ISSN-E: 18735347-02779536

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence And Machine Learning In Drug Development: Opportunities And Challenges

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ISSN-E: 18735347-02779536

Abstract:

The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) has significantly transformed multiple sectors, including the pharmaceutical industry. AI and ML algorithms have great potential in speeding up the discovery and improvement of new drugs, improving the identification of targets, predicting interactions between drugs, and optimizing the design of clinical trials in drug development. This paper presents a thorough examination of the latest advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) applications in the pharmaceutical field. The text examines diverse approaches, such as deep learning, reinforcement learning, and natural language processing, and emphasizes their usefulness in different phases of drug development. Moreover, the study examines the obstacles and restrictions linked to the incorporation of AI and ML in pharmaceutical research, encompassing difficulties related to data quality, regulatory matters, and ethical deliberations. This review tries to clarify the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in revolutionizing drug development processes, while also addressing the obstacles to their broad use..

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, machine learning, drug development, deep learning, target identification, clinical trial optimization, drug discovery, predictive modeling.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are powerful technologies that have the capacity to greatly impact multiple industries, such as healthcare, by bringing about significant changes. AI, or artificial intelligence, is the replication of human intelligence processes by machines. On the other hand, ML, or machine learning, focuses on creating algorithms that allow computers to learn from data and make predictions. These technologies have attracted considerable attention because of their capacity to analyze extensive information, identify patterns, and extract insights that might inform decision-making processes.

Drug development plays a crucial role in the field of healthcare. The exploration and advancement of new medical treatments are crucial in enhancing the well-being of patients, solving medical demands that have not been satisfied, and fighting against a wide range of diseases, including both common and rare conditions. Nevertheless, the conventional method of drug development is frequently characterized as being time-consuming, expensive, and filled with difficulties, such as high rates of failure and extensive regulatory approval procedures. In light of this situation, the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in pharmaceutical research shows great potential. These technologies provide novel answers to the urgent difficulties encountered by the pharmaceutical industry, ranging from expediting the drug development process to refining clinical trial design and improving patient stratification. Researchers can accelerate the process of identifying viable drug candidates, anticipate probable negative effects, and customize therapies based on unique patient characteristics by utilizing AI and ML (Lo et al., 2018).

The rationale for utilizing AI and ML in pharmaceutical research arises from the acknowledgement of its capacity to optimize and transform drug development procedures. Through the utilization of data-driven insights, researchers can enhance their decision-making process at all stages of the drug development lifecycle, resulting in the creation of safer and more efficient treatments. In addition, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) present prospects for enhanced efficacy, cost-efficiency, and individualized medical care, therefore

promoting the objective of providing improved healthcare results to patients globally (Chowdhury & Koydemir, 2020).

This paper presents a comprehensive review of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technologies, as well as their specific applications in pharmaceutical research. We analyze the significance of medication development in the healthcare industry and investigate the reasons behind the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into the process of discovering and developing drugs. By doing a thorough examination, our goal is to clarify the significant impact that these technologies can have, as well as the problems and opportunities they offer for the future of pharmaceutical innovation.

1. AI and ML in Drug Discovery

The combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) has greatly improved drug discovery, especially in high-throughput screening (HTS) and virtual screening techniques. It has also enhanced predictive modeling for selecting and optimizing compounds, as well as developing new drugs through de novo drug design and generative modeling approaches.

Methods for rapidly and efficiently screening large numbers of compounds and using computer simulations to identify potential drug candidates: High-throughput screening (HTS) is a process that quickly tests extensive collections of chemical compounds to identify viable candidates that exhibit specific desirable biological activity. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms have played a crucial role in improving high-throughput screening (HTS) processes by automating the processing of data, decreasing the expenses associated with experiments, and speeding up the time it takes to conduct screenings (Hughes et al., 2011). Virtual screening use computational techniques to forecast the binding strength of small molecules and target proteins, therefore determining the priority of compounds for experimental verification. Machine learning algorithms, such as support vector machines and deep neural networks, have been used to improve the accuracy and efficiency of virtual screening protocols. This allows for the discovery of lead compounds with greater hit rates (LeCun et al., 2015).

