For Immediate Release

ATA releases new guidelines that include artificial intelligence diagnosis

The American Telemedicine Association's updated practice guidelines for ocular telehealth-diabetic retinopathy now include an appendix on fully automated and computer-assisted diagnosis

(CORALVILLE, Iowa) April 9, 2020 – The American Telemedicine Association (ATA) last week published ocular telehealth practice guidelines that now include artificial intelligence (AI) for the remote diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness for working age adults.

The ATA's new practice guidelines provide best practices for the clinical implementation of telemedicine and AI for diabetic retinopathy and are published in Telemedicine and eHealth Journal (Vol. 26, No. 4, April 2020). ATA joins a growing number of health organizations, including the American Diabetes Association, that are adopting autonomous AI diagnostics for diabetic retinopathy as a new standard of care.

"This pandemic has put a spotlight on the importance of remote healthcare delivery solutions, but we need to make sure telemedicine and new AI technologies are being implemented the right way," said Michael Abramoff, MD, PhD, Founder and Executive Chairman of IDx and chair of the AI section of ATA's guidelines. "The ATA's new guidelines offer a roadmap for providers implementing these solutions with an emphasis on extensive clinical validation and quality control to better protect patient safety."

"As we work to continue expanding access to telemedicine to fully realize the benefits of remote healthcare delivery, artificial intelligence will play an important role in improving efficiency and quality at large scale," said Ann Mond Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of the ATA. "With the urgent need to provide high-quality, cost-effective screening to prevent avoidable blindness from diabetes, and the recent introduction of FDA-cleared fully autonomous diagnostics, the ATA expanded its ocular telehealth guidelines to provide more comprehensive best practices around the use of AI."

IDx-DR, an autonomous AI system that makes a clinical decision without physician involvement, is currently the only FDA-authorized fully automated diagnostic solution that is commercially available to healthcare providers. The AI system, which detects diabetic retinopathy and macular edema, is currently in use at a rapidly growing number of large health systems that each serve tens of thousands of people with diabetes and previously struggled to implement diabetic retinopathy eye exams at scale. IDx-DR enables these health systems to provide vision-saving eye exams to their patients and meet care quality metrics.

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes that causes an estimated 50,000 people with diabetes to lose vision each year. If caught in its early stages, vision loss and blindness are almost entirely preventable, yet as few as 15% of people with diabetes get regular eye exams, according to a Diabetes Care study.

About IDx-DR

IDx-DR is an FDA-authorized autonomous AI-based diagnostic system that makes a clinical decision without physician involvement. The system is designed for use at the front lines of care to detect diabetic retinopathy and macular edema, common complications of diabetes and leading causes of blindness. IDx-DR is cleared by the FDA to make an assessment without the need for a clinician to interpret the image or results, making it usable by health care providers who may not normally be involved in eye care.

The exam typically takes 5-10 minutes. Operators use a robotic fundus camera to take pictures of the patient's retinas – the back part of the eye, which are then analyzed by the autonomous AI's algorithms for signs of diabetic retinopathy. An immediate diagnostic report is produced at the point of care, allowing the physician to discuss the results with the patient while they are still in the office.

About IDx

IDx is paving the way for automated diagnosis to become the new standard of care. Founded in 2010 by Dr. Michael Abramoff, a physician/scientist and computer engineer, IDx has developed a unique, patented biomarker-based approach to build algorithms to "think" like a physician. These algorithms are integrated into easy-to-use systems that can make clinical decisions without human intervention, removing the diagnostic burden of common diseases from specialists.

IDx received FDA clearance for its first diagnostic system for diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular edema in 2018, which is rapidly gaining adoption among the largest and most prestigious health systems in the U.S and globally.

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