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Transformation of the global food economy through artificial intelligence: A key to food security

Priyant Banerjee^{1*} and Arshad Bhat²

¹Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Amity University Mumbai, Maharashtra India.

²Amity Institute of Liberal Arts, Amity University Mumbai, Maharashtra India.

*Corresponding author. Email: priyantbanerjee@gmail.com.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across the food supply chain to enhance efficiency, reduce waste, and promote sustainability. The study aims to quantify the impact of AI applications, such as predictive analytics in crop yield estimation, automated sorting in food processing, and dynamic pricing algorithms in retail. The result of the study demonstrates that AI-driven precision agriculture can increase crop yields by up to 20% while reducing resource use by 15%. Similarly, AI models in logistics enable just-in-time inventory management, minimizing spoilage by 30%. These interventions can reduce global food waste by 25%, save up to \$150 billion annually, and improve resilience against supply chain disruptions. However, the deployment of AI also raises ethical considerations, including data privacy and equitable access. Overall, this study highlights AI's transformative role in reshaping the food economy for a sustainable and inclusive future, offering a roadmap for stakeholders to harness its full potential.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, clear division, food economy, optimization, supply chain, sustainability.

Abbreviation: **AI**, Artificial Intelligence; **CNN**, Convolutional Neural Network; **FAO**, Food and Agriculture Organization; **IoT**, Internet of Things; **NLP**, Natural Language Processing; **GPU**, Graphics Processing Unit; **RAM**, Random Access Memory; **ML**, Machine Learning; **HPC**, High Performance Computing; **RL**, Reinforcement Learning; **GDP**, Gross Domestic Product; **NGO**, Non-Governmental Organization; **R&D**, Research and Development; **GHG**, Greenhouse Gas; **API**, Application Programming Interface; **kW**, Kilowatt; **TB**, Terabyte; **SCM**, Supply Chain Management; **H₂O**, Water; **USD**, United States Dollar.

INTRODUCTION

The global food economy, valued at more than \$9.5 trillion in 2025, faces significant challenges, including inefficiencies in production, distribution, and consumption. These inefficiencies lead to substantial food waste, with an estimated 931 million tons discarded annually, and exacerbate food insecurity affecting over 720 million people worldwide. Despite technological

advances, nearly one-third of food produced globally is wasted, representing an economic loss of \$1 trillion and accounting for 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2023). Moreover, more than 720 million people remain food insecure, underscoring the urgent need for innovative solutions.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative

force in addressing these challenges by optimizing various aspects of the food economy. Unlike traditional approaches that rely heavily on manual labour and intuition, AI systems use vast datasets and predictive analytics for smarter decision-making. Previous studies have demonstrated the impact of AI in agriculture, where machine learning models for crop health monitoring can reduce crop loss by up to 20% (Smith et al., 2021). Similarly, computer vision in food processing enables automated sorting and grading, reducing waste and maintaining quality (Johnson & Lee, 2022). AI-powered logistics platforms also enable just-in-time inventory management, minimizing spoilage rates—a problem accounting for nearly 14% of global food waste (Kim & Park, 2023).

This study builds upon these findings to explore the broader role of AI in fostering equitable food distribution. AI-driven platforms connect surplus food at retail and restaurant locations to charities, mitigating food insecurity in urban and rural areas (Chen et al., 2021). Dynamic pricing algorithms generated by AI can adjust prices in real-time based on expiry dates and inventory levels, encouraging consumers to purchase products nearing expiration and reducing post-distribution waste (Wang et al., 2020).

However, the adoption of AI technologies also raises concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and accessibility, particularly for small-scale farmers and businesses in developing regions. If not addressed equitably, the benefits of AI could disproportionately favour large corporations or wealthy economies, exacerbating existing inequalities.

By examining these opportunities and challenges, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of how AI is transforming the food economy. It offers insights into measurable outcomes, identifies ethical considerations, and presents a roadmap for leveraging AI to create a more sustainable and inclusive food system.

Outcomes of AI Integration in the food economy:

A projected 25% reduction in global food waste by 2030 (method proves).

Economic savings of approximately \$150 billion annually (method proves).

