Hybrid Image Processing and Deep Learning System for Early Detection and Classification of Kidney Stones with IoT-Based Patient Monitoring

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Abstract

Kidney stone disease (urolithiasis) is a prevalent urological disorder that often remains undetected in its early stages, leading to severe pain and long-term renal complications. Accurate diagnosis requires expert interpretation of medical images, which is not suitable for continuous monitoring. This paper proposes a hybrid framework that integrates advanced image processing, convolutional neural network (CNN) classification, and Internet of Things (IoT)–enabled patient monitoring. Renal ultrasound and CT images undergo preprocessing, including median filtering, contrast-limited adaptive histogram equalization (CLAHE), and intensity normalization, followed by hybrid segmentation to enhance stone visibility. The CNN classifies images into four categories based on stone size: no stone, small, medium, and large. IoT sensors continuously monitor physiological and lifestyle parameters and transmit data to a cloud platform for real-time analysis and alert generation. The proposed hybrid framework achieved **94.3% accuracy**, outperforming CNN-only approaches by **4.7%**, demonstrating improved early-stage kidney stone detection and real-time patient monitoring.

Keywords: Urolithiasis, kidney stone detection, hybrid image processing, deep learning, CNN, IoT healthcare monitoring, medical imaging.

1. Introduction

Kidney stone disease, also known as urolithiasis, affects individuals across various age groups worldwide and represents a significant clinical concern. It is characterized by the formation of crystalline deposits within the renal system, which may lead to severe pain, urinary obstruction, hematuria, infection, and potential renal impairment if not detected at an early stage. Lifestyle factors such as inadequate hydration, dietary habits, and metabolic disorders have contributed to the increasing prevalence of this condition.

Medical imaging techniques, including ultrasonography and computed tomography (CT), play an important role in the diagnosis of kidney stones. CT imaging provides high sensitivity and precise localization of stones but involves exposure to ionizing radiation. In contrast, ultrasound imaging is safer and more cost-effective; however, it often suffers from low contrast, speckle noise, and poor visualization of small stones. As a result, manual interpretation of renal images may lead to inter-observer variability, particularly in early-stage stone detection.

Recent advances in artificial intelligence, especially convolutional neural networks (CNNs), have enabled automated feature extraction and classification from medical images, thereby improving diagnostic accuracy. Despite these advantages, CNN-based approaches alone may exhibit reduced performance when applied to heterogeneous imaging conditions and limited annotated datasets, which are common in medical imaging applications.

The emergence of the Internet of Things (IoT) has enabled continuous patient monitoring through wearable and sensor-based systems that track parameters such as hydration levels, urine flow, body temperature, and pain indicators. These physiological and lifestyle parameters are closely associated with kidney stone formation and recurrence. Integrating IoT-based monitoring with image-based diagnostic systems supports early detection, continuous supervision, and proactive clinical intervention.

This paper proposes a unified framework that combines hybrid image processing techniques, CNN-based multi-class classification, and IoT-enabled patient monitoring to improve early kidney stone detection and patient management. Unlike existing studies that primarily focus on standalone image classification, the proposed system enhances image quality through hybrid preprocessing while simultaneously enabling real-time patient monitoring. This integrated approach addresses the limitations of CNN-only methods and supports intelligent decision-making in smart healthcare environments.

Research Contributions

- A hybrid image preprocessing and segmentation framework for enhanced kidney stone visibility
- Multi-class CNN-based classification according to stone size
- Integration of medical image diagnosis with IoT-based patient monitoring
- Cloud-enabled real-time alerts for proactive kidney stone management

2. Related Work

Traditional image processing techniques have been widely explored for kidney stone detection in medical imaging. Common approaches include thresholding, edge detection, region growing, and morphological operations. These methods are computationally efficient and easy to implement; however, their performance is highly sensitive to noise, illumination variations, and anatomical differences in renal images. As a result, conventional image processing techniques often struggle to detect small or early-stage kidney stones, particularly in ultrasound images affected by speckle noise.

With the advancement of artificial intelligence, deep learning–based methods, especially convolutional neural networks (CNNs), have demonstrated improved accuracy and robustness in kidney stone detection and classification. CNNs automatically learn discriminative features from imaging data and reduce dependency on handcrafted feature extraction. Several studies have reported promising results using CNN-based models on CT and ultrasound images. Nevertheless, most existing approaches rely on large annotated datasets and focus primarily on image-based diagnosis, limiting their effectiveness in real-world clinical scenarios where data variability and limited annotations are common.