Predictive modeling is essential for guiding compound selection and optimization in the drug discovery process. ML algorithms utilize extensive datasets comprising chemical structures and biological activity profiles to construct predictive models that can find drugs possessing specific pharmacological properties. These models employ a range of molecular descriptors, such as physicochemical qualities, structural fingerprints, and molecular docking scores, to determine the order of importance for compounds to be synthesized and tested (Gupta et al., 2018). In addition, Bayesian optimization algorithms have been used to continuously modify compound structures by incorporating feedback from experimental assays. This approach allows for the efficient identification of lead compounds that have enhanced potency and selectivity (Kadurin et al., 2017).

Methods for designing new drugs from scratch and using generative models: De novo drug design utilizes computational approaches to create new chemical compounds that possess specific pharmacological properties. Generative modeling techniques, such as recurrent neural networks and generative adversarial networks, have become effective tools for creating new drug designs. These models learn the patterns present in large chemical datasets and generate unique molecular structures with specific properties (Gómez-Bombarelli et al., 2018). These

generative models can be integrated with reinforcement learning algorithms to systematically improve compound attributes through iterative optimization, resulting in the identification of structurally varied and chemically viable lead compounds. (Segler et al., 2018).

2. The role of AL and ML in Target Identification and Validation

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are playing an increasingly significant role in target identification and validation in pharmaceutical research. The utilization of omics data, encompassing genomes, transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics, has demonstrated its immense value in the identification of prospective therapeutic targets. Through the examination of extensive omics datasets, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms have the ability to reveal molecular patterns linked to disease pathology. This process aids in the discovery of crucial biological pathways and molecular targets that play a role in the development of diseases (Xu & Jackson, 2019). By utilizing a data-driven strategy, researchers are able to identify candidate targets that have a greater potential for therapeutic benefits. This, in turn, speeds up the process of discovering new drugs.

Moreover, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) methods play a crucial role in forecasting target-drug interactions through the utilization of network-based strategies. These methods utilize network biology principles to create models of intricate interactions across medications, targets, and biological pathways (Aliper et al., 2016). ML algorithms may use many data sources, like chemical structure databases, protein-protein interaction networks, and gene expression profiles, to forecast the probability of a medicine interacting with a certain target or influencing a specific biological pathway. The network-centric perspective of drug-target interactions allows researchers to discover new drug-target combinations and repurpose current medications for different uses. This approach broadens the range of therapeutic options and decreases the time and expense associated with conventional target identification techniques.

Furthermore, AI-driven techniques have played a crucial role in improving target validation by combining several data sources and revealing new understandings of target biology. Conventional methods for target validation typically depend on experimental assays and animal models that require a significant amount of labor and resources, leading to time and cost inefficiencies (Zhang et al., 2019). On the other hand, AI-driven solutions utilize sophisticated data analytics techniques, such as deep learning and reinforcement learning, to examine various datasets, including genomic, proteomic, and clinical data. AI systems can rank candidate targets by analyzing patterns and correlations in datasets. This prioritization is based on the targets' significance to disease etiology, therapeutic tractability, and potential off-target consequences. By utilizing a data-driven approach, the validation process for the target is expedited and the selection of the target is improved, resulting in a decreased likelihood of clinical trial failures caused by inadequate target engagement. This strategy also increases confidence in the target selection.

AI and ML are crucial in the process of identifying and validating targets by utilizing the potential of omics data, network-based strategies, and AI-driven techniques. These methods allow researchers to discover new drug targets, forecast interactions between targets and drugs, and improve the validation of targets. This eventually speeds up the process of finding new drugs and increases the effectiveness of therapeutic treatments.