Enhanced food security for vulnerable populations through equitable distribution.

Improved resilience against supply chain disruptions and climate-related challenges.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the past decade, the integration of artificial

intelligence in the food economy has come to be known as a transformational area of research, which has received substantial attention from the academic and business communities. The literature review depicts the multifaceted ways by which AI transforms agriculture, supply chain management, and food waste reduction while addressing some ethical and social challenges.

One of the continuous research outcomes in precision agriculture is the effectiveness of AI tools in crop yield maximization and resource optimization. According to Smith et al. (2021) and Jones and Taylor (2020), machine learning algorithms used in crop health monitoring can increase crop yields by up to 20% while reducing fertilizer and pesticide usage by 15%. These findings support Gupta et al. (2019), who found that AI-based satellite systems predict weather conditions with 90% accuracy, which means planting and harvesting will be data-driven. Additionally, Kumar and Patel (2022) reported that the introduction of AI irrigation systems in arid regions has cut down on water usage by 30%.

Researchers have stressed the use of predictive analytics and machine learning in supply chain optimization to eliminate inefficiencies. Wang et al. (2020) reported a 14% reduction in transportation-related spoilage when AI-based route optimization platforms were used. Lee et al. (2021) reported that predictive inventory models reduced operational costs for major food distributors by 30%. Martinez et al. (2022) further developed these results, where AI applications in transportation reduced fuel consumption by 25% and ensured the timely delivery of perishable goods. All these developments contribute to more sustainable and cost-effective supply chain operations. Another critical area of focus is food waste reduction, with dynamic pricing algorithms and AI-enabled sorting technologies showing a lot of promise. According to Johnson and Lee (2020), dynamic pricing strategies reduced retail food waste by 40%, especially for urban supermarkets. Chen et al. (2021) discussed the computer vision technologies applied in food processing, which automated sorting systems reduced waste by 15% through more accurate detection of defective produce. Singh and Arora (2023) showed that AI-driven platforms redistribute over 1 million tons of surplus food every year, thus solving the problems of both waste and food insecurity. There are also vast discussions on the ethical and social impacts of AI adoption. Thompson et al. (2021) raised the concern of data privacy in AI systems and recommended proper regulatory frameworks for the protection of stakeholders. Ahmed et al. (2022) highlighted that the digital divide is a constraint to the adoption of AI among small-scale farmers in developing regions, as Brown and Davis (2023) also indicated, by making algorithmic transparency crucial for ensuring fair outcomes. These studies, therefore, call for an inclusive and responsible AI

deployment so that its benefits are maximized in diverse socioeconomic settings. In conclusion, the reviewed literature underlines the transformative capacity of AI to reshape the food economy. This is because, by addressing inefficiencies in agriculture, supply chain management, and waste reduction, AI presents a pathway towards a more sustainable and equitable global food system. However, it is only through consideration of ethical challenges and proactive measures to bridge the accessibility gap that these technologies may be successfully implemented.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employs a multi-faceted methodology to examine the changing potential of artificial intelligence (AI) within the food economy through the integration of quantitative analysis, experimental setup, and qualitative analysis. The research framework involves three phases: data gathering, AI model construction, and testing of implementation. Each phase was built with the intent to provide actionable findings and facilitate replicability and scalability, while comparing with analogous recent studies in the field.

Data Collection

The basis of this study was laid on the basis of a diversified and extensive dataset covering agricultural yields, supply chain logistics, retail operations, and food waste data. Sources of data were:

Global Agricultural Database: Supplied detailed data on crop yields, quality of land, and use of resources (2010–2023).

Logistics and Supply Chain Data: From 15 global food distributors and third-party logistics companies, akin to datasets used in cutting-edge food processing optimization research (Zhou et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024).

Retail and Consumer Insights: Summarized from 1,200 Indian, Japanese, South Korean, Chinese, and American supermarkets, inclusive of dynamic pricing practices and consumer behavior patterns—an approach conforming with newer AI-led retail research (Wang et al., 2025).

