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Differential equation models for tumor growth dynamics

Pranay Kathade [†]
Rockwell Automation India Pvt. Ltd.
Pune 411057
Maharashtra
India

Smita N. Gambhire *
Department of Computer Science & Information Technology
Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj University
Navi Mumbai 410206
Maharashtra
India

Swati Varma [§]
Department of Computer Engineering
Vidyavardhini's College of Engineering and Technology
Vasai-Virar 401202
Maharashtra
India

Sheetal Patil [‡]
Department of Electronics and Computer Science
Vidyalankar Institute of Technology
Wadala East
Mumbai 400037
Maharashtra
India

[†] *E-mail:* pranay.p.kathade@gmail.com
* *E-mail:* smitagambhire@csmu.ac.in (Corresponding Author)
[§] *E-mail:* swati.varma@vcet.edu.in
[‡] *E-mail:* sheetalsp2105@gmail.com

Sardor Sabirov [@]
Department of General Professional Sciences
Mamun University
Khiva 220900
Uzbekistan

Shivkumar Karale [#]
Department of Computer Technology
Yeshwantrao Chavan College of Engineering
Nagpur 441110
Maharashtra
India

Abstract

In medical field disease diagnosis the use of differential equations increase to analysis the increase patterns of tumours by representing the how cells is divide, nutrients movement, and the immune system reacts. These models, which include exponential, logistic, Gompertz, and reaction-diffusion frameworks, show important biological processes that control how tumours grow. The integration of biologic system with mathematical model make it more reliable and behave as most prominent analysis in medical field. This study of paper has shown the improve treatment plans, identify the growth rates, and find out how cells go from avascular to vascular growth phases. It gives important information for both theoretical cancer and clinical decision-making.

Subject Classification: *68T07, 68T09, 12H20.*

Keywords: *Tumorigenesis, Gompertzian dynamics, Reaction-diffusion modelling, Proliferation kinetics, Oncological simulation.*

1. Introduction

Differential equation models provide a mathematical framework to analyze tumor growth behavior and treatment response. They describe dynamic interactions among tumor cells, nutrients, and immune factors [1]. By quantifying biological processes, these models enhance understanding, prediction, and optimization of cancer therapies, bridging theoretical research with clinical oncology applications [2, 3, 4]. Because of this problem, more complex models were made, such as the Gompertz model, which explains why tumours' growth slows down when they hit saturation because of mechanical pressure and a lack of nutrients [5, 6, 7]. Reaction-diffusion and partial differential equation (PDE) models were developed further as shown in figure 1.

[@] *E-mail:* **sabirov_sardor@mamunedu.uz**
[#] *E-mail:* **sjkarale@gmail.com**

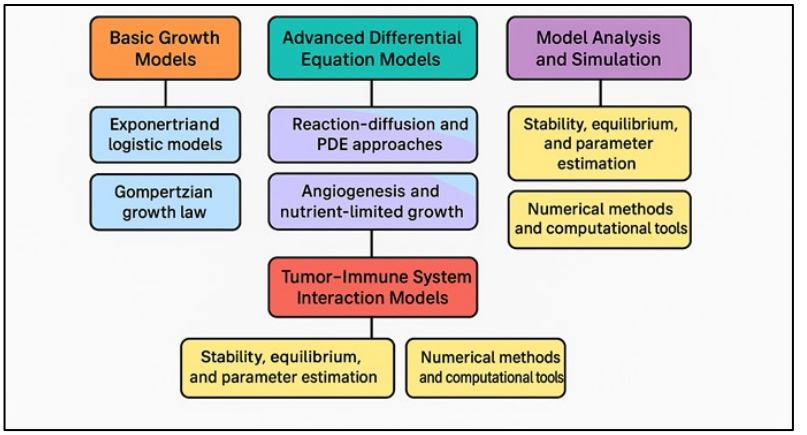

Figure 1

Classification of tumor growth dynamics

These models fill in the blanks between how cells behave at the microscopic level and how tumours look at the larger level in medical images [8].

2. **Basic Growth Models**

2.1 *Exponential and logistic models*

Let $N(t)$ stand for the group of tumour cells at time t. The rate of growth is equal to the number of people living there now:

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = rN \tag{1}$$

where $r > 0$ is the intrinsic growth rate.

Solution: Separate variables and integrate:

$$\int \left(\frac{1}{N}\right) dN = \int r\, dt \rightarrow \ln N = rt + C \tag{2}$$

$$Hence, N(t) = N0 * e^{rt}$$

For this model to work, resources are infinite and there are no biological limits [9]. It only works for early tumour growth (the avascular phase).

