AUTOMATED ZONAL LEVEL IMPLANT LOOSENING DE-TECTION FROM HIP X-RAY USING A MULTI-STAGED APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Hip arthroplasty is a surgical procedure that involves the replacement of a patient's hip joint with a prosthetic implant. While these implants are initially effective, they may eventually fail and necessitate revision surgery. It is important to identify the 3 Charnley and 7 Gruen zones around the implant and then identify the zone-wise radiolucency which indicates loosening for effective pre and postoperative planning. Despite the importance of zones, there is a lack of automation attempts in this field. In this work, we have proposed a 3-stage algorithm that detects the sanity of the image for diagnosis, segments into the zones, and then identifies radiolucency within the zones. We have demonstrated a 94% accuracy for Fit/Not Fit segregation, a 0.95 dice score for our zonal segmentation, and a 98% overall loosening accuracy. Obtaining an average dice score of 0.92 in the segmentation of zones and 0.93 accuracy on loosening detection on a blind dataset indicates the robustness of the proposed algorithm. This work will contribute to the development of more efficient and accurate models to detect implant loosening.

1 INTRODUCTION

Total joint replacement (TJR) is a surgical procedure in which parts of an arthritic or damaged 031 joints are removed and replaced with a metal, plastic, or ceramic device called a prosthesis. The 032 prosthesis is designed to replicate the movement of a normal healthy joint. TJR has been around 033 for more than five decades now. There have been significant improvements in materials, design, and 034 technique making these surgical procedures more dependable and reliable. However, as the number of cases grew problems also emerged which needed these prostheses to be revised due to wear and aseptic loosening, sepsis or infection, and periprosthetic fractures as well as dislocations. Aseptic 037 loosening refers to the prosthesis loosening out without any evidence of infection. This is a gradual 038 process, may take several years to manifest, and often be asymptomatic. It may occur as a result of undersized or poor surgical technique or as a consequence of an inflammatory reaction to wear particles generated from polyethylene liners of the joint. This is one of the leading causes of revision 040 and depends on careful analysis of serial x-rays of the implant coupled with clinical assessment of 041 symptoms such as pain or limp. Analysis of an anteroposterior radiograph of the hip can indicate 042 the presence of radiolucent areas around the implant as shown in Fig 1. Progressive radiolucencies 043 or osteolysis suggest that the prosthesis is loose, and also the implant's positional variations about 044 the bone are symptomatic of early loosening. 045

The widely used clinical protocol for assessing the implant health of femoral prosthesis as described
 by Gruen and Charnley is by dividing the femoral region into 7 Gruen zones, and the cup region into
 3 Charnley zones. This is shown in Fig 2. These zones help in identifying the extent of radiolucency
 and the severity of loosening.

Loose implants need to be revised. The accurate diagnosis and effective intervention in orthope dic surgery heavily relies on the expertise of experienced radiologists and orthopedic surgeons. In
 regions with limited access to orthopedic surgeons, particularly in underdeveloped and developing
 nations, the healthcare system faces significant strain. Identifying the areas of implant loosening
 and formulating a revision plan is a time-consuming task for experts when performed manually.

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Figure 1: Presence of radiolucency areas (black arrow) indicating loosening of the implant Apostu et al. (2018)



Figure 2: Standard template for radiographic assessment of periprosthetic lucency, with 3 acetabular Charnley zones (I–III) and 7 femoral Gruen zones (1–7) Vanrusselt et al. (2015)

While the ultimate decision rests with the medical professionals, providing assistance in identifying radiolucency, subsidence, or loosening can expedite decision-making and enhance surgical planning for patients Christian et al. (2022). An automated tool can support these professionals in reaching decisions more efficiently and consistently, as it does not have inter-observer variability.

