

Neonatal Disease Diagnosis : AI Based Neuro-Genetic Hybrid Approach

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Abstract

Accurate disease diagnosis and proper management is a matter of concern to everybody. In this context, there are a number of uncertainties involved including human errors. The problem is augmented when the domain is itself critical; for example, neonatal diseases. The problem is further augmented whenever and wherever proper experts are not available. Mitigating the kind of such problems, developing medical decision support systems using AI techniques are being explored during last few years. Combining neural networks with genetic algorithms is one of the approaches people use. It reduces various medical errors and provides better prediction of diseases. This article presents a study of neuro-genetic approach with multi layer perceptron (MLP) neural network diagnosing neonatal diseases. Integration of genetic algorithm and incremental back propagation neural network has been found suitable for a better trained network; experimental results and a comparative study corroborate the fact.

Keywords: *Neuro-Genetic approach, Neural Networks, Neonatal diseases, Genetic algorithms, MLP.*

1. Introduction

Newborn or neonate comes from Latin word, '*neonatus*', which refers to an infant in the first 28 days after birth [1]. Neonatal phase is one of the vital and critical phases in child development. There are certain problems in managing neonates. Firstly, neonates can not spell out their problems except crying, in most of the cases. So, a very experienced clinical eye is solicited. Secondly, experts-neonatologists are scarce specially

in remote areas; general physicians are to manage the show in most cases. Thirdly, the information provided by the persons related with the patients may contain wrong, not-related or redundant information relating to signs and symptoms. Fourthly, signs and symptoms may overlap; generating problems for accurate diagnosis. Fifth, there are some region specific problems need to be addressed in this context. In a study, authors had explored several prevalent diseases of neonates in Tarai region of west Bengal, India [2]; indicating the regional characteristics. It is absolutely essential to identify and select the correct features of disease. To reduce the burden of morbidities and meeting the unmet need for health care in rural neonates [3], one has to adopt fast and accurate disease diagnosis and management. Mitigating the kind of such problems, developing medical decision support systems using AI techniques are being explored during last few years. Combining neural networks with genetic algorithm is one of the approaches people use. It reduces various medical errors and provides better prediction of diseases.

Neural network has been found one of the most efficient and vastly used tools for predicting the diseases with good accuracy. The neural networks can be related with non-linear statistical data modeling tools. Even they are used to build complex relationships between inputs and outputs and / or to find patterns in data [4]. In an another attempt, the authors presented the results of a study where some coupling with data mining and rough set theory is proposed for differential neonatal disease diagnosis [5]. In artificial neural networks, back propagation network algorithm uses gradient based approach. It trains the network slowly. To avoid slow learning problem, researchers often use optimization methods like genetic algorithm (GA), PSO, ant colony optimization techniques to find the network

weights. If there is huge search space, GA may be used for searching and selecting features. It is also used for back propagation neural network determining the hidden layers parameters and numbers of hidden nodes.

In this study, we concentrate on a neuro-genetic approach for feature selection and network training methods to diagnose neonatal diseases. Proper selections of algorithms, neural network architecture, network training process and performance evaluation have been discussed. The rest of the paper has been arranged in the following way. Section 2 elaborates the related field studies. Incremental back propagation neural network and neuro-genetic fusion approach have been discussed in Section 3 and 4 respectively. Experimental results are highlighted in section 5. Lastly, our conclusions are summarized in section 6.

2. Related Studies

The main feature of an incremental learning neural network is to find how a network can learn new knowledge without forgetting the old knowledge. In a study [6], authors proposed a new incremental learning method for pattern recognition which employs bounded weight modification and structural adaptation learning rules and applies initial knowledge to constrain the learning process. This approach has been applied in iris and the promoter domains for the classification problems. The parameter incremental learning (PIL) algorithms for the multilayer perceptron (MLP) are subsequently derived. In terms of accuracy and speed PIL algorithm has been found to be better as compared to stochastic diagonal Levenberg-Marquardt (SDLM) algorithm and batch back propagation as revealed in a study [7]. PIL algorithms are simple to compute and easy to use. This can be applied for better performance where BP algorithm is relevant. A method of artificial neural networks (ANN) coupled with genetic algorithms has been applied to evolve combinations of clinical variables optimized for predicting urinary tract infection [8]. Neuro-Genetic approach has also been proposed for feature selection in diagnosis of stroke disease. Here MLP is used whose inputs are automatically selected using GA and the experimental results show better classification accuracy with fewer inputs as features [9]. In another study of tuberculosis diagnosis, multilayer neural networks (MLNNs) with two hidden layers and genetic algorithm have been used for network training and feature selection [10]. The neuro-fuzzy approach combines the merits of connectionist and fuzzy approaches, which constitutes a key component of soft computing at this stage. In an another study [11], a detailed and integrated categorization of the various neuro-fuzzy models used for rule generation under a unified soft computing framework has been proposed.

