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Advancing Multi-Center Cancer Research Through Federated Learning: Privacy-Preserving Artificial Intelligence in Oncology

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ABSTRACT

Background:
Cancer remains one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, underscoring the urgent need for advanced computational approaches that can improve cancer diagnosis, prognosis, and personalized treatment. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative technology in oncology, enabling automated medical image interpretation, biomarker discovery, treatment response prediction, and integration of multimodal biomedical data. However, most conventional AI models rely on centralized data aggregation, requiring patient information from multiple institutions to be transferred to a central repository for model development. Such approaches raise significant concerns regarding patient privacy, data ownership, regulatory compliance, cybersecurity, and institutional data-sharing restrictions, thereby limiting large-scale collaborative cancer research.
Federated learning (FL) has emerged as a decentralized, privacy-preserving AI paradigm that enables multiple healthcare institutions to collaboratively train machine learning models without exchanging raw patient data. By keeping sensitive data within local institutions and sharing only encrypted model parameters or updates, FL facilitates secure collaboration while maintaining data confidentiality. In oncology, FL has demonstrated considerable potential for distributed analysis of medical imaging, genomic and multi-omics data, electronic health records, digital pathology, and clinical trial datasets, thereby supporting improved cancer detection, tumor characterization, disease progression modeling, biomarker discovery, and personalized therapeutic decision-making.
Despite these advantages, widespread implementation of FL in oncology remains challenged by data heterogeneity, non-identically distributed datasets, communication overhead, computational resource variability, model bias, cybersecurity threats, and the absence of standardized validation and regulatory frameworks. Future integration of FL with deep learning, foundation models, generative artificial intelligence, multimodal learning, multi-omics analytics, and international cancer research networks is expected to accelerate the development of secure, collaborative, and privacy-preserving precision oncology platforms.
This review provides a comprehensive overview of federated learning principles, system architectures, security mechanisms, clinical applications, current challenges, and future research directions, highlighting its growing role in enabling privacy-preserving artificial intelligence for multi-center cancer research.oncology practice.

Keywords: *Federated learning; Artificial intelligence; Oncology; Privacy-preserving AI; Precision oncology; Cancer imaging; Multi-center research; Machine learning*

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Introduction

Cancer remains one of the most significant global health challenges, accounting for millions of new diagnoses and deaths annually despite remarkable advances in early detection, molecular diagnostics, and targeted therapeutics. The biological complexity of cancer, extensive inter- and intra-tumoral heterogeneity, genetic diversity, and variable treatment responses necessitate increasingly sophisticated computational methods capable of supporting precision oncology. Artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a transformative technology in cancer research by enabling automated analysis of complex biomedical datasets, including radiological imaging, digital pathology, genomic sequencing, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, and electronic health records (EHRs). AI-driven models have demonstrated promising performance in early cancer detection, tumor segmentation, molecular subtype classification, biomarker discovery, survival prediction, and personalized treatment planning.

The development of robust and clinically generalizable AI systems depends on access to large, diverse, and representative datasets encompassing different patient populations, healthcare systems, imaging protocols, and clinical outcomes. Multi-center collaborations are therefore essential for improving algorithm robustness, reducing model overfitting, minimizing institutional bias, and enhancing external validity. However, assembling centralized oncology datasets remains challenging because of stringent privacy regulations, ethical considerations, institutional governance policies, legal restrictions, and concerns regarding ownership of sensitive patient information.

Traditional machine learning approaches generally require centralized aggregation of patient data before model training. Although centralized learning can improve predictive performance by increasing dataset size, it introduces substantial challenges related to patient confidentiality, cybersecurity, regulatory compliance, and institutional trust. The transfer and storage of sensitive healthcare data increase the risk of privacy breaches and often discourage hospitals and research organizations from participating in collaborative AI initiatives.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in oncology, where data originate from diverse sources including radiological imaging, digital pathology, genomic sequencing, molecular profiling, laboratory investigations, and longitudinal clinical records. Furthermore, differences in imaging equipment, acquisition protocols, healthcare infrastructure, clinical workflows, and patient demographics create heterogeneous datasets that complicate centralized model development and limit model generalizability across institutions.

Federated learning (FL) has emerged as a promising decentralized machine learning framework designed to overcome these limitations. Rather than transferring raw patient data to a central server, FL enables participating institutions to train machine learning models locally while exchanging only encrypted model parameters or gradients for centralized aggregation. This collaborative training strategy preserves patient privacy, maintains institutional control over sensitive datasets, and facilitates secure large-scale AI development across geographically distributed healthcare centers.