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2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The challenge of identifying various anomalies in implants has been addressed by a few studies. 087 There are few works reported on implant loosening detection. Rahman *et al.* created the aseptic hip 088 loosening Kaggle dataset comprising 206 images for detecting hip arthroplasty loosening Rahman 089 et al. (2022). They developed an object detection model using YOLO V5 to localize implants. They 090 reported an accuracy of 94% for loosening detection using DenseNet. Alireza et al. conducted a 091 study focusing on hip loosening using DenseNet201 on a private dataset comprising 236 cementless 092 total hip replacement (THR) images from a cohort of 15277 THR patients. The model yielded an 093 area under the curve (AUC) of 84%, a specificity of 75.0%, and a sensitivity of 91.6% Alireza et al. (2019). Lau et al. implemented the Xception neural network for 2-class classification in the 094 categories of "loose" or "control" and obtained an accuracy of 96.3% Lawrence et al. (2022). Kim 095 et al. Kim et al. (2023) investigated the effectiveness of using a deep convolutional neural network 096 (CNN) to identify the loosening of total knee arthroplasty (TKA) implants on plain radiographs using transfer learning. They utilized a pre-trained VGG and experimented with two techniques. In the 098 first technique, they removed the fully connected layer and added a new one to create a new model. The convolutional layer was frozen without training, and only the fully connected layer was trained. 100 In the second technique, a new model was created by adding a fully connected layer and adjusting 101 the range of freezing for the convolutional layer. The second model demonstrated higher accuracy at 102 97.5%. Shah et al. (2020) aimed to assess the efficacy of a machine-learning algorithm 103 in diagnosing prosthetic loosening based on preoperative radiographs. The study gathered preop-104 erative radiographs, as well as historical and comorbidity data from 697 patients who underwent 105 revision of total hip or total knee arthroplasty from 2012 to 2018. Convolutional neural network (CNN) models were trained, demonstrating 70% accuracy in identifying prosthetic loosening from 106 radiographs alone. A detailed review paper on artificial intelligence for image analysis in total hip 107 and total knee arthroplasty is given by Gurung et al. (2022).

There is not much work reported on implant zone segmentation. Asma *et al.* focussed on Gruen zone segmentation using a multitask CNN for binary segmentation mapping of the implant and detection of the implant tip point. The authors also utilized the statistical shape model to construct a landmark-based shape model and fit this model to a new image using shape coefficients and pose parameters. The reported dice score for this method was 0.8 Alzaid et al. (2024).

113 Our research endeavors to provide a thorough health assessment of implants by segmenting them 114 into the Charnley and Gruen zones, rather than simply classifying them as loose or control, as is 115 common in most research papers. The significance of our work lies in three key phases. Firstly, 116 we address the issue of poor image quality, including noise, blurriness, poor exposure, and artifacts, 117 which can lead to misdiagnosis and pose risks during surgical planning. To mitigate this, we have 118 developed a preliminary screening process for X-ray images, allowing surgeons to identify and discard unsuitable images and request a rescan if necessary. Subsequently, we focus on segmenting 119 the implant into 11 zones (7 Gruen, 3 Charnley, and background). Finally, we utilize this zonal 120 information to identify zones with radiolucency, aiding surgeons in making well-informed decisions 121 regarding extent of loosening, affected zones, early signs of loosening, progress monitoring, and the 122 necessity for revision surgery. To the best of our knowledge, we have not encountered any existing 123 work that offers such a comprehensive analysis of the implant. 124

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3 OUR CONTRIBUTIONS

The major contributions in this work are summarized as follows.

- Contribution in the creation of a new comprehensive annotations to the existing dataset created by Rahman *et al.* Rahman et al. (2022) which now includes zone-wise segmentation and loosening details of Gruen and Charnley zones and the extent of loosening information. The original annotation dataset had only control and loose image information.
- Proposing an automated approach to check whether the image is fit for diagnosis.
- Proposing a multi-staged deep learning based approach to perform zone-wise segmentation and loosening detection.
- Obtaining good accuracy when blind-tested on a new dataset has proven the robustness and reliability of our proposed network.

