Clinical Perfusion MRI

Techniques and Applications

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PBB To Angela, Blake, Bob, and Ian, gone but not forgotten
XG To Sélène and Lou, for keeping me always on my toes
GZ To Mimi, Kenji, and Noah, with love and appreciation

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Foreword

Diseases of the brain remain the largest single cause of human suffering worldwide [1], and an extraordinarily wide range of symptoms can be observed with brain ischemia, including both acute and chronic neurological and/or psychological deficits. These two facts have prompted a very long quest to better understand, observe, and quantify blood flow in the living human brain – more than a century-long quest, in fact [2]. The advent of in vivo advanced imaging techniques in humans has therefore perhaps naturally been put to use to study blood flow to the brain, and indeed all organs.

While routine imaging of the larger vessels has become relatively straightforward, with a variety of imaging methods ranging from ultrasound to X-rays and beyond to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), the measurement of tissue-level blood flow has been more challenging. The ability to measure capillary-level blood flow, or tissue perfusion, is of perhaps greater medical importance since the cell is the critical functional entity of human biology. However, methods to measure the various parameters that characterize tissue perfusion have been frankly more challenging than the imaging of the larger vessels in living humans. A variety of methods were initially developed using radioactive tracers, including planar imaging as well as tomographic methods such as positron emission tomography (PET) or single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT). The fundamental principles of these methods have since been adapted for use with the currently far more widely available modalities of X-ray computed tomography (CT) and MRI.

In 1991, Belliveau and colleagues [3] at the Massachusetts General Hospital demonstrated that brain perfusion could be measured in humans with MRI using bolus injection of MR contrast agent, a technique which has become known as dynamic susceptibility contrast (DSC) MRI. This technique is a use of contrast agents that has regulatory approval in some countries, with more countries actively considering approval at the time of this writing. Initial applications were in the brain, most notably for studying functional brain activation and the evaluation of patients with cerebrovascular disease, and this methodology is now widely used in clinical practice. The related technique of dynamic contrast-enhanced (DCE)-MRI also looks at contrast agent kinetics following bolus injection, but over a slightly slower time scale, and has found application in oncological imaging applications, perhaps most frequently in the clinical evaluation of lesions of the breast. In the early 1990s, landmark papers by Detre *et al.* and Williams *et al.* [4, 5] demonstrated the ability to image cerebral blood flow entirely non-invasively, without the injection of an exogenous tracer, a technique now known as arterial spin labeling (ASL)-MRI. Although the utilization of this method in routine clinical neuroimaging has been somewhat less compared to DSC, perhaps because of some of the technical difficulties (now mostly overcome), the method is beginning to be used with increasing frequency. For all of these methods, the greatest volume of studies to date have been performed in the brain, with applications to other organ systems mostly still at an earlier stage of development.

In 2000, when Peter Reimer and I wrote the book *Cerebral MR Perfusion Imaging: Principles and Current Applications* [6], only DSC was in routine clinical use. Since then, the use of ASL, DCE, and DSC has steadily progressed, both for neuro- and non-neuro imaging applications. The current book covers these more recent advances, and gives the reader an excellent understanding of the theoretical and experimental aspects of perfusion MRI. For the clinician or researcher, in addition to a knowledge of data acquisition methods, it is of particular importance to understand the algorithms and analysis methods used to generate perfusion maps from the raw MR image data. Careful consideration of many factors is required in order to generate reproducible,

quantitative perfusion images. This book not only describes recommended acquisition and analysis procedures, but also discusses limitations and potential pitfalls that may be encountered. While not every clinical case may require quantitative measurement, without a firm grasp of the techniques and their associated strengths and weaknesses, the interpreter will ultimately be limited in their ability to draw conclusions, and hence the need for this book. Case reports at the end of the clinical chapters describe how such methods can be applied in real-life situations.

With the popularity of perfusion MRI and its ability to aid in sorting through clinical questions has come greater support from equipment manufacturers. All major equipment vendors now provide substantial support for clinical perfusion MRI, and the role of microvascular flow continues to be of critical importance, indeed increasingly appreciated importance, in many diseases. One recent example is the advent of anti-angiogenic therapy, where the need to understand tumor- and organ-level microvascular flow has taken on tremendous importance. I expect that many additional areas will emerge as we gain greater insight into human physiology, and I also expect perfusion MRI to continue to develop and mature technically. This book, therefore, is timely and needed, as it provides both clinicians and researchers with a comprehensive and state-of-the-art evaluation of perfusion MRI.

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Preface

Blood flow is one of the most fundamental physiological parameters. Maintenance of adequate blood flow is vital for the health of biological tissue. The growth and function of many organ systems are linked tightly to their blood supply. In addition, many disease processes are associated with either increases or decreases in flow compared with normal values. The development and validation of non-invasive tools for the measurement of flow have been longstanding goals, both in biomedical research and in clinical practice.