3. Predictive Toxicology and Safety Assessment

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) play a crucial role in predicting toxicology and safety evaluation within the field of pharmaceutical research and drug development. These technologies provide novel methods for detecting adverse effects at an early stage, predicting drug-induced toxicity and off-target effects, and integrating multi-omics data for a thorough safety assessment.

An important advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in the field of predictive toxicology is the ability to identify undesirable effects at an early stage through the use of computational models. Conventional toxicological studies heavily depend on the use of animal testing, which is a time-consuming and expensive process that frequently does not precisely anticipate human responses. Computational toxicology utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms to examine extensive datasets containing chemical structures, biological profiles, and toxicity endpoints. Its purpose is to detect any safety issues (Cheng et al., 2019). These models utilize structure-activity connections, physicochemical features, and molecular interactions to forecast toxicity consequences. This allows researchers to pick compounds with reduced toxicity profiles for further advancement.

In addition, the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) methods allows for the anticipation of drug-induced toxicity and off-target effects. This is achieved by integrating a variety of data sources and revealing concealed connections between medications, targets, and biological processes. Machine learning techniques, such as random forest and deep learning, have the ability to examine transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic data in order to detect biomarkers that are linked to medication toxicity and adverse reactions (Rajput et al., 2019). Through comprehending the fundamental principles of toxicity, scientists can develop safer medications that have decreased off-target effects, hence enhancing patient safety.

Moreover, the incorporation of multi-omics data is essential in conducting thorough safety evaluations since it offers a full perspective on the impact of drugs on biological systems. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms have the ability to combine genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic, and metabolomic data in order to evaluate how medications affect different cellular processes and pathways (Hodos et al., 2016). Through the analysis of these complex datasets, researchers can detect possible safety issues, clarify the mechanisms behind medication toxicity, and formulate approaches to reduce negative effects. In addition, AI-driven methods allow for the anticipation of specific patient reactions to medications based on their genetic composition and biomarker profiles, hence facilitating customized healthcare and minimizing the likelihood of negative responses.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are crucial in the field of predictive toxicology and safety assessment. They allow for the early identification of harmful effects, prediction of toxicity caused by drugs, identification of off-target effects, and integration of multiple types of biological data for a thorough safety evaluation. These technologies provide novel answers to conventional obstacles in drug safety assessment, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and success rate of medication development and providing superior patient outcomes.

4. Clinical Trial Optimization

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) methods in the optimization of clinical trials has fundamentally transformed the process of designing, conducting, and analyzing clinical studies. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are essential in patient stratification and tailored treatment methods, predictive modeling for patient recruitment and retention, as well as adaptive trial design and real-time data analysis.

Implementing patient classification and tailored treatment approaches is crucial for enhancing clinical trial outcomes and optimizing patient care. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms examine various datasets, such as patient demographics, genetic profiles, biomarker data, and clinical results, in order to pinpoint certain groups of patients who are most likely to gain advantages from a specific treatment (Ghahramani, 2015). Researchers can optimize therapy effectiveness and reduce negative effects by discovering predictive biomarkers and patient features linked to treatment response, allowing for personalized interventions (Shah et al., 2018). This individualized medicine strategy not only improves patient outcomes but also boosts the efficiency of clinical trials by selecting a study population that includes individuals who respond well to treatment.

AI and ML enable the optimization of clinical trials by facilitating predictive modeling for patient recruitment and retention. Conventional recruiting methods sometimes depend on the labor-intensive process of manually reviewing patient records and relying on referrals from physicians. This approach often results in delays and inefficiencies when enrolling participants for clinical trials (Duffy & Sajjan, 2015). AI-powered predictive algorithms utilize electronic health records, genomics data, and other real-world data sources to proactively identify eligible patients and forecast their probability of participating in and remaining in clinical trials (Ozery-Flato et al., 2018). AI and ML algorithms expedite the timelines of clinical trials and enhance the success rate by automating patient recruitment processes and focusing on individuals who are more likely to participate and follow study protocols. This approach also improves the quality of data collected during the trials.