The application of federated learning is particularly attractive in oncology because modern cancer research increasingly relies on integrating heterogeneous data modalities, including radiological images, whole-slide pathology images, genomic and multi-omics profiles, electronic health records, wearable health data, and clinical trial information. By enabling collaborative model development without exposing raw patient data, FL supports privacy-preserving multi-institutional research while improving model robustness, fairness, and generalizability across diverse patient populations.

Recent studies have demonstrated the potential of federated learning across numerous oncology applications, including tumor detection, lesion segmentation, cancer classification, radiomics, radiogenomics, biomarker identification, treatment response prediction, survival modeling, and clinical decision support. Federated approaches have also facilitated distributed genomic analyses and collaborative biomarker discovery while addressing privacy concerns associated with highly sensitive molecular data. Consequently, FL is increasingly recognized as a key enabling technology for precision oncology, supporting secure integration of multimodal clinical data and accelerating AI-driven cancer research.

Despite these advances, several important challenges continue to limit widespread clinical adoption of federated learning. Data heterogeneity, non-identically distributed local datasets, communication latency, computational disparities among participating institutions, model convergence issues, cybersecurity threats, adversarial attacks, explainability, regulatory compliance, and the lack of standardized validation frameworks remain significant barriers to deployment. Addressing these technical, ethical, and regulatory challenges will be essential for translating federated AI systems into routine oncology practice.

This review comprehensively summarizes the fundamental principles of federated learning, its architectural frameworks, privacy-preserving mechanisms, major applications in cancer imaging, pathology, genomics, multi-omics, and clinical decision support, together with current implementation challenges and future research opportunities. By highlighting recent advances and emerging trends, this review aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on the role of federated learning in enabling secure, collaborative, and privacy-preserving artificial intelligence for multi-center cancer research.

2. Fundamentals of Federated Learning

Federated learning is a machine learning paradigm that enables multiple organizations or devices to collaboratively train a shared artificial intelligence model while keeping original datasets stored locally. Unlike conventional centralized learning, where all data must be transferred to a single server, FL follows a decentralized approach in which only model parameters, gradients, or statistical updates are exchanged between participating nodes. This architecture reduces the need for direct data sharing and provides enhanced privacy protection for sensitive healthcare information [7].

The basic workflow of federated learning consists of several key steps. Initially, each participating healthcare institution maintains its own local dataset containing patient information such as medical images, genomic profiles, or clinical records. A common AI model architecture is distributed to each participating center, where local training is performed using institution-specific data. After local model optimization, only updated model parameters are transmitted to a central aggregation server. The server combines these updates to generate an improved global model, which is then redistributed to participating centers for further training cycles [8].

The most widely used FL algorithm is Federated Averaging (FedAvg), which combines locally trained model parameters by calculating weighted averages based on the contribution of each participating institution. FedAvg reduces communication requirements while maintaining effective learning performance across distributed datasets. However, variations in healthcare data distribution may require advanced optimization techniques to improve model stability and accuracy [9].

Different types of federated learning approaches have been developed depending on the structure and characteristics of the participating datasets. Centralized federated learning involves multiple clients communicating with a central server responsible for model aggregation. This approach is commonly applied in healthcare collaborations involving multiple hospitals connected through a secure server infrastructure.

Decentralized federated learning eliminates dependence on a single central coordinator by allowing direct communication between participating nodes. This approach may improve robustness and reduce the risk of centralized system failure, although it requires more complex communication strategies.

Horizontal federated learning is applied when participating institutions possess similar types of data but different patient populations. For example, multiple cancer hospitals may share medical imaging datasets with similar features but different patients. Horizontal FL is particularly relevant for multi-center oncology studies involving MRI, CT, PET, and histopathological images [10].

Vertical federated learning is used when institutions have different types of information from the same patient population. For example, a hospital may possess clinical records while another organization holds genomic information. Vertical FL enables integration of complementary datasets without exchanging sensitive patient-level information.

Federated transfer learning combines concepts of federated learning and transfer learning to improve performance when participating institutions have limited or heterogeneous datasets. This approach can be beneficial in rare cancers where individual centers may not have sufficient patient numbers for developing effective AI models.

Secure aggregation methods are essential components of FL systems, ensuring that individual institution contributions remain confidential during model training. These techniques prevent unauthorized access to model updates and strengthen privacy protection in healthcare applications [11].

