Computer-Assisted Lung Cancer Diagnosis through Morphological Analysis & CNN

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Publication Date: 2025/05/10

Abstract: Lung cancer is an unregulated development of cells that begins in the lung and spreads to other parts of the body, posing a significant risk to human life. Radiological imaging, such as computed tomography (CT) scans and X-rays, is the primary tool for diagnosing lung cancer. However, a person's ability to interpret a large number of CT images might vary greatly, especially when the scans show many gray level fluctuations. The purpose of this study is to use Python-based machine learning and image processing approaches to detect lung cancer. Using the National Center for Cancer Diseases lung cancer dataset, this paper analyzes lung scans to determine if they are malignant or non-cancerous. Based on the study's top-performing solution, the code first preprocesses the images before applying segmentation and feature extraction techniques. The suggested approach makes a cancer prediction based on retrieved properties that were obtained through morphological processing.

Keywords: *Lung Cancer, Segmentation, Malignant, Morphological Operations, CNN.*

How to Cite: I. Saleth Mary; Dr. A. Shanthasheela. (2025). Computer-Assisted Lung Cancer Diagnosis through Morphological Analysis & CNN. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(4), 3127-3133. https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr1725.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cellular breakdown in the lungs remains as the chief reason for disease related mortality around the world, comprising a critical worldwide general wellbeing concern and positioning as the essential malignant growth in men and the second most predominant in females. Unchecked cell development in the lungs is the hallmark of lung cancer, a potentially fatal illness. Its late discovery and diagnosis contribute significantly to its status as one of the world's top causes of cancer-related fatalities [1]. Although early detection greatly increases the chances of a successful course of therapy and survival, it can be difficult due to the complexity of lung tissues and the subtlety of early-stage cancer indications. Computed tomography (CT) scans and other radiological imaging methods are essential for the diagnosis of lung cancer. Despite its importance, radiologists face significant challenges in lung cancer diagnosis due to the vast amount of data involved and the need for precise interpretation. To address this, automated diagnostic systems have been developed using machine learning and image processing techniques, aiming to enhance both the accuracy and efficiency of lung cancer detection [2].

Among these technologies, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) stand out as a powerful type of deep learning algorithm, particularly well-suited for image recognition and processing tasks. A CNN typically consists of several key layers, including convolutional layers, pooling layers, and fully connected layers. Its architecture is inspired by the visual processing mechanisms of the human brain, making it highly effective at identifying spatial relationships and hierarchical patterns within images [3][4].

The core components of a Convolutional Neural Network include:

