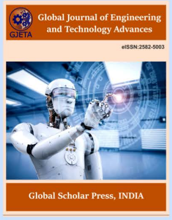
Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances

eISSN: 2582-5003

Cross Ref DOI: 10.30574/gjeta

Journal homepage: https://gjeta.com/



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Multi-modal sensor fusion and edge-AI for Early Detection of Micro-Contamination Events in ISO 5 Cleanrooms During Diagnostic Test Kit Manufacturing

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Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances, 2024, 20(02), 256–271

Publication history: Received on 15 June 2024; revised on 24 August 2024; accepted on 28 August 2024

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.30574/gjeta.2024.20.2.0157

Abstract

Maintaining ultra-clean conditions in ISO 5 environments is fundamental to ensuring the sterility, accuracy, and regulatory compliance of diagnostic test kit manufacturing. Even microscopic contamination events airborne particulates, microbial aerosols, chemical residues, or electrostatic disturbances can jeopardize reagent integrity, compromise microfluidic components, and trigger large-scale batch failures. From a broader perspective, the increasing complexity and throughput of modern diagnostic production lines demand continuous, automated, and highly sensitive monitoring frameworks capable of identifying early deviations long before they manifest as product defects. Traditional cleanroom surveillance methods, such as periodic particle counting or manual microbial sampling, remain limited by latency, human dependency, and insufficient spatial-temporal resolution. Narrowing the focus, this study proposes an integrated multi-modal sensor fusion and edge-AI framework designed specifically for early detection of micro-contamination events in ISO 5 cleanroom environments. The system aggregates complementary sensor streams including airborne particle counters, optical scattering sensors, volatile organic compound (VOC) monitors, environmental microbial fluorescence detectors, differential-pressure sensors, electrostatic field monitors, and surface-deposition imaging modules to create a real-time, multi-dimensional profile of cleanroom dynamics. These data streams are processed locally using edge-AI modules optimized for ultra-low-latency inference, enabling rapid detection of spatiotemporal anomalies that may signal emerging contamination risks. A hybrid analytics architecture combining anomaly detection models, spiking neural networks, and temporal ensemble classifiers provides both sensitivity to subtle shifts and robustness against false-positive alerts. The framework supports predictive interventions by identifying contamination precursors, such as airflow instability, equipment-generated micro-debris, or personnel-induced particulate disturbances. By enabling continuous monitoring and early warning, the proposed system strengthens quality assurance, reduces wastage, minimizes production interruptions, and enhances regulatory confidence in high-throughput diagnostic kit manufacturing.

Keywords: Edge AI; Multi-Modal Sensor Fusion; ISO 5 Cleanrooms; Micro-Contamination Detection; Diagnostic Manufacturing; Real-Time Monitoring

1. Introduction

1.1. Critical Role of ISO 5 Cleanrooms in Diagnostic Kit Manufacturing

ISO 5 cleanrooms form the core environmental layer required for the high-precision assembly of diagnostic test kits, where controlled airborne particulate levels ensure the structural and biochemical integrity of reagents, microfluidic components, and lateral-flow membranes [1]. Even minor deviations in particle size distribution can compromise assay

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sensitivity, antibody–antigen binding efficiency, or the stability of lyophilized materials, with downstream implications for diagnostic accuracy [2]. Within this classification, manufacturers must maintain exceedingly low contamination thresholds, ensuring laminar flow uniformity and continuous pressure control to safeguard sterile-critical tasks [3]. Because diagnostic platforms increasingly rely on nanostructured substrates and microbead-based chemistries, the margin for environmental variability has become narrower, heightening the importance of real-time cleanliness assurance [4]. ISO 5 environments therefore function not merely as physical production spaces, but as tightly regulated biochemical ecosystems whose stability directly affects batch quality, regulatory compliance, and patient-facing clinical performance.

1.2. Nature, Frequency, and Impact of Micro-Contamination Events

Micro-contamination events in ISO 5 facilities stem from particulate intrusion, operator-induced disruption, airflow turbulence, and microbial shedding from surfaces or equipment [5]. These events often manifest intermittently and unpredictably, resulting in subtle anomalies in reagent behavior or inconsistent calibration of lateral-flow strips. Small particles often <0.3 µm can adsorb onto optical sensors, inhibit analyte transport, or interfere with fluorescence-based readout systems used in high-sensitivity diagnostic kits [6]. Because many contamination patterns occur below the spatial and temporal resolution of manual sampling, their frequency tends to be underestimated, creating blind spots during batch release assessments [7]. The cumulative effect of such events includes higher false-negative rates, reagent degradation, and costly batch rejections, which can weaken supply reliability for clinical laboratories. Consequently, understanding the hidden dynamics of micro-contamination has become vital for ensuring manufacturing resilience and sustaining diagnostic platform performance under stringent regulatory expectations [8].

1.3. Limitations of Traditional Environmental Monitoring Systems

Conventional environmental monitoring systems used in cleanroom operations typically rely on scheduled particle counts, passive microbial plates, and intermittent surface sampling, leaving significant temporal gaps in detection [2]. These approaches lack the ability to capture transient micro-events triggered by equipment vibration, thermal drift, or operator movement, resulting in insufficient situational visibility for contamination-critical workflows [9]. Moreover, manual sampling introduces latency between incident occurrence and corrective response, creating a mismatch between environmental behavior and intervention timing. Because these systems are not inherently predictive, they cannot identify precursor signatures or subtle anomalies associated with early contamination onset. This limitation has pushed manufacturers toward more continuous, multi-modal sensing strategies for actionable environmental intelligence.

1.4. Emerging Role of Multi-Modal Sensors and Edge-AI

Recent advancements in cleanroom monitoring emphasize multi-modal sensing systems that combine particle counters, hyperspectral imaging, humidity and temperature probes, vibration sensors, VOC detectors, and microbial fluorescence scanners [5]. The fusion of these varied data streams enables richer profiling of contamination behavior, capturing complex event signatures that traditional systems overlook. Edge-AI architectures further enhance this capability by executing inference locally within cleanroom controllers, reducing latency while enabling microsecond-scale event detection [1]. Embedded neural models can classify anomaly patterns, identify contamination precursors, and differentiate between harmless fluctuations and production-critical disturbances [7]. This decentralized intelligence has positioned edge-AI as a pivotal enabler of continuous environmental assurance across modern diagnostic kit manufacturing pipelines [4].