Theorem (Growth without Constraint):

$$If \frac{dN}{dt} = rN \; and \; N(0) = N0 \tag{3}$$

then

$$for\ all\ t \geq 0, N(t) > 0 \; and \; N(t) \rightarrow \infty \; as \; t \rightarrow \infty.$$

Proof: Since $r > 0, e^{rt} \rightarrow \infty$ as $t \rightarrow \infty$, therefore $N(t) = N0\, e^{rt} \rightarrow \infty$

2.2 *Gompertzian growth law*

The logistic model adds a carrying capacity K to account for natural limits like lack of nutrients, weakened immune systems, and limited space.

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = rN * \ln\left(\frac{K}{N}\right) \tag{4}$$

Solution: Separate variables:

$$\frac{dN}{\left[N \ln\left(\frac{K}{N}\right)\right]} = r\, dt \tag{5}$$

Let $u = ln(K/N) \rightarrow du = -dN/N$

Then:

$$\frac{-\int du}{u} = r \int dt \rightarrow -\ln u = rt + C \tag{6}$$

$$u = C' e^{-rt}$$

Theorem (Gompertz Convergence): $If\ N(0) = N0\ in\ (0,K), then\ N(t) \rightarrow K\ as\ t \rightarrow \infty$.

Proof:

$$\text{From } N(t) = K * \exp\left[-\ln\left(\frac{K}{N0}\right) * e^{-rt}\right], as\ t \rightarrow \infty, e^{-rt} \rightarrow 0.$$

Thus, $N(t) \rightarrow K * e^0 = K$.

Therefore, tumor growth saturates at K.

3. Advanced Differential Equation Models

3.1 *Reaction-diffusion and PDE approaches*

These models show how tumours grow in space by using diffusion terms to show how cells move and changes in chemical concentration. They do a good job of showing heterogeneity, invasion fronts, and interactions with the microenvironments of nearby tissues.

3.1 *Angiogenesis and nutrient-limited growth*

Angiogenesis models include how the movement of nutrients and the formation of blood vessels affect the spread of tumours. The following equations show how the number of tumour cells N(x,t), the amount of nutrients C(x,t), and the number of endothelial cells E(x,t) interact with each other.

$$\frac{\partial N}{\partial t} = D^1 \nabla^2 N + rN\left(1 - \frac{N}{K}\right) - \alpha NC \tag{7}$$

Describes tumor cell proliferation (logistic) and nutrient consumption.

$$\frac{\partial C}{\partial t} = D^2 \nabla^2 C - \beta NC - \gamma C \tag{8}$$

Nutrient diffusion, uptake by tumor cells, and natural decay.

$$\frac{\partial E}{\partial t} = D^3 \nabla^2 E + \eta C - \delta E \tag{9}$$

Endothelial migration stimulated by nutrient signals.

$$\nabla^2 p = -\rho N \tag{10}$$

Poisson's equation for interstitial pressure within the tumor mass.

$$\frac{\partial K}{\partial t} = \mu E - \lambda K \tag{11}$$

Capillary network density regulated by endothelial activity.
Growth constraint: $N \leq f(C, K)$
Ensures tumor expansion depends on nutrient and vascular limits.
Boundary: $C|\partial\Omega = C_0$

3.2 *Tumor–immune system interaction models*

Tumor–immune system interaction models show how the immune system and tumour growth are constantly balancing each other. Hybrid AI-assisted differential equation models take into account both biological reality and predictive analytics.

Step 1: Initialize Parameters

Input biological parameters and set learning rate η and iteration count T

Step 2: Define Loss Function (Prediction Error)

Define target tumor/immune trajectories (from patient data).

Compute model output N_pred(t), E_pred(t), C_pred(t) using numerical integration (Runge–Kutta method).

$$Loss = \Sigma_t \left[\left(N_{pred(t)} - N_{true(t)} \right)^2 + \left(E_{pred(t)} - E_{true(t)} \right)^2 \right]$$

Step 3: AI Parameter Optimization (Using Machine Learning)

Use gradient-based optimizer (e.g., Adam or SGD) or neural network regression.

$$For\ epoch = 1\ to\ T:$$

$$Simulate\ model \rightarrow get\ N_{pred(t)}, E_{pred(t)}, C_{pred(t)}$$

$Compute\ Loss$

$$\nabla W = \frac{\partial Loss}{\partial W} \tag{12}$$

$$W = W - \eta * \nabla W \tag{13}$$

Step 4: Adaptive Learning via Neural Network

Train a neural network NN(x; θ) to predict optimal parameters W_opt based on new patient data x.

$$W\_opt = NN(x;\ \theta) \tag{14}$$

Use updated parameters in ODE model:

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = r'(x)N\left(1 - \frac{N}{K'(x)}\right) - p'(x)E \tag{15}$$

$$\frac{dE}{dt} = s'(x) + c'(x)N - d'(x)E \quad (16)$$

Step 5: Simulation and Prediction

Integrate updated equations numerically, and generate predicted tumor and immune response curves.