In parallel, Internet of Things (IoT)–based healthcare monitoring systems have gained attention for continuous tracking of physiological and lifestyle parameters related to kidney health, such as hydration levels, urine output, body temperature, and post-operative recovery indicators. While these systems enable remote patient monitoring and early warning mechanisms, they typically lack integrated diagnostic intelligence derived from medical imaging analysis.

The present work addresses these limitations by integrating hybrid image processing, CNN-based multi-class classification, and IoT-enabled patient monitoring within a unified framework. By enhancing image quality prior to deep learning inference and combining diagnostic outputs with real-time physiological monitoring, the proposed system improves early detection accuracy while supporting continuous patient supervision and proactive clinical decision-making.

3. Proposed System Architecture

The proposed system consists of three integrated layers (Figure 1):

1. Image Acquisition and Preprocessing Layer
2. Deep Learning-Based Classification Layer
3. IoT-Cloud-Based Monitoring and Decision Support Layer

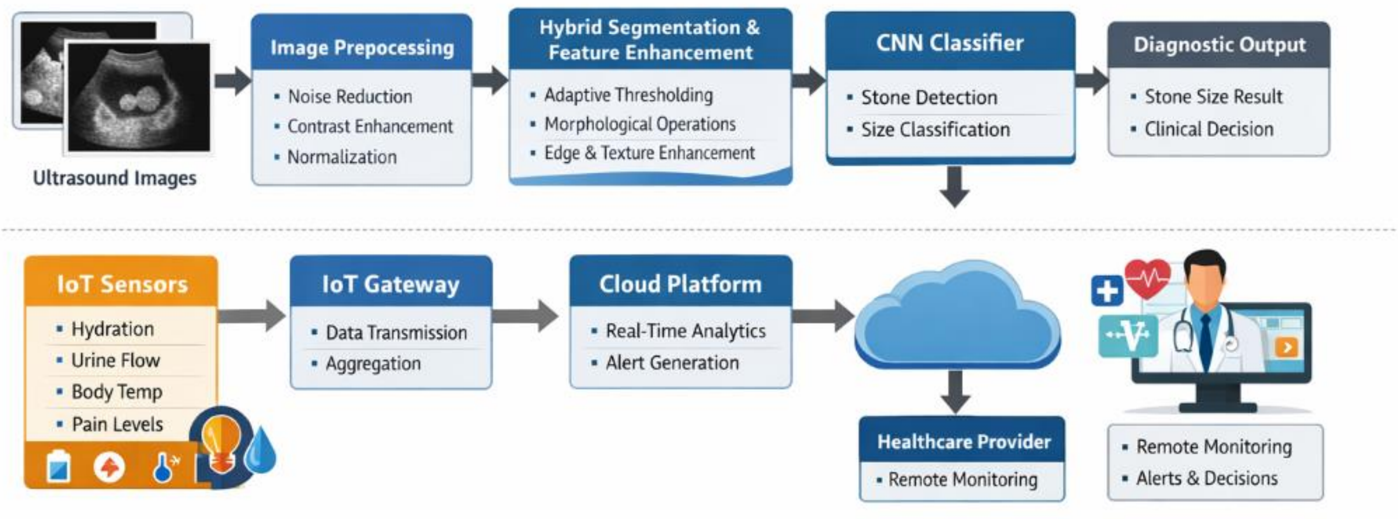

Figure 1: Workflow of the hybrid kidney stone detection and IoT patient monitoring system.

3.1 Image Acquisition and Preprocessing

Renal ultrasound and CT images are collected from clinical sources and public datasets. Preprocessing steps include:

- Median filtering for noise reduction
- CLAHE for contrast enhancement
- Intensity normalization to standardize image ranges