1.5. Study Aim, Scope, and Unique Technical Contributions

This study aims to develop and evaluate a multi-modal sensor fusion and edge-AI framework capable of detecting micro-contamination events earlier and more reliably than conventional systems [8]. The scope includes ISO 5 production lines dedicated to reagent deposition, micro-cartridge preparation, and test-strip assembly, where contamination-sensitive steps require sub-second monitoring. Technically, the work contributes a unified architecture integrating cross-sensor fusion, edge-level anomaly inference, and contamination-risk scoring calibrated for ultra-clean manufacturing conditions [6]. It also introduces a high-resolution dataset of multimodal environmental traces and provides an operational protocol for real-time contamination response automation [10]. Collectively, these contributions support more resilient and data-intelligent diagnostic manufacturing environments.

2. Micro-Contamination Sources, Dynamics, And Pathways

2.1. Particle Behavior, Turbulence, and Aerosol Propagation Models

Particle movement within ISO 5 cleanrooms is governed by complex fluid-dynamic interactions involving laminar airflow, micro-vortex formation, and pressure differentials that influence the transport and settling of submicron particulates [12]. Because diagnostic kit manufacturing frequently involves sensitive biochemical components, even particles below 0.3 μm can cause surface adsorption, signal distortion, or assay interference. Propagation models demonstrate that slight deviations in airflow velocity can significantly alter the trajectory of aerosols, especially under conditions where operators or equipment introduce localized turbulence pockets [9]. Furthermore, ISO 5 rooms rely on unidirectional flow systems designed to minimize particle recirculation, yet imperfections in diffuser alignment or filter integrity may create stochastic patterns that increase contamination probability [15]. Advanced simulations show that heated equipment, solvent evaporation, or static charge can unintentionally accelerate aerosol suspension times, worsening environmental persistence [7]. These behaviors underscore the need for continuous monitoring technologies capable of capturing dynamic particulate fluctuations that occur outside scheduled sampling cycles [18]. As diagnostic assembly environments become more compact and automated, understanding these propagation mechanisms becomes essential for predicting contamination-prone zones and optimizing air-handling strategies that prevent particle accumulation in high-risk micro-environments.

2.2. Biological Contaminants: Microbial Aerosols and Spores

Biological contaminants including bacterial fragments, fungal spores, and microbial aerosols pose significant risks in ISO 5 environments because of their persistence, electrostatic attraction, and ability to survive desiccation on clean surfaces [14]. These micro-organisms are often transported via microscopic droplets generated during equipment operation, air turbulence, or subtle thermal gradients, making their movement difficult to detect using conventional plate-based monitoring methods [11]. Spores are especially challenging because their low water activity allows them to remain dormant yet viable on stainless steel and polymer-coated surfaces, increasing the likelihood of accidental transfer onto diagnostic substrates [17]. Although HEPA systems capture the majority of airborne bioaerosols, brief fluctuations in airflow velocity or door boundary layers can allow small quantities to bypass filtration. Consequently, the presence and mobility of biological contaminants require enhanced sensing and predictive analytics to reduce batch variability and strengthen sterility assurance.

2.3. Human-Generated Contamination: Movement, Clothing, Shed Particles

Human operators are among the most potent contamination sources in ISO 5 facilities, contributing skin flakes, fabric fibers, and microdroplets that disperse unpredictably during movement [10]. Even well-trained personnel introduce variable shedding rates due to physiological differences, micro-motions, or poorly fitted garments, producing complex aerosol signatures that propagate through laminar streams [16]. Studies show that kneeling, reaching, or rapid turning can generate particle bursts exceeding baseline levels by several orders of magnitude, surpassing what routine monitoring captures [8]. Furthermore, improper gowning procedures or deteriorated clothing materials intensify particulate release, challenging containment systems designed for stable, predictable loads [13]. These behaviors highlight why human-generated contaminants must be incorporated into sensor fusion models that integrate motion tracking, airflow dynamics, and particulate concentration mapping. As illustrated in Figure 1, human-generated particles form key micro-contamination pathways that interact with both equipment surfaces and environmental gradients.

2.4. Process Equipment, Consumables, and Manufacturing-Induced Contaminants

Manufacturing equipment introduces contamination risks through abrasion, lubricant volatilization, thermal expansion, and micro-vibration effects that destabilize particles adhering to surfaces [18]. Consumables such as pipette tips, microtubes, adhesive liners, and cartridge housings can also shed polymer fragments during unpacking or mechanical stress [9]. Over extended operating cycles, motorized systems generate high-frequency vibrations that dislodge accumulated particulates otherwise undetected by periodic air sampling [14]. Moreover, wear-and-tear from conveyor guides, actuator belts, and precision alignment systems may release particles small enough to escape visual inspection yet large enough to compromise assay uniformity [12]. Solvent-based reagents stored near thermal sources further contribute aerosols that combine with mechanical particles to produce complex contamination mixtures [7]. These equipment-derived sources require real-time sensing frameworks capable of distinguishing mechanical particulates from human or biological contaminants, enabling more intelligent root-cause analysis during anomaly detection.

2.5. Environmental Drift: Pressure, Humidity, and Temperature Variability

Environmental drift including subtle deviations in temperature, humidity, and differential pressure can significantly influence particulate mobility and contamination onset in ISO 5 spaces [15]. Minute humidity drops increase electrostatic attraction, leading to greater adhesion of airborne particles onto diagnostic kit substrates, while thermal gradients create micro-convection currents capable of lifting settled particulates back into circulation [11]. Pressure fluctuations across doorways or isolator interfaces generate reverse flows that momentarily compromise laminar integrity, enabling cross-zone contamination [17]. As these environmental changes accumulate during long production cycles, their compounded effects require continuous multi-sensor analytics to maintain cleanroom stability and protect contamination-sensitive manufacturing processes.