GAs is basically inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution-survival of the fittest. For finding the approximate solution to optimization problems genetic algorithms are used. It is a global search technique and a particular class of evolutionary

algorithms. From biological sciences, evolutionary processes have been borrowed and translated to efficient search and design strategies. Genetic algorithms use these strategies to find an optimum solution for any multi-dimensional problem [12]. GA algorithms are the ways of solving problems by selection, crossover, mutation and accepting to progress of a problem solution. Each element in a genetic space is termed as chromosome. It is the collection of genes, the basic building block of the chromosome. Locus is the position of particular gene in the chromosome. In every generation the total population is evaluated using fitness function and there by selecting procedure. In this procedure high fitness chromosomes are used to eliminate low fitness chromosomes using Boltzmann selection, Roulette-wheel selection etc. After selection crossover, mutation process starts their job by which two-selected chromosomes with high fitness values exchange part of the genes to generate new pair of chromosomes. Crossover may be of different types, namely, uniform crossover, average crossover, multipoint crossover, one point crossover and two-point crossover. The mutation processes like, heuristic mutation, random gene mutation and creep mutation randomly changes the value of a gene for checking and preventing early convergence to local optima. This whole process will continue till the termination criteria are not satisfied for new population generation [13].

3. Incremental Backpropagation

3.1 Back Propagation Neural Network

Neural network models can be basically of two types-feedforward type and feedback type. The training of the network is accomplished by adjusting the connection weights by means of a local learning law. There are hundreds of local learning laws; back-propagation is one of the well-known technique [14]. Feed-forward networks are often trained using a back propagation-learning scheme. Back propagation learning works by making modifications in weight values starting at the output layer and then moving backward through the hidden layers of the network. Back propagation algorithm is the most popular algorithm for training of multi-layer perceptrons and is often used by researchers as well as by practitioners. Back propagation can also be efficient for large datasets if one properly selects the learning rate and momentum.

3.2 Needs of Incremental BP [6]

The standard backpropagation learning network is not incremental learner by its nature for processing jobs. For an example, if a network has been trained on instance set X and then that has been retrained on set Z, possibly, the trained knowledge of set X would be lost. In that situation back propagation network has to be trained on the new instances

along with old instances for learning new instances maintaining the same old memory. In the case of non stationary data sets, the network should be adapted to the new instance and preserve previous knowledge if it is not in conflict with that instance. A technique is to minimize the network output error with respect to old instances subject to the approximation of the network output to the desired output of the new instances [15]. Since the old instance has to be reexamined, this may not be treated as incremental learning technique. Incremental and batch back propagation algorithm may be used for networks of any size. The main drawbacks of back propagation are: slow convergence, need to tune up the learning rate and momentum parameters, and high probability of reaching local minima. Thus for a large datasets, incremental back propagation would be efficient. Eventually, this efficiency requires proper selection rate and momentum for the network learning.

4. Neuro-Genetic Approach

4.1 Application of GA in fusion approach

The fusion of artificial neural network with genetic algorithm has been accomplished by using GA to optimize the parameters for an ANN with specific topological architecture. Back propagation neural network learning is performed by frequent changing the weights at the output layer. When the gradient descent algorithm is used to modify the weights of the artificial neural network, it searches for the number of hidden nodes and connection weights in a specific network topology. There are many search algorithms and several soft computing techniques [16] to perform the domain attribute selection, for example; greedy local search, GA. Figure 1 depicts neuro-genetic fusion model considered in this study.