Traditionally, the imaging of flow, or perfusion, has been accomplished using either nuclear medicine-based techniques involving radioactive isotopes, or X-ray computed tomography (CT) methods using radio-opaque contrast agents. However, soon after the introduction of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for anatomical imaging, research began on techniques for depicting flow. Since then, progress has been rapid, not least because MR methods have the advantage of not involving radiation, and in the case of arterial spin labeling-based techniques, are completely non-invasive. This makes them particularly appealing for use in a wide range of populations, including children and normal subjects. In addition, MR perfusion can be combined with the armamentarium of other structural, vascular, physiological, metabolic, and functional techniques available with MR to provide a comprehensive, "one-stop" examination for the patient.

Perfusion MRI is now a part of clinical practice, most notably for evaluating neurological disease. In particular, these techniques have been most developed for studying cerebrovascular disease and tumors of the central nervous system (CNS). However, perfusion MRI also has had a major impact in certain organ systems outside the CNS, including the breast, heart, and prostate. Techniques and applications continue to be developed, and over time perfusion MRI is likely to become widely used in organ systems throughout the body.

This book is divided into two major parts, the first section covering the theoretical background of the measurement of perfusion, technical aspects of dynamic susceptibility contrast (DSC) and dynamic contrast enhancement (DCE), and arterial spin labeling (ASL). Chapters are also included on its use in neuroscience (including functional MRI), and MRI methods for measuring blood volume and oxygenation. The second section contains a comprehensive review of clinical applications of perfusion MRI, in neurological diseases including stroke and brain tumors, neurodegeneration, as well as applications throughout the body (breast, heart, prostate, and other organ systems). Finally, there is a chapter dedicated to perfusion MRI in pediatrics.

This book is mainly focused on perfusion MRI in humans; however, on occasion, reference is made to preclinical studies when appropriate. However, it is not intended to be a reference work for researchers using preclinical MRI in animal models, even if many of the principles and techniques for clinical and preclinical perfusion MRI are similar. Other areas that this book does not specifically cover include vascular imaging (i.e., MR, CT, or X-ray angiography), MR perfusion using unconventional or unapproved tracers, or other non-MR methods of measuring perfusion, such as X-ray CT perfusion (CTP) or positron emission tomography (PET). These topics are beyond the scope of the current volume.

Despite the popularity of perfusion MRI in clinical use, there is currently a need for a book that covers this topic in detail. *Clinical Perfusion MRI: Techniques and Applications* aims to fill this gap, and to provide the reader with a comprehensive, yet readable, treatment of this topic. In a single volume, it provides clinicians with the basic knowledge needed to use this technique in their clinical practice. The widespread adoption of high-quality, clinical perfusion MRI will result in improved diagnoses and management decisions, resulting in better clinical outcomes in individual patients worldwide.

Abbreviations

AAT	arterial arrival time
aBV	arterial blood volume
ACA	anterior cerebral artery
ACE-I	angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor
ACS	acute coronary syndrome
ACZ	acetazolamide
AD	Alzheimer's disease
ADC	apparent diffusion coefficient
AIF	arterial input function
AMI	acute myocardial infarction
ASE	asymmetric spin echo
ASL	arterial spin labeling
ASPECTS	Alberta Stroke Program Early CT Score
ATA	arterial transit artifact
ATT	arterial transit time (ms)
AUC	area under the curve (for ROC analysis)
AV	atrioventricular
BAT	bolus arrival time (ms)
BOLD	blood oxygenation level-dependent contrast
BV	blood volume
CA	Contrast agent
CAD	computer-assisted diagnosis; or coronary artery disease
CAS	carotid artery stenting
CBF	cerebral blood flow (ml/100 g/min)
CBV	cerebral blood volume (ml/100 g)
cCBV	corrected cerebral blood volume (usually corrected for leakage of contrast)
CFR	cardiac flow reserve
CHD	congenital heart disease
$CMRO_2$	Cerebral metabolic rate of oxygen consumption (mmol O_2/100 g/min)
CNR	contrast-to-noise ratio
CNS	central nervous system
COMI	cerebral oxygen metabolic index
CPP	cerebral perfusion pressure (mmHg)
CS	coronary sinus
CT	computed tomography
CTA	CT angiography
CTA	Computed tomography angiography
CTC	contrast concentration versus time curve
CTP	CT perfusion
CXA	coronary X-ray angiography
DCE	dynamic contrast enhancement
dHb	deoxyhemoglobin
DMN	Default mode network
DNP	Dynamic nuclear polarization
DSA	digital subtraction angiography
DSC	dynamic susceptibility contrast
DWI	diffusion-weighted imaging
EBCT	electron beam CT
EBRT	external beam radiation therapy
ECG	electrocardiogram
EES	extravascular extracellular space
EPI	echo-planar imaging
EPISTAR	EPI-based signal targeting by alternating radiofrequency pulses, an early pulsed ASL sequence
FA	flip angle
FAIR	flow alternating inversion recovery, one of the early pulsed ASL sequences
fMRI	functional MRI
FSE	fast spin echo
FSL	Functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brain Software Library, a freeware post-processing imaging toolkit from the Univeristy of Oxford
FTD	frontotemporal dementia
FTLD	Frontotemporal lobar degeneration
GABA	gamma-aminobutryic acid, an inhibitory neurotransmitter
GE	gradient echo
GESSE	gradient echo sampling under the spin echo
GFR	glomerular filtration rate
GM	gray matter
GRASE	gradient and spin echo
GRE	gradient echo
HbO_2	oxyhemoglobin
Hct	hematocrit
HHT	hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia
HII	hypoxic-ischemic insult
ICA	internal carotid artery
ICDs	implanted cardioverter-defibrillators
ICV	intracranial volume (cm^3)
IVD	ischemic vascular dementia
JPA	juvenile pilocytic astrocytoma
K^{trans}	Forward rate constant for transfer of a contrast agent between the vascular and extravascular space
LGE	late gadolinium enhancement, a marker of dead tissue on cardiac MR
LV	left ventricular
MACE	major adverse cardiac events
MAGIC	multiple acquisitions with global inversion cycling
MCA	middle cerebral artery
MCI	mild cognitive impairment
MDCT	multi-detector CT