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr1725

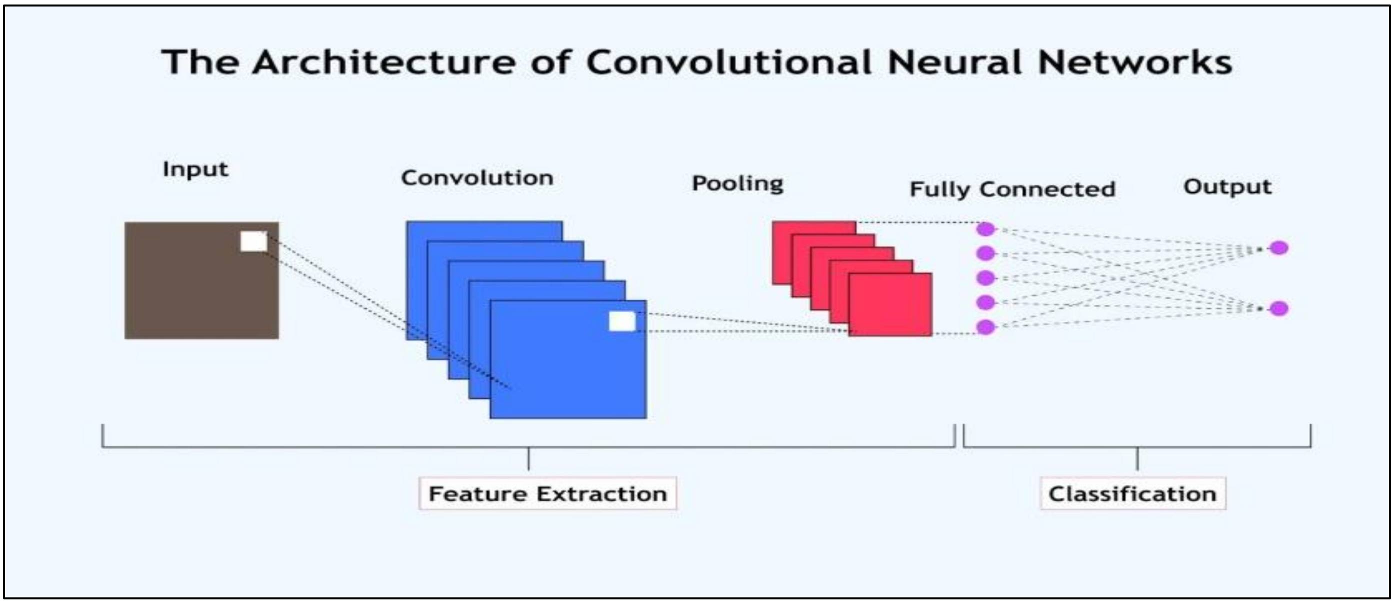

Fig 1: The Architecture of Convolutional Neural Networks

- **Convolutional Layers:** These layers apply filters, also known as kernels, to the input images through convolutional operations, enabling the detection of features such as edges, textures, and more complex patterns. Convolution helps preserve the spatial relationships between pixels, which is essential for accurate image analysis.
- **Pooling Layers:** Pooling layers reduce the spatial dimensions of the feature maps, decreasing the computational load and the number of parameters in the network. One commonly used method is *max pooling*, which selects the highest value from a set of neighboring pixels, effectively summarizing the most prominent features.
- **Activation Functions:** Non-linear activation functions, such as the Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU), introduce non-linearity into the model. This enables the network to learn complex and non-linear patterns in the data, which is critical for tasks like image classification.
- **Fully Connected Layers:** These layers interpret the high-level features extracted by earlier layers and are responsible for making final predictions. In fully connected layers, each neuron is connected to every neuron in the previous layer, allowing for comprehensive integration of the learned features.

This paper proposes a comprehensive approach for detecting bright regions in lung images—often indicative of lesions—by integrating techniques such as noise reduction, contrast enhancement, segmentation, and classification, powered by advances in machine learning and image processing.

Morphological analysis plays a vital role in lung cancer detection, as it focuses on the shape and structure of biological tissues in medical imaging. Techniques such as dilation, erosion, and edge detection in CT imaging help highlight and isolate regions of interest, thereby aiding in the accurate identification of potential cancerous areas [5].

These methods are very helpful in differentiating between non-cancerous and malignant tissues based on the size, texture, and form of nodules. Morphological approaches have the advantage of enhancing the traits of interest and suppressing extraneous details, which results in more accurate and dependable cancer detection. Automated lung cancer detection systems can achieve far better diagnosis results by combining morphological processing with other image processing and machine learning methods.

There are numerous Morphological Analysis [6][7][8]. Some of them are given below:

- Facilitates creative problem-solving by offering multiple solutions.
- Encourages collaboration and improves communication by involving team members.
- Aids in strategic business analysis.
- Enhances search engine results by identifying un-lexicon words.
- Enhances biological insights by reducing labeling reagent artifacts.
- Provides unbiased analysis of cell morphology.
- Produces repeatable experimental results.