The unique ability of federated learning to facilitate collaboration without direct data exchange makes it highly suitable for oncology research, where large-scale datasets are required but privacy restrictions remain a major barrier. By enabling secure multi-center AI development, FL provides a foundation for next-generation cancer research platforms.

3. Need for Privacy-Preserving Artificial Intelligence in Oncology Research

The advancement of oncology research increasingly depends on the availability of large-scale, high-quality datasets derived from diverse patient populations. AI-based cancer models require extensive information from multiple sources, including medical imaging, electronic health records (EHRs), genomic sequencing, pathology reports, and clinical trial databases. However, healthcare data is highly sensitive and contains personally identifiable information, creating significant challenges regarding data sharing, ownership, and ethical use [12].

Medical imaging datasets, including computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET), and digital pathology images, contain valuable information for developing AI-based diagnostic and predictive models. However, transferring these datasets between institutions is difficult due to patient confidentiality concerns, large storage requirements, and regulatory restrictions. Similarly, genomic datasets contain highly sensitive molecular information that may reveal patient-specific biological characteristics, making unrestricted sharing ethically challenging [13].

Electronic health records provide comprehensive clinical information, including patient history, laboratory results, treatment responses, and survival outcomes. Although these datasets are essential for developing predictive AI models, differences in data formats, healthcare systems, and institutional policies often limit their integration across multiple centers. Clinical trial data faces similar challenges because pharmaceutical companies and research institutions may be restricted from sharing proprietary information or patient-level data.

Data protection regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and healthcare privacy frameworks emphasize strict control over patient information. These regulations aim to protect individuals from unauthorized use of their medical data but may also create barriers for international and multi-center AI collaborations. Therefore, developing AI approaches that maintain privacy while enabling collaborative research is a major priority in modern oncology [14].

Federated learning provides a solution by allowing institutions to collaboratively train AI models without transferring raw patient data. In FL-based systems, hospitals maintain complete control over their datasets, while only model updates are exchanged through secure communication channels. This reduces privacy risks and enables institutions with different resources and expertise to participate in collaborative cancer research.

Another important advantage of FL is its ability to preserve institutional autonomy. Healthcare organizations may hesitate to share valuable datasets because of concerns regarding data ownership, competitive advantage, or regulatory compliance. Federated learning allows institutions to contribute to global AI development while maintaining control over their proprietary information [15].

However, privacy preservation in FL does not solely depend on keeping data local. Model updates exchanged between institutions may still contain information that could potentially be exploited through advanced attacks. Therefore, additional privacy-enhancing techniques such as differential privacy, secure aggregation, and encryption methods are required to strengthen the security of FL systems in healthcare environments [16].

4. Applications of Federated Learning in Oncology

4.1 Federated Learning in Cancer Imaging

Medical imaging is one of the most promising areas for applying federated learning in oncology. Radiological images contain complex spatial and structural information that can be analyzed using deep learning algorithms for cancer detection, classification, and treatment monitoring. However, developing reliable imaging AI models requires large and diverse datasets from multiple institutions, which are difficult to combine due to privacy and regulatory limitations [17].

Federated learning enables multiple hospitals to collaboratively train imaging models without transferring patient images. Each institution trains AI algorithms locally using its own imaging datasets, and the model learns from distributed knowledge through parameter exchange. This approach improves model generalizability by incorporating variations in imaging devices, patient populations, and clinical practices.

In magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), FL has been investigated for tumor segmentation and characterization. Brain tumors such as glioblastoma require accurate segmentation for diagnosis, treatment planning, and monitoring disease progression. Multi-center FL approaches allow AI models to learn from diverse MRI datasets while preserving patient confidentiality [18].

Computed tomography (CT)-based FL applications have demonstrated potential in lung cancer detection, pulmonary nodule identification, and tumor volume assessment. Since CT imaging protocols may vary significantly between hospitals, FL provides an opportunity to develop robust models capable of handling heterogeneous imaging environments.

Positron emission tomography (PET) imaging combined with FL can support metabolic tumor analysis and treatment response prediction. By integrating PET data from multiple centers, AI models may improve prediction accuracy for therapy outcomes while avoiding direct exchange of sensitive imaging information.