MEG	magnetoencephalography
MEGESE	multi-echo gradient echo/spin echo
MION	monocrystalline iron oxide nanoparticles, a type of USPIO
MITR	maximum intensity change per unit time interval ratio
MRA	magnetic resonance angiogram
mRS	modified Rankin score
MRS	magnetic resonance spectroscopy
MRV	magnetic resonance venography
MT	magnetization transfer
MTT	mean transit time (in seconds)
NAC	neo adjuvant chemotherapy
NASCET	North American Symptomatic Carotid Endarterectomy Trial, from which a standard grading system for arterial stenosis has been derived
NPV	negative predictive value
NSF	nephrogenic systemic fibrosis
PASL	pulsed arterial spin labeling
PC	phase contrast
PCA	posterior cerebral artery
pCASL	pseudo-continuous ASL, sometimes also called pulsed-continuous ASL
PCI	percutaneous coronary intervention (angioplasty and stent placement)
pCT	perfusion CT
PE	pulmonary embolism
PET	positron emission tomography
PFS	progression-free survival
PH	peak height
PICORE	Proximal inversion with a control for off-resonance effect
PK	pharmacokinetic
PLD	post-label delay (in seconds), used primarily for continuous or pseudo-continuous ASL sequences
PNET	primitive neuroectodermal tumor
PPV	positive predictive value
PS	permeability surface area product
PSR	percentage of signal recovery (in bolus DSC)
PVL	periventricular leukomalacia
PWI	perfusion-weighted imaging
Q2TIPS	Second version of quantitative imaging of perfusion by using single subtraction with addition of thin-section periodic saturation after inversion and time delay
qBOLD	quantitative blood oxygenation level-dependent contrast
QSM	quantitative susceptibility mapping
QUASAR	Quantitative signal targeting by alternating radiofrequency labeling of arterial regions, a multi-delay ASL sequence
QUIPSS I	Quantitative Imaging of Perfusion using a Single Subtraction method I
QUIPSS II	Quantitative Imaging of Perfusion using a Single Subtraction method II
QUIXOTIC	QUantitative Imaging of Extraction of Oxygen and Tissue Consumption
$R(t)$	Residue function, or fraction of tracer remaining in the voxel following an infinitely sharp bolus
R_2	$=1/T_2$, Relaxivity rate for spin echo experiments
$R_2^*=1/T_2^*$	R_2^*, Relaxivity rate for gradient echo experiments
RAS	renal artery stenosis
RCC	renal cell carcinoma
RECIST	Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid Tumors
ROC	receiver operator characteristic
ROI	region of interest
rs-fMRI	resting state functional MRI
RVD	renovascular disease
SAGE	Spin and gradient echo
SAR	specific absorption rate
SE	spin echo
SI	signal intensity
SNR	signal-to-noise ratio
SPECT	single photon emission computed tomography
SPM	Statistical Parameter Mapping, a freeware software program that runs within Matlab, from the University College of London
SSFP	steady-state free precession, a method of image readout
STEMI	ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction
SVD	singular value decomposition, a popular method of performing deconvolution
SWI	susceptibility-weighted imaging
TDL	tumefactive demyelinating lesion
TE	echo time
TEE	transesophageal echocardiogram
THM	tissue homogeneity model
TI	inversion time or delay (in pulsed ASL)
T_{max}	normalized bolus delay (in seconds)
TR	repetition time
TRUST	T_2 relaxation under spin tagging
TTE	transthoracic echocardiogram
USPIO	ultrasmall superparamagnetic iron oxide
V/Q scan	ventilation perfusion scan, used in the lung to diagnose pulmonary emboli
VASO	vascular space occupancy
vCBV	venous CBV
VEGF	vascular endothelial growth factor
Venc	velocity-encoding level, used for phase contrast angiography
VOF	venous output function
VS-ASL	velocity-selective ASL
WHO	World Health Organization, a grading system for brain tumors
WM	White matter
WML	White matter lesions
Xe-CT	Xenon-enhanced CT
Y_v	tissue oxygen saturation (%)