SUPERFICIAL FEMORAL ARTERY OCCLUSIVE DISEASE SEVERITY CORRELATES WITH MR CINE PHASE CONTRAST FLOW MEASUREMENTS

H. Zhang¹, K. Mohajer¹, D. Gurell¹, H. Ersoy¹, B. Ho¹, K. C. Kent², M. R. Prince¹,³

¹Radiology, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York, NY, United States, ²Surgery, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York, NY, United States, ³Radiology, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, New York, United States

INTRODUCTION
MRA has advanced to the point where stenoses and occlusions are diagnosed with 83-99% sensitivity and 87-98% specificity using conventional DSA as the standard of reference. However, accurate depiction of the arterial lumen may not be sufficient to determine the hemodynamic significance of a particular lesion. With cine phase contrast (PC) technique, pulsatility (the variation of flow between systole and diastole), flow volume and flow velocity might help evaluate stenoses. In this study we retrospectively analyzed 2D cine PC flow data obtained above and below arterial disease in the thigh for patients with peripheral vascular disease (PVD) undergoing routine peripheral bolus chase MRA and at similar locations in normal subjects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Forty-eight patients with suspected PVD underwent routine bolus chase peripheral MRA with cine PC flow measurements for each leg. 2D cine PC flow measurements were also obtained in 9 healthy volunteers. All imaging was performed on the same 1.5 T MR scanner (GE Signa EXCITE). Flow data was obtained at the proximal and distal thigh with the following parameters: TR/TE/flip angle = 6.9/3.3/30°, FOV = 32 cm; 6 mm slice thickness; matrix = 256 x 256; NEX = 1; venc = 100 cm/s. A pulse oximeter on the index finger was used for peripheral gating. Imaging parameters for the volunteer study were identical to patient study except that NEX = 4 to compensate for absence of Gd and occlusions, 74% (n = 26) were monophasic (Figure 1) and there was a small number with a biphasic flow pattern (n = 7). Data on peak velocity ratio, incidence of peak delay and flow volume ratio from 9 normal volunteers and 48 patients are shown in Table 1. Compared to normal arteries, severe stenoses and occlusions had significant increases in peak velocity ratio (p = 0.01 and 0.003 respectively) and the number of arteries with peak delay was significantly higher (p < 0.001). Two variables showed significant positive correlation with the severity of arterial disease, including existence of peak delay (r = 0.65, p < 0.001) and peak velocity ratio (r = 0.31, p < 0.001).

RESULTS
In normal volunteers, triphasic flow rate curves were obtained in all the 18 arterial segments. For the 96 arterial segments in 48 patients, 26 had no significant lesion, 35 had moderate-to-severe stenosis, and 35 were occluded. In 84% of arterial segments (n = 21) with mild disease, the flow patterns at the lower level were unchanged. In 21 out of 35 (60%) segments with moderate-to-severe stenosis, flow patterns changed from triphasic above to biphasic (n = 7) or monophasic (n = 3) below the lesion or from biphasic to monophasic (n = 11) indicating lower capillary resistance below these stenoses. Below occlusions, 74% (n = 26) were monophasic (Figure 1) and there was a small number with a biphasic flow pattern (n = 7). Data on peak velocity ratio, incidence of peak delay and flow volume ratio from 9 normal volunteers and 48 patients are shown in Table 1. Compared to normal arteries, severe stenoses and occlusions had significant increases in peak velocity ratio (p = 0.01 and 0.003 respectively) and the number of arteries with peak delay was significantly higher (p < 0.001). Two variables showed significant positive correlation with the severity of arterial disease, including existence of peak delay (r = 0.65, p < 0.001) and peak velocity ratio (r = 0.31, p < 0.001).

DISCUSSION
When evaluating arterial occlusive disease, detecting functional significance of stenoses is often more important than determining percentage narrowing of the lumen. In the absence of a trans-stenotic pressure gradient, revascularization techniques will not augment blood flow, but still pose the risk of procedure-related complications. Thus, an important goal of MRA techniques is to noninvasively determine the hemodynamic significance of each stenosis. MR flow measurement on PC Images shows high accuracy and excellent correlation with direct flow measurements. Arterial flow parameters including the flow waveform pattern, flow velocity, flow volumes have been utilized to evaluate hemodynamic significance of arterial occlusive disease. Data in this study are similar to the expected flow based on prior studies. Combining cine PC data with MRA may reduce interobserver variability on stenosis grading. Quantitative flow data may help to increase the sensitivity and negative predictive value thus yielding higher confidence when interpreting 3D MRA images.

In conclusion, 2D cine PC flow measurements add functional information to the peripheral MRA examination without substantially prolonging scanning time or requiring additional contrast injection. This may help to improve therapeutic planning, simplify the amount of catheter manipulation required at the time of interventional procedures and ultimately improve management of peripheral vascular disease patients.

REFERENCES