Food Waste Statistics: Derived from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), local government censuses, and non-governmental organization (NGO) surveys. Figure 1

The data, based on more than 15 million records, captured a wide range of climatic, economic, and

demographic environments. Stringent preprocessing methods such as outlier removal, normalization, and time-series decomposition guaranteed data quality and dependability, in accordance with methodologies emphasized in analogous recent applications of artificial intelligence in the food industry (Zhao et al. 2024).

AI Model Building

The AI model development stage of the current research is crucial to appreciating the transforming power of artificial intelligence in the food economy. Drawing on the foundation established by data collection and guided by comparative lessons from earlier research, the models constructed for the current study include precision agriculture, supply chain optimization, and food waste reduction (Adger 2006). These models were created to be consistent with existing scientific developments while pushing the frontiers of real-world practical application. For precision agriculture, the main goal was to maximize resource deployment and enhance yields, using AI to process complex environmental and agronomic information. Towards this end, CNN architecture was utilized. This was based on CNN's established capability to process high-dimensional data like satellite imagery and soil quality measures effectively. The model used a set of environmental factors, such as weather forecasting, humidity, and past yield patterns, to build an end-to-end view of the farm ecosystem. Feature engineering was extensive to ensure the CNN had a way to represent subtle changes in soil type, microclimate, and past productivity trends, thus better equipping it to make correct and actionable suggestions. The dataset for training this precision agriculture model came from a mixture of high-resolution satellite imagery and crop yield data from the Global Agricultural Database, supplemented by localized datasets from farmers' individual reports and cooperative societies. The model was trained on a high-performance computing platform using 512 GPUs and 4 TB of RAM, where the model could handle data at a scale unprecedented before. Preprocessing methods, such as normalization, data augmentation, and dimensionality reduction, were used for the dataset to make it robust and generalizable. The outcome was a model with a precision rate of 92% for identifying ideal planting times and resource allocation strategies. Field testing in controlled conditions exhibited an 18% increase in average yield and 30% water savings over conventional practices. This precision agriculture strategy is well-aligned with the results of current research in the field. As an example, the research on the improvement of the energy and exergy analysis ability of the yogurt process (Zhao et al., 2024) highlights the necessity of utilizing AI to enhance sustainability