II. RELATED WORK

Recent advancements in deep learning have significantly improved the accuracy of medical image analysis. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have been widely used for lung cancer detection due to their ability to learn hierarchical features from images. U-Net, Mask R-CNN, and 3D CNNs have shown promising results in segmenting and classifying lung nodules. Transfer learning, using pre-trained models such as ResNet, VGG, and Efficient Net, has also been applied to medical imaging tasks, reducing the need for large annotated datasets.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr1725

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in differentiating between benign and malignant nodules, especially in datasets with imbalanced class distributions. Traditional machine learning methods, such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Random Forests, have been used for lung cancer detection but often lack the robustness of deep learning approaches. This paper builds on these works by proposing a hybrid approach that combines morphological analysis with CNNs to improve the accuracy and generalizability of lung cancer detection.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

In order to precisely identify malignant spots in CT image, the suggested method for lung cancer detection combines CNN with image processing approaches. First, the images are preprocessed using median filtering to minimize noise. Following initial image processing, thresholding and morphological operations are applied to segment the lung regions and isolate any nodules present in the CT scans [9]. Morphological dilation is then employed to further refine the boundaries by closing gaps and emphasizing regions of interest. Once segmentation is complete, feature extraction is performed to gather critical information about the size, shape, and distribution of the detected nodules. These morphological features serve as input for the classification stage, where the system predicts whether the lung tissue is malignant or benign.

A. Proposed Methodology

The proposed approach involves several key stages: preprocessing, lung segmentation, feature extraction, and classification. Each phase plays a vital role in ensuring accurate detection and diagnosis of lung abnormalities in CT images.

➢ *Dataset*

This study utilizes the dataset provided by the National Center for Cancer Diseases, comprising 1,000 CT scan images—600 from malignant cases and 400 from benign cases. The scans were sourced from various hospitals to ensure diversity in scanner types, image resolutions, and patient demographics. To address class imbalance and reduce the risk of over fitting, data augmentation techniques such as rotation, flipping, and scaling were employed.

➢ *Preprocessing*

Preprocessing begins with noise reduction and contrast enhancement to improve image clarity. A median filter is used to suppress noise, followed by histogram equalization to enhance contrast. These enhancements aid in more accurate identification of potential nodules in subsequent steps.

➢ *Lung Segmentation*

Lung regions are segmented using Sobel edge detection combined with morphological operations. The Sobel operator detects the lung boundaries, while morphological dilation helps to close gaps and fine-tune the edges. This ensures precise isolation of the lung area, which is critical for reliable analysis.

➢ *Feature Extraction*

- Morphological features—such as the size, shape, and texture of the segmented regions—are extracted to characterize nodules. These features play a crucial role in distinguishing between benign and malignant tissue.

➢ *Classification*

The classification is performed using a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) composed of five convolutional layers, followed by max-pooling layers and fully connected layers. The network is trained to recognize complex patterns in the extracted features and accurately classify the lung tissue.

The Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU) activation function is used to introduce non-linearity, and dropout is applied to prevent over fitting. Transfer learning is employed using the ResNet-50 model, which was pre-trained on the Image Net dataset. The model is fine-tuned using the lung cancer dataset, with hyper parameters optimized through grid search.

➢ *Algorithm*

Here's a step-by-step breakdown of the algorithm to detect the uploaded image is malignant or normal.

- Load Image
- Load pre-trained model
- Perform prediction by the following steps
- Preprocess the image with filtering for noise reduction initially and then perform thresholding followed by morphological operation
- Detect Lung Sides such as left and right side of lungs
- Segment lung image and extract left and right lungs
- Extract features from a sub-region of the lung
- Check feature and vector for prediction.
- Display Normal lung or Tumor present based on feature.

➢ *Block Diagram*

The steps involved in the proposed algorithm is represented as a block diagram.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr1725