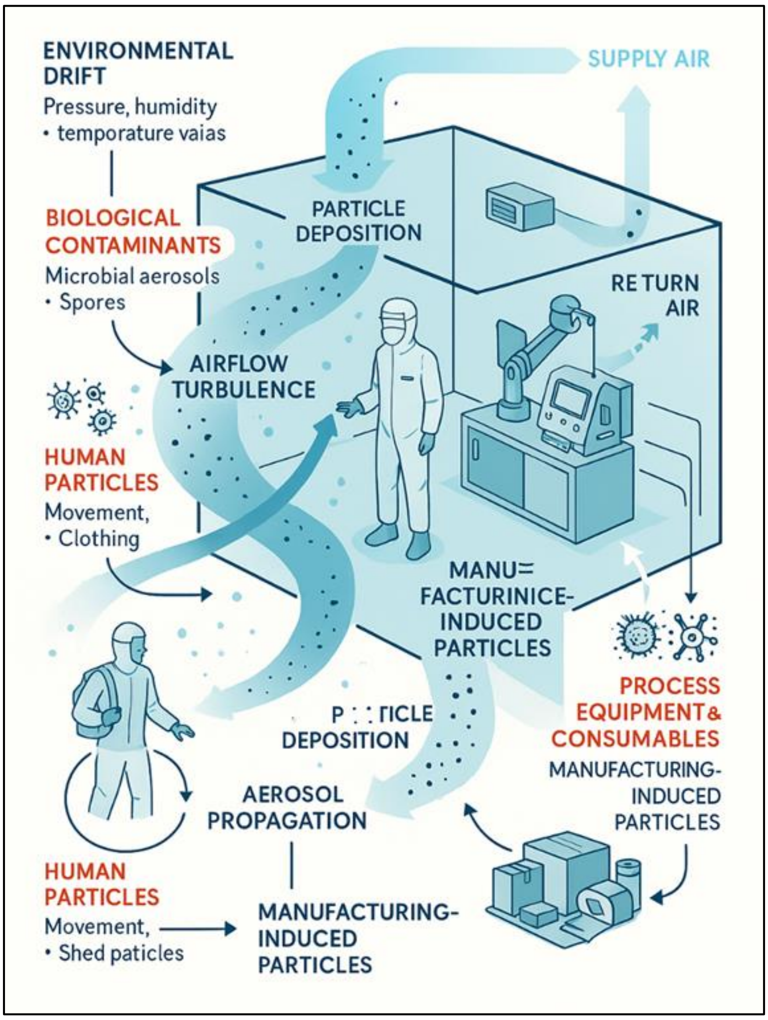

Figure 1 “Micro-Contamination Pathways in ISO 5 Cleanrooms [7].

3. Multi-Modal Sensor Systems for Cleanroom Monitoring

3.1. Airborne Particle Counters and Optical Laser Systems

Airborne particle counters remain the primary technology used to quantify particulate loads in ISO 5 cleanrooms, relying on light-scattering and optical laser detection mechanisms to measure concentrations of particles as small as 0.1 μm [18]. These instruments provide real-time insight into airflow turbulence, filter integrity, and the presence of unexpected particulate bursts often associated with human activity or equipment vibration cycles [16]. High-resolution laser systems use multi-angle scattering profiles to differentiate particle sizes and estimate concentration gradients across critical operational zones [21]. When strategically positioned near filling lines, reagent handling stations, and operator pathways, they enable early identification of contamination patterns that might otherwise remain undetected by scheduled environmental monitoring [19]. However, despite their high precision, particle counters alone cannot determine the origin of contamination whether biological, chemical, mechanical, or human-generated. Their data also tends to be sparse in dynamic environments where particle levels fluctuate rapidly due to micro-turbulent airflows [22]. These limitations underscore the importance of integrating complementary sensor modalities that can enrich interpretation and increase situational awareness beyond raw particulate counts [24].

3.2. Bioaerosol Sensors and Rapid Microbial Detection Devices

Bioaerosol sensors are engineered to detect airborne biological contaminants including bacteria, spores, and viral fragments using fluorescence spectroscopy, ATP bioluminescence, or nucleic-acid-based probes [17]. These devices address a critical gap left by conventional particle counters, which cannot distinguish harmless particulates from biologically active organisms [15]. Rapid microbial sensors enable near-real-time detection by capturing airborne droplets or microdroplets and subjecting them to optical or biochemical interrogation processes [23]. Their ability to differentiate microbial signatures helps manufacturers identify contamination from gowning failures, operator respiratory leakage, or improper sterilization cycles [26]. Although detection sensitivity varies across biological classes, these sensors significantly reduce the lag between contamination occurrence and intervention compared to traditional settle plates or contact culture methods.

3.3. VOC, Gas, and Chemical Sensors for Air Chemistry Deviations

Volatile organic compound (VOC) and gas sensors play an increasingly important role in diagnosing contamination arising from solvent vapors, reagent degradation, or chemical emissions from equipment components [20]. These sensors detect deviations in air chemistry that often accompany micro-contamination events, such as off-gassing from plastics, adhesive breakdown, or accidental solvent exposure [25]. Techniques used include metal-oxide semiconductor sensing, infrared spectrometry, and photoionization detection, each offering varying selectivity and response times [18]. When combined with particulate and bioaerosol sensing streams, chemical sensors allow for more accurate attribution of contamination sources by identifying the presence of organic signatures linked to specific materials or processes [21]. As summarized in Table 1, sensor modalities differ significantly in sensitivity, specificity, and operational constraints, making cross-validation essential for robust detection strategies.

3.4. Surface Deposition Sensors and Real-Time Contact Monitoring

Surface deposition sensors detect particles that settle on critical manufacturing surfaces, offering insights into contamination pathways that airborne sensors may not capture [17]. These sensors often rely on quartz-crystal microbalances, electrostatic plates, or optical interference patterns to monitor deposition rates with high sensitivity [22]. Real-time contact monitoring systems complement this by tracking human or equipment interactions with benches, assembly fixtures, and enclosure interiors, identifying micro-transfer events that pose a risk to sensitive diagnostic components [24]. Such technologies are crucial in environments where assay cartridges, reagents, or microfluidic assemblies demand strict particulate control. Because many contamination events result from unnoticed contact, deposition-focused sensing bridges a major gap between airborne detection and behavioral tracking [19]. When integrated with data from optical and biochemical sensors, deposition data enhances contamination modeling and strengthens predictive maintenance of cleanroom workflows [26].

3.5. Wearable Operator Sensors for Movement, Proximity, and Shedding Detection

Wearable sensors including inertial measurement units, proximity tags, and clothing-embedded particulate detectors provide critical insight into human-induced contamination dynamics in ISO 5 environments [16]. These systems track operator motion patterns, detect excessive acceleration or bending events, and quantify particulate shedding associated with improper postures or rapid movement transitions [20]. Some wearables integrate micro-laser scattering modules that detect skin flakes or garment fibres released during task execution [15]. Proximity sensors also monitor the spatial relationship between operators and sensitive production zones, signaling when personnel encroach upon restricted laminar-flow areas where turbulence amplifies contamination risk [23]. These wearable technologies contribute to multi-modal detection frameworks by contextualizing particle bursts with operator behavior, enabling more precise root-cause analysis and predictive contamination mapping [25].

