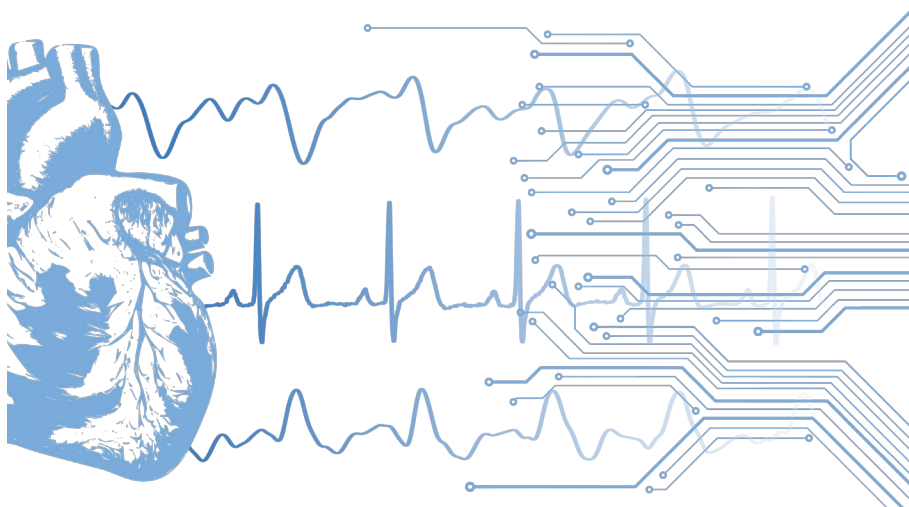


Durmuş Umutcan Uğuz

Capacitive Electrocardiography: A Novel Perspective on Motion Artifacts and New Frontiers



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Capacitive Electrocardiography: A Novel Perspective on Motion Artifacts and New Frontiers

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Ein Beitrag aus dem Lehrstuhl für Medizinische Informationstechnik
(Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dr. med. Dr. h.c. Steffen Leonhardt).

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Abstract

Unobtrusive measurement techniques allowing cardiac monitoring in out-of-hospital scenarios are expected to play a decisive role in transforming the healthcare system to adapt to changing demographics and more prevalent cardiovascular diseases. Capacitive electrocardiogram (cECG) measurement is among the most prominent candidates that may contribute to large-scale screening to allow physicians to intervene at earlier stages. Using specialized electrode designs, cECG can capture the heart's electrical activity without any preparation, even through subjects' clothing. Although this property has led to various cECG applications like chairs, beds, and car seats in the literature, it also poses the greatest challenge for the cECG technique to become a reliable healthcare monitoring option.

Motion artifacts resulting from the loose contact between the subject and the cECG electrodes have severe adverse effects on the signal quality. Due to high-amplitude motion artifacts, large gaps reduce the availability and robustness of the cECG signal. Moreover, low-amplitude distortions in the signal waveform reduce the diagnostic capabilities and reliability of the cECG. This thesis analyzes the motion artifacts by studying their mechanisms in the electrode-skin interface. The electrode model with time-variant coupling impedance is inspected for the sources influencing the measurement. The thesis proposes the hypothesis that the heart's mechanical activity following the electrical activity can distort the coupling impedance, resulting in motion artifacts correlated with the electrocardiogram.

The thesis then presents a dedicated measurement setup capturing all relevant signals to test the interaction between the cardiomechanical waves, the electrocardiogram, and the time-variant coupling impedance of the cECG measurement. The abstract source-filter model for this particular type of artifact is validated by collecting multimodal data in a study on healthy volunteers. The analyses of the signals made both in frequency and time domains reveal a moderate to strong correlation between the heart's mechanical activity and the distortion in the coupling impedance, leading to a new term: *physiological motion artifacts*. This term coined in this work aims to differentiate from the classical understanding of motion artifacts resulting from independent processes such as limb movement.

Following the core of the thesis, the physiological motion artifacts, the work undertakes a new approach to the time-variant coupling impedance. Instead of inspecting the resulting drawbacks, a novel electrode idea is proposed to utilize the sensitive coupling impedance. This electrode deliberately modulates the coupling impedance at a chosen modulation frequency, resulting in a carrier wave amplitude-modulated with the ECG signal. Therefore, the name modu-

lated ECG is proposed. The first electrode prototype capturing the ECG signal via amplitude modulation is presented starting from analytical solutions on the electrode model, followed by numerical simulations and experimental validation on a physical test bench.