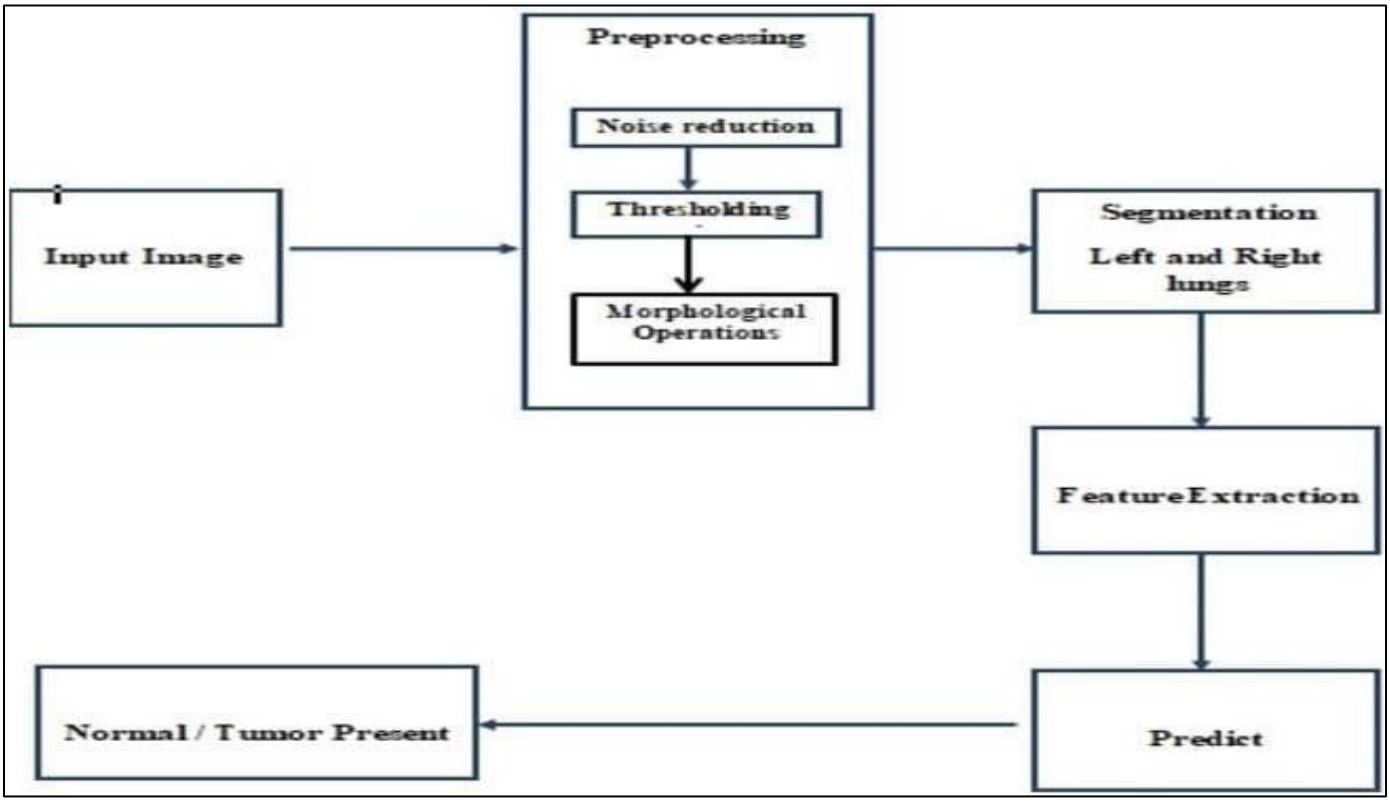

Fig 2: Block Diagram of Proposed Algorithm

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed method, a dataset from the National Center for Cancer Diseases was employed. The performance of the system was measured using a confusion matrix, which provided insights into the model's accuracy in predicting lung cancer cases. The method successfully detects and highlights bright regions in lung images indicative of lesions, enhances image contrast, and applies morphological analysis to achieve precise segmentation. Contour detection is used to define regions of interest, making the system a powerful tool for early detection of lung cancer.

The confusion matrix results demonstrate strong performance, with a low number of false positives and false negatives. The integration of morphological dilation and Sobel edge detection further contributed to improved accuracy in cancer detection. By comparing predicted classifications with the actual labels of CT scan images, the system's diagnostic accuracy was reliably assessed.