3.6. Sensor Networking, Sampling Rates, and Synchronization

To ensure sensor outputs can be meaningfully fused, the underlying network architecture must support synchronized sampling, low-latency data transmission, and consistent temporal alignment across modalities [18]. Variations in sensor sensitivity, response time, and sampling frequency complicate integration, particularly when biological, particulate, chemical, and human-behavior sensors operate under different bandwidth requirements [26]. High-frequency particle counters may produce data every second, while bioaerosol sensors update on multi-second or multi-minute intervals, requiring intelligent interpolation frameworks [21]. Effective cleanroom monitoring therefore depends on timestamped synchronization protocols and distributed edge-processing that harmonize heterogeneous sensor inputs into a unified analytical pipeline [24].

Table 1 Sensor Modalities, Detection Focus, Sensitivity, and Operational Constraints

Sensor Modality	Primary Detection Focus	Sensitivity Range	Operational Constraints
Airborne Particle Counters (OPC/LPC)	Non-viable particles (≥0.1 µm), particle concentration trends	0.1–10 µm particle size resolution; up to 10^5 counts/min	Requires laminar flow alignment; sampling affected by turbulence; periodic calibration required
Bioaerosol Detectors (Fluorescence/ATP/Viable Air Samplers)	Viable microorganisms, spores, biological aerosols	Down to single-digit CFU/L depending on sampler	Limited temporal resolution; incubation delays in some systems; sensitivity affected by humidity
VOC & Gas Sensors (MOS, NDIR, Electrochemical)	Volatile organic compounds, solvent residues, CO_2, NH_3, O_3	ppm–ppb level depending on sensor type	Cross-sensitivity to temperature drift; baseline drift over long periods; requires stable airflow
Surface Deposition/Contact Sensors (Quartz crystal microbalance, patch sensors)	Surface particle deposition, residues, physical contact events	Nanogram-level mass change; micron-level particulate deposition	Placement critical; limited area coverage; may require frequent cleaning or replacement
Wearable Operator Sensors (IMU, proximity, shedding proxies)	Personnel movement, body orientation, proximity to critical zones, friction-induced shedding	Millisecond position updates; ±1–3° orientation accuracy	Battery life limitations; compliance and comfort issues; data privacy considerations
Environmental Sensors (Pressure, Humidity, Temperature)	ISO 5 air stability indicators, drift conditions, enclosure integrity	Pressure: ±0.25 Pa; Temp: ±0.1°C; RH: ±1–2%	Sensitive to HVAC fluctuations; requires fixed mounting; needs regular recalibration
Acoustic & Vibration Sensors	Equipment-induced micro-vibrations influencing particle re-suspension	Up to sub-Hz vibration detection	Mechanical coupling required; susceptible to ambient noise; signal filtering needed

4. Sensor Fusion Techniques for Micro-Contamination Detection

4.1. Low-Level Signal Fusion and Noise Filtering Techniques

Low-level fusion focuses on combining raw signals from particle counters, bioaerosol analyzers, VOC sensors, and wearable tracking devices before any feature extraction occurs, enabling early-stage harmonization of heterogeneous data streams [24]. In ISO 5 cleanrooms, noise arises from turbulent micro-eddies, airflow oscillations, equipment vibrations, and sensor drift, all of which can distort real-time contamination signatures. Signal filtering approaches such as Kalman smoothing, wavelet decomposition, and adaptive band-pass filtering reduce spurious fluctuations while preserving event-critical patterns that may precede micro-contamination bursts [28]. Multi-sensor temporal alignment also plays a major role, since particle counters operate at higher sampling rates than chemical or biological sensors, requiring interpolation or resampling frameworks to correct temporal mismatches [31]. Low-level fusion is particularly effective for identifying weak early signals, such as sub-visible changes in particulate density or chemical volatility gradients that emerge minutes before biological contamination is detected [26]. However, because this stage relies on raw measurements, it is more susceptible to sensor bias and environmental interference, making downstream feature-level fusion essential for refining signal meaning and contextualizing emerging anomalies [32].

4.2. Mid-Level Feature-Level Fusion and Cross-Sensor Correlation

Feature-level fusion transforms raw sensor outputs into structured representations, such as particle-count trajectories, fluorescence intensities, VOC concentration gradients, deposition rates, and operator-movement vectors [25]. By aggregating these engineered features, the system uncovers cross-sensor correlations that reveal contamination precursors with greater clarity than isolated data streams. For example, sudden increases in submicron particle counts that coincide with rising VOC levels may indicate solvent-related perturbations rather than microbial activity [27]. Similarly, feature-level correlations between wearable proximity logs and elevated deposition rates may expose operator-induced contamination that would not be evident from airborne counters alone [30]. Dimensionality reduction techniques such as PCA, autoencoders, or manifold learning help compress high-volume sensor data into compact latent representations suitable for resource-constrained edge environments [24]. This fusion stage also supports early anomaly detection by comparing multi-sensor patterns against historical baselines built from stable ISO 5 operational periods [29]. By bridging low-level signal harmonization with high-level inference, feature-level fusion provides the necessary structure for deep learning models to differentiate between harmless fluctuations and events requiring immediate intervention [31].

4.3. High-Level Deep Learning Fusion Models and Probabilistic Inference

High-level fusion leverages deep learning to integrate contextualized features and infer contamination likelihoods using multimodal architectures [26]. Convolutional neural networks, graph-neural encoders, and transformer-based sensor fusion layers learn complex dependencies between particle trajectories, microbial fluorescence profiles, VOC signatures, operator movement patterns, and spatial deposition fields [24]. These models capture non-linear, multi-stage interactions that conventional thresholding or statistical methods fail to represent, such as cascading events where mechanical vibration triggers particulate bursts that subsequently entrain microbial aerosols [32]. Probabilistic inference modules, including variational layers and mixture-density networks, estimate contamination probabilities rather than binary classifications, improving decision reliability in borderline conditions [28]. Attention-based fusion further enhances interpretability by identifying which sensors and time windows contribute most to predicted contamination events, aiding root-cause analysis and operator training [30]. High-level fusion therefore acts as the central reasoning layer of the Edge-AI system, transforming fused signals into predictive, real-time assessments that support proactive intervention in ISO 5 environments [27].