Moreover, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) facilitate the use of flexible trial design and immediate analysis of data, enabling researchers to make well-informed judgments based on the evolving trial data. Adaptive trial designs, such as Bayesian adaptive randomization and response-adaptive allocation, alter trial protocols based on interim data analyses, enabling more effective allocation of resources and sample sizes (Berry et al., 2015). Machine learning algorithms process live patient data, including as clinical outcomes, adverse events, and biomarker measurements, in order to detect treatment effects and safety signals at an early stage of the trial (Rajkomar et al., 2018). Through ongoing monitoring of trial progress and adjusting study protocols as necessary, researchers can enhance trial outcomes, mitigate risks, and increase the probability of identifying treatment effects.

The implementation of AI and ML technologies has revolutionized the optimization of clinical trials. These technologies allow for the categorization of patients based on specific characteristics and the development of individualized treatment strategies. Additionally, they enable predictive modeling to enhance patient recruitment and retention, as well as adaptive trial design and real-time analysis of data. These novel strategies improve the efficiency, efficacy, and safety of clinical trials, thereby expediting the development of new treatments and

enhancing patient outcomes.

5. Drug Repurposing and Combination Therapy

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools has greatly improved the study of drug repurposing and combination therapy. This integration has resulted in the development of novel methods, such as utilizing electronic health records (EHRs) to discover potential drug candidates for repurposing, employing artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to predict effective combinations of drugs, and combining AI-based approaches with traditional procedures for drug repurposing.

Utilizing electronic health records (EHRs) for mining purposes has become a valuable approach in identifying possible candidates for drug repurposing. Electronic Health Records (EHRs) store extensive patient information, such as demographic data, medical history, medication usage, and clinical results (Hripcsak & Albers, 2013). Researchers can utilize AI and ML algorithms to evaluate EHR data, enabling the identification of patterns and connections between pharmaceuticals and disorders. This analysis can reveal possible opportunities for repurposing drugs (Duke et al., 2017). Data-driven approaches facilitate the recognition of therapeutic benefits in existing pharmaceuticals that have not been previously identified. This, in turn, speeds up the process of discovering new drugs and decreases the expenses associated with their development.

The application of AI algorithms in predicting synergistic drug combinations has greatly transformed the field of combination therapy. ML algorithms have the capability to examine extensive databases of medication interactions, genomic data, and chemical structures in order to uncover combinations of drugs that work together to provide improved therapeutic effectiveness and decreased toxicity (Aliper et al., 2016). Researchers can systematically investigate the extensive range of potential drug combinations and choose those with the greatest probability of success by utilizing AI-driven predictive modeling techniques (Cheng et al., 2018). The utilization of data in combination therapy not only enhances treatment outcomes but also reduces the likelihood of negative side effects linked to polypharmacy.

Moreover, combining AI-based methods with conventional medication repurposing procedures provides a synergistic approach to discover novel therapeutic uses for already existing pharmaceuticals. Conventional methods for repurposing drugs often involve searching through scientific literature, using computer models, and conducting experiments to find prospective candidates for repurposing (Ashburn & Thor, 2004). By incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) methods into these methodologies, researchers can improve the effectiveness and precision of drug repurposing endeavors. AI algorithms have the ability to examine several sources of data, including as biological networks, pharmacological databases, and clinical trial data. This analysis helps in prioritizing repurposing candidates based on their probability of being successful (Sirota et al., 2011). This integrated method allows researchers to utilize the combined knowledge and skills of AI systems and domain specialists, resulting in more informed decision-making and faster drug repurposing efforts.

The combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) methods has significantly transformed the field of drug repurposing and combination therapy. This integration allows for the analysis of electronic health records to identify potential candidates for repurposing, predict effective combinations of drugs, and combine AI-based approaches with traditional strategies for drug repurposing. These innovative methods provide new

opportunities for finding and creating new treatments, ultimately resulting in better results for patients and improved healthcare delivery.

