

NeuroSENSE[®] Monitor with WAV_{CNS} Cortical Quantifier:

A Deterministic Approach to EEG Analysis

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ABSTRACT – Brain function monitoring has been shown to provide additional insight for the assessment and optimization of the anesthetic drugs administration.

Since 2003, NeuroWave Systems Inc. has been developing the NeuroSENSE[®], a bilateral hemisphere monitor of patient's brain activity for the anesthesia specialty. The NeuroSENSE incorporates the WAV_{CNS} technology for automated EEG quantification.

The WAV_{CNS} (Wavelet-based Anesthetic Value for Central Nervous System) utilizes wavelet analysis of the normalized EEG signal in the gamma frequency band. This EEG quantifier was intentionally developed for future use in closed-loop anesthesia delivery systems. As such, the WAV_{CNS} method employs a deterministic algorithm, which yields a delay-free, linear and time-invariant quantifier of cortical activity. The WAV_{CNS} algorithm has been fully disclosed in [23].

This white paper provides interested readers with more information about the WAV_{CNS} technology, the NeuroSENSE monitor and its use.

With the discovery of the effect of cyclopropane on brainwaves in the late 1930's came the realization that electroencephalogram (EEG) signals could be used effectively to monitor the effect of anesthetic drugs. Since then, unlocking the hidden message behind the EEG waveforms has been the subject of intense research.

Progress in the use of EEG to quantify anesthetic drug effect happened rapidly, with the first EEG-based closed-loop delivery system developed and tested in the early

1950's by Bickford and his colleagues. Yet, due to a simplistic burst suppression detection mechanism, the burgeoning technology did not expand beyond the Mayo Clinic and remained a technological curiosity.

For the following 20 years, researchers used different time series analysis techniques to determine anesthetic depth. But none of these techniques could be used reliably across patients and anesthetic drug regimen to provide a viable quantifier.

In the mid-1970's, progress in computing science enabled researchers to use the spectral analysis in order to extract frequency information from the EEG signal. This opened a new era for the use of EEG in anesthesia, which culminated with the development of the Spectral Edge Frequency and Median Edge Frequency indexes. Yet, once again, repeatability of these measures was limited between patients and across anesthetic regimens.

It is only in the early 1990's that changes in both time and frequency content of the EEG signals were found to be complementary. For instance, with increasing drug concentration, certain EEG frequency components tend to synchronize by shifting their phase (i.e., the offset of the sine wave from a reference point in time). Larger and more obvious changes in the EEG amplitude occur only at higher concentrations. This observation led to the use of bispectral analysis to capture these early phase shifts. The bispectral variables best able to discriminate between different sedation levels were supplemented by traditional power spectral measures. These features were further combined using multivariate statistical modeling to form a single, composite index bounded between 0 and 100. The Bispectral Index¹ thus provides an interpretation of the EEG waveform based on a learn-and-test approach using a training database of EEG segments and associated clinically derived sedation levels.

The commercialization of the first brain function monitor for anesthesia in the late 1990's yielded a realization that monitoring the brain may provide a number of advantages directly related to patient outcome. In essence, brain function monitoring used as a supplement provides additional information to help deliver adequate levels of anesthesia. This, in turn, may help reduce the risks of intra-operative awareness, post-operative nausea and vomiting, delayed emergence and recovery, and prolonged stay in post-anesthesia care units. Recent research has also shown that maintaining patients at too deep anesthetic levels can be associated with an increased 1-year post-operative mortality rate. In fact, brain monitoring provides anesthesiologists with an additional, more direct means for assessing drug effect and adjusting titration accordingly. Such technologies are hence a step

towards the customization of anesthetic administration according to the patient specific needs.

The Need and Motivation for a Deterministic Approach to Cortical Activity Quantification

In 2001, a research group at the University of British Columbia (UBC - Vancouver, Canada) was formed to introduce the benefits of industrial process control technologies to the anesthesia practice. The research team was composed of experts and scientists in process control, anesthesia, pharmacology and therapeutics. One of the main goals of the group was to assess the feasibility of a reliable closed-loop anesthesia drug delivery system and to establish the path for its future development.

The success of any closed-loop system is intimately linked to the performance of the feedback sensor used to measure the controlled output. In the case of anesthesia delivery, an EEG-based monitor that quantifies the physiological effect of the administered drug can be used as a sensor. However, the industrial process control theory shows that interpretative feedback sensors are difficult to use reliably since they often introduce discontinuities, variable time delays, and other non-linearities. For an EEG-based monitor, this can result in an inaccurate and/or delayed interpretation during sudden changes in cortical activity due to, e.g., a sudden change in drug administration or change in surgical stimulation. As a result, when regulating the patient's cortical state, the control action (i.e., adjustments in anesthetic delivery) needs to be slowed down in order to account for the limitations in the sensing technology. Consequently, the overall regulation of anesthetic delivery would be less than optimal. A non-linear sensor further implies that the stability of the control system cannot be evaluated mathematically and hence, a large effort in empirical tuning, testing and validation is required. Thus, future evolutions of automated anesthesia drug delivery systems are limited without first improving the feedback technology used for sensing, i.e., the EEG-based monitor that quantifies the physiological effect of the administered drug.