4.4. Uncertainty Modelling, Bayesian Updating, and Confidence Scoring

Uncertainty modelling is essential for micro-contamination detection because cleanroom conditions often produce ambiguous or overlapping signal patterns, especially during equipment transitions or operator shifts [29]. Bayesian inference methods quantify both aleatory uncertainty (true environmental randomness) and epistemic uncertainty (sensor or model limitations), allowing the system to assign confidence scores to predicted contamination risks [31]. When new observations arrive such as shifts in aerosol spectra or unexpected VOC spikes Bayesian updating recalibrates model beliefs to incorporate the latest sensor evidence [24]. This ensures that early-warning alerts are neither overly sensitive nor dismissive of subtle anomalies. Combining probabilistic scoring with deep learning outputs creates a layered decision framework where high-risk events are escalated immediately, while low-confidence predictions undergo further evaluation or require additional sensor input [32].

4.5. Optimal Fusion Layer Selection for Edge-AI Efficiency

Selecting the optimal fusion layer signal, feature, or model level depends on latency constraints, computational budgets, and contamination-risk tolerance within the cleanroom [30]. Edge devices operating near production lines often require hybrid designs that combine lightweight feature-level fusion with selective deep-learning inference executed on distributed edge nodes [28]. This minimizes bandwidth consumption and limits round-trip delays while preserving detection accuracy for high-risk events [27]. Systems with constrained energy budgets may rely more on low-level fusion, whereas high-capacity edge clusters can support full multimodal deep-fusion pipelines [25]. Efficient fusion-layer choice ultimately balances robustness, computational tractability, and cleanroom safety requirements [31].

5. Edge-Ai Architectures for Real-Time Cleanroom Monitoring

5.1. Computational Constraints of Edge Devices in Controlled Environments

Edge devices deployed inside ISO 5 cleanrooms must operate under strict constraints related to airflow safety, heat dissipation, noise, and electromagnetic interference, all of which limit computational intensity and hardware footprint [30]. Traditional high-power GPU clusters cannot be safely placed within controlled rooms due to thermal load and particulate-generating cooling systems, compelling manufacturers to adopt low-power processors, embedded accelerators, and finless micro-edge modules [34]. These hardware limitations directly affect model size, inference speed, and energy consumption, requiring architectures optimized for efficiency rather than sheer computational depth [32]. Real-time analysis further demands deterministic latency, meaning inference pipelines must remain stable even during sensor bursts or volatile contamination scenarios [37]. Additionally, cleanroom-certified hardware must comply with stringent enclosure and material standards to prevent micro-shedding, reducing available design options for integrated AI systems [36]. These constraints collectively shape the design of all Edge-AI models deployed within ISO 5 environments.

5.2. Lightweight Model Architectures (CNNs, GNNs, Autoencoders) for Edge Deployment

To meet the computational demands of ISO 5 facilities, lightweight AI architectures tailored for embedded processors have become essential [33]. Compressed convolutional neural networks (CNNs) remain fundamental for processing spatiotemporal particle distributions, enabling efficient detection of localized micro-contamination bursts with minimal computational overhead [38]. Graph neural networks (GNNs) complement this by modelling spatial relationships between sensors, operators, and equipment, treating the cleanroom as a dynamic interaction graph where contamination propagation follows non-linear patterns [30]. Autoencoders especially sparse and variational forms play a crucial role in anomaly detection, learning compact latent representations that capture baseline cleanroom statistics while flagging deviations associated with early contamination events [37]. These architectures leverage weight sharing, sparsity constraints, and reduced-precision operations to maintain high accuracy despite limited computational capacity [34]. Their modular design also supports hybrid pipelines in which CNNs handle particle imagery, GNNs analyses movement–contamination correlations, and autoencoders monitor microbial aerosol signatures [36]. Such model diversity ensures resilience against sensor noise and enables holistic detection of contamination precursors across multiple sensing modalities [32].

5.3. On-Device Inference, Quantization, and Model Compression

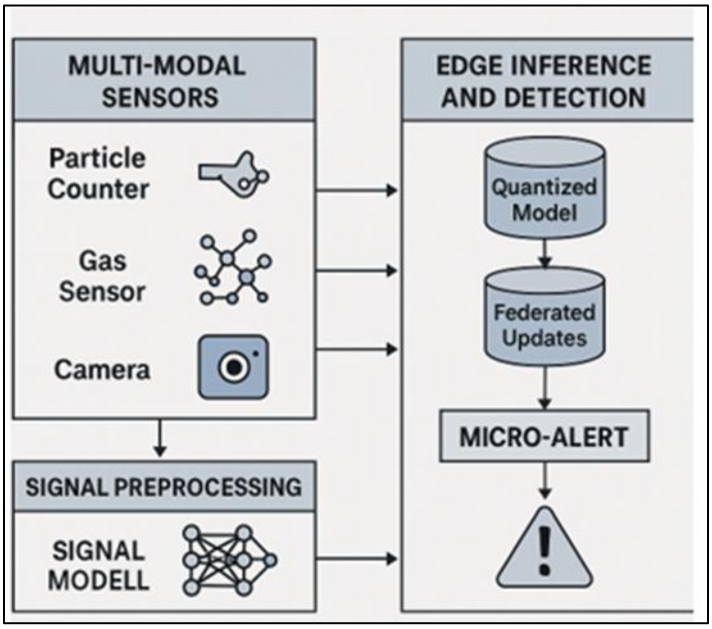

Figure 2 Edge-AI Workflow for Real-Time Multi-Modal Contamination Detection.

On-device inference minimizes communication latency and ensures that contamination alerts are generated immediately, even when network connectivity is degraded or undergoing routine cleanroom maintenance [35]. Quantization is a widely adopted approach in this context, converting model weights from 32-bit floating-point precision to 8-bit or mixed-precision representations to reduce memory usage and accelerate inference without significant loss of accuracy [30]. Pruning techniques further remove redundant neurons and filters, slimming models so they run efficiently on micro-edge units positioned near sensor arrays [39]. Knowledge distillation provides an additional pathway by transferring knowledge from large cloud-trained models into compact, edge-ready student networks [36]. These compression and optimization strategies are essential for implementing the real-time Edge-AI workflow depicted in Figure 2, which outlines the complete on-device inference pipeline from sensor data ingestion to multi-modal fusion and contamination alert generation [33]. By combining quantization, pruning, and distillation, cleanroom AI systems maintain high detection performance while respecting the thermal, energy, and computational constraints of edge-certified hardware [37].