Digital pathology is another emerging area where FL can contribute significantly. Histopathological images contain detailed cellular-level information essential for cancer diagnosis and grading. However, these datasets are extremely large and difficult to share. FL enables collaborative development of pathology AI models for tumor classification, biomarker identification, and prognosis prediction [19].

Beyond diagnosis, FL-based imaging models can assist in treatment response evaluation. AI algorithms trained through multi-center collaboration may identify imaging biomarkers associated with chemotherapy response, radiotherapy outcomes, and disease progression. This capability supports personalized treatment planning and precision oncology.

4.2 Federated Learning in Genomics and Precision Oncology

Cancer is fundamentally a genomic disease characterized by complex molecular alterations, including mutations, gene expression changes, epigenetic modifications, and pathway dysregulation. The integration of genomic information with AI provides opportunities for identifying therapeutic targets, predicting drug response, and developing personalized treatment strategies [20].

Large-scale genomic analysis requires collaboration between institutions because individual centers often lack sufficient patient numbers, particularly for rare cancers. However, genomic data sharing presents major privacy concerns because genetic information is uniquely identifiable and cannot be completely anonymized.

Federated learning enables collaborative genomic analysis while keeping genomic datasets within their original institutions. AI models can learn patterns associated with cancer-related mutations, molecular subtypes, and treatment responses without requiring direct exchange of genetic information.

In precision oncology, FL can support molecular classification of tumors by integrating genomic profiles from multiple centers. This approach may improve identification of patient subgroups likely to respond to specific targeted therapies or immunotherapies.

AI-based FL models can also assist in biomarker discovery. By analyzing distributed genomic and clinical datasets, these models can identify relationships between molecular characteristics and clinical outcomes. Such discoveries may contribute to the development of novel diagnostic biomarkers and therapeutic targets [21].

Furthermore, FL may enhance drug discovery and repurposing approaches in oncology by allowing pharmaceutical companies and academic institutions to collaboratively analyze molecular and clinical data while protecting proprietary information.

4.3 Federated Learning in Clinical Decision Support

Clinical decision-making in oncology involves complex evaluation of patient characteristics, tumor biology, treatment history, and predicted outcomes. AI-powered clinical decision support systems aim to assist healthcare professionals by providing evidence-based predictions and recommendations.

Federated learning enables development of clinical AI models using multi-center patient data without requiring centralized medical records. These models can support prediction of cancer survival, recurrence risk, treatment response, and disease progression.

Survival prediction models trained through FL can incorporate diverse patient populations, improving their ability to generalize across different healthcare settings. Similarly, risk stratification models can identify high-risk patients who may require more intensive monitoring or alternative treatment strategies.

Treatment optimization is another important application. AI models trained through federated approaches may predict which therapies are most likely to benefit individual patients based on clinical characteristics, molecular features, and previous treatment responses [22].

FL-based decision support systems can also support oncology clinical trials by enabling secure analysis of distributed trial datasets. This may accelerate research collaborations and improve recruitment strategies while maintaining participant confidentiality.

5. Federated Learning Architectures for Multi-Center Cancer Research

Federated learning architectures designed for oncology research consist of multiple interconnected components that enable secure AI model development across healthcare institutions. The primary objective of these architectures is to achieve collaborative learning while maintaining privacy and data ownership.

The data layer represents local datasets stored at participating institutions. These datasets may include imaging data, genomic information, pathology slides, and clinical records. Importantly, the original patient data remains within the institution and is not transferred externally.

The AI model layer contains machine learning algorithms responsible for learning patterns from local datasets. Depending on the research objective, models may include deep neural networks, convolutional neural networks, transformer-based architectures, or graph-based models.

The communication layer manages exchange of model parameters between participating centers. Secure communication protocols are essential to prevent unauthorized access and ensure reliable transmission of information.

The aggregation layer combines model updates from multiple institutions to generate an improved global model. Advanced aggregation techniques are used to minimize bias and improve performance when datasets differ significantly between centers.

Cloud-based federated learning architectures use centralized cloud platforms for coordination and model aggregation. These systems provide scalability and computational flexibility but require strong security measures.

Edge-based FL allows computation and model training closer to where data is generated, reducing communication delays and improving privacy protection. Hybrid architectures combine cloud and edge computing approaches to balance efficiency, security, and scalability [23].

Multi-center cancer research networks based on FL have the potential to create global AI ecosystems where institutions can collaborate without compromising patient confidentiality. These architectures may significantly accelerate development of next-generation oncology solutions.

