



A predictive model for high/low risk group according to oncotype DX recurrence score using machine learning

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ABSTRACT

Background: Oncotype DX(ODX) is a 21-gene breast cancer recurrence score(RS) assay that aids in decision-making for chemotherapy in early-stage hormone receptor-positive(HR+)breast cancer. We developed a prediction tool using machine learning for high- or low-risk ODX criteria (i.e., RS < 11 for low-risk; RS > 25 for high-risk).

Methods: We performed a retrospective review of 301 breast cancer patients who underwent surgery between April 2011 and July 2017 and then an ODX test at Samsung Medical Center in Seoul, Korea. Among them, 208 cases were defined as the modeling group and 76 cases were defined as the validation group. We built a supervised machine learning classification model using the Azure ML platform.

Results: For the high RS group, accuracy was 0.903 through Two-class Decision Jungle method in test set. For the low RS group, the accuracy was 0.726 when the Two-class Neural Network method was applied. The AUC of the ROC curve was 0.917 in the high RS group and 0.744 in the low RS group in test set. In addition, we conducted an internal validation using 76 patients who underwent ODX testing between January 2017 and July 2017. The accuracy of validation was 0.880 in the high RS group and 0.790 in the low RS group.

Conclusion: We developed a predictive model using machine learning that could represent a useful and easy-to-access tool for the selection of high ODX RS patients. After additional evaluation with large data and external validation, worldwide use of our model could be expected.

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Introduction

Oncotype DX (ODX) (Genomic Health, Redwood City, CA, USA) is a 21-gene breast cancer recurrence score (RS) assay that aids in decision-making for chemotherapy in early-stage hormone receptor-positive (HR+), human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2)-negative breast cancer [1,2]. The ODX test is currently used worldwide for routine evaluations in conjunction with guidelines from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), and others [3,4]. However, the ODX test is costly, and significant racial and socioeconomic disparities exist with regard to its use [5].

A few studies have attempted to predict the results of the ODX test using patients at multiple institutions who were evaluated

using the ODX test [6–9]. These investigations employed histopathologic variables and statistical methods such as logistic regression for prediction; to date, no study has used machine learning method for prediction. Machine learning as an advanced computational technology has been around for several years, with research indicating it is suitable for discovering patterns among diverse biomedical datasets and that it provides excellent capabilities ranging from gene annotation to predictive phenotyping [10].

The purpose of our study was to develop a prediction tool using machine learning for high- or low-risk ODX criteria according to the TAILORx trial (i.e., RS < 11 for low-risk; RS > 25 for high-risk) [11]. Because, patients with RS < 11 do not need chemotherapy according to prospective validation study [12] and chemotherapy is recommended to patients with RS > 25 [13].

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Methods

Study population

We performed a retrospective chart review of 301 breast cancer patients who underwent surgery between April 2011 and July 2017 and then an ODX test at Samsung Medical Center in Seoul, Korea. As part of this study, not only ODX scores but also electronic medical records including pathology reports were reviewed. Seventeen cases were excluded from analysis due to incomplete medical data and 284 cases were included for analysis. Among them, 208 cases were defined as the modeling group and 76 cases were defined as the validation group. Because we tried to conduct a prospective validation with data during January and July 2017 after development of our model, we used retrospective data (total 208 patients during April 2011 and December 2016) for modeling. This study adhered to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the institutional review board (IRB) of Samsung Medical Center (IRB no. 2017-03-136-002).

The available data for the cohorts were: age at diagnosis; histopathology (e.g., invasive ductal carcinoma, invasive lobular carcinoma, mixed invasive ductal carcinoma and invasive lobular carcinoma); existence of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), lympho-vascular invasion (LVI), and extensive intraductal component (EIC); nuclear grade; histologic grade; pathologic T-stage; number of metastatic lymph nodes; lymph node metastasis size; perinodal extension; and estrogen receptor, progesterone receptor, HER2, and Ki-67 status. ER, PR positivity was defined as an Allred score in the range of 3–8 according to immunohistochemical (IHC) staining with antibodies to ER (Immunotech, France) and PR (Novocastra, UK) [14]. HER2 status was evaluated using the antibody (DAKO, CA) and/or fluorescence or silver in situ hybridization (FISH or SISH). HER2 grades of 0, 1 were defined as a negative, while grade 3 was identified as a positive result. Amplification of HER2 was confirmed by FISH or SISH for results of 2+ and HER2 amplification, defined as American society of clinical oncology guideline 2013 [15]. Ki-67 status was evaluated using the MIB1 antibody (Immunotech, France) and scored by percentage of positive cells [16].