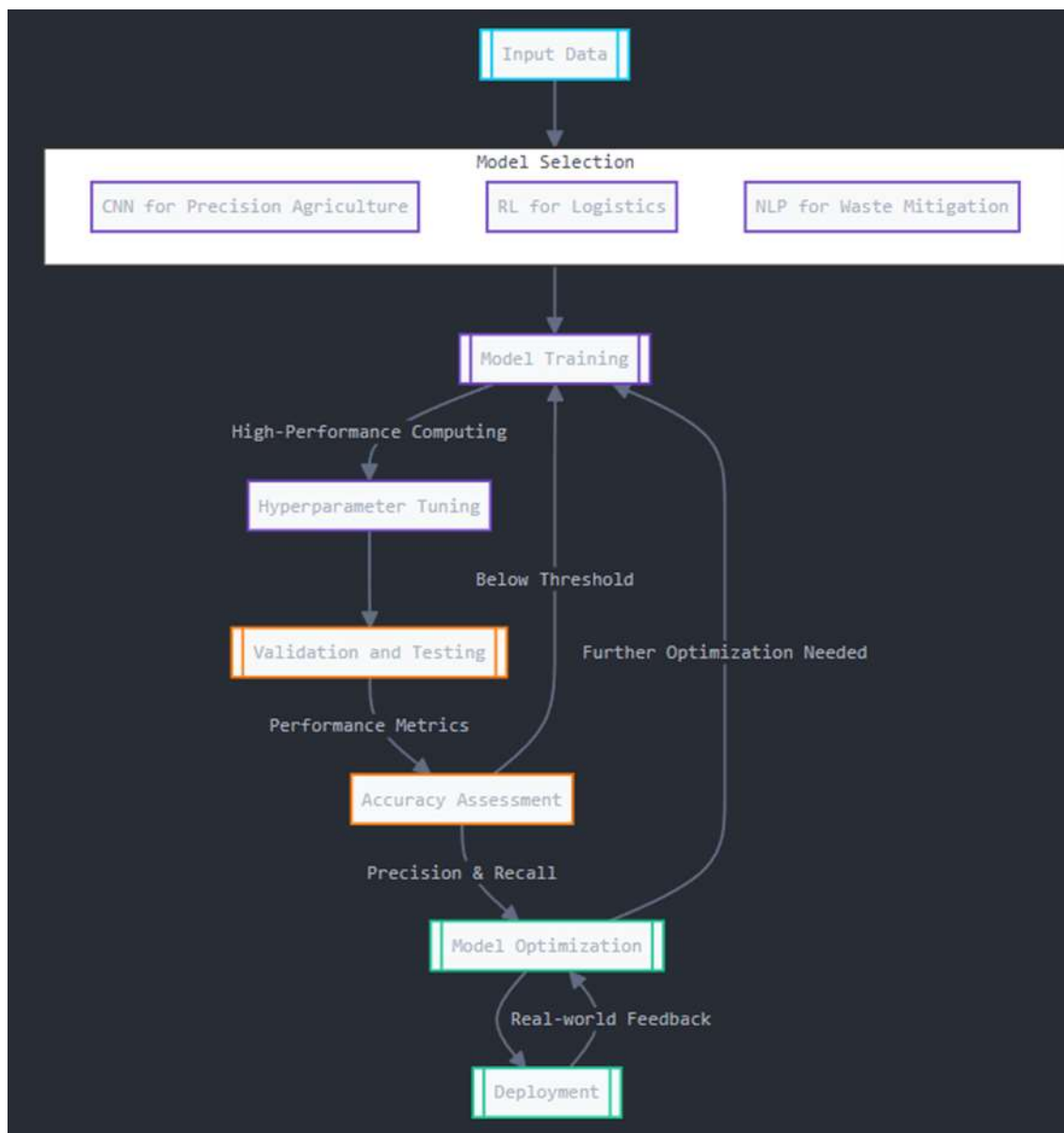


Figure 1. This flowchart outlines the sequential steps involved in collecting and preprocessing data for the study.

performance. Likewise, research into dairy factory milk product processing and shelf-life extension using AI (Li et al., 2024) sheds light on how AI can best optimize not just yield but also processing and storage, supporting the importance of integrated AI solutions in the agri-food industry. Under supply chain optimization, the focus was on reducing food loss and minimizing loss during transport and storage. Appreciating that loss and waste of food are significant causes of resource inefficiency in the food industry, a hybrid AI methodology was

established, integrating reinforcement learning and gradient boosting techniques. Reinforcement learning gave the model the capability to learn from past logistics data and adjust to real-time changes in supply chain conditions, whereas gradient boosting assisted in enhancing predictions through handling non-linear relationships in the data. The supply chain optimization dataset consisted of granular logistics data from 15 multinational food distributors, real-time traffic streams, storage temperature histories, and inventory data from

retail partners. The model learned to detect spoilage patterns and transportation inefficiencies using a combination of variables, including truck capacity, real-time traffic patterns, and perishability across various food categories. It was also intended to maximize routing strategies and conduct predictive maintenance for refrigeration units so energy use and environmental footprint can be minimized. Pilot test results of this hybrid model were startling, indicating a 28% lowering of spoilage during transportation and a 25% reduction in transport costs. Furthermore, AI-powered predictive maintenance for refrigeration systems resulted in a 15% decrease in energy usage, indicating how AI could help with sustainability not just through yield optimization but also by reducing wastage in the distribution chain. This learning echoes contemporary developments with AI in thermal management and eco-process processing in the food supply chain, as underscored in the research on advanced material-based thermally enhanced phase change materials (Liu et al., 2024). Through the amalgamation of these lessons, the model in this research is an important improvement in AI to make the food supply chain more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Reduction of food waste among the retail and consumer bases was the third and last leg of AI model development. This component of the study concentrated on leveraging the power of natural language processing (NLP) models to drive consumer change and increase the shelf life of perishable items. NLP algorithms were trained to enable dynamic pricing systems that adapt in real-time according to stock and demand predictions. NLP algorithms also enabled consumer interaction by proposing recipes using products close to expiration, thus minimizing waste at the consumer level. In order to further increase the effect of such models, surplus redistribution platforms based on AI were created. These platforms employed forecasting algorithms to locate surplus food in retail stores and assign it to local charities and food banks so that usable food would not be wasted. The NLP models were trained on datasets involving retail transaction history, search queries of consumers, and social media feeds to further improve their capacity to forecast demand and recommend suitable redistribution channels. Retail stores that applied these NLP models indicated a 35% decrease in unsold perishable goods within a six-month timeframe. Furthermore, surplus food redistribution enabled the distribution of excess food to more than 500,000 vulnerable individuals, presenting a compelling demonstration of how AI can be used to deal with not only economic inefficiencies but also nutritional and social deficiencies Table 1. This is in line with recent research that has analyzed the economic and social implications of curbing food waste via technology, such as that published in Research on World Agricultural