In addition, the limitations of interpretative indexes for the future closed-loop systems may also affect their clinical performance when used as a guide for titration of anesthetics, or to assess the patient's anesthetic state. The

¹ Bispectral Index is a trademark of Aspect Medical Systems, Inc.

UBC group thus concluded that a better suited cortical quantifier should be based on a deterministic, instead of interpretative, approach to EEG analysis, where multiple features and their combination into a composite index should be avoided. In this context, a deterministic approach refers to a method of computation that always produces the same result for a given EEG segment. Therefore, for a given EEG segment, the output of a deterministic computation method is fully predictable.

The WAV_{CNS} Cortical Quantifier

In the late 1990's, a new signal processing approach that could simultaneously track changes in both time and frequency was developed and made practical for real-time implementation: Wavelet analysis. Since then, this methodology has been applied to a wide variety of biomedical applications and has proven to be particularly well suited for the analysis of spontaneous EEG activity. In October 2001, the UBC group published a first conference paper [28] describing the new Wavelet-based Anesthetic Value (WAV). This early publication was followed by a comprehensive manuscript in 2006 [23], where the algorithm was fully disclosed.

The major finding of the UBC group was that the wavelet information associated with the gamma² frequencies (32-64 Hz) of normalized³ EEG signal can be statistically represented in a form of a Probability Density Function (PDF), which shape evolves from a flat and wide envelope to a sharp and narrow spike, see Fig. 1. The flat and wide envelope is typical for EEG signals acquired from fully conscious and awake subjects, while the sharp and narrow spike represents an isoelectric EEG signal (i.e., when all cortical activity is fully suppressed). Furthermore, the evolution between these two shapes is consistent with an increasing anesthetic drug effect on the cortical state, and is fully reversible when the drug plasma concentration

² In fact, recent research has associated EEG gamma frequencies with mechanisms of conscious awareness.

³ Normalization of EEG signal removes the influence of amplitude from signal analysis, and also incorporates other non-gamma frequency components into the analysis. Since deepening anesthesia is associated with increasing power of lower EEG frequencies, amplitude normalization results in decreasing gamma content of normalized EEG.

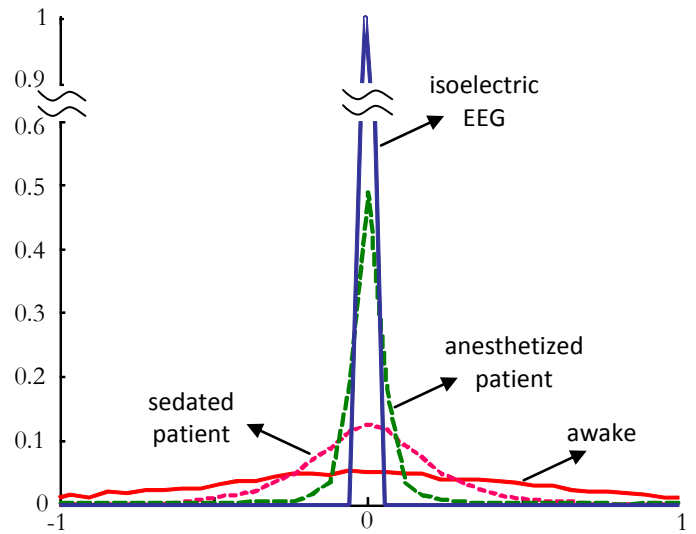


Fig. 1 – Probability Density Functions (PDFs) of EEG waveforms obtained from patients at different level of anesthetic-induced cortical depression. Note how the shape of the function changes in a predictable fashion as the anesthetic drug effect changes, from flat and wide to sharp and narrow.

decreases. In order to quantify the cortical state based on a given EEG segment, its corresponding PDF is compared with the two reference PDFs: awake and isoelectric, see Fig. 2. A convenient characteristic of PDFs is that the area under the curve is always equal to 1. Thus, the comparison between the observed PDF and the two reference PDFs yields a bounded and dimensionless index, the WAV_{CNS}, which expresses how far the observed EEG has evolved from either reference endpoint.

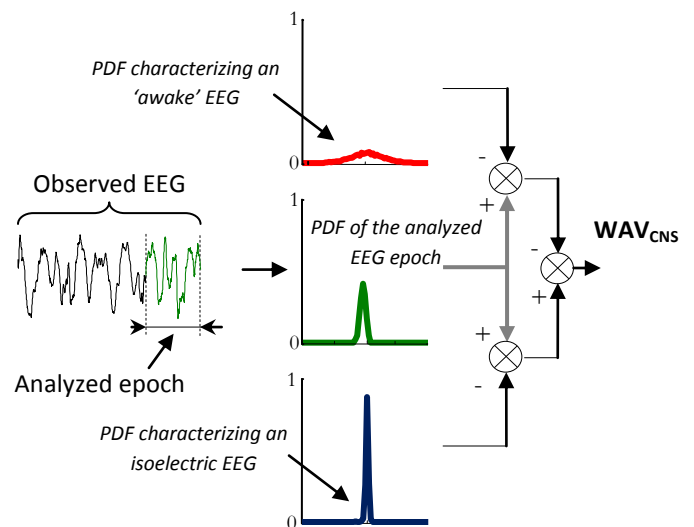


Fig. 2 – Overview of the WAV_{CNS} algorithm.

