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Letter to Editor

Artificial Intelligence in Clinical Neuropsychology: Opportunities and Limitations

Urbina Barraza David*

Department of Psychology, University of Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

***Corresponding Author**: Urbina Barraza David, Department of Psychology, University of Palermo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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Abstract

The application of machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly in scientific work, including neuropsychology. The aim of this editorial letter is to contribute to the debate regarding the limits in the use of AI, briefly reviewing some of its main contributions, and providing a critical overview of its risks and limitations in neuropsychological research.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Machine Learning; Neuropsychology*

Abbreviation

AI: Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications have enjoyed of popularity in basic and applied neuroscientific research. This success has been due in part to the contributions that it has had both in the processing and analysis of large amounts of data, optimizing times, always so necessary in research processes. Thus, the use of AIs in research has made it possible to improve precision and effectiveness, identifying patterns and relationships in the data, as well as automating repetitive tasks, freeing researchers to concentrate on higher-level tasks.

In this line, disciplines such as clinical neuropsychology have not been left behind, incorporating the use of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms into their clinical and investigative practice. Some of its main contributions to neuropsychology could be summarized as:

1. Cognitive assessment: AI algorithms have been used to develop cognitive assessment tools, such as digital tests and games, that can accurately measure cognitive abilities, such as memory, attention, and processing speed. These tools can be used to assess the cognitive impact of neurological disorders and to monitor disease progression [1].

2. Diagnosis and prognosis: AI algorithms have been used to assist in the diagnosis of neurological disorders, such as dementia and traumatic brain injury, by analyzing imaging data, medical records, and other patient data. AI can also be used to make prognoses about disease progression and treatment outcomes [2].

3. Patient stratification: AI algorithms have been used to analyze patient data to better understand patient heterogeneity and to stratify patients into subgroups, which can improve the accuracy of diagnosis and help to personalize treatment plans [1,3].

4. Emotion and behavior analysis: AI algorithms have been used to analyze emotional and behavioral data, such as facial expressions and speech patterns, to better understand the emotional and behavioral impact of neurological disorders, and to develop treatments that target these symptoms [4].

5. Development of brain-machine interfaces: AI algorithms have been used to develop brain-machine interfaces (BMIs), which can be used to study the neural underpinnings of cognition, emotion, and behavior, and to develop treatments that target these areas [5].

Despite the above, and although the incorporation of AI based algorithms has the potential to greatly advance our understanding of the brain-behavior relationship and to improve the diagnosis and treatment of neurological disorders that affect cognitive and emotional function, there are some risks and limitations related to the use of artificial intelligence in neuropsychology. These risks and limitations could be summarized in:

1. Data quality and availability: The quality and availability of data can impact the accuracy of AI algorithms in neuropsychology. There may be limited data available to train algorithms, or the data may not accurately represent the population being studied [6].

2. Model interpretability: Many AI algorithms are not easily interpretable, making it difficult to understand how they arrived at a particular result. This can be a limitation in a field like neuropsychology where understanding the underlying mechanisms is important [7,8].

3. Algorithmic bias: AI can perpetuate discrimination by replicating biases present in the training data used to develop algorithms [9].

4. Lack of transparency: Many AI algorithms are "black boxes," meaning it is not possible to fully understand how they work. This can lead to uncertainty about the validity of results and can make it difficult to identify and correct errors [10].

5. Lack of validation: There are not enough studies to validate the clinical utility of many AI algorithms in neuropsychology. This means their use may not be reliable and may lead to incorrect results [9].

6. Risk of over-automation: AI can be used to automate too many clinical processes, leading to a loss of clinical skills and a disconnection between the clinician and the patient [9].

7. Regulation and ethical considerations: There are ethical and regulatory considerations associated with the use of AI in neuropsychology, such as data privacy and confidentiality [11].

8. Risk of replacement: AI can be used to replace clinical professionals, which can have a negative impact on the quality of patient care and the economy [12].

9. Skill requirements: The use of AI in neuropsychology may require a new set of skills, such as the ability to work with AI algorithms and interpret their results. This may present a barrier to implementation for some professionals in the field [13].

Despite these limitations, AI has the potential to greatly enhance the field of neuropsychology by enabling faster and more accurate diagnoses, improving patient care, and advancing our understanding of the brain and behavior. It is important to approach AI in neuropsychology with caution and to address these limitations to ensure its safe and effective use.

It is important to take these risks into account and to address them appropriately. This includes transparency and validation of algorithms, as well as training clinical professionals in the safe and effective use of AI.

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