Efforts on understanding and utilizing the sensitive coupling impedance are complemented by a clinical trial aiming to extend the research on the cECG to clinically more relevant subject profiles. This clinical study presents a car seat with cECG electrodes tested on cardiac patients with implanted pacemakers. Multichannel cECG measurement is supported by a fusion scheme and a pacemaker spike detection algorithm, showing that cECG can also capture cardiac pacemaker spikes through subjects' clothing. Limitations are addressed to provide a framework for future cECG applications that aim to cover subjects with cardiac pacemakers.

Contents

Acknowledgment	iii
Abstract	v
Abbreviations and Symbols	xi
1 Introduction	1
2 Fundamentals	7
2.1 Medical Background	7
2.1.1 Anatomy of the Human Heart	7
2.1.2 Electrical Conduction System of the Heart	9
2.1.3 Cardiac Arrhythmia	12
2.1.4 Pacemaker Treatment	15
2.2 Measurement of the Cardiac Activity	16
2.2.1 Electrocardiography	16
2.2.2 Cardiomechanical Signals	18
2.3 Capacitive Electrocardiography	20
2.3.1 Electrode Types and Coupling Impedance	21
2.3.2 Obstacles of Capacitive ECG	25
2.3.3 Applications	30
3 Physiological Motion Artifacts and Their Measurement	33
3.1 Motivation and Overview	33
3.2 Mathematical Model for Motion Artifacts	34
3.2.1 Electrode Model	34
3.2.2 Effect of Time-Variant Components	35
3.2.3 Resulting Artifacts	36
3.3 Physiological Motion Artifacts	37
3.3.1 Hypothesis	38
3.3.2 Supporting Examples in the Literature	41
3.3.3 Preliminary Study for BCG Influence	42
3.4 Measurement System for the Coupling Impedance	45
3.4.1 Design Constraints	47
3.4.2 BCG Measurement	48
3.4.3 Impedance Measurement	49
3.5 System Evaluation in Vitro	52
3.5.1 Performance Under Static Load	53
3.5.2 Dynamic Characteristics	54

3.6	Summary	57
4	Results and Analysis of Physiological Motion Artifacts	59
4.1	Motivation and Overview	59
4.2	Methods	60
4.2.1	Study on Healthy Subjects	60
4.2.2	Post-processing and Metrics	61
4.3	Evaluation of the Correlation Model	67
4.3.1	Correlation in Time Domain	69
4.3.2	Correlation in Frequency Domain	71
4.3.3	Artifact Consistency	74
4.3.4	Correlation Strength	75
4.4	Electrode Impedance Mismatch	77
4.4.1	Mismatch Factor	77
4.4.2	Deterioration of CMRR	79
4.5	Summary	82
5	Utilization of Time-Variant Coupling Impedance	85
5.1	Motivation and Overview	85
5.2	Amplitude Modulation in Capacitive ECG	86
5.2.1	Electrode Model with Modulated Impedance	86
5.2.2	Analytical Solution of the System	87
5.2.3	Validation in Numerical Simulations	89
5.2.4	Crossover in the Coupling Impedance	92
5.3	System Description for Physical Simulations	93
5.3.1	Proposed Electrode Prototype	93
5.3.2	Measurement Setup and Amplifier	96
5.3.3	Physical Test Setup	97
5.4	Validation on the Test Bench	98
5.4.1	Proof-of-Concept Measurement	98
5.4.2	Modeling of the mECG Amplitude	99
5.4.3	Experimental Validation	99
5.5	Influence of System Parameters	101
5.5.1	Textile Material	102
5.5.2	Contact Pressure	104
5.5.3	Modulation Frequency	106
5.6	Summary	107
6	Extension of the cECG to Patients with Cardiac Pacemakers	111
6.1	Motivation and Overview	111

6.2	Multichannel Capacitive ECG Measurement	112
6.2.1	Capacitive ECG Car Seat	113
6.2.2	Morphology of Pacemaker Spikes	115
6.3	Clinical Trial on Pacemaker Patients	117
6.3.1	Measurement Protocol	117
6.3.2	Reference System and Data Annotation	120
6.4	Data Evaluation	122
6.4.1	Spike Detection Algorithm	122
6.4.2	Evaluation Metrics	124
6.4.3	Channel Fusion	125
6.5	Results and Discussions	127
6.5.1	Signal Quality in cECG Channels	128
6.5.2	Multichannel Measurement of Pacemaker Spikes	128
6.5.3	Detection Efficiency	131
6.5.4	Factors Influencing Detection Score	133
6.6	Summary	136
7	Conclusion and Outlook	139
A	Publications	143
	Bibliography	147