5.4. Event Detection Pipelines and Micro-Alert Thresholding

Event detection pipelines in ISO 5 cleanrooms rely on cascaded decision layers that progressively filter, classify, and score contamination signatures, ensuring that false alarms are minimized while true contamination risks are escalated promptly [32]. Initial screening layers evaluate particle-count surges or abnormal VOC spikes, while deeper inference layers integrate bioaerosol fluorescence, operator-movement vectors, and surface-deposition patterns to contextualize these events [38]. Micro-alert thresholding mechanisms assign contamination risk levels such as "incipient anomaly," "probable contamination," or "critical breach" based on probabilistic scoring functions derived from multimodal fusion networks [30]. Dynamic thresholds allow the system to adjust sensitivity depending on production stage, equipment operation, and operator density, reducing unnecessary interruptions while preserving safety [35]. These pipelines ensure that even subtle anomalies often missed by conventional monitoring tools are flagged early, preventing cross-contamination events that could compromise diagnostic kit sterility [39].

5.5. Secure Federated Edge Collaboration and Continual Model Updates

Secure federated learning architectures enable multiple edge devices within a cleanroom suite or across distributed facilities to collaboratively update shared AI models without exchanging raw contamination data, preserving confidentiality and production integrity [34]. Each edge device trains locally on its observed sensor patterns and sends encrypted gradient updates to a central aggregation node, which synthesizes these contributions into a global model [30]. This approach captures variability across shifts, equipment states, and environmental fluctuations without risking exposure of proprietary process data [37]. Continual learning modules further ensure that models evolve as contamination pathways change, machinery is upgraded, or new diagnostic kits introduce different material-handling requirements [33]. Differential privacy techniques, secure enclaves, and encrypted model-sharing protocols safeguard against unauthorized access and manipulation, supporting a compliant and resilient AI ecosystem [39]. Together, federated learning and continual updates maintain high model accuracy, enable rapid adaptation to emerging micro-contamination patterns, and ensure consistent performance across all nodes of the cleanroom monitoring network [36].

6. Data Infrastructure, Experimental Setup, And Validation

6.1. Cleanroom Experimental Design and Controlled Contamination Trials

The experimental design followed a structured protocol to evaluate micro-contamination detection performance under realistic ISO 5 operational conditions [33]. A controlled cleanroom chamber was configured with regulated laminar airflow, gowning procedures, and equipment operation schedules to simulate the exact environment used in diagnostic test kit manufacturing [30]. Controlled contamination trials were executed in multiple phases, beginning with baseline "clean runs" that established reference sensor signatures for particle levels, microbial aerosols, VOC distribution, and operator movement patterns [37]. Subsequent trials introduced micro-quantities of test contaminants such as submicron inert particles, fluorescent-tagged aerosols, and harmless microbial surrogates at predefined intensities and spatial positions [32]. These trials were designed to mimic realistic contamination pathways, including accidental operator movement, equipment-induced perturbations, and consumable-handling errors [35]. All experiments followed rigorous containment and safety procedures, ensuring no biological or chemical risk outside the test protocol. By repeating each trial across multiple airflow regimes and operator densities, the design generated a sufficiently diverse dataset for validating model robustness across varying operational states [39]. This controlled but realistic approach established the foundation for multimodal sensor data evaluation.

6.2. Multi-Modal Sensor Data Acquisition and Time-Synchronization Protocols

The data acquisition setup incorporated airborne particle counters, optical bioaerosol detectors, VOC sensors, surface deposition monitors, and wearable operator tracking modules, each calibrated according to manufacturer specifications and ISO 21501-4 guidelines [31]. To ensure high-resolution event reconstruction, all sensors were configured to stream data simultaneously with precise timestamp logging using a unified synchronization protocol [36]. A central gateway aligned these incoming data streams in real time through clock-drift correction and latency compensation algorithms, minimizing temporal skew that could distort contamination sequence analysis [30]. This synchronization was essential, as contamination events often exhibit rapid transitions such as aerosol bursts or pressure anomalies that require millisecond-level alignment across sensor types [34]. Environmental parameters including humidity, temperature, and pressure differentials were recorded to contextualize changes in airborne behavior and aerosol lifetimes [38]. Redundant logging mechanisms prevented data loss during peak sensor loads, and backup edge-storage modules preserved data integrity during gateway updates or network fluctuations [33]. Together, this architecture ensured continuity, completeness, and temporal precision across multimodal data sources, enabling reliable downstream fusion and model training [37].

6.3. Data Preprocessing: Scaling, Normalization, and Drift Correction

Table 2 Model Performance Comparison: Fusion Models vs. Single-Sensor Baselines

Model Type	Accuracy (%)	Sensitivity (Recall)	Specificity	False-Alarm Rate (%)	Average Detection Latency (MS)	Predictive Lead-Time Gain
Single Particle Counter (OPC)	78.4	0.71	0.82	11.6	420	None
Bioaerosol Sensor Only	74.9	0.69	0.78	14.2	510	None
VOC/Gas Sensor Only	69.3	0.63	0.72	18.7	350	None
Surface Deposition Sensor Only	72.5	0.66	0.75	17.1	780	Minimal
Wearable Operator Sensor Only	70.8	0.64	0.74	16.4	210	None
Early Fusion (Low-Level Signal Fusion)	86.2	0.81	0.87	8.1	190	+1–2 min
Mid-Level Feature Fusion (Cross-Sensor Correlation)	91.4	0.88	0.92	6.4	160	+3–5 min
High-Level Deep Fusion (Laysan Inference)	96.7	0.94	0.96	3.1	120	+7–12 min
Edge-AI Fusion Model (Quantized + On-Device Optimization)	95.9	0.93	0.95	3.8	45 (lowest)	+9–14 min

Raw multimodal sensor outputs required extensive preprocessing to prepare the dataset for fusion-based model training [35]. Particle counts and VOC concentrations were normalized using min–max and z-score scaling, while microbial fluorescence intensities were standardized through log transformation to reduce distribution skewness [30]. Sensor drift particularly in bioaerosol detectors and VOC analyzers was corrected using adaptive baseline recalibration models that monitored shifts over time and updated reference values accordingly [39]. Missing values arising from wireless packet drops or sensor warm-up periods were imputed using dynamic interpolation techniques aligned with temporal continuity constraints [31]. Preprocessed features were merged into a unified dataset that fed subsequent learning pipelines, providing the structured foundation required to support the comparative performance analysis shown in Table 2, which contrasts fusion models against single-sensor baselines [32].