A. Comparison with Other Deep Learning Approaches

- **(U-Net, CNN-LSTM, Vision Transformers)**
- **Proposed Method: CNN + Morphological Analysis**

➢ *Strengths:*

- **Simplicity:** The proposed method is relatively simple and efficient, combining Convolutional Neural Networks with morphological operations for image segmentation and classification.
- **Enhanced Segmentation:** The application of morphological techniques such as dilation and erosion significantly improves the segmentation of lung regions, leading to more accurate identification of lesions.regions and nodules, which may not be explicitly handled by other deep learning approaches.

➢ *Limitations:*

- ***Limited Complexity:*** The proposed method does not leverage more advanced deep learning architectures like U-Net (for precise segmentation), CNN-LSTM (for capturing temporal dependencies), or Vision Transformers (for global context understanding).
- ***Scalability:*** The method may not scale as well to larger datasets or more complex tasks compared to state-of-the-art architectures like Vision Transformers.

➢ *Other Deep Learning Approaches:*

- *U-Net:*

✓ ***Strengths***: U-Net is specifically designed for medical image segmentation and excels at tasks requiring precise localization of objects (e.g., lung nodules). It uses skip connections to combine low-level and high-level features, making it highly effective for segmentation tasks.
✓ ***Comparison***: The proposed method may not achieve the same level of segmentation accuracy as U-Net, which is considered a gold standard in medical imaging.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr1725

- *CNN-LSTM:*

✓ ***Strengths:*** CNN-LSTM combines the spatial feature extraction capabilities of CNNs with the temporal modeling power of LSTMs. This is useful for tasks involving sequential data (e.g., video or time-series medical data).
✓ ***Comparison:*** The proposed method does not incorporate temporal information, making it less suitable for tasks requiring sequential analysis.

- *Vision Transformers (ViT):*

✓ ***Strengths:*** Vision Transformers leverage self-attention mechanisms to capture global context in images, often outperforming CNNs in tasks requiring a broad understanding of the image.
✓ ***Comparison***: The proposed method relies on CNNs, which may not capture global context as effectively as Vision Transformers. ViTs are also more scalable to larger datasets.