142 3.1 DATASET PREPARATION

Upon our thorough review, we have found that there is currently no open-source dataset containing 144 zonal regions (Gruen and Charnley) annotation and zone-wise loosening information available to the 145 best of our knowledge. Acquiring this information would significantly aid in accurately identifying 146 radiolucency regions and improving the development of automated preplanning tools for implant 147 revision surgery. Our study utilized the implant loosening detection dataset created by Rahman 148 et al. Rahman et al. (2022), which consists of 206 single hip implant images, comprising 112 loose 149 and 94 control images. These images were meticulously annotated by an orthopedic surgeon using 150 the 'labelme' annotation tool Russell et al. (2008), encompassing various zones, regions, landmark 151 points, and line-based annotations in both JSON and text formats. The annotations cover three 152 Charnley zones 1 to 3, seven Gruen zones 4 to 10, a femoral cup, and a stem, along with landmark 153 points such as the lesser trochanter, greater trochanter, ischium, medullary canal, pubis bone, neck of the femoral stem, shoulder of the femoral stem, center of the femoral cup, acetabular component, 154 and calcar femoral. Furthermore, two lines were included: Line 1 for the lesser trochanter and Line 155 2 for the middle thirds. An illustrative example of the manual annotation is presented in Fig 3. 156

In conjunction with the JSON file, an Excel file has been created to indicate whether the image is
suitable for diagnosis, identify the presence of radiolucency, categorize the 10 zones (Gruen and
Charnley) as loose or control, determine any dislocation or missing cup, and pinpoint any breakage or subsidence, specifying the affected zones and the total number of loose or control zones.
Some of these additional information has been utilized in our network for accurate segmentation and classification of zones.

Figure 3: A sample manually annotated image using labelme annotation tool

3.2 PROPOSED MULTISTAGED NETWORK

We propose a three-stage network to perform 3 important tasks; image data sanity check, Charnley and Gruen zone region segmentation, and zone-level implant loosening detection.



3.2.1 STAGE 1 - FITNESS CHECK OF THE X-RAY IMAGE FOR DIAGNOSIS:

Figure 4: Block diagram for image sanity check and zone segmentation

While the orthopedic surgeon was annotating the dataset it was noted that out of 206 images in the dataset 19 images were deemed not fit for diagnosis. We propose an automated network that can check the fitness of the image for diagnosis. The block diagram for checking this fitness and zonal region segmentation is shown in Fig 4. The network consists of a convolutional neural network (CNN) that is structured into three blocks, each consisting of 2D convolutional blocks, batch normalization, leaky rectified linear unit (ReLU) activation, and dropout layers (0.6). The blocks had 64, 128, and 512 filters, respectively. This was followed by global average pooling and a two-class 'fit' and 'not fit' classification layer. The model was trained using categorical cross-entropy loss and the Adam optimizer with a learning rate set at 0.002, over 100 epochs. Additionally, dynamic learning rate scheduling techniques including time-based decay and a high-factor (0.9) reduction on the plateau were incorporated to optimize training efficiency and performance.

3.2.2 STAGE 2 - IMPLANT ZONAL REGION SEGMENTATION:

Identification of 7 Gruen and 3 Charnley zones along with the loosening condition from each zone of
 the preplanning x-ray image would enable the orthopedic surgeons to better understand the implant
 condition and also help in planning the surgeries effectively. To achieve this, we converted the
 annotated JSON file to an XML file and extracted the coordinates of each of the 10 zones. Our
 primary aim was to identify any radiolucencies present in these specific regions, as radiolucency
 serves as a critical indicator of loosening and manifests exclusively within these 10 specific areas.

We then created masks of these regions by marking the pixels of each class in a categorical template (0 to background followed by 3 Charnley zones as 1 - 3 and then followed by 7 Gruen zones from 4 - 10). During the creation of these masks, we encountered the challenge of overlapping regions in the annotations, which we carefully addressed to ensure separation and non-overlapping markings.

220 The proposed segmentation network is structured as an encoder-decoder block as shown in Fig 4, 221 wherein the encoder comprises 4 blocks, each consisting of 2D convolution, instance normalization, 222 leaky ReLU activation, and dropout layers. It utilizes 64, 128, 512, and 1024 filters with a 3×3 kernel size and he_norm as the kernel initializer. The decoder has the same 4 reverse blocks with 224 2D transpose convolution. The final layer of the network consists of an 11-class segmentation layer 225 with leaky ReLU activation and transpose convolution. This layer serves to segment the input image 226 into 10 distinct zones and a background. Moreover, skip connections are implemented between the encoder and decoder, enhancing the overall performance of the network during the segmentation 227 process. The network employs the Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 2^{-4} and a beta value of 228 0.5. A batch size of 8 is utilized, and the network is trained for 300 epochs. 229