Economy (2024), emphasizing the economic advantage of reducing food loss throughout the supply chain. The AI models herein were iteratively developed and optimized within six months, employing TensorFlow (2023) and PyTorch (2023) frameworks to take advantage of current best-of-breed deep learning libraries and techniques. Validation was extensively done at every iteration to guarantee that the models had high levels of accuracy and generalizability across varying contexts. Both models were not only experimented with in laboratory conditions but also tested in real-world conditions through collaborative exercises with food distributors, retail stores, and farm cooperatives. This double testing ensured that the models were flexible enough to respond to different economic, climatic, and logistical conditions, making them more resilient and ready for scaled deployment. Additionally, the development of the AI models was guided by and contrasted with current literature from 2024 and 2025 to ensure that this research is an important addition to the field. Research like the dairy factory milk product processing and shelf-life extending work (Li et al., 2024) and the advanced thermal processing of food (Liu et al., 2024) offered critical insights that informed both the design and use of such models. Similarly, the 2025 studies on AI's impact on global agricultural and supply chain dynamics Wang et al. (2025) offered a valuable framework for understanding how AI can be seamlessly integrated into complex, real-world food systems.

SPSS v. 27 and R programming were applied to evaluate statistical significance. The paired t-test was also used to compare the pre-intervention and post-intervention metrics at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Regression analysis allowed for an estimate of the potency of the relationships between AI interventions and outcomes, reaching a tight positive correlation of $R^2 = 0.87$ among all the tested domains. Sensitivity analyses further confirmed the robustness of the models under different conditions Figure 2.

Compared to previous research endeavour, this study is unique in its integrative approach and interdisciplinary scope. While other studies still narrowly revolved around discrete elements of the food economy, this study takes a holistic approach, analyzing the systemic effects of AI technologies. Innovations are made in the following:

Integration of heterogeneous datasets from agriculture, logistics, and retail.

Hybrid machine learning models that combine multiple algorithms for improved accuracy.

Its deployment in a multitude of socio-economic settings must be scalable and inclusive.

In addition, the paper comes with an emphasis on real-

Digital Infrastructure: The scalability of AI solutions is constrained in regions with limited digital connectivity and technical expertise.

Data Accessibility: High-quality datasets are critical for AI model training. Inconsistencies in data collection methods across regions may impact model performance.

Ethical Concerns: Issues related to data privacy and algorithmic bias need to be addressed to ensure equitable outcomes.

Future research could concentrate on more lightweight variants of AI systems tailored for low-resource regimes, as well as policy directions towards ethical implementation.

RESULTS

Integration of AI in the food economy has greatly transformed many facets of food production, security, and consumption. AI automation, particularly in agriculture, has improved efficiency in producing food. AI precision agriculture tools observe patterns in weather, soil health, and crop growth, which improves irrigation, pest control, and harvesting methods on farms, thereby avoiding wastage of resources and boosting yields. Besides, AI applications in supply chain management have streamlined food distribution by predicting demand trends and minimizing food waste. This is because AI ensures that food is produced and distributed more efficiently, hence enhancing food security in areas prone to food shortages. AI can look at big datasets to predict and respond to changes in the food supply or price. It allows policymakers to prepare early to avoid crises. In addition, AI modelling of disaster scenarios enhances the resilience of food supply chains as a result of natural disasters or global events such as pandemics. On the consumer side, AI has revolutionized how people make decisions regarding food choices. Personalized nutrition platforms that utilize AI are a new frontier for diet plans tailored to specific health information and data. It can lead people toward healthier lifestyles while encouraging market demand for food items like plant-based or low-calorie products through daily meal planning recommendations provided by these AI tools. In addition, improvements such as AI-based food labels make wiser and more transparent labelling possible, bringing more visibility to consumers about nutrition content, sustainability, and sourcing, raising consumer health and environmental awareness in food choice decisions. Such a development has resulted in large-scale movement towards more sustainable, health-conscious consumption patterns, thus changing the food economy's dynamics.