4.2 Analyzing Data sets

Analyzing the dataset is required to define column parameters and detect data anomalies. Data analysis information needed for correct data preprocessing. After data analysis, we can see which values have been identified as missing, wrong type values or outliers and which columns were rejected as unconvertible for use with the neural network. Outliers are column values that are far away from the majority of the column data. Outliers can be just extreme cases, measurement errors or other anomalies. Outliers prevent correct neural network training and significantly degrade neural network performance. Studies recommend removing outliers from data before using neural networks and model designing. However, our data sets are free of such problems.

4.3. Feature Selection and preprocessing

In this fusion approach GA has been applied in such a way that it can reduce the size of the training set, if possible, and select the most relevant features from the data set for designing a proper

network structure. By using few trials, we select the hidden layer of the network. Here, the constraint is that there should have at least one layer between input and output layer of the network. We have used a dataset of having 95 instances belonging to 14 classes described by 14 categorical attributes as different sign and symptoms. GA search classifier used to select the mostly required attributes. The size of the neural network is particularly dependent on the number of input variables. To get best performance and avoid over-fitting problem in the network, the input variables should be less. Thus, we use pre-processing on the entire input data after randomization. This pre-processing actually eliminates the irrelevant and redundant data. This is required for optimization of the network structure.

4.4 Procedure for Attribute selection

Individual representation consists of a string of N bits, and N is the number of the original attributes. The i th bit can take not more than two values, i.e. 1 or 0. It represents whether the attribute is selected (1) or not (0). Hence, $i = 1 \dots N$. For an example taken from our study, in the 14-attribute data set, the individual “ 1 0 0 0 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 1 1 ” represents a solution where the data set selects the attributes no 1st, 5th, 6th, 9th, 13th

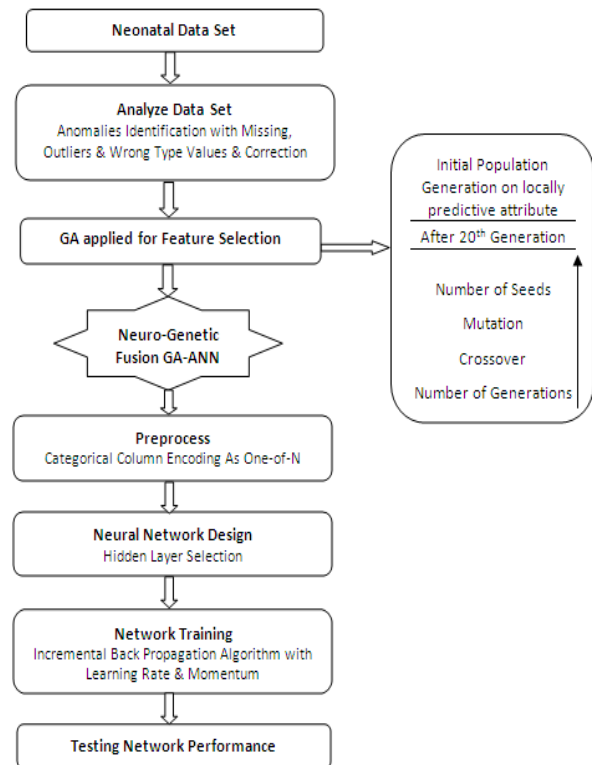


Fig. 1 Neuro-genetic fusion process model

and 14th are selected. Here we applied crossover and mutation operations.

4.5 Data Pre-processing and Post-processing

Neural networks performance is better on numeric data. But, we are having categorical data to be processed by neural network. Therefore, before that data to be used in the network, additional transformation is required as an input and after their reception at the output.

Data preprocessing means modification of the data before it is fed to a neural network. Preprocessing transforms the data to make it suitable for neural network.

Post-processing means modifying the neural network output to make it understandable by user or suitable for real world environment. Textual values can be used only if they represent a final set of values. Columns with such values are called categorical columns.

Numeric values should be scaled before feeding them to the network input, because artificial neurons have a limited range of operating values. Therefore, input information should be reduced to this range and output information should be received from network output by a reverse transformation. In this context, categorical columns automatically encoded during data preprocessing using one-of-N, encodings method. The one-of-N encoding means that a column with N distinct categories (values) is encoded into a set of N numeric columns, with one column for each category. For example, for the Birth_Term_Status column with values "Term", "Pre Term" and "Post Term", have been represented; Term as {1,0,0}, Pre Term as {0,1,0}, and Post Term as {0,0,1}.