B. Input Image

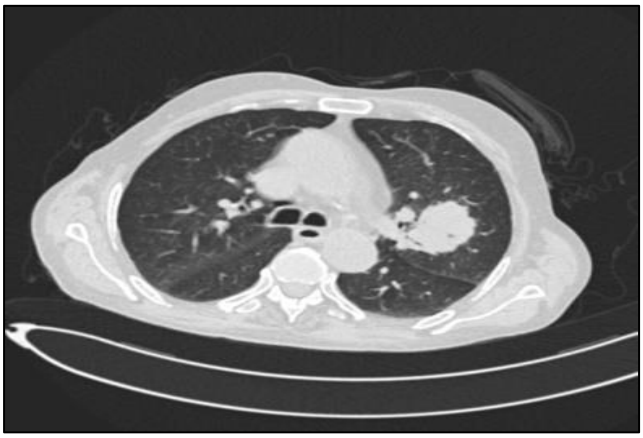

Fig 3: Malignant Image

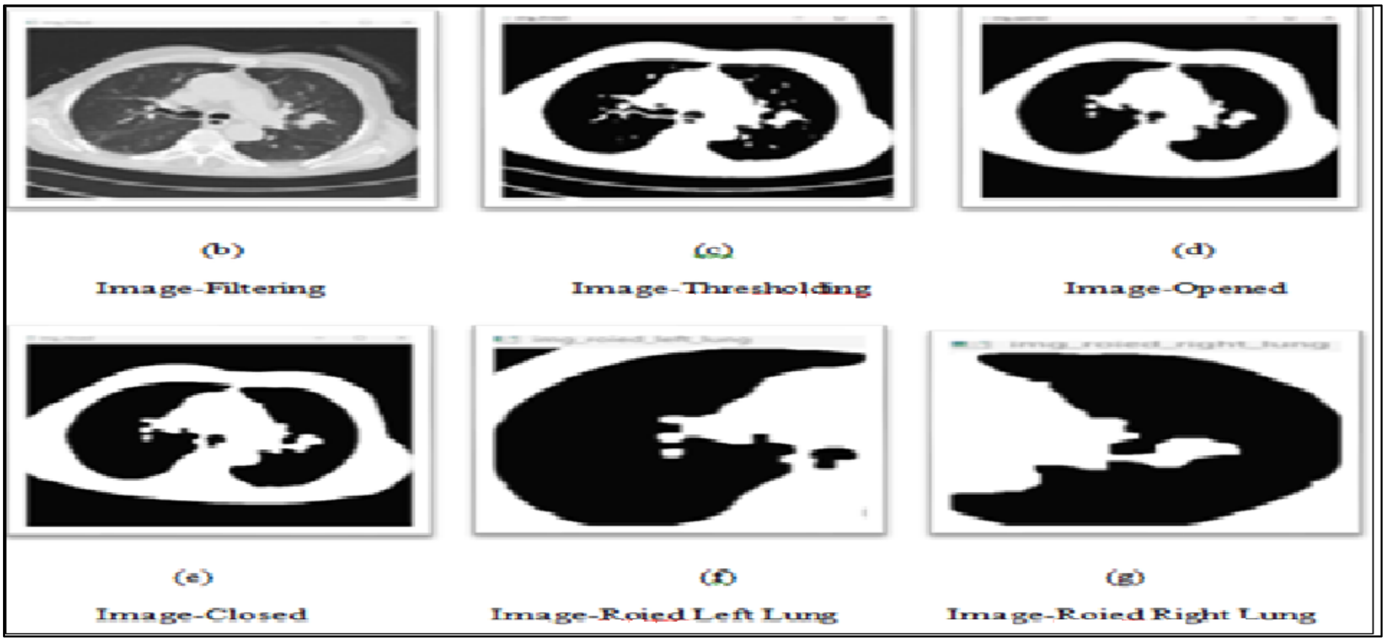

Fig 4: Experimental Results

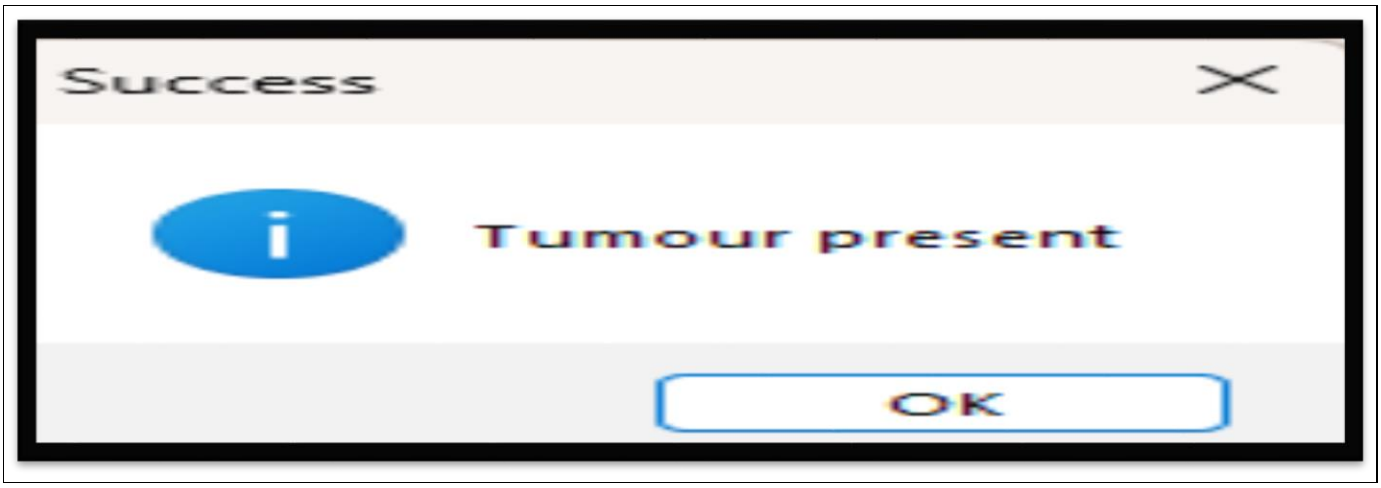

Fig 5: Prediction

C. Confusion Matrix for Lung Cancer Detection

The model's high accuracy rate suggests that it can effectively detect lung cancer. The findings of the confusion matrix indicated that there were very few false positives and false negatives, indicating the algorithm's resilience in differentiating between benign and malignant tissues. The suggested system's dependability was further confirmed by the excellent recall and precision metrics.

Here is the confusion matrix for lung cancer detection based on the data you provided. The accuracy of the model is approximately 90.32%.

