

2005

## Digital film dosimetry in radiotherapy and the development of analytical applications software

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**DIGITAL FILM DOSIMETRY IN RADIOTHERAPY**  
**and the**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF ANALYTICAL APPLICATIONS SOFTWARE**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
from the  
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

By  
Yang Wang (BSc, Post GDip)  
ENGINEERING PHYSICS

2005

## CERTIFICATION

I, Yang Wang, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Yang Wang

31 October 2005

# Preface

## **The clinical imperative**

Film dosimetry started being used for radiotherapy quality assurance checks in the 1950s and 1960s. From the 1990s film dosimetry has become an important tool for the dose distribution checks in 3-D conformal radiotherapy and intensity modulated radiotherapy treatment (IMRT). However, film dosimetry results have in the past suffered from large uncertainties. The low accuracy relates to a variety of causes including the film response to radiation beams, dosimetry, and film development and measurement procedures.

The use of film for dosimetry requires the establishment of procedures which minimize the uncertainties in each stage from exposure through development to measurement and analysis.

## **Digital technique for image optical density calibration**

Low cost computer desktop scanners are becoming possibly used for reliable clinical film dosimetry. Desktop transparency scanners, when properly calibrated, provide a reliable and accurate means to measure of film transparency digitally. Both scanner and film response can be linearised to improve the dosimetry analysis results. A software package has been developed to undertake the complex signal analysis and image mapping techniques required for accurate film dosimetry.

## **Clinical performance of film dosimetry result improvement**

The film scanner dynamic range, linearity, gain variations and light source variability must be calibrated before the scanner can be used for dosimetry, the film dosimetry. Perturbations resulting from film processing or image processing are dealt with separately from those arising in digitising.

The film response depends on film type, radiation beam type and energy dependence, phantom buildup, angle of entry and radiation field size. These factors are directly compensated in the film analysis software.

Film dosimetry reliability and accuracy are improved by using this film dosimetry software package.

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# Table of Contents

Preface

Acknowledgement

Abstract .....	1
Chapter 1. Introduction .....	3 Chapter
2. The Historical of Film and Film Dosimetry .....	7
2.1 Review of the Photographic process .....	7
2.2 History of photography .....	9
2.3 The Characteristic Curve .....	10
2.4 History of Film Dosimetry .....	13
Chapter 3. Film Processing in Medical Imaging .....	19
3.1 Introduction .....	19
3.2 Film grains, sensitivity and contrast .....	19
3.3 The Photographic process .....	21
3.4 The effects of development and fixing process on the characteristic curve ....	24
Chapter 4. Dosimetry Concepts in Radiotherapy .....	28
4.1 An overview of the Linear Accelerator .....	28
4.2 Quality Assurance requirement for the radiotherapy .....	29
4.3 Dosimetry and Quality Assurance procedures .....	29
Chapter 5. Digital Densitometry Equipment – Film Scanners .....	42
5.1 Introduction .....	42
5.2 Historical background to film digitization .....	43
5.3 Modern desktop scanners .....	49
5.4 Scanner characteristics .....	52
5.5 Screen display issues .....	58
5.6 Brightness and contrast .....	58
5.7 Image quality requirements .....	59
5.8 Are desktop scanners suitable for film dosimetry?.....	61
Chapter 6. Image Processing Technology Study.....	64
6.1 Introduction .....	64
6.2 Greyscale value – optical density linearity and its optimization .....	64
6.3 Scanner warm-up factor .....	70
6.4 Light source intensity distribution and background calibration .....	75
Chapter 7. An Assessment of Film Dosimetry Problems .....	79
7.1 Introduction .....	79
7.2 Film calibration: optical density and dose response .....	81

7.3 Film dosimetry affected by chemical, pH, temperature .....	84
7.4 Film processing artifacts .....	88
7.5 Latent image effects .....	91
7.6 Summary .....	94
Chapter 8. Uncertainty in Film Dosimetry and Resolution Accuracy .....	95
8.1 Introduction .....	95
8.2 A comparison of EDR-2 and XV-2 film .....	97
8.3 Summary .....	109
Chapter 9. <b>Radiation Oncology Dosimetry Management System (RODOMS)</b> - the development of a QA protocol .....	111
9.1 Introduction to the RODOMS QA protocol .....	111
9.2 Software overview .....	111
9.3 Summary .....	119
Chapter 10. Software Development and Functional Design .....	120
10.1 Introduction .....	120
10.2 Programming language .....	120
10.3 API interface .....	121
10.4 Image formats .....	121
10.5 Image files handling .....	123
10.6 Bitmap image storage and background value subtraction .....	125
10.7 Signal correction factors and data interpolation .....	127
10.8 Signal / noise and smoothing procedures .....	128
10.9 Film setup to beam direction angle distance correction .....	137
10.10 Curve drawing and curve fitting .....	140
10.11 Physical distance calculation and coordinate determination .....	142
10.12 Isodose tracing, isodose curve plotting and printing .....	143
10.13 3-D displays .....	146
10.14 Data saving and retrieval .....	149
10.15 Image and Graphical output .....	152
10.16 Summary .....	154
Chapter 11. Phantom Design for the Film Dosimetry .....	155
11.1 Introduction .....	155
11.2 Depth dose curves .....	156
11.3 Beam energies .....	163
11.4 IMRT phantoms .....	169