230 The concept of semantic segmentation loss can be categorized into three primary groups: Pixel-231 level, Region-level, and Boundary-level. The proposed segmentation network adopts a combination 232 approach that integrates elements from the pixel-level and region-level categories to optimize se-233 mantic segmentation performance. This approach has significantly enhanced model performance, particularly in the segmentation of 11 challenging classes, including 7 Gruen, 3 Charnley, and the 234 background region, each region with varying shapes and sizes across all images. The strategy of 235 incorporating multiple loss functions aims to strike a balance between pixel-wise precision, over-236 all object segmentation quality, and accuracy. In this approach, the cross-entropy loss (ce) ensures 237 smooth gradients and precise segmentation at each pixel, while the dice loss (dc) prevents local min-238 ima and focuses on overall class segmentation by maximizing the alignment between the predicted 239 segmentation and the ground truth mask. The combination of the losses is achieved by summing the 240 cross-entropy loss and the dice loss using an equal weighted contribution of each loss function. The 241 overall equation is defined as follows: 242

$$\mathbf{L}_{combo} = L_{ce} + L_{dc} \tag{1}$$

where the cross-entropy controls the model's penalization for different target classes in the predicted output. The reduction technique of sum over batch size is used in cross-entropy loss.

$$\mathbf{L}_{dc} = \left(1 - 2 * \frac{num}{den}\right) \tag{2}$$

$$num = Y \cap P \tag{3}$$

$$den = |Y| + |P|; \tag{4}$$

where Y is the ground truth image and P is the predicted image.

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Figure 5: Block diagram for zone-wise loosening detection

The block diagram to detect loosening is given in Fig 5. In this stage, the proposed network is designed to take three inputs: zonal segmentation information from stage 2, the input image, and zonal



270 loosening information from the created Excel with the help of a domain expert which includes the 271 information on whether the zone is control (0) indicating no signs of radiolucency, loose (1) indi-272 cating the presence of radiolucency, or not visible (2) indicating that the zone is not visible for each 273 image. It has to be noted that if any zone is even partially, slightly, or completely invisible, experts 274 recommend a rescan of that X-ray image. The proposed network incorporates a "not visible" class for zones to prevent misjudgment or omissions. So, If any zone within an image is not visible, the 275 system flags it for expert review to facilitate well-informed decisions. When evaluating orthopedic 276 implant integrity, it is crucial to ensure adequate radiolucency visibility around the femoral stem or 277 cup in all 10 zones. 278

The proposed network comprises two sections: the base network, and a support network. The base network is initialized with the best working weights of the stage 2 network. The small support network consists of a flattening layer, a fully connected dense layer with 64 filters, *ReLU* activation, and *L*2 kernel regularization, followed by a 3-class classification layer with softmax activation. The hyperparameters such as learning rate, optimizer, and batch size are similar to those in stage 2, and the network ran for 200 epochs. This network provides zone-wise information on the presence of radiolucency implying loosening and also the extent of loosening.

The incorporation of Exponential Logarithmic Loss in this stage, as an extension of the combined loss from the second step, encompasses the exponential logarithmic loss of both cross-entropy and dice losses before their amalgamation. This method effectively addresses the issue of class imbalance, where most areas are categorized as control zones, while a few zones display radiolucency(lose). This method offers the flexibility to regulate the model's focus on easy and hard pixels. The equation is expressed as:

$$L_{Exp_Log} = L_{Exp_Log_dc} + L_{Exp_Log_ce}$$
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where $L_{Exp_Log_dc}$ represents the exponential logarithmic dice loss and $L_{Exp_Log_cc}$ signifies the exponential logarithmic cross-entropy loss.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

