Multi-center (mono-vendor) longitudinal conventional and quantitative spinal cord MRI in Multiple Sclerosis at 3 Tesla - The EMISEP Study: First results

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The EMISEP Study: First results

Multi-center (mono-vendor) longitudinal conventional and quantitative spinal cord MRI in Multiple Sclerosis at 3 Tesla

Funding: French Ministry of Health 2012

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CHU Rennes, Unité/Projet Visages

team.irisa.fr/visages/emisep
Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an often disabling disease of the central nervous system affecting the brain and the spinal cord.

Especially, walking impairment is considered by the patients as the main cause of disability (Hobart et al., 2003).

However, there is a huge heterogeneity in disability progression between patients.

There is a need to identify prognostic factors at the individual level to guide therapeutic decisions.

« Clinico-Radiological paradox »

Barkhof et al. 1999
Can spinal cord involvement more directly explain motor and sensitive impairment and predict disease evolution?

> 75% of spinal cord images show lesions, more frequently in the cervical than thoracic cord (Ikuta et al. 1976, Nijeholt et al. 1998, Bot et al. 2002, Eden et al. 2018)

Eden et al. ISMRM 2018
Correlation with impairment

- Weak: Focal lesions (Kidd et al. 1993, Nijeholt et al. 1998)
- Stronger with quantitative imaging
  - Atrophy (Daams et al. 2014, Kearney et al. 2014)
  - Diffusion and MT imaging (Zackowski et al. 2009, Oh et al. 2013)

Prognosis

- Spinal cord focal lesions have an impact on patient prognosis (Brownlee et al. 2016, Arrambide et al. 2018)
- No long term quantitative studies

Relies on improved image quality for lesion and quantitative imaging (Wheeler-Kingshott 2014, Stroman 2014)
MRI and Multiple Sclerosis – Study design

**EMISEP**

- Funding: Ministry of Health 2012
- Led by Rennes Clinical Trials NCT021173375
- PI: Pr. Gilles Edan / Dr. Anne Kerbrat
- 80 patients - 5-year Brain and Spinal Cord MRI and clinical follow up
- 3T Research MR scanners
- + Healthy controls – M0 and M24

13 centers initially
3 scanner change
<1 inclusion (2 GE scanners)
→ 7 centers included patients
5 Siemens, 1 Philips scanner
MRI and Multiple Sclerosis – What about Spinal Cord MRI?

**EMISEP**

**Inclusion criteria**
- RRMS (MacDonald 2010)
- First symptoms < 1 year
- Brain T2 > 9 and/or SC lesion
- EDSS < 3
- 18 - 45 years old

**Clinical follow up**
- EDSS, 6min, 8 meter, 9 holes peg test
- Auto questionnaires MSWS12, Qualiveen
- Quantitative: Strength and vibration

**Imaging protocol**
- Whole cord
  - Sag T2 TSE and PSIR TSE
- Cervical cord
  - Axial 2D T2* ME GRE C1-C3 and C4-C7 → lesion
  - Sag 3D T1 → atrophy
  - Ax 3D GRE with and without MT → MTR
  - Sag 30 dir Diffusion
- Brain (OFSEP French MS Cohort protocol)
  - Sag 3D T1 pre Gd
  - Sag 3D FLAIR
  - Ax DP/T2 or 3D T2
  - Ax 30 Dir Diffusion
  - Sag 3D T1 post Gd
81 patients were included between 2014 and 2017
46 healthy controls
to date >18 months follow-up
### MRI and Multiple Sclerosis – First results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Controls reproductibility study</th>
<th>Patient study at M0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intra-subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between-subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between-scanner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Magnetization Transfer Ratio

- Distortion correction (Snoussi, ISBI 2019)
- Lesion location (Chouteau, ECTRIMS 2018)

### Diffusion imaging

### Lesion imaging

- PSIR vs T2 TSE (Rojat et al, JFR 2018)
Measurement of Magnetization Transfer Ratio (MTR) from Cervical Spinal Cord: Multicenter Reproducibility and Variability
## MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Multicenter Reproducibility and Variability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IRM 1 (Siemens Verio)</th>
<th>IRM 2 (Siemens Verio)</th>
<th>IRM 3 (Siemens Verio)</th>
<th>IRM 4 (Siemens Skyra)</th>
<th>IRM 5 (Siemens Prisma)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># subjects</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># scans</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Between scanner**

**Between session**
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Multicenter Reproducibility and Variability

Imaging details
3D GRE, 52 3mm slabs, 0.7mmx0.7mm in-plane resolution, TR/TE=38/3.57ms, 23°, water excitation and GRAPPA 2
MT0 : no prepulse
MT1 : with vendor MT prepulse (Gaussian, 1200Hz off-resonance)

Processing (Benoît Combès, Post-Doc)
Registration of MT1 to MT0 using the Anima toolbox (v2.3)*
MTR map computation
Whole cord segmentation
Vertebra labeling
Atlas registration
GW/WM segmentation (>0.8)