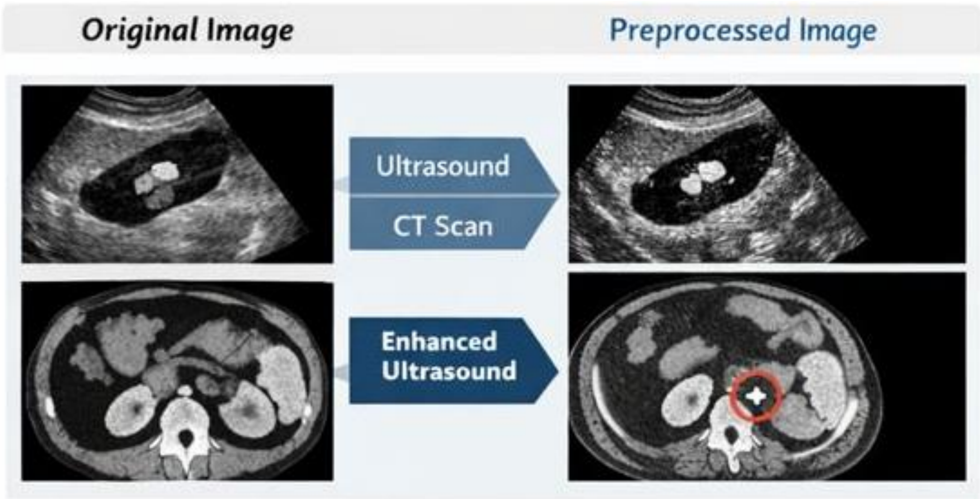

Figure 2: Sample renal images before and after preprocessing.

3.2 Hybrid Segmentation and Feature Enhancement

Hybrid segmentation combines adaptive thresholding with morphological operations to isolate kidney regions and potential stones. Edge detection and texture enhancement further improve boundary visibility.

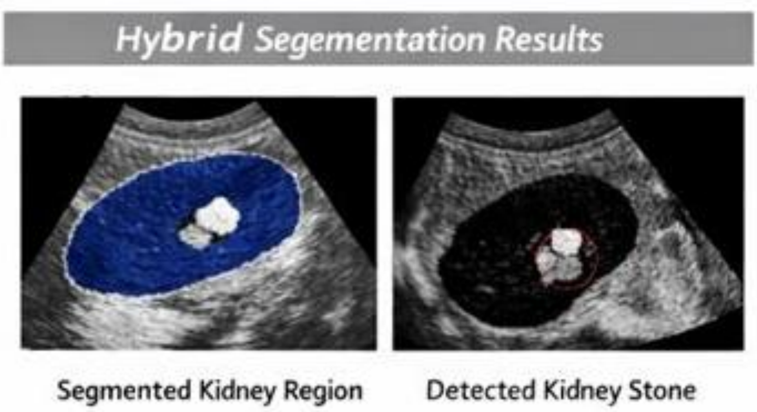

Figure 3: Hybrid segmentation results highlighting kidney regions and detected stone boundaries.

3.3 CNN-Based Classification

A CNN classifies preprocessed images into four categories: no stone, small stone, medium stone, and large stone. **Architecture details:**

- 4 convolutional layers (filters: 32, 64, 128, 256; kernel size: 3x3; ReLU activation)
- Max pooling after each convolution

- 2 fully connected layers (512 and 128 neurons, ReLU)
- Output layer: 4 neurons (softmax)
- Optimizer: Adam, learning rate 0.001, batch size 32, epochs 50
- Transfer learning applied using pretrained ImageNet weights to improve convergence

3.4 IoT-Based Patient Monitoring

IoT sensors track:

- Hydration (capacitance-based sensors)
- Urine flow rate (flow meters)
- Body temperature (thermistors)
- Pain indicators (self-reported via app)

Data are transmitted to an AWS cloud platform for real-time analysis. Alerts are generated if dehydration, abnormal urine flow, or pain escalation is detected. Secure data transmission and access control mechanisms were employed to ensure patient data privacy in the cloud environment.

4. Methodology

4.1 Dataset Description

- Ultrasound images: 1,200 images (300 per class)
- CT images: 1,000 images (250 per class)
- Training: 70%, Validation: 15%, Testing: 15%
- Image resolution: 512x512 pixels

4.2 Image Preprocessing and Segmentation Workflow

Images undergo median filtering, CLAHE, and intensity normalization. Hybrid segmentation isolates kidney and stone structures, improving CNN input quality.

4.3 CNN Training

The network is trained using Adam optimizer, categorical cross-entropy loss, batch size 32, 50 epochs. Data augmentation includes rotation, scaling, and flipping. The model was implemented using TensorFlow in a GPU-enabled environment. Five-fold cross-validation was employed to improve generalization.