6. Challenges and Limitations

To fully harness the capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in drug development, it is crucial to tackle the obstacles and restrictions that come with their integration. Some of the main obstacles are the accessibility, accuracy, and compatibility of data; the need to comply with regulations and validate AI-driven models; and the ethical concerns around the use of AI and ML in drug development. Addressing these obstacles necessitates a collaborative endeavor involving stakeholders from both the pharmaceutical industry and regulatory bodies.

- Data availability, quality, and interoperability:

A major obstacle in the field of AI and ML applications in medication development is the limited accessibility and reliability of data. Pharmaceutical research depends on a wide range of datasets, such as genomic, proteomic, and clinical data. These datasets can be fragmented, partial, or of different quality levels (Wang et al., 2019). Additionally, the challenge of achieving interoperability among many data sources and formats continues to impede the progress of data integration and analytic endeavors. To tackle these difficulties, it is necessary to allocate resources towards developing data infrastructure, engaging in standardization initiatives, and fostering collaborations to enhance the sharing of data across relevant parties.

- Regulatory considerations and validation of AI-driven models:

Regulatory organizations, like as the FDA and EMA, are crucial in assessing the safety and effectiveness of AI-driven models in the development of drugs. Nevertheless, the existing legal frameworks may lack the necessary capabilities to evaluate the intricate algorithms employed in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) systems. It is of utmost importance to guarantee the strong verification of AI-driven models and tackle legislative issues with data protection, security, and transparency (Beam & Kohane, 2018). The establishment of defined rules and evaluation criteria for AI-driven models in drug development requires collaboration among regulatory bodies, industry stakeholders, and academic researchers.

- Ethical implications of AI and ML in drug development:

The extensive implementation of AI and ML technologies in pharmaceutical research gives rise to ethical problems around data privacy, bias, openness, and responsibility (Celi et al., 2019). AI algorithms have the potential to unintentionally maintain existing biases in healthcare data, resulting in discrepancies in treatment outcomes. In addition, the utilization of exclusive algorithms and opaque models might hide the processes of decision-making, which leads to concerns regarding transparency and accountability. To tackle these ethical challenges, it is essential to prioritize justice, openness, and equity in the creation and implementation of AI and ML technologies. Stakeholders should actively participate in ethical deliberations and establish protocols to guarantee the conscientious utilization of AI in the process of drug development.

- Overcoming barriers to adoption and implementation:

Although AI and ML have the potential to bring significant advantages to drug research, there are various obstacles that prevent their mainstream acceptance and use. The obstacles encompass restricted availability of expertise and resources, reluctance to embrace change, and cultural impediments inside businesses (Krittanawong et al., 2020). To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to make investments in worker training, infrastructure development, and organizational change management. Furthermore, cultivating a culture that promotes innovation and cooperation can help to smoothly incorporate AI and ML technologies into current drug development processes.

To effectively tackle the obstacles and limits related to the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in medication development, a comprehensive and diverse strategy is necessary. To fully leverage the potential of AI and ML in drug development, stakeholders must tackle challenges related to data availability, quality, and interoperability. They should also address regulatory concerns and ensure the validation of AI-driven models. Additionally, stakeholders need to navigate ethical implications and overcome barriers to the adoption and implementation of these technologies. By doing so, they can drive innovation and enhance patient outcomes.

7. Future Perspectives and Concluding Remarks

As we look towards the future of pharmaceutical research, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) is poised to continue driving innovation and transforming drug development processes. Several emerging trends in AI and ML for pharmaceutical research are likely to shape the landscape in the coming years, with profound implications for drug development timelines, cost-effectiveness, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

One emerging trend is the increasing use of AI and ML for predictive modeling and precision medicine. AI algorithms can analyze large-scale datasets, including genomic, proteomic, and clinical data, to identify biomarkers, predict drug responses, and tailor treatments to individual patients (Kraus et al., 2018). By leveraging AI-driven predictive models, researchers can optimize clinical trial designs, stratify patient populations, and accelerate the development of targeted therapies for personalized medicine.