4.6 Designing the Network

After preprocessing, the data are fed to neural network for training which is preceded by design phase. For designing a network, we need to specify the network architecture.

a. Selection of Network Architecture

This process searches number of hidden layers and units of each layers and network properties which includes error and activation functions. Though the network properties are defined automatically; for our experiment, we have changed them manually for improving network performance. Here feed-forward fully-connected neural network MLP algorithm has been applied for searching best network architecture.

In this context, our objectives of the training process was to find the set of weight values which will cause the output from the neural network to match the actual target values as closely as possible. We have faced several issues concerned in designing and training a multilayer perceptron network model. Some of the issues are:

- To select the number of hidden layers to use in the network.

- To decide the number of neurons to be used in each hidden layer.
- Converging to an optimal solution in a reasonable period of time.
- Finding a globally optimal solution that avoids local minima.
- Validating the neural network to test for over fitting.

b. Hidden Layers Selection

In our study, one hidden layer is sufficient for the network. Two hidden layers are required for modeling data with discontinuities such as a saw tooth wave pattern. As we find that using two hidden layers rarely improves the model, and it may introduce a greater risk of converging to a local minima. So, three layer models with one hidden layer are found suitable for our study.

c. Deciding how many neurons to be used in the hidden layers

The most significant characteristic of a multilayer perceptron network is to decide the number of neurons in the hidden layer. The network may be unable to model complex data. The resulting fit will be poor, if an inadequate number of neurons are used in the network. Similarly, if too many neurons are used, the training time may become excessively long, and, worse, the network may overfit the data. When overfitting occurs, the network will begin to model random noise in the data. The overfitting model fits the training data extremely well, but generalizes poorly to new and unseen data. For controlling overfitting, we retain and restore best network.

d. Training the Network

We train the selected architecture using incremental back propagation training algorithm. This has been studied with the training data for finding better training performance. For the purpose of comparison, we use traditional neural network, as well as batch back propagation neural network. The comparative results are shown in the later part of the paper.

e. Performance evaluation on training data

After the network training process has been completed using algorithms, mentioned earlier, performance testing of the selected network has been done on training set. We tested using CCR% (correct classification rate) as well as confusion matrix.

5. Experiment and Result Analysis

5.1. Data for the study

We use 95 patient's data for analysis. All the cases are analyzed after careful scrutiny with the help of a pediatric expert; one of our authors. The following Table 1 shows the various input parameters involved in neonatal disease diagnosis.

Table 1: Input Parameters

Sl. No.	Column Type	Parameters
1	Categorical	Birth_Term_Status
2	Categorical	Birth_Weight_Status
3	Categorical	Age_in_Hours>72
4	Categorical	Lethargy
5	Categorical	Refusual_to_Suck
6	Categorical	Poor_Cry
7	Categorical	Poor_Weight_gain
8	Categorical	Hypothalmia
9	Categorical	Sclerema
10	Categorical	Excessive_Jaundice
11	Categorical	Bleeding
12	Categorical	GI_Disorder
13	Categorical	Seizure
14	Categorical	Sluggish_Neonatal_Reflex

5.2. GA Based Attribute Selection

Initially we consider all the 14 symptoms for neuro-genetic fusion approach. Genetic Algorithm optimizes 14 inputs and the genotype is represented by the sequence of symptoms. GA algorithm is an adaptive optimization algorithm for simulating the inheritance and evolution of biology in the nature [17]. Genes are represented by real number encoding method. The chromosomes are generated randomly and the original population is a set of N chromosomes. Minimum optimization method has been applied for computing the fitness of each

Table 2: GA Parameters for Attribute Selection

Attribute Selection on all input data	
Search Method	Genetic search
Start set	no attributes
Population size	14
Number of generations	20
Probability of crossover	0.7
Probability of mutation	0.035
Report frequency	20
Random number seed	1

chromosome. Fitness is given by $C_i = 1/E$ for each chromosome of the population, where E is the error computed as root mean square error at the output layer, where summation is performed overall output nodes p_j and t_j is the desired or target value of output o_j for a given input vector. For finding the error we use the following:

$$E = \frac{1}{2} \sum_p \sum_j (t_{pj} - O_{pj})^2 \quad (1)$$

After computing the fitness for all chromosomes, the worst fit chromosomes are replaced by best-fit chromosomes. Crossover steps are experimented using single point, two-point and multi point crossover term. In this study, the number of individual and initial population is 14. Maximum number of generation are fixed at 20. The probability of crossover is 0.7 and mutation is 0.035. This has been chosen in trial and error basis till the best performance achieved. Table 2 shows the GA parameters for the feature or attributes selection.

