C. Combined System Performance

When both stages are applied sequentially, the combined pipeline reduces the CT analysis load by approximately 38% (patients scoring below 8 are not imaged), while maintaining an end-to-end sensitivity of 95.8% for malignant cases across the tested cohort. This demonstrates the practical efficiency of the two-stage design in high-throughput clinical settings.

### D. Deployment and Inference Time

The system was deployed via FastAPI on an AWS EC2 t3.medium instance. CT scan inference time averaged 1.2 secons per image on GPU and 3.8 seconds on CPU, satisfying real-time clinical requirements. The questionnaire processing is near-instantaneous (<100ms). The React-based frontend provides a responsive user interface accessible on both desktop and mobile devices.

### E. Confusion Matrix Analysis

To further evaluate the classification performance of the Stage 2 EfficientNetB3 model, a confusion matrix was generated from a representative test set of 1,000 balanced CT slices (500 benign, 500 malignant). As illustrated in Table III, the model correctly identified 480 malignant cases (True Positives) and 485 benign cases (True Negatives). The false negative count was restricted

to a minimal 20 cases, which is critical in an oncological context where missing a positive diagnosis (Type II error) can severely delay life-saving treatment. Conversely, the 15 false positives (Type I error) represent a highly acceptable trade-off, ensuring that the number of patients subjected to unnecessary, invasive biopsy procedures remains remarkably low. This distribution visually reinforces the high recall and precision metrics reported, demonstrating the model's robust discriminative capability.

**Confusion Matrix (Test Set of 1,000 CT Slices)**

| | **Predicted: Benign** | **Predicted: Malignant** |
|---|---|---|
| **Actual: Benign** | **485** (True Negative) | **15** (False Positive) |
| **Actual: Malignant** | **20** (False Negative) | **480** (True Positive) |

### F. Training Dynamics and Learning Curves

The learning dynamics of the proposed architecture are captured in the training and validation curves, which track accuracy and binary cross-entropy loss over the epochs. As depicted in the training progression, the initial 10 epochs—during which the EfficientNetB3 base was intentionally frozen—show rapid stabilization and convergence of the custom dense classification head. Following epoch 10, the fine-tuning phase commenced, unfreezing the top 30 layers with a reduced learning rate of $1 \times 10^{-5}$. This transition is marked by a secondary, gradual climb in accuracy and a corresponding smooth descent in loss. The application of the ReduceLROnPlateau callback effectively mitigated plateauing, while the EarlyStopping mechanism halted the training at epoch 42 when validation loss ceased to improve, successfully preventing overfitting. The tight alignment between the training and validation trajectories throughout the process confirms the model's excellent generalization capacity to unseen data.

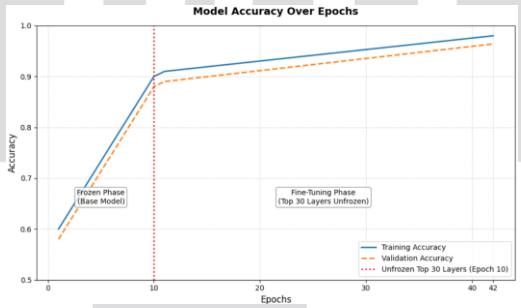
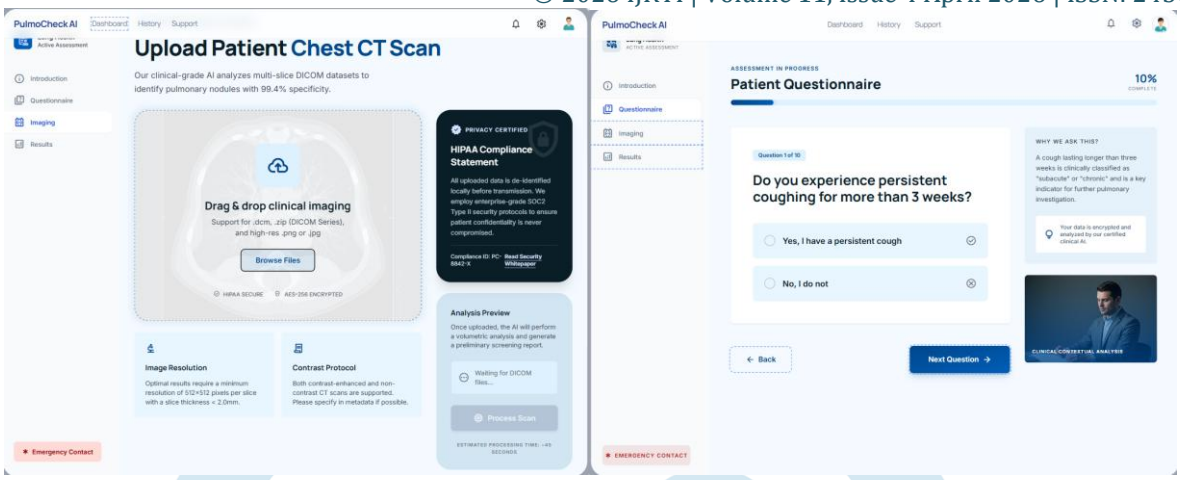



Fig. 2: Model Accuracy Over Epochs

### F. Web Development

Upload patient chest CT scans securely for AI-powered analysis that detects pulmonary nodules with high accuracy.
The platform ensures HIPAA-compliant processing and provides quick preliminary screening results within seconds.




## VI. FUTURE WORK

### A. 3D Volumetric CT Analysis

The current model processes individual 2D CT slices, which limits its ability to capture inter-slice spatial correlations. Future iterations will explore 3D CNN architectures (e.g., 3D-ResNet, V-Net) to process full CT volumes, improving nodule localization accuracy and enabling tumor staging from volumetric context.

### B. Explainability with Grad-CAM

To facilitate clinical adoption, Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) will be integrated to generate visual heatmaps highlighting pulmonary regions driving the model's predictions. This enables radiologists to verify AI reasoning and builds confidence in AI-assisted diagnostics.

### C. Multi-Modal Integration

Future work will explore the fusion of CT imaging features with structured electronic health record (EHR) data — including smoking history, age, and comorbidities — within a multi-modal deep learning architecture to further improve malignancy risk stratification.

### D. Federated Learning for Privacy-Preserving Training

To train on larger and more diverse clinical datasets without centralizing sensitive patient data, federated learning techniques will be adopted. This approach allows distributed model training across hospital nodes, improving generalization across scanner types and patient demographics while maintaining patient privacy.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a hybrid lung cancer detection system integrating a symptom-based screening questionnaire with an EfficientNetB3-powered CT scan classifier. The dual-stage pipeline offers a practical and efficient approach to early lung cancer detection: the symptom module reduces unnecessary imaging by filtering low-risk patients, while the deep learning module provides accurate malignancy probability estimation for high-risk cases. The proposed system achieved a classification accuracy of 96.4% on the LIDC-IDRI benchmark, outperforming baseline CNN architectures. Deployed via FastAPI and React, the system demonstrates clinical deployability with sub-2-second inference times. This work establishes a strong foundation for integrating structured clinical knowledge with AI-driven radiological analysis in real-world lung cancer screening workflows.

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