Statistical analysis

Continuous variables were compared between the modeling and validation groups using Mann–Whitney *U* tests, while categorical variables were analyzed via the chi-squared test or Fisher's exact test using SAS version 9.4 (SAS Institute, Cary, NC, USA). Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves and areas under the ROC curve (AUCs) were calculated. All tests were two-sided and a *p*-value of <0.05 was considered to be statistically significant.

Machine learning

Azure Machine Learning (Azure ML; Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA) is a cloud service that enables the execution of machine learning processes; the Azure Machine Learning Studio (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA) is also available as a workspace to help users build and test predictive models [17]. We built a supervised machine learning classification model using the Azure ML platform (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA). This was accomplished using the steps of (1) edit the data, (2) split the data, (3) train the model, (4) score the model, and (5) evaluate the model (Fig. 1). We classified data as integers (e.g., age, DCIS size, metastasis size of lymph nodes) and categories (e.g., tumor type; existence of DCIS, LVI, and EIC; perinodal extension; and status of estrogen receptor, progesterone receptor, HER2, and Ki-67). We split the modeling data (208 cases) into training and testing sets using a randomized 70–30 split. We then trained our training set using a Two-class Decision Jungle method [18] for the prediction of the high RS group and a Two-class Neural Network [19] method for the prediction of the low RS group.

Results

Patient characteristics

Table 1 shows the baseline characteristics of the included patients. The modeling and validation groups consisted of 208 patients and 76 patients, respectively. The proportion of low RS patients was higher in the validation group than in the modeling group, while the proportion of high RS patients was higher in the

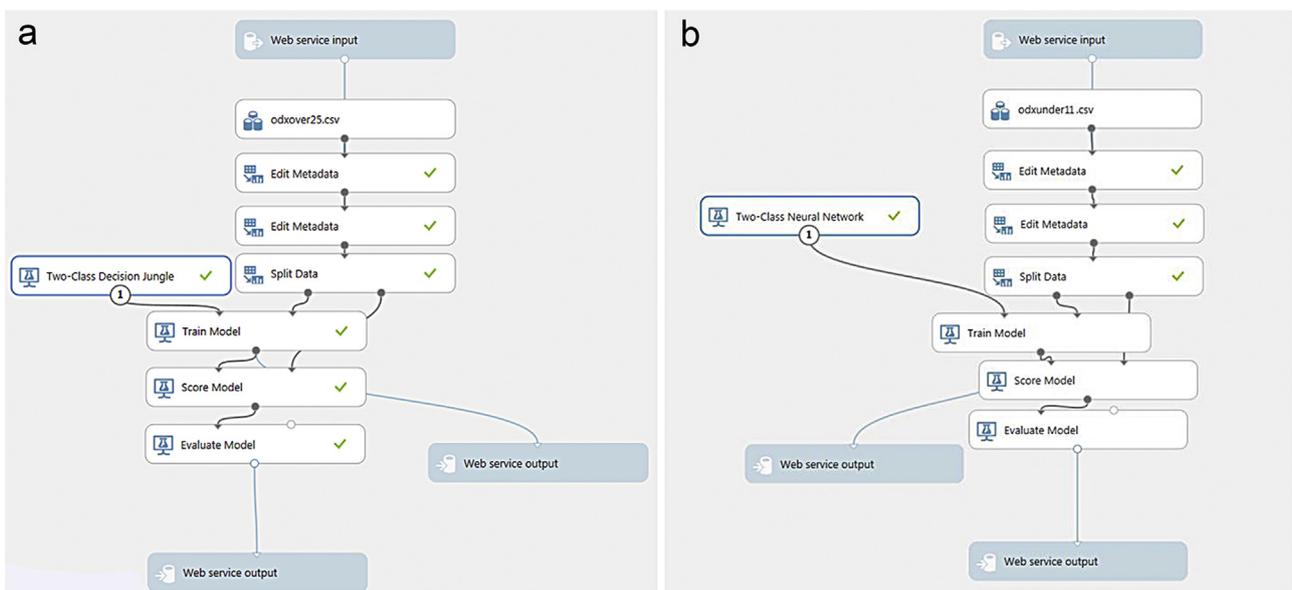


Fig. 1. The workflow of modeling using Azure ML (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA). It consist of establishing a dataset; editing the metadata; employing an algorithm (for example, Two-Class Decision Jungle or Two-Class Neural Network); splitting the data; training the model; scoring the model; and evaluating the model. a. The high RS group. b. The low RS group.