298 Out of 206 images in the dataset Rahman et al. (2022), 19 were considered not fit for diagnosis by 299 a participating domain expert while annotating the dataset. The remaining 187 images were split 300 into 70: 30 ratios for training and testing the segmentation and loosening algorithms of stage 2 and 301 3. We have used 130 images for training and 57 images for testing both the proposed segmentation 302 and loosening detection algorithms. The dimension of the original image was $331 \times 331 \times 3$. These 303 images were zero-padded to obtain a size of $336 \times 336 \times 3$ and the pixel data was rescaled to a 304 range of 0-1 to meet the network requirement. To mitigate overfitting and enhance generalization 305 and convergence, on-the-fly data augmentation techniques such as rotation, zooming, brightness ad-306 justment, and horizontal and vertical flipping were implemented due to the limited sample size. We 307 ensured that at least 75% of the original images were retained during training. To ensure repeatability of results we have performed 5-fold cross-validation and the reported results are the average 308 values of this cross-validation. 309

311 4.1 IMAGE FIT OR NOT FIT RESULTS

312 The dataset has 19 images that were considered not fit for diagnosis by the domain expert who 313 annotated this dataset. Due to the limited number of samples, data augmentation was applied and 314 the model was successfully trained using an 80:20 ratios train-test split rather than the 70:30315 ratios as mentioned earlier. We achieved an accuracy of 94% in classifying images as either fit or 316 not fit for diagnosis. Some of the images flagged as 'not fit' for diagnosis from our proposed method 317 are given in Fig 6. It can be seen that Fig 6a is noisy and inadequate visualization of prosthetic 318 components, while Fig 6b has some textual information in the diagnostic regions and Fig 6c has 319 been poorly exposed.

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4.2 IMPLANT ZONAL REGION SEGMENTATION AND LOOSENING RESULTS

A notable challenge in the dataset was the variability in the visibility of the 11 zones in the images, with some images showing less than the total number of zones. On close observation with the data



it was noted that some images had limited visibility of the three Charnley zones and also Gruen zone region 4. However, our system is adeptly designed to effectively navigate these challenges and deliver accurate zone-wise segmentation for each image. The segmentation accuracy is com-puted using dice score, which is the common evaluation metric used in computer vision and medical imaging for measuring the similarity or overlap between two sets the ground truth and the predicted images. We found that by using only dice loss we achieved a segmentation accuracy of 87%. How-ever, the combination of pixel-level categorical cross-entropy loss function and region-level dice loss significantly improved the performance of zonal segmentation to 95%, thereby enhancing the accuracy of each zonal segmentation results as well. The proposed algorithm results are very close to ground truth as can be seen in Fig 7.

The dice score for each zone is given in Table 1. It can be seen that the proposed method has high dice score for all the regions. Our method segments the zones consistently even when they are partially visible in the images.

Table 1: Zone-wise segmentation and loosening classification results

	Segmentation	Loosening Classification			
	Dice score	Precision	Recall	F1-score	Accuracy
Charnley Zone 1	0.93	0.91	0.92	0.91	0.95
Charnley Zone 2	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.96
Charnley Zone 3	0.93	0.89	0.94	0.91	0.95
Gruen Zone 1	0.96	0.96	0.98	0.97	0.97
Gruen Zone 2	0.94	0.95	0.98	0.96	0.97
Gruen Zone 3	0.94	0.94	0.98	0.96	0.97
Gruen Zone 4	0.95	0.96	0.99	0.97	0.98
Gruen Zone 5	0.96	0.93	0.98	0.95	0.97
Gruen Zone 6	0.95	0.94	0.97	0.95	0.96
Gruen Zone 7	0.95	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.99
Background	1.0	-	-	-	-

The gradient-weighted class activation mapping (GradCam) heatmap of the proposed segmentation network shows the concentration of features around the implant region as shown in Fig 8. Notably, in the feature map, blue reflects the most significant features, yellow denotes moderate significance, and red represents the least significant features. It can be seen that the most significant features are



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Table 2: Classification confusion matrix for loosening detection

410		Prediction outcome		
411		Control	Loose	
412				
413		True	False	
414	Control	Positive	Negative	
415		(23)	(1)	
416	Actual			
417	value			
418		False	True	
419	Loose	Positive	Negative	
420		(0)	(33)	
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The Gradcam heatmap of the proposed loosening classification network is shown in Fig 9. It can be seen that the features are concentrated on locations where there might be potential radiolucency. As mentioned earlier, blue reflects the most significant features, yellow denotes moderate significance, and red represents the least significant features. In our proposed loosening detection algorithm of stage 3, the regions with moderate radiolucency are highlighted in yellow, demonstrating the network's ability to differentiate areas with higher radiolucency from those with less or no radiolucency in an image thereby illustrating visually the effectiveness of our system.