One of the important advantages of the WAV_{CNS} method is that it can easily be implemented in real time, based on very short EEG segments. The ability of the wavelet analysis to characterize changes in both time and frequency enables the WAV_{CNS} quantifier to rapidly capture fast changes in cortical activity, which more traditional spectral analyses are typically unable to track timely. The current algorithm uses a 1-second EEG epoch resulting in a per-second actualization rate of the WAV_{CNS} quantifier that instantly responds to the changes in patient state. A post-analysis trending filter is further applied to the WAV_{CNS} in order to attenuate the measurement noise and extract the trend. An advanced trending filter was designed to provide a high frequency noise rejection superior to averaging filters, resulting in a smoother trend.

The WAV_{CNS} index is further scaled into the 100-0 range familiar to clinicians, where 100 denotes a brain state consistent with an awake patient, and 0 denotes the total and prolonged absence of cortical activity.

The WAV_{CNS} Scale

Initial clinical data suggested that the WAV_{CNS} scale is similar to that of the BIS index (trademark of Aspect Medical Systems, Inc.) [23],[48]. For instance, a 2002 clinical study involving 25 knee surgery cases, which aimed at comparing the WAV_{CNS} and BIS technologies, revealed that the WAV_{CNS} scale closely agrees to that of BIS (v.3.4), see for example Fig. 3. The correlation coefficient across all patients included in the study was 0.969 [23]. The Bland-Altman analysis performed on steady state data points [48] further suggested equivalence

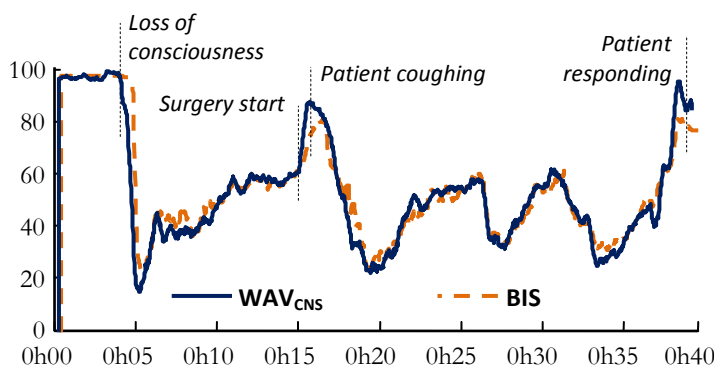


Fig. 3 – Example of the WAV_{CNS} and BIS (v.3.4) time courses in an arthroscopy case (adapted from [48]).

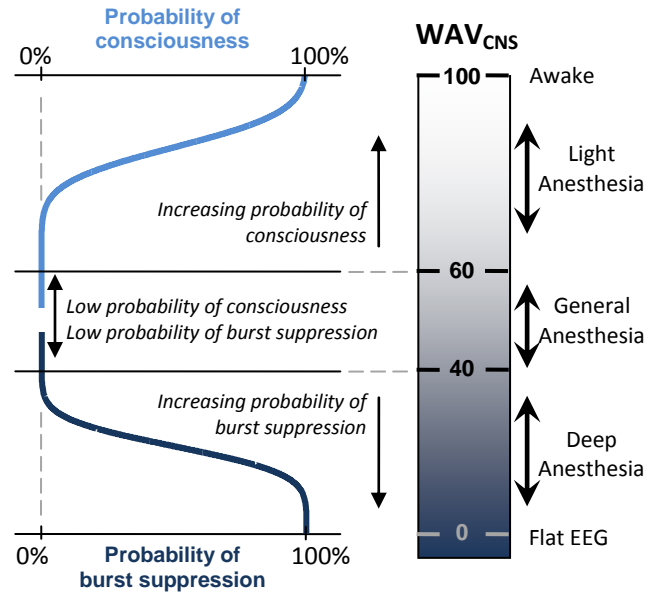


Fig. 4 – WAV_{CNS} Scale. The recommended WAV_{CNS} range for general anesthesia is between 40 and 60 as within this range there is a very low probability of a patient being either awake or in deep anesthetic state as characterized by the presence of burst suppression (adapted from [29]).

of the two scales. The bias between the two indexes was 1.4, and the 95% confidence intervals were [-9.8 ; +12.5].

The WAV_{CNS} clinical guidelines were derived on additional clinical data [31] and are presented in Fig. 4. The optimal range for anesthesia maintenance was found