Table 1
The baseline characteristics of enrolled patients.

		Modeling group (n = 208)		Validation group (n = 76)		p-value
		No.	%	No.	%	
Recurrence Score	low (<11)	44	21.2	18	23.7	0.840
	intermediate (11–25)	143	68.8	52	68.4	
	high (>25)	21	10.1	6	7.9	
Age	<40	28	13.5	13	11.0	0.449
	40 ≤	180	86.5	63	82.9	
Age (Median±SD, yr)	44.00 (±4.0)			46.68 (±3.9)		0.052
Menopause	Pre	174	83.7	61	80.3	0.595
	Post	34	16.3	15	19.7	
Histology	Ductal	180	86.5	70	92.1	0.201
	Lobular	17	8.2	6	7.9	
	Mixed(ductal+lobular)	3	1.4	0	0.0	
	Others	8	3.8	0	0.0	
Coexistence of Ductal Carcinoma in situ	No	128	61.5	52	68.4	0.286
	Yes	80	38.5	24	31.6	
Median Size (range, cm) of DCIS	2.04 (±1.5)			1.05 (±0.9)		0.069
Existence of Satellite nodules	No	145	69.7	54	71.1	0.827
	Yes	63	30.3	22	28.9	
Lymphovascular invasion	No	135	64.9	44	57.9	0.279
	Yes	73	35.1	32	42.1	
Extensive intraductal component	No	137	65.9	63	82.9	0.005
	Yes	71	34.1	13	17.1	
Nuclear grade	1	28	13.5	2	2.6	0.053
	2	168	80.8	67	88.2	
	3	12	5.8	7	9.2	
Histologic grade	1	58	27.9	9	11.8	0.058
	2	140	67.3	62	81.6	
	3	10	4.8	5	6.6	
T stage	1	144	69.2	46	60.5	0.211
	2	64	30.8	30	39.5	
Number of metastatic lymph node	0	140	67.3	57	75.0	0.454
	1	56	26.9	16	21.1	
	2	12	5.8	3	3.9	
Median Size (range, cm) of metastasis	0.11 (±0.1)			0.17 (±0.2)		0.455
Perinodal extension	No	195	93.8	71	93.4	0.927
	Yes	13	6.3	5	6.6	
Estrogen Receptor(ER)	negative	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.353
	positive	208	100.0	76	100.0	
ER grade	8	171	82.2	69	90.8	0.353
	7	33	15.9	6	7.9	
	6	2	1.0	1	1.3	
	5	1	0.5	0	0.0	
	4	1	0.5	0	0.0	
	3	0	0	0	0	
Progesteron Receptor	negative	6	2.9	3	3.9	0.355
	positive	202	97.1	73	96.1	
HER2 Receptor	negative	208	100.0	76	100.0	0.325
	positive	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Ki-67	1 (<25%)	184	88.5	59	77.6	0.054
	2 (25 ≤ <50%)	24	11.5	17	22.4	
	3 (50 ≤ <75%)	0	0	0	0	
	4 (75 ≤ <100%)	0	0	0	0	

modeling group but lower in the validation group. However, there was no statistical significance with respect to these differences ($p = 0.840$). The mean patient age was 44 years in the modeling group and 46 years in the validation group. The majority of patients had invasive ductal carcinoma with the characteristics of nuclear grade 2, histologic grade 2, and stage T1. EIC was the only different variable among the two groups ($p = 0.005$); the others were not significantly different.