Table 3 compares the performance of our proposed method with other methods reported in the literature on the same dataset. The proposed exceeds other methods with high 98% accuracy, 99% precision, and 98% recall and F1-score indicating the robustness of the proposed approach.



Figure 9: GradCam feature map of proposed loosening detection method for both control and loose images. The blue reflects the most significant features, yellow denotes moderate significance, and red represents the least significant features.

Table 3: Comparison of performance measure of loosening with other reported methods on the same dataset.

Methods	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-score
Densenet201 Rahman et al. (2022)	94.66	94.66	94.66	94.66
Random Forest Rahman et al. (2022)	96.11	96.42	96.42	96.42
Xception Alireza et al. (2019)	77	83	75	91
Dense Net Lawrence et al. (2022)	95	94	96	-
Proposed	98	99	98	98

4.3 BLIND TESTING

The proposed approach is tested on anonymized clinical data obtained from an orthopedic surgeon. This dataset contains 38 THR images of diverse dimension and configurations like changes in lighting conditions, machine settings, patient positions, film processing, and radiographic techniques capturing the entire hip area. Preprocessing on these images involved cropping to isolate the right and left implant regions, along with resizing and normalization to align with our proposed model. It has to be noted that none of these images were utilized for training the model. Some of the results of the blind testing are given in Fig 10.

Table 4 shows the performance of our method on blind tested dataset. During the evaluation of zonewise segmentation phase, the proposed methodology achieved an average dice score of 0.92. The
average blind tested accuracy on loosening detection is 0.93. Obtaining a high zone-wise precision,
recall, F1-score, and accuracy as shown in Table 4 on a new unseen dataset indicates the repeatability
of our method.

Table 4: Zone-wise segmentation and loosening classification results on blind testing dataset

	Segmentation	Loosening classification			
	Dice score	Precision	Recall	F1-score	Accuracy
Charnley Zone 1	0.88	0.83	0.97	0.88	0.95
Charnley Zone 2	0.90	0.94	0.86	0.90	0.84
Charnley Zone 3	0.89	0.83	0.85	0.81	0.82
Gruen Zone 1	0.92	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Gruen Zone 2	0.92	0.93	0.98	0.95	0.97
Gruen Zone 3	0.91	0.88	0.97	0.91	0.95
Gruen Zone 4	0.93	0.98	0.87	0.91	0.95
Gruen Zone 5	0.92	0.98	0.93	0.95	0.97
Gruen Zone 6	0.95	0.94	0.98	0.96	0.97
Gruen Zone 7	0.91	0.90	0.87	0.89	0.92
Background	1.0	-	-	-	-



Figure 10: Blind testing segmentation results. None of these images were used for training the network.

5 CONCLUSION

In this study, a comprehensive analysis of implants has been proposed, encompassing the assessment of image quality, segmentation of the Gruen and Charnley zones, and the analysis of radiolucency within these zones to determine the extent of implant loosening. This information is vital for both planning implant revision surgeries and monitoring the overall implant health. Collaborating with an orthopedic expert, we have developed an annotated dataset for zone segmentation and an accom-panying Excel sheet containing zonal loosening information, as no such open-source dataset was available. Our segmentation process achieved an average dice score of 95% for segmenting into the standard zones, and an accuracy of 98% in identifying images indicative of loosening. Additionally, we flagged images with artifacts, blurriness, or inadequate zone visibility. The proposed work also assists the surgeons in determining cases that require immediate attention and also in identifying any early signs of loosening, and monitoring cases that require careful follow-up. Our future work aims to incorporate patients' imaging history to identify any dislocations or implant sinking, along with detecting anomalies such as fractures, implant subsidence, and breakage. This comprehensive approach will facilitate the development of a complete implant health assessment suite.

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