Finally mutation is applied as the last step to generate the new population. The new population is given as input to the classifier to compute the fitness of each chromosome, followed by process of selection, reproduction, crossover and mutations to generate the next population. This process is repeated till more or less all the chromosomes converge to the same fitness value. The categories of the initial population are showing in the Table 3.

Table 3: Initial Population

Merit	Scaled	Subset
0.09297	.00646	12
0.12137	.04982	7
0.34722	.39471	3 5 6 7 8 9 12 14
0.31215	.34115	7 9 13 14
0.38434	.45138	1 2 3 5 6 8 11 12 13 14
0.08874	0	3
0.31063	.33882	2 3 7 8 10 11 12
0.19273	.15879	4
0.36413	.42053	1 2 3 4 5 8 12 14
0.3017	.32518	2 4 8 11 12
0.33616	.37781	2 5 7 9 10 14
0.18158	.14176	14
0.34124	.38557	1 2 7 8 9 11 14
0.22485	.20783	1 4

After computing the 20th generation, the subset categories using GA are reflecting on Table IV. The irrelevant features are identified here which reduce the misuse classification. The basic idea was to find the best combination out of all inputs features and provide little computational process and maximum accuracy. The selected attributes using genetic algorithm are 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11,12,13,14. It is noticed that attribute 8, which is Hypothalmia, is missing on the selected attributes set. This reflects the less importance of that attribute for decision making through neural network.

5.3 Data Partition Set and Preprocessing

Selected categorical input data are encoded by [-1..1] scaling range for the input columns and [0..1] scaling range for the output column at the time of analyzing. The last column is considered as the target or output one and other columns are considered as input columns. The dataset is divided into training, validation and test sets. The Data have been analyzed

using Neuro-intelligence tool [18]. Table V shows the number records which are partitioned for training,

Table 4: After 20th Generation Subset Category

Merit	Scaled	Subset
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.41041	0	1 2 3 5 7 9 10 11 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.43019	0.29085	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 11 13 14
0.44385	0.49158	1 2 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44027	0.43897	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 13 14
0.44279	0.47602	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
0.44418	0.49641	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14

validation and test set. Out of 100% data, 68.42% data have been used for training data set and rest data are divided into validation and test data set at 15.79% consecutively.

Table 5: Data Partition Set

Partition Set	Records	Percentage (%)
Total	95	100
Training Set	65	68.42
Validation Set	15	15.79
Test Set	15	15.79
Ignore Set	0	0

Data encoding parameters have been depicted in Table 6.

Table 6: Pre-processing and Encoding Parameters

Data Preprocessing Information	Range
Rows for preprocessing	95
Columns before preprocessing	14
Columns after preprocessing	35
Input columns scaling range	[-1..1]
Output column(s) scaling range	[0..1]
Categorical Column Encoding Parameters	Range
Birth_Term_Status	One-of-3
Birth_Weight_Status	One-of-4
Age_in_Hours>72	Two-state
Lethargy	Two-state
Refusal_to_Suck	Two-state
Poor_cry	Two-state
Poor_Weight_gain	Two-state
Sclerema	Two-state
Excessive_Jaundice	Two-state
Bleeding	Two-state
GI_Disorder	Two-state
Seizure	Two-state
Sluggish_Neonatal_Reflex	Two-state
Disease_Confirmation	One-of-14

5.4 Network Characteristics

For searching the best network architecture; numbers of weights, fitness training error, validation error, test error and AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) have been considered. Basically, AIC is used to compare different networks with different weights (hidden units). AIC is used as fitness criteria during architecture search. Simple models are preferred to complex networks if the increased cost of the additional weights (hidden units) in the complex networks do not decrease the network error. It also determines the optimal number of weights required for the neural network. Heuristic searching method has been applied in this study. Out of 11 verified network architectures, [18-3-14] architecture had the best fitness with less number of weights. Table VII shows the architecture search results.