Predictive model

We developed a predictive model with 208 cases through the Azure ML platform (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA) (Fig. 1). We tried to develop a model using various classification algorithms, such as Two-class Decision Forest, Two-class Decision Jungle, Two-

class Bayes Point Machine, Two-class Support Vector Machine, and Two-class Neural Network. Among them, we found the most suitable method in each case for the high RS group and the low RS group, respectively. For the high RS group, the use of Two-class Decision Jungle showed the best accuracy, which was 0.903. For the low RS group, the accuracy was 0.726 when the Two-class Neural Network method was applied. We also assessed the AUC. The AUC of the ROC curve was 0.917 in the high RS group (Fig. 2a) and 0.744 in the low RS group (Fig. 2b). In addition, we conducted an internal validation initiative using 76 patients who underwent ODX testing between January 2017 and July 2017. When we applied a 0.5 threshold value with our predictive model, the accuracy of validation was 0.880 in the high RS group and 0.790 in the low RS group (Table 2). We also compared variables for modeling between other validation studies and our study (Table 3.)

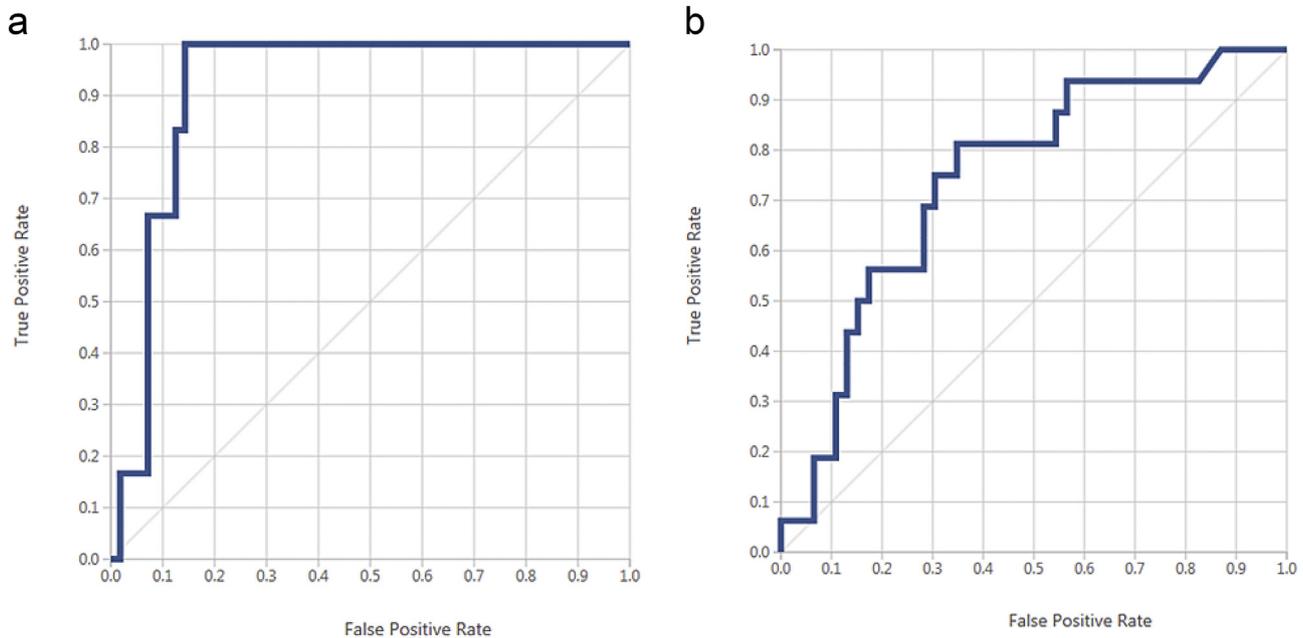


Fig. 2. The mean AUC of ROC curve. a. The high RS group (0.917). b. The low RS group (0.744).

Table 2

The predictive result of validation with 76 patients.

	Sensitivity	Specificity	Precision	Accuracy
low recurrence score group (<11)	0.110	1.000	1.000	0.790
high recurrence score group (>25)	0.170	0.960	0.250	0.880

Clinical application

The Azure ML platform (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA) provides a function for the set-up of web services (<http://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/machine-learning/studio/consume-web-services>). After deploying the Azure ML predictive model as a web service, we used a Representational State Transfer application programming interface to send data and obtain predictions in real-time. For example, when we input data according to each variable excluding the final value “ODX” (Fig. 3), an external application communicated with a machine learning workflow scoring model in real-time, enabling the predicted value to be calculated in only a few seconds.