## **Clinical Applications of Film Dosimetry:-**

Chapter 12 An investigation into the source of low energy scattered radiation of significance in film dosimetry and correction technique .....	172
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12.1 Introduction .....	173
12.2 Experiments .....	177
12.3 Enhanced background correction technique .....	182
12.4 Discussion .....	184
12.5 Conclusion .....	185
Chapter 13 Dynamic Radiation Film Dosimetry .....	186
13.1 Introduction .....	186
13.2 Quality assurance and the procedures to determine the isocentre and wedge dosimetry in a dynamic radiation field .....	188
13.3 Dynamic field and 3D planning checks using a spherical phantom .....	192
13.4 Summary .....	211
Chapter 14. Electron Beam Energy Checks .....	212
14.1 Introduction .....	212
14.2 Method and material .....	214
14.3 Results .....	219
14.4 Discussion .....	220
14.5 Summary .....	222
Chapter 15. Multiple Beam Field Junction Dose Distribution Checks .....	223
15.1 Introduction .....	223
15.2 Experimental .....	226
15.3 Exposure rate correction .....	235
15.4 Discussion .....	239
15.5 Summary .....	241
Chapter 16. High Dose Rate Brachytherapy Quality Assurance Checks – Source Position and Dwell Accuracy .....	242
16.1 Introduction .....	242
16.2 Experimental .....	244
16.3 Results .....	247
16.4 Discussion .....	250
16.5 Summary .....	251
Chapter 17. Summary and Conclusion .....	252
Reference .....	257
Glossary .....	261
Appendix 1. .... The Characteristics of the four films which were involved in this study	265
Appendix 2 .....	265
Details of the processors used in the study including recommended developer temperature, development time.	

Appendix 3 .....	266
Details of the scanners used in the study including the spatial resolution, noise and contrast	
Appendix 4 .....	267
Discussion on alternative methods of area dosimetry	

## **Abstract**

This study is focused on the analysis, evaluation and calibration of low cost computer desktop scanners for possible use in film dosimetry. The study also includes the development a software package to use the digital output of such scanners for image processing. This software has matured commercially into a suite of programs named **Radiation Oncology Dosimetry Management System (RODOMS)** for use in radiotherapy quality assurance protocols. The input to the software is a bitmap image created by the scanner. The scan signal greyscale value (GSV) is converted into an optical density value (OD) and a calibration is made to the equivalent radiation doses (DOSE). The software functions include:

- Scanner signal calibration – using a standard step wedge film to set and calibrate the dynamic range and scan signal linearity
- OD vs DOSE response curve calibration – using film strips to read the optical density for different dose exposures to establish the OD-DOSE conversion curve.
- Background level uncertainty control – analysis and subtraction of the base + fog value from the film base material and the film over response to radiation scatter.
- Processing noise smoothing – polynomial and mean smoothing, alternately used to reduce the noise caused by film artifacts.
- Beam quality dependence correction – using individual OD-DOSE calibration curves to correct the exposure for a combined beam modality field film dosimetry quality assurance.
- Clinical film dosimetry analysis – graphic user interface (GUI) designed program for radiation field quality assurance in advanced comparison of 3-D and IMRT dose distribution analysis. This includes the IMRT field with the planning computer curve overlaid for a comparative analysis.

Dosimetry phantoms have been designed and used in the testing and evaluation of RODOMS. The software is currently in clinical use in several radiotherapy centers in Australia and Asian countries. The clinical results give

on average a  $\pm 3\%$  uncertainty level in most of the clinical cases compared with the ionization or TLD measurement results of up to  $\pm 5\%$ . By using this software in a variety of clinical situations it is shown in this study that the traditional uncertainty levels in film dosimetry have been significantly reduced.