Table 7: ANN Architecture Search

ID	Architecture	# of Weights	Fitness	Train Error	AIC
1	[18-3-14]	117	1.666667	0.461538	-77.572721
2	[18-45-14]	1545	1.363636	0.523077	2770.538823
3	[18-28-14]	967	1.5	0.507692	1616.602489
4	[18-18-14]	627	1.363636	0.507692	936.602489
5	[18-38-14]	1307	1.363636	0.538462	2292.407485
6	[18-34-14]	1171	1.25	0.507692	2024.602489
7	[18-24-14]	831	1.25	0.507692	1344.602489
8	[18-31-14]	1069	1.363636	0.507692	1820.602489
9	[18-26-14]	899	1.25	0.492308	1482.602646
10	[18-29-14]	1001	1.5	0.492308	1686.602646
11	[18-30-14]	1035	1.363636	0.523077	1750.538823

This network has 18 input neurons corresponding to the inputs, 3 hidden neurons and the output layer has 14 neurons. Here, the input neurons represent the symptoms for the neonatal disease diagnosis. The output layer neurons represent the predicted types of disease. Table 8 depicts those total available records which are relevant during the Recall or search. Septicemia has been found to be most significant with a recall value 0.946. Here harmonic mean of precision and recall is specified as F-Measure for each class.

5.5 Results summary

Correct classification rate for training and validation have been obtained to find the best network after a number of iterations. A comparative study has been done with a previous study [19,20] based on traditional NN approach, neuro-genetic fusion approach (GA-Batch BP) and neuro-genetic approach (GA-Incremental BP). We use GA implemented in WEKA[21]. Table IX shows the comparative study.

The test results are summarized in Table 9. The final performances of the neuro-genetic (incremental) approach are compared with traditional backpropagation learning (non incremental) and neuro-genetic fusion (GA-Batch BP). The comparative study clearly reveals that the present neuro-genetic approach with GA-Incremental-BP shows better performance and faster convergence due to nature of the network formed from the data set. The maximum training CCR% has been found to be 81.54 with only 123 iterations in

Table 8: Detailed Accuracy By Class

TP Rate	FP Rate	Precision	Recall	F-Measure	ROC Area	Class
0.8	0.05	0.75	0.8	0.774	0.94	HIE III
0.875	0	1	0.875	0.933	0.999	No Disease
0.625	0.023	0.714	0.625	0.667	0.986	Hypo-Calcimia
0.946	0.31	0.66	0.946	0.778	0.911	Septicemia
0.5	0	1	0.5	0.667	0.997	Hypo- Thalmia
0.5	0.022	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.977	HIE II
0.5	0	1	0.5	0.667	0.997	Jaundice
0.75	0.022	0.6	0.75	0.667	0.988	Hypothermia
0	0	0	0	0	0.995	Hemorrhage
0	0	0	0	0	0.971	Others
0	0	0	0	0	0.984	Jaundice-BA
0.333	0	1	0.333	0.5	0.993	Hypo-Glycimia
0	0	0	0	0	0.989	Seizure Disorder
0	0	0	0	0	0.995	HIE II
0.705	0.133	0.64	0.705	0.653	0.95	Weighted Average

Table 9: Comparative Study for Training Performance

Approach	Iteration	CCR% (Training)	CCR% (Validation)
Traditional NN [19]	73	46.875	26.666666
	189	68.75	40
	364	75	20
Neuro-Genetic Fusion (GA-Batch BP) [20]	80	75.384613	40
	252	78.46154	33.333332
	414	78.46154	33.333332
Neuro-Genetic Approach(GA-Incremental BP)	124	81.53846	20
	247	81.53846	20
	368	81.53846	20
	492	81.53846	13.3333

this approach. In the case of traditional NN, CCR% for training is only 75% but with 364 iterations. On the other hand, training CCR% is 78.46 using 252 iterations for simple GA-Batch-BP approach.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented a neuro-genetic approach for neonatal disease diagnosis. The system has been trained by

different ANNs; traditional batch back propagation, incremental back propagation, and also evaluated are with respect to their training ability. Feature selection has been successfully performed by genetic algorithm. In this study, hidden layer plays an important role of detecting relevant features. Moreover, the neuro-genetic approach using incremental learning with GA shows better performance when relevant attributes has been chosen correctly of any artificial neural network.

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