Clinical follow up

We performed clinical follow up in 284 patients (208 patients for modeling group and 76 patients for validation group) and median follow up period was 38.1 months (range 11–80). Among them, 1 patient had distant metastasis and 2 patients had local recurrence (Table 4). These patients were all real high RS group but only 1 patient was not high RS group through our predictive model. There were also 3 cases for contra lateral breast cancer (Table 4). Among them, 2 cases were real high RS group but only 1 case was predictive high RS group.

Discussion

ODX is one of several genomic tests that has been developed for the identification of early breast cancer and is currently used

worldwide [20]. There have been several reports published to date about the cost-effectiveness of ODX [21,22] and it remains an expensive test.

In previous studies, prediction for ODX score was performed using logistic regression models [8,23,24] or equations [7,25]. Our study is unique in that it is a validation study that employs machine learning. The Azure ML platform (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA) that we used has several advantages. First, real-time analysis is possible in the clinical field. Second, it is free of charge to use—there is an option tool that has a charge associated with it in the Azure ML platform (Microsoft, Redmond, WA, USA), but our study was performed with the free option tool sufficiently. Third, using this program, the development of a suitable model is possible for each hospital. The findings of a predictive study with large data conducted at one center may not always be suitable for use by other institutions. Our center performed a validation study using an online nomogram calculator provided by the University of Tennessee Medical Center (Knoxville, TN, USA) on their website (<https://gsm.utmc.edu/nomograms>) in order to calculate the probability of a low-risk or a high-risk ODX score for each patient [26]. Notably, the nomogram calculations cannot be generalized to patients in Asia, although they are based on a large dataset of the United States-based National Cancer Database. This may be because of differences in race or variable values. The accurate results of ODX testing were dependent on accurate histology grading and high-quality estrogen receptor, progesterone receptor, HER2, and Ki-67 immunohistochemical results. These factors were measured according to the official international standard; however, there could be minimally differences among centers or individual patients. Our predictive model can incorporate data from other centers or hospitals

Table 4

The results of clinical follow up in 284 patients (modeling group 208 + validation group 76).

	Site	Time to event from operation date	Real ODX RS group	Predictive ODX RS group
Distant metastasis	Multiple bone(Skull, Spine, Sternum, Humerus)	59 months	high	high
Local recurrence	Operation site	52 months	high	high
	Ipsilateral internal mammary lymph node	33 months	high	intermediate ^a
Contra lateral breast cancer	—	56 months	high	high
	—	52 months	high	intermediate
	—	34 months	intermediate	intermediate

^a Our model was made for prediction of high or low RS group. Intermediate means the group which could not be predicted through high RS model as well as low RS model.

Between the two groups, EIC was the only factor that showed a statistical difference. EIC is defined as the presence of intraductal carcinoma representing more than 25% of the area of the entire invasive carcinoma [27] and it has been reported to be a very important risk factor for local disease recurrence after breast-conserving therapy [28]. However, the association between ODX RS (low, intermediate, high) and EIC (yes, no) was not important statistically according to linear-by-linear association analysis ($p = 0.083$). Therefore, we believe that EIC did not have an influence on the results of internal validation.

We also investigated recurrence or contralateral breast cancer cases in 284 patients (208 patients for modeling group and 76 patients for validation group) and then only 6 cases were observed.

Among them, 5 cases were real high RS group and 3 cases were predictive high RS group. These results did not reflect the utility of our predictive model because our study was focused on the prediction for RS low or high group, not recurrence. In addition, it was limited to check accurate prognosis due to short follow up period. For more reliable results, additional analysis with a larger number of patients and long term follow up time is needed.

Our study has several limitations. First, the predictive accuracy for the low RS group was lower (0.790) than that for the high RS group (0.880). However, the predictive value for the high RS group showed reliable results, so it can be said that our predictive model is more suitable for the prediction of high RS patients. This could be the merit for assortment of patients who need chemotherapy in clinical field. Second, the number of patients enrolled in the current study was not a large one and, third, only internal validation was performed. To increase study reliability, an analysis with a larger number of patients and external validation regardless of race is needed.

Conclusion

We developed a predictive model using machine learning that could represent a useful and easy-to-access tool for the selection of high RS patients. After additional evaluation with large data and external validation, worldwide use of our model could be expected.

Conflicts of interest statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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