Histogram Analysis of Diffusion Metrics in Evaluation of Brain Tumors: Clinical Applications

Akira Nishikori¹, Masaaki Hori¹,³, Fumitaka Kumagai¹,², Yoshitaka Masutani¹, Ryuji Nojiri¹, Katsutoshi Murata⁵, Kohei Kamiya¹,⁴, Koji Kamagata¹, Mariko Yoshida¹, and Shigeki Aoki¹

¹Radiology, Juntendo University School of Medicine, Tokyo, Japan, ²Graduate School of Human Health Sciences, Tokyo, Japan, ³Tokyo Medical Clinic, Tokyo, Japan, ⁴The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, ⁵Siemens Japan K.K., Tokyo, Japan

Target audience: Researchers and clinicians who investigate the brain tumors by using diffusion-weighted imaging and diffusion metrics.

Purpose: In clinical practice, conventional MR imaging is limited its ability to evaluate characteristics of brain tumors, such as classification. Recently, histogram analyses of diffusion metrics have showed promising results as imaging biomarkers¹, ². The purpose of this exhibit is to explain methods of histogram analyses of diffusion metrics and to demonstrate clinical usefulness of the analysis in evaluation of brain tumors.

Outline of contents:
1. We will explain the representative diffusion metrics used in histogram analysis for brain tumors, such as mean diffusivity, apparent diffusion coefficient (ADC), fractional anisotropy (FA) and mean diffusional kurtosis (MK)³. Moreover, we also explain analysis methods including double Gaussian mixed mode and single Gaussian model, and statistical parameters including median, skewness and kurtosis.
2. We will present examples that illustrate characteristic of brain tumors,
   1) Classification of the grades and subtypes of brain tumors. For example, ADC histogram analysis can stratify patients with glioblastoma into high- and low- risk groups².
   2) Demonstration of intratumoral microstructures. Different histogram patterns of diffusion metrics may be seen in the same brain tumor, depending on different component and ratio of the tumor cells and interstitial structures (Figure 1).
   3) Determination of peritumoral invasion. In general, complex patterns are seen in the ADC and MK histograms in the area of peritumoral invasion because of the presence of both normal brain tissue and malignant tumor cells (Figure 2).

Summary: This exhibit will demonstrate the various methods of histogram analysis of diffusion metrics and their usefulness to evaluate the characteristics of brain tumors. In case it is difficult for radiologists to reach comprehensive diagnosis with conventional imaging technique, complementary combination use of histogram analysis of diffusion metrics will be helpful for more precise diagnosis of brain tumors.