

# Mean diffusivity measurement in gray matter: a potential image-based biomarker of MCI and AD

Sung-han Lin<sup>1</sup>, Wen-Chiun Hsu<sup>2,3</sup>, Yao-Liang Chen<sup>4</sup>, and Jiun-Jie Wang<sup>5,6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduate Institute of Clinical Medicine, Chang Gung University, Taoyuan County, Taiwan, <sup>2</sup>Department of Neurology, ChangGung Memorial Hospital, Linkou, Taoyuan County, Taiwan, <sup>3</sup>Dementia Center, Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Linkou, Taoyuan County, Taiwan, <sup>4</sup>Department of Medical Imaging and Intervention, Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Linkou, Taoyuan County, Taiwan, <sup>5</sup>Department of Medical Imaging and Radiological Sciences, Chang Gung University, Taoyuan County, Taiwan, <sup>6</sup>Neuroscience Research Center, Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Linkou, Taoyuan County, Taiwan

## PURPOSE

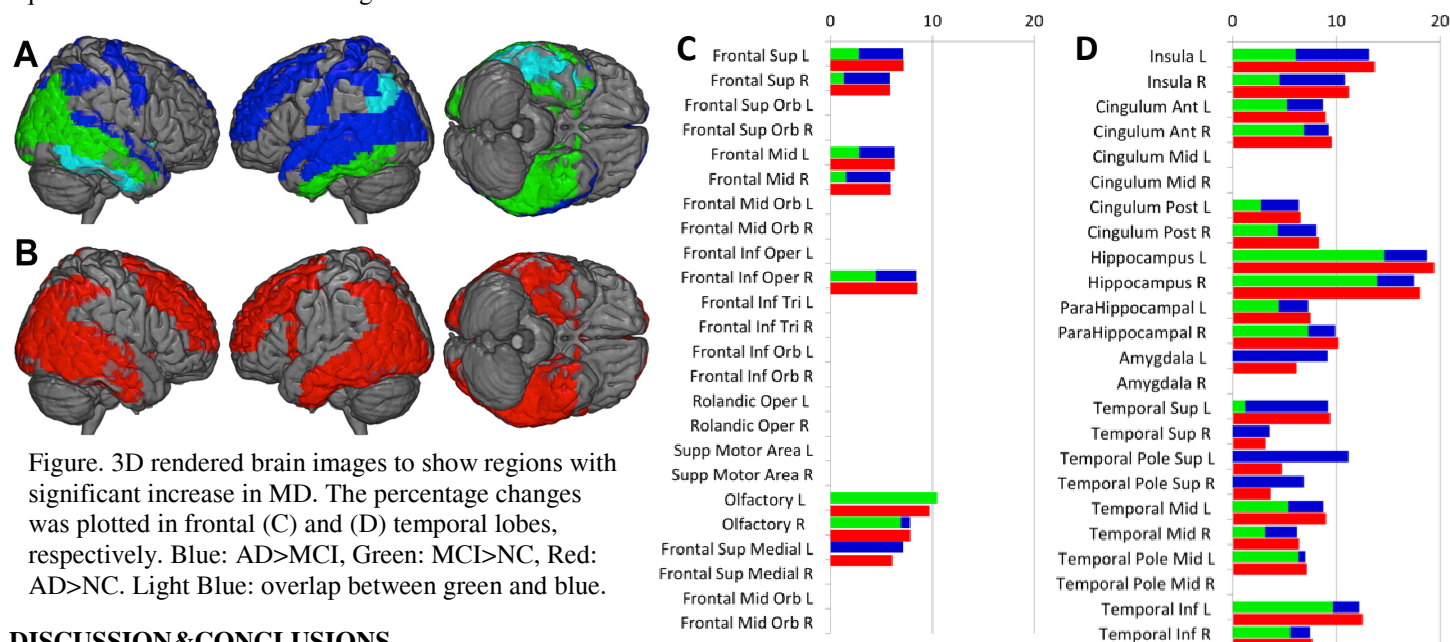
The potential of mean diffusivity as a biomarker for detecting the early stage of the neurodegenerative process has been of great interest. The current study therefore investigated the changes of mean diffusivity (MD) in cortical gray matter in normal subjects and patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and AD.

## METHODS

The study was approved by the institution review board. Subjects from 3 age-matched groups were recruited: 35 normal control subjects (NC, aged 65.7±6.4 year old), 27 AD patients (aged 69.4±8.2 year old) and 59 MCI patients (aged 68.2±6.4 year old). Both diffusion weighted images and T1-weighted MP RAGE were acquired on a 3T MR scanner (TIM-Trio, Siemens, Germany). The imaging parameters of the diffusion weighted images included TR/TE=7324ms/83ms, 64 axial slices of voxel size=2x2x2mm<sup>3</sup>, 64 gradient directions and the b-value 1000 sec/mm<sup>2</sup>. The MD was parcellated followed the procedure by Lo et al.<sup>1</sup> The changes in mean diffusivity were subsequently calculated.

## RESULTS

Increased mean diffusivity was noticed in patients with AD when compared to MCI (Figure A, blue), which was located in rostral temporal and frontal lobe. In contrast, when comparing MCI with NC (Figure A, green), increased MD was found in ventral temporal and occipital lobes. Color of light blue indicated the overlapping regions. Figure B showed the regions with significantly increased MD in patients with AD when compared to NC, which was consistent with the regions identified in Figure A. The percentage changes of MD in frontal (Figure C) and temporal (Figure D) lobes showed that the difference of MD between AD and NC is approximately equal to the sum of the MD changes in AD with MCI and MCI with NC.



## DISCUSSION&CONCLUSIONS

Our study showed that significant increase of MD in patients of AD when compared to normal control can be noticed in both frontal and temporal lobes, which is consistent with the clinical observations related to cognitive impairment and dementia.<sup>2</sup> Both the percentage changes of MD and the involved regions might suggest that MCI is a transition stage between NC and AD. The current study therefore demonstrated that MD in cortical gray matter could be a potential image-based biomarker of MCI and AD.

## REFERENCES

1. Lo CY, Wang PN, Chou KH et al. Diffusion Tensor Tractography Reveals Abnormal Topological Organization in Structural Cortical Networks in Alzheimer's Disease. The Journal of Neuroscience 2010;30(50):16876-16885.
2. Nir TM, Jahanshad N, Villalon-Reina JE et al. Effectiveness of regional DTI measures in distinguishing Alzheimer's disease, MCI, and normal aging. NeuroImage: Clinical 2013;3:180-195.