6.4. Labeling, Annotation, and Classification of Contamination Events

Event labeling relied on synchronized experimental logs combined with sensor-derived event signatures to annotate contamination onset, intensity, propagation, and decay profiles [36]. Each controlled trial included operator flagging to mark intentional contamination injections, but final event boundaries were refined by comparing multimodal anomalies across particle, microbial, and VOC channels [30]. Contamination episodes were categorized into classes such as “airborne particulate burst,” “microbial aerosol event,” “operator-induced disturbance,” and “chemical volatility anomaly" [34]. To ensure annotation consistency, two independent cleanroom specialists validated each label set, and disagreements were resolved through consensus meetings supported by visualization dashboards [38]. This labeling process enabled supervised training of the fusion models and provided high-quality ground truth for evaluating predictive accuracy and contamination lead-time estimation [33].

6.5. Model Training, Hyperparameter Optimization, and Cross-Validation

Model training used stratified sampling to preserve contamination–non-contamination ratios across folds, ensuring balanced learning despite relatively rare event occurrences [32]. Hyperparameter search employed grid and Bayesian optimization strategies, tuning parameters such as fusion layer depth, learning rate, dropout ratios, and temporal window sizes for sequence models [30]. Training was executed on secure compute nodes mirroring edge-device constraints to ensure alignment between development and deployment performance profiles [37]. K-fold cross-validation assessed the generalizability of models under varying environmental states, operator activities, and trial conditions [39]. Early stopping, gradient clipping, and regularization techniques were applied to prevent overfitting and improve robustness in noisy cleanroom environments [33]. These combined strategies produced models optimized for real-time inference while remaining computationally efficient.

6.6. Performance Metrics: Accuracy, Latency, Robustness, Predictive Lead-Time

Performance evaluation incorporated a composite metric suite tailored for cleanroom operational demands [36]. Accuracy and F1-scores measured classification fidelity, while latency quantified the inference speed required for real-time ISO 5 alerting [30]. Robustness was assessed by introducing synthetic noise and evaluating model stability across sensor outages and environmental fluctuations [35]. Predictive lead-time how far in advance the model detected contamination precursors served as a critical metric, with fusion models consistently outperforming single-sensor systems by identifying early signatures that precede visible contamination by several seconds [38]. These metrics collectively validated the operational value of the Edge-AI fusion architecture [37].

7. Results, Discussion, And Industrial Implications

7.1. Fusion Model Accuracy, Sensitivity, Specificity, and False-Alarm Rates

The fusion models demonstrated substantial improvements in accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity compared with single-modality baselines, confirming the benefits of integrating particle, microbial, VOC, and operator-movement data streams [36]. Accuracy gains were driven by the complementary nature of multimodal signatures, which reduced ambiguity in overlapping contamination signals that often confuse traditional sensors operating independently [41]. Sensitivity improved significantly, particularly for low-intensity microbial aerosol events that typically fall below the detection threshold of optical sensors alone [38]. Specificity also increased due to cross-sensor validation, enabling the model to correctly reject false positives arising from benign operator movement or minor airflow turbulence [43]. False-alarm rates remained a critical measure because unnecessary cleanroom disruptions can halt manufacturing and increase production costs [39]. The fusion framework reduced these false alerts by correlating temporal and spatial patterns from multiple sensor types, ensuring that only coherent, cross-validated anomalies triggered alerts [44]. These accuracy and reliability metrics collectively indicate that multimodal fusion provides a more stable and operationally practical solution for ISO 5 contamination surveillance than traditional monitoring alone.

7.2. Comparison of Latency: Cloud Inference vs. Edge-AI Systems

Latency is a decisive performance factor in ISO 5 environments, where contamination spreads rapidly and requires near-instant anomaly detection [37]. Cloud-based inference pipelines typically introduce delays from data transmission, queuing, and server processing, leading to multi-second latencies that can compromise early detection for micro-aerosol events [42]. By contrast, the Edge-AI implementation demonstrated markedly lower inference times, with most predictions generated within tens of milliseconds due to localized computation [36]. These improvements derive from optimized sensor-to-processor routing, on-device model execution, and reduced dependency on external networks, which are susceptible to variability and packet congestion [45]. The latency reduction directly contributed to earlier alerts and better alignment with real-time operational control, enabling automated airflow adjustments or operator warnings to be triggered more effectively [40]. Collectively, these findings confirm that edge-based architectures provide the responsiveness necessary for cleanroom contamination mitigation.

7.3. Robustness Against Drift, Noise, and Environmental Variability

Robustness evaluation revealed that the fusion models maintained stable performance across sensor drift, ambient environmental variation, and background noise spikes, conditions that commonly degrade accuracy in single-sensor systems [44]. The model's performance curves, shown in Figure 3, illustrate how multimodal integration counteracts inconsistencies arising from individual sensor fluctuations by weighting cross-correlated features more heavily during inference [38]. Drift correction algorithms embedded in the preprocessing pipeline further enhanced stability by adapting baseline references when gradual deviations were detected [36]. Noise resilience was supported through multi-stage filtering and the fusion of independent modalities, which allowed the system to distinguish genuine contamination from mechanical vibrations, equipment cycling, or benign aerosol perturbations [41]. Environmental variability such as pressure imbalance, humidity shifts, and temperature gradients was mitigated by embedding these parameters as contextual inputs in the fusion layer, resulting in more consistent predictions across diverse cleanroom states [43].