Step 6: Therapy Optimization (Reinforcement Learning Layer)

Define reward:

$$R = -(Final\ Tumor\ Volume) + \lambda * (Immune\ Response\ Strength)$$

Train reinforcement agent to select therapy schedule T_opt maximizing R.

4. Model Analysis and Simulation

4.1 *Stability, equilibrium, and parameter estimation*

The stability and equilibrium study checks to see if immune and tumour populations reach steady states or change over time [10, 11]. Estimating parameters improves rates of growth, as represent it in table 1, decay, and interactions, making sure that model predictions are correct and that biological reality is preserved [12].

Table 1

Parameter Estimation for Tumor–Immune Interaction Model

Parameter	Meaning	Value	Unit	Method
r	Tumor growth rate	0.32	day^{-1}	Experimental fit
K	Carrying capacity	1.0×10^{6}	cells	Histological data
p	Immune kill rate	2.1×10^{-7}	$day^{-1}\cdot cell^{-1}$	AI regression
s	Immune influx rate	1.5×10^{3}	cells/day	Clinical data
c	Immune activation constant	3.2×10^{-4}	$day^{-1}\cdot cell^{-1}$	Data fitting
d	Immune decay rate	0.25	day^{-1}	Literature value

The tumour grows faster, but then it stops growing as immune cells multiply. This shows in figure 2 that there is a dynamic balance between cell growth and immune control.

The tumor–immune system's stable states and stability traits are shown in Table 2. Case 1 shows an unstable state without a tumour, Case 2 shows a stable relationship between immune cells and tumour cells, and Case 3 shows that the tumour cells are in charge. Stability depends on how strong interactions are and how well the defence system works.

5. Conclusion

Using differential equation models to study tumour growth is a useful way to learn about how cancer changes over time and how treatments work. These models, which include simple exponential and logistic equations as well as more

complex PDE and mixed AI-integrated frameworks, show important biological processes like cell growth, angiogenesis, nutrient diffusion, and immune system interactions. By using math to measure how tumours behave, they can make accurate predictions about how they will grow and how treatment will work. Adding AI improves parameter estimates, personalisation, and the ability to make predictions. Overall, these models connect theoretical oncology to real-world clinical use. They are an important tool for improving cancer treatments and making precision medicine in tumour biology even better.

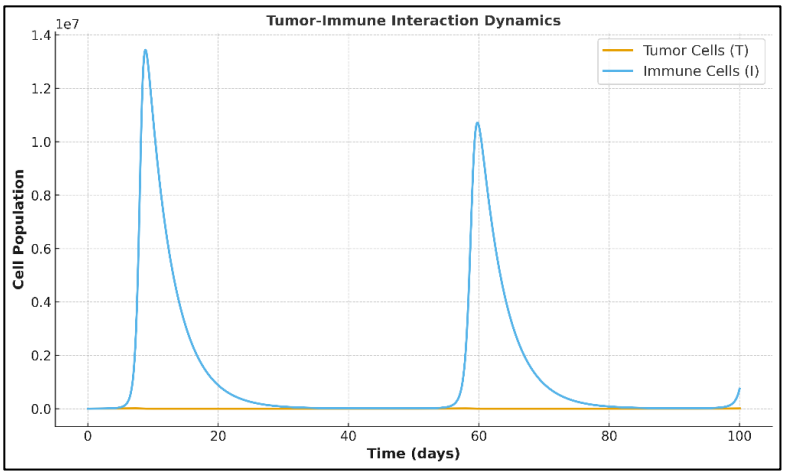

Figure 2
Tumor-Immune Interaction Dynamics

Table 2
Equilibrium and Stability Analysis of Tumor–Immune Dynamics

Case	Equilibrium (N*, E*)	Eigenvalues	Stability	Interpretation
1	(0, 6000)	(+0.32, -0.25)	Saddle	Tumor-free unstable
2	(5.2×10^5, 1.9×10^4)	(-0.18, -0.09)	Stable	Tumor–immune coexistence
3	(1×10^6, 0)	(+0.15, +0.03)	Unstable	Tumor dominates

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