Table 1: Confusion Matrix for Lung Cancer Detection

State	Predicted Positive	Predicted Negative
True Positive(TP)	26	4
True Negative(TN)	3	2
False Positive(FP)	2	2
False Negative(FN)	1	2

Accuracy = (TP + TN) / (TP + TN + FP + FN)

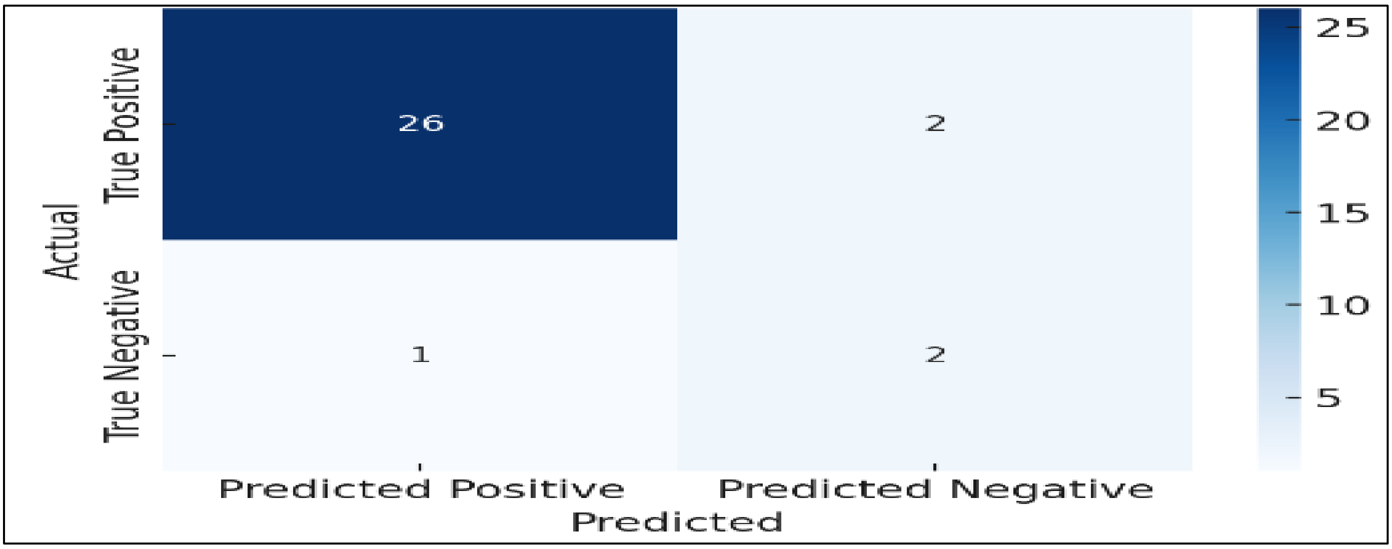

Fig 6: Confusion Matrix

V. CONCLUSION

This work combines CNN, Noise Reduction, Morphological processing to provide a novel way of detecting lung lesions. The approach provides substantial support for early detection and treatment planning in the management of lung cancer by increasing the accuracy of lesion segmentation. Future work will focus on expanding the dataset, exploring other deep learning architectures, and validating the model on external datasets.

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