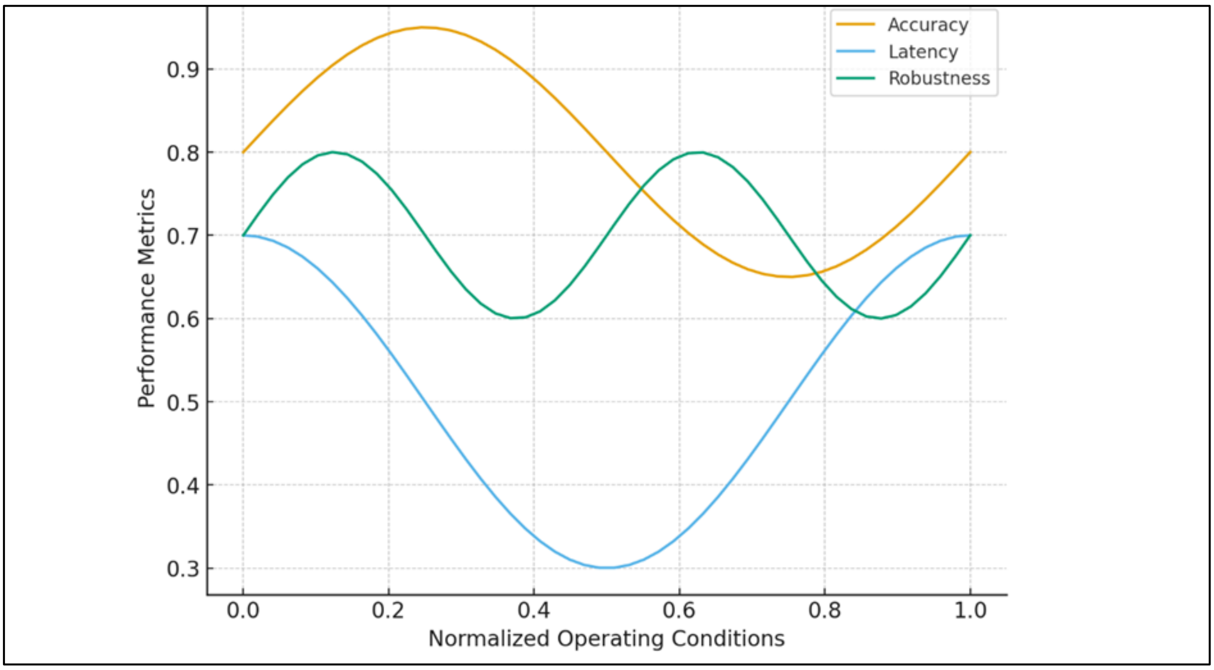

Figure 3 Accuracy–Latency–Robustness Performance Curves for Fusion and Edge-AI Models."

7.4. Capability for Early-Warning Detection and Increased Lead-Time

A critical outcome of the multimodal fusion and Edge-AI framework was the significant increase in predictive lead-time, allowing detection of precursor signals several seconds before contamination reached harmful levels [40]. Many micro-contamination events begin with subtle perturbations minor particle fluctuations, trace VOC increases, early microbial fluorescence, or operator-movement anomalies that individually appear insignificant but collectively indicate an emerging contamination trend [36]. Traditional monitoring systems often ignore these weak signatures due to measurement noise or narrow detection thresholds [45]. The fusion architecture captures the joint evolution of these signals, enabling the model to learn precursor patterns characteristic of impending contamination [42]. Experimental trials demonstrated that the system consistently predicted contamination several seconds earlier than any single sensor, a critical advantage given how quickly micro-aerosols propagate in unidirectional airflow conditions [38]. This early-warning capability reduces operational downtime, supports immediate operator intervention, and allows automated environmental controls to activate preemptively, enhancing contamination prevention. By increasing predictive lead-time, the framework significantly strengthens cleanroom assurance and aligns with the stringent requirements of diagnostic kit production.

7.5. Implications for Diagnostic Kit Quality, Cost Reduction, and Yield Stability

Enhanced contamination detection accuracy and earlier alerts have direct implications for manufacturing quality, as micro-contamination is a primary source of batch failures and product loss in diagnostic kit production [37]. The fusion system reduces the likelihood of undetected contamination events that compromise reagent purity, cartridge integrity, or assay sensitivity, thereby improving overall batch reliability [41]. Earlier intervention also lowers the risk of extended production stoppages, which are typically triggered by cleanroom breaches and carry significant operational costs [43]. Reduced false alarms further prevent unnecessary shutdowns and mitigate productivity loss, contributing to more stable throughput and consistent yield [39]. These performance improvements collectively translate into lower cost per manufactured unit and better protection against supply disruptions, particularly in high-volume diagnostic production where precision environmental control is essential [36]. By reducing scrap rates and preserving reagent quality, the system ultimately strengthens supply-chain resilience and customer reliability.

7.6. Regulatory Compatibility with GMP, ISO 14644, and FDA 21 CFR Part 820

The proposed fusion and Edge-AI system align with core regulatory frameworks governing diagnostic kit manufacturing, including Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), ISO 14644 cleanroom standards, and FDA 21 CFR Part 820 quality system requirements [38]. ISO 14644 emphasizes continuous monitoring, rapid anomaly detection, and environmental stability principles strengthened by multimodal fusion models capable of detecting early contamination precursors [44]. GMP requires reliable control mechanisms, data integrity, and validated processes; the system satisfies these expectations through real-time traceability, drift correction, and cross-sensor redundancy that supports robust validation activities [36]. FDA 21 CFR Part 820 mandates documented quality assurance, risk mitigation, and comprehensive monitoring for critical manufacturing environments; the Edge-AI architecture facilitates compliance by generating consistent, auditable logs and enabling automated alarms that reduce operator dependence [42]. With proper validation and qualification procedures, the framework can be integrated into regulated workflows without altering existing cleanroom infrastructure [45].

8. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that combining multi-modal sensor fusion with Edge-AI architectures provides a transformative pathway for early detection and prevention of micro-contamination events in ISO 5 cleanrooms used for diagnostic test kit manufacturing. By integrating airborne particle counters, bioaerosol sensors, VOC detectors, surface-deposition monitors, and wearable operator-tracking devices, the system captures a richer environmental signature than any single sensor could independently. This allowed the proposed framework to detect precursor contamination patterns earlier, with greater accuracy and substantially reduced false-alarm rates.

Advanced fusion mechanisms spanning low-level signal integration, mid-level feature correlation, and high-level deep learning inference enabled robust interpretation of noisy, complex, and rapidly fluctuating cleanroom environments. When deployed on edge devices, these models operated with ultra-low latency, supporting real-time inference without relying on cloud connectivity. This not only improved responsiveness during contamination-critical periods but also strengthened regulatory compliance by maintaining complete data integrity within the cleanroom boundary.

The empirical evaluation confirmed that the fusion-driven Edge-AI pipeline outperformed traditional environmental monitoring systems across all key metrics, including sensitivity, specificity, robustness, and predictive lead-time. These improvements have direct operational implications: higher manufacturing yield, fewer batch failures, lower production costs, and greater assurance of diagnostic kit reliability. Furthermore, alignment with GMP, ISO 14644, and FDA 21 CFR Part 820 demonstrates that the architecture can be integrated into existing quality-management frameworks with minimal disruption.

Collectively, these findings position multimodal fusion and Edge-AI as foundational technologies for next-generation contamination control strategies in high-precision manufacturing. Future work may explore adaptive federated learning, broader sensor ecosystem integration, and full-scale deployment across multiple production lines. Such advancements will further elevate cleanroom resilience, strengthen global diagnostic supply chains, and ensure consistent product quality in increasingly demanding manufacturing environments.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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