Another emerging trend is the use of AI and ML for drug discovery and repurposing. ML algorithms can analyze chemical structures, biological data, and drug-target interactions to identify novel drug candidates and repurpose existing drugs for new indications (Mamoshina et al., 2016). By harnessing the power of AI-driven approaches, researchers can expedite the identification of lead compounds, optimize drug properties, and prioritize candidates for preclinical and clinical evaluation.

Furthermore, the integration of AI and ML with advanced imaging technologies is revolutionizing drug development and disease diagnosis. AI algorithms can analyze medical images, such as MRI, CT, and PET scans, to detect disease biomarkers, monitor treatment responses, and improve diagnostic accuracy (Litjens et al., 2017). By automating image analysis tasks and extracting quantitative information from imaging data, AI-driven approaches enable more precise and efficient disease characterization, leading to better patient outcomes.

The potential impact of AI and ML on drug development timelines and cost-effectiveness cannot be overstated.

By streamlining data analysis, optimizing trial designs, and accelerating decision-making processes, AI-driven approaches have the potential to significantly reduce drug development timelines and costs (Makowski et al., 2020). Moreover, AI algorithms can identify opportunities for drug repurposing, enabling the development of new therapies at a fraction of the time and cost required for traditional drug discovery efforts.

Importantly, interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing will be essential for realizing the full potential of AI and ML in pharmaceutical research. The convergence of expertise from diverse fields, including computer science, biology, chemistry, and medicine, is critical for developing and implementing AI-driven solutions (Oprea et al., 2018). By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, sharing best practices, and promoting open access to data and tools, researchers can accelerate the pace of innovation and maximize the impact of AI and ML on drug development and patient care.

Finally, the future of pharmaceutical research is increasingly intertwined with AI and ML technologies. Emerging trends in AI and ML for predictive modeling, drug discovery, precision medicine, and imaging analysis hold the promise of revolutionizing drug development processes and improving patient outcomes. By embracing interdisciplinary collaboration, fostering knowledge sharing, and harnessing the power of AI-driven approaches, researchers can unlock new opportunities for innovation and transformation in pharmaceutical research and healthcare.

Conclusion:

To summarize, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into the process of drug development offers numerous possibilities to transform the pharmaceutical sector. During this investigation, we have highlighted the extensive capacity of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to improve several areas of medication discovery, optimization, and delivery.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) provide unparalleled skills to evaluate large datasets, forecast medication reactions, and discover new therapeutic targets with exceptional accuracy. Through the utilization of these technologies, researchers can simplify the drug discovery process, expedite clinical trials, and enhance treatment regimens customized for each patient.

Furthermore, the utilization of AI-based methods shows potential for repurposing drugs and implementing combination therapy, hence creating new possibilities to tackle unaddressed medical requirements and enhance patient results. These technological developments have the capacity to greatly decrease the amount of time, money, and potential dangers involved in the development process. As a result, this will lead to the quicker delivery of safer and more efficient treatments to patients all over the world.

Nevertheless, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into the process of drug discovery is not exempt from obstacles and constraints. In order to assure the appropriate and fair utilization of these technologies, it is crucial to thoroughly address the availability, quality, regulatory issues, and ethical implications of the data involved.

Moreover, it is crucial to promote interdisciplinary collaboration, the sharing of knowledge, and transparency in order to optimize the effectiveness of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in the field of drug development. By accepting and taking advantage of these difficulties and possibilities, the pharmaceutical sector

may utilize the revolutionary capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to stimulate innovation, increase healthcare, and elevate the standard of living for millions of individuals worldwide.

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