6. Security and Privacy Enhancement Techniques in Federated Learning

Although federated learning improves healthcare data privacy by keeping patient information within institutional boundaries, the exchange of model parameters introduces potential security vulnerabilities. Attackers may attempt to extract sensitive information from model updates or manipulate the learning process through malicious contributions. Therefore, advanced privacy-preserving and security-enhancing techniques are required for safe implementation of FL in oncology research [24].

6.1 Differential Privacy

Differential privacy is a mathematical framework designed to prevent disclosure of individual patient information during data analysis. In federated learning, differential privacy techniques introduce controlled noise into model updates before transmission to the aggregation server. This reduces the possibility of identifying specific patients from shared model information while maintaining overall model performance.

In oncology applications, differential privacy is particularly important because cancer datasets often contain sensitive genomic profiles, imaging information, and clinical outcomes. The technique enables institutions to contribute knowledge to AI models while reducing risks associated with privacy breaches [25].

However, excessive noise addition may negatively affect model accuracy, especially when datasets are small or heterogeneous. Therefore, optimization of privacy levels while maintaining predictive performance remains an important research challenge.

6.2 Secure Multi-Party Computation

Secure multi-party computation (SMPC) allows multiple participants to jointly perform computational tasks while keeping their individual inputs confidential. In federated learning, SMPC protocols can enable institutions to collaboratively calculate model updates without revealing their private information.

For multi-center cancer research, SMPC provides additional protection when hospitals, research institutes, and pharmaceutical organizations collaborate on sensitive datasets. This approach is valuable for genomic studies and clinical research where data confidentiality is essential.

6.3 Homomorphic Encryption

Homomorphic encryption enables computations to be performed directly on encrypted data without requiring decryption. In FL systems, encrypted model updates can be exchanged between institutions, preventing unauthorized access during communication.

Although homomorphic encryption provides strong privacy protection, its major limitation is high computational complexity. The increased processing requirements may affect scalability, particularly when dealing with large oncology datasets such as whole-slide pathology images or genomic sequences [26].

6.4 Blockchain-Based Federated Learning

Blockchain technology has been explored as a method for improving transparency, trust, and security in federated learning networks. Blockchain-based FL architectures can provide decentralized record management, authentication of participating institutions, and secure tracking of model updates.

In oncology research networks involving multiple hospitals and international collaborators, blockchain integration may improve accountability and reduce risks associated with unauthorized model manipulation.

However, blockchain implementation requires additional computational resources and standardized frameworks before widespread clinical adoption.

6.5 Secure Aggregation Protocols

Secure aggregation ensures that the central server can combine model updates from multiple institutions without accessing individual contributions. This prevents the identification of specific institutional data patterns and strengthens privacy protection.

Secure aggregation is particularly important in oncology because differences in cancer prevalence, treatment practices, and patient demographics may unintentionally reveal information about participating institutions. Combining secure aggregation with encryption and privacy-preserving algorithms can improve reliability of FL-based cancer research systems [27].

7. Challenges and Limitations of Federated Learning in Oncology

Despite its significant potential, federated learning implementation in oncology faces several technical, clinical, and regulatory challenges. Addressing these limitations is necessary before FL can become a routine component of precision oncology research.

7.1 Data Heterogeneity Between Institutions

One of the major challenges in oncology FL is data heterogeneity. Cancer datasets collected from different hospitals often vary in terms of patient demographics, disease stages, imaging equipment, laboratory procedures, and treatment protocols.

For example, MRI images acquired using different scanners may have variations in resolution, intensity, and acquisition parameters. Similarly, genomic datasets may differ due to sequencing platforms and analysis pipelines. These variations can reduce model performance and create difficulties in achieving reliable predictions across institutions [28].

Techniques such as domain adaptation, transfer learning, and advanced normalization methods are being investigated to improve model performance under heterogeneous conditions.

7.2 Bias and Fairness Issues

AI models trained on healthcare data may inherit biases present within the original datasets. In oncology, underrepresentation of certain populations, cancer subtypes, or demographic groups may lead to unequal model performance.

Federated learning may reduce some forms of bias by incorporating data from multiple institutions, but it does not automatically eliminate fairness problems. Careful evaluation of AI models across different patient groups is required to ensure equitable cancer care.

7.3 Limited Computational Resources

Healthcare institutions differ significantly in their computational capabilities. Large academic hospitals may possess advanced computing infrastructure, whereas smaller centers may have limited resources.