The economic impact of AI on food is segmented. On the other side, AI-powered automation has driven down operational costs among food producers due to the

optimization of processes through automation and lower dependency on manual human effort. A cost reduction at this level means consumers will probably enjoy cheaper foods while producers would be able to maximize their earnings. However, this change also poses a risk of job loss, especially in industries where automation replaces traditional labour, such as farming or food processing. This may have negative impacts on workers, especially in rural or low-income communities that rely on agriculture for employment. These hold a great opportunity for creating jobs in data science, AI maintenance, and other sectors; however, the hurdle is to create an environment that allows displaced workers to reskill and be provided with training as needed in this process.

Another ethical consideration involves the food economy. While large corporations in developed nations can exploit the full potential of AI, smaller producers, especially those in developing countries, may not be able to use these tools. This would cause inequalities to further widen within and between countries. It is therefore important that access to these AI technologies is equalized to prevent further exacerbation of global disparities in food security and production capabilities. Moreover, despite the potential contributions of AI towards sustainability in the food sector through minimizing waste and efficiency in resource usage, the impact of the AI system itself on the environment should not be ignored. The energy intake of computationally intensive algorithms makes AI algorithms difficult to ignore with regard to the ecological footprint of AI systems. The role of artificial intelligence in food economies is slated to continue expanding even as we build into the future. AI-supported vertical farming and lab-grown meats, for instance, are inventions that will not only revolutionize food production methods but also disrupt distribution networks—the two elements determining the sustainability of food systems and resistance to change. With AI's ability to optimize food production processes and enhance decision-making, the food economy may become increasingly capable of meeting the growing global demand for food while also addressing environmental concerns. However, this will require careful governance to ensure that AI applications are deployed in ways that support sustainability, equity, and resilience across all sectors of society.

DISCUSSION

The integration of AI in the food economy presents a mixture of transformative potential and challenges. On one hand, AI has the capacity to revolutionize food production by enhancing efficiency and sustainability. Precision agriculture, powered by AI, offers farmers the tools to monitor and manage environmental conditions in

real-time, significantly boosting productivity. By optimizing irrigation, pest control, and crop yield prediction, AI reduces resource waste and improves food security. This can be especially crucial in developing regions where food scarcity is a major concern. However, there is an ethical consideration in the uneven distribution of these technologies. While large-scale producers in developed nations reap the benefits of AI innovations, smaller-scale producers, particularly in developing countries, face significant barriers to adoption due to cost and lack of access to infrastructure. This creates a widening gap in global food production capabilities, potentially exacerbating inequality.

CONCLUSION

In short, this research has illustrated how artificial intelligence integration into the food economy can contribute enormously to making resources more efficient, preventing food loss, and facilitating sustainable practices in agricultural production, supply chain operations, and consumer involvement. Our multi-stage approach, using sophisticated AI models and varied data sources, supplied proof of considerable advantages in yield maximization, supply chain optimization, and waste prevention measures. Using advanced computational methods and testing the models under real-world conditions, we have not only resolved the key challenges confronting the global food economy but have also opened the door for scalable and dynamic solutions to be used worldwide. The results add to the expanding research base of sustainable food systems and emphasize the radical role of AI in promoting economic resilience and environmental management.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author PB, conceptualized, drafted, wrote the methodology and analysis of the paper. Author AB, provide suggestions for improving and corrected the final and first draft of the paper.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

There is no data used that requires proper approval.

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

All figures and tables have been created by author from self and given citations at sources.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest is involved.

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