4.4 IoT Data Processing

Sensor data are analyzed using statistical models. Alerts are generated when thresholds are exceeded. Integration with CNN predictions supports clinical decision-making.

4.5 Performance Metrics

- Accuracy
- Sensitivity
- Specificity
- F1-score

Algorithm 1: Hybrid Kidney Stone Detection and Monitoring

1. Acquire ultrasound/CT images
2. Apply preprocessing (noise filtering, CLAHE, normalization)
3. Perform hybrid segmentation (thresholding + morphology)
4. Classify stone presence/size using CNN
5. Collect IoT sensor data
6. Transmit to cloud platform
7. Generate alerts and diagnostic output

5. Experimental Results and Discussion

The performance of the proposed hybrid kidney stone detection system was evaluated using standard classification metrics, including accuracy, sensitivity, specificity, and F1-score. The results were compared with traditional image processing methods and a CNN-based approach without preprocessing to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed framework.

Table 1: Comparative performance of kidney stone detection methods

Method	Accuracy (%)	Sensitivity (%)	Specificity (%)	F1-Score
Traditional Image Processing	85.2	82.4	86.1	0.84
CNN without preprocessing	89.6	88.1	90.0	0.89
Proposed Hybrid Method	94.3	93.1	95.0	0.94

Table 1 presents the comparative performance of different kidney stone detection methods. Traditional image processing techniques achieved an accuracy of 85.2%, indicating limited robustness, particularly in handling noise and low-contrast ultrasound images. The CNN model without preprocessing showed improved performance with an accuracy of 89.6%; however, its effectiveness was constrained by variability in image quality.

The proposed hybrid method achieved the highest performance, with an accuracy of **94.3%**, sensitivity of **93.1%**, specificity of **95.0%**, and an F1-score of **0.94**. These results demonstrate that integrating image preprocessing and hybrid segmentation prior to CNN classification significantly improves detection accuracy, especially for early-stage kidney stones. The incorporation of IoT-based monitoring further supports continuous patient supervision and timely clinical intervention.

Class-wise Accuracy Table:

Table 2: Class-wise classification accuracy of the proposed hybrid system

Class	Accuracy (%)
No Stone	96.1
Small Stone	92.4
Medium Stone	93.8
Large Stone	95.0

Table 2 presents the class-wise classification accuracy of the proposed hybrid system across different stone-size categories. The system achieved consistently high accuracy for all classes, including **92.4% accuracy for small stones**, which is particularly important for early diagnosis and preventive treatment planning.

The class-wise results indicate that the proposed hybrid framework maintains strong discriminative capability across stone-size categories, demonstrating its effectiveness in early-stage kidney stone detection and reliable multi-class classification.

Figure 4: CNN classification output and IoT dashboard for real-time health visualization.

Figure 4 illustrates the CNN classification output along with the IoT-based monitoring dashboard, providing real-time visualization of diagnostic results and patient health parameters. The combined imaging and sensor-based outputs enhance clinical decision support by enabling both accurate diagnosis and continuous patient monitoring.

Clinical Significance: Early detection combined with continuous monitoring can significantly reduce emergency hospitalizations and improve patient quality of life in kidney stone management.

6. Advantages of the Proposed System

- Enhanced early detection accuracy
- Reduced diagnostic variability
- Continuous remote patient monitoring
- Scalable cloud-based architecture
- Improved clinical decision support

7. Limitations and Future Scope

Limitations

- The dataset used in this study is limited in size; multi-center validation is required to confirm generalizability.
- IoT sensor reliability and data privacy considerations must be addressed to ensure safe deployment in clinical settings.
- The CNN model may require retraining or fine-tuning when applied to images from different devices or institutions.

Future Scope

- Deployment of the framework on edge devices or mobile platforms for real-time kidney stone detection.
- Integration of explainable AI techniques, such as Grad-CAM, to enhance clinical interpretability and trust.
- Validation using larger, multi-center clinical datasets to improve robustness and generalization.
- Enhancement of IoT-based analytics through predictive and personalized risk modeling for proactive patient management.

8. Conclusion

A hybrid framework integrating image processing, CNN-based classification, and IoT monitoring was proposed for early kidney stone detection. The system demonstrates superior diagnostic performance and enables continuous patient monitoring, supporting intelligent, patient-centric care in smart healthcare environments.

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