Spinal Cord toolbox (v3.0)**

*https://github.com/Inria-Visages/Anima-Public/wiki/, ** De Leener, Neuroimage 2017
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Multicenter Reproducibility and Variability

Overall multi-scanner variability

Between-scanner variability

Between-session variability (same participant, same scanner)

Between-participant variability

Inter-scanner variability (different scanners, same participant)

Inter-participant variability (different participants, same scanner)

Investigated variability

Measured variability
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Multicenter Reproducibility and Variability

Inhomogeneous MTR values along the cord (C4-C6 plateau)

Between-scanner and between-subject variability overlap
Boxplots of mean MTR measurements in gray matter (GM) and white matter (WM) for each level between C1 and C7 and for C4-C6.
Variation coefficient = (standard deviation / mean) x 100
Global variation coefficient of 3% (0.9 pu) is compatible with the detection of 1pu MTR Variations between 2 groups (45 per group, type I error= 0.05 and type II error= 0.10)

These results show that it is possible to use cervical cord MTR in multicenter studies

Yet

This was evaluated on a single vendor
Inhomogenous MTR along the cord
The investigation in longitudinal studies remains challenging
Focal and diffuse cervical spinal cord damage in patients with early relapsing-remitting MS: A multicentre magnetization transfer ratio study

Combes, Kerbrat, Multiple Sclerosis Journal 2018
Goals

Quantify MTR changes in early RRMS patients in comparison with healthy controls
Describe spatial distribution within and outside lesions
Correlate MTR measurements with clinical scores
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Patient vs Controls at M0

**Participants**
- 60 RRMS patients
- 34 controls

**MRI acquisition**
- Lesion imaging (patients)
  - Sag PSIR
  - Sag T2
  - Axial T2*
- MT imaging
  - MT1
  - MT0
- Morphological imaging
  - 3DT1

**Image processing**
- Lesion mask
- MTR maps
- SC segmentation and vertebral labelling

**Results**
- T2 lesion load
- Lesion MTR
- Normal appearing SC MTR
- Whole SC MTR
- Mean cross-sectional area

Mean value for:
- C4-C6 (most reproducible levels)
- Cl, i=1,...,7
- At different distances from cord periphery and barycentre
MTR (C4-C6) is significantly lower in patients versus controls considering the normal appearing spinal cord (lesion excluded) and the whole spine.
The more focal lesions the lower the MTR, also in the normal appearing spinal cord.

MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Patient vs Controls at M0

- No lesion
- 1-2 lesions
- 3 lesions or more
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Patient vs Controls at M0

In the sagittal plane
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Patient vs Controls at M0

In the axial plane

(Pardini et al. 2016)
### Correlation with clinical scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EDSS (p = 0.14)</th>
<th>Pyramidal EDSS (p = 0.05)</th>
<th>8m (p = 0.57)</th>
<th>6 minutes (p = 0.36)</th>
<th>12 MSWS (p = 0.39)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MTR</strong></td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cord Lesion volume</strong></td>
<td>0.26 (p = 0.06)</td>
<td>0.28 (p = 0.03)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.26 (p = 0.05)</td>
<td>0.30 (p = 0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CSA</strong></td>
<td>0.08 (p = 0.58)</td>
<td>0.01 (p = 0.92)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.04 (p = 0.79)</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brain lesion volume</strong></td>
<td>0.15 (p = 0.27)</td>
<td>0.12 (p = 0.38)</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.11 (p = 0.43)</td>
<td>0.07 (p = 0.63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diffuse and focal spinal cord burden can be measured at the beginning of the disease, and is correlated with lesion load.

Longitudinal data needs to be processed to investigate whether initial burden can predict disability at 1, 2, 3 and 5 years.
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Longitudinal data – Ongoing work

A particular case

![Graph showing MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord over time with different levels labeled V1 to V6. The graph illustrates the trend of MTR over months M00, M12, and M24, with level V4 showing a notable decrease.]
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Longitudinal data

A particular case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M0</th>
<th>M12</th>
<th>M24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MTR from Cervical Spinal Cord: Longitudinal data

Whole cord MTR change between M12 and M0 in a group of 39 patients

...ongoing work
Gilles Edan, Anne Kerbrat and Benoît Combès

EMISEP study group: Neurologists, radiologists, MR Techs, MR Physicists, Research assistants from Montpellier, Strasbourg, Marseille, Lyon, Clermont-Ferrand, Nîmes and Rennes (list @ team.irisa.fr/visages/emisep)

Research group Visages (Empenn) Univ Rennes, CNRS, Inria, Inserm, IRISA UMR 6074, Empenn - ERL U 1228

Ponnada Narayana, Maria Rocca and Denis Ducreux

Virginie Callot

Julien Cohen-Adad and his team