Deep learning-based FL models require substantial computational power, memory, and storage capacity. These requirements may restrict participation of resource-limited institutions and affect the scalability of multi-center oncology collaborations.

7.4 Communication Costs

Federated learning requires repeated exchange of model parameters between institutions and aggregation servers. Large AI models, particularly deep neural networks used for imaging analysis, generate substantial communication requirements.

Frequent communication cycles may increase training time and computational expenses. Efficient model compression techniques and optimized communication protocols are being developed to address this limitation.

7.5 Model Convergence Problems

Differences in local datasets can affect the ability of FL algorithms to achieve stable model convergence. Institutions with smaller datasets or unique cancer populations may contribute updates that differ significantly from other participants.

This problem may reduce overall accuracy and requires improved aggregation strategies capable of handling diverse healthcare data environments.

7.6 Lack of Standardization

Currently, there is no universally accepted framework for implementing federated learning in oncology research. Differences in data formats, AI algorithms, evaluation methods, and reporting standards make comparison between studies difficult.

Establishing standardized protocols for FL-based cancer research is essential to improve reproducibility and facilitate regulatory approval.

7.7 Regulatory and Clinical Validation Challenges

Although FL models may demonstrate high computational performance, clinical adoption requires extensive validation. AI systems must undergo rigorous testing to confirm reliability, safety, and clinical usefulness.

Regulatory agencies require evidence that AI-based decision-support systems improve patient outcomes without introducing additional risks. Therefore, collaboration between AI researchers, clinicians, regulatory authorities, and technology developers is necessary.

8. Future Perspectives

Federated learning represents an important advancement toward privacy-preserving artificial intelligence in oncology. Future developments will likely focus on integrating FL with emerging AI technologies to create more powerful and clinically relevant cancer research platforms.

The combination of FL with deep learning architectures may improve automated analysis of complex oncology datasets, including medical images, pathology slides, and molecular information. Advanced neural networks can identify subtle patterns associated with tumor behavior, treatment response, and disease progression while maintaining patient privacy.

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) represents another promising direction. Generative models may assist in synthetic data generation, augmentation of limited datasets, and simulation of cancer progression patterns. When combined with FL, GenAI could enable collaborative research without requiring direct access to real patient data [29].

Large language models (LLMs) may further enhance oncology AI systems by integrating clinical documentation, research literature, and patient information. Federated approaches could allow hospitals to collaboratively develop clinical language models while maintaining confidentiality of medical records.

Integration of FL with multi-omics analysis is expected to significantly improve precision oncology. Combining genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic, and imaging data through privacy-preserving frameworks may enable deeper understanding of tumor biology and improve individualized treatment strategies.

Future global cancer research networks may utilize federated learning platforms to connect hospitals, universities, pharmaceutical companies, and research organizations worldwide. Such collaborations could accelerate biomarker discovery, clinical trial development, and personalized therapy selection.

Real-time personalized oncology is another potential application. Continuous integration of patient monitoring data with FL-based AI systems may allow dynamic prediction of treatment response and early identification of disease progression.

AI-powered clinical trials may also benefit from federated architectures by enabling secure analysis of distributed patient populations. This could improve trial recruitment, reduce research costs, and enhance discovery of effective anticancer therapies.

However, successful implementation will require continued improvement in security, standardization, transparency, and clinical validation. Future FL systems must not only achieve technical accuracy but also demonstrate meaningful improvements in patient outcomes.

9. Conclusion

Federated learning provides a promising solution for overcoming major barriers associated with healthcare data sharing in oncology research. By enabling collaborative AI model development without transferring raw patient information, FL supports privacy-preserving analysis of medical imaging, genomic datasets, clinical records, and multi-center cancer research data.

The application of FL in cancer imaging, precision oncology, biomarker discovery, and clinical decision support demonstrates its potential to transform personalized cancer care. By allowing institutions to contribute knowledge while maintaining data ownership and confidentiality, federated learning creates new opportunities for global collaboration.

Despite significant advantages, challenges related to data heterogeneity, cybersecurity, computational requirements, standardization, and clinical validation must be addressed before widespread implementation. Integration with deep learning, generative AI, large language models, and multi-omics technologies may further enhance the capabilities of FL-based oncology platforms.

Overall, federated learning represents a critical step toward developing secure, scalable, and patient-centered artificial intelligence systems. Its continued advancement may accelerate multi-center cancer research and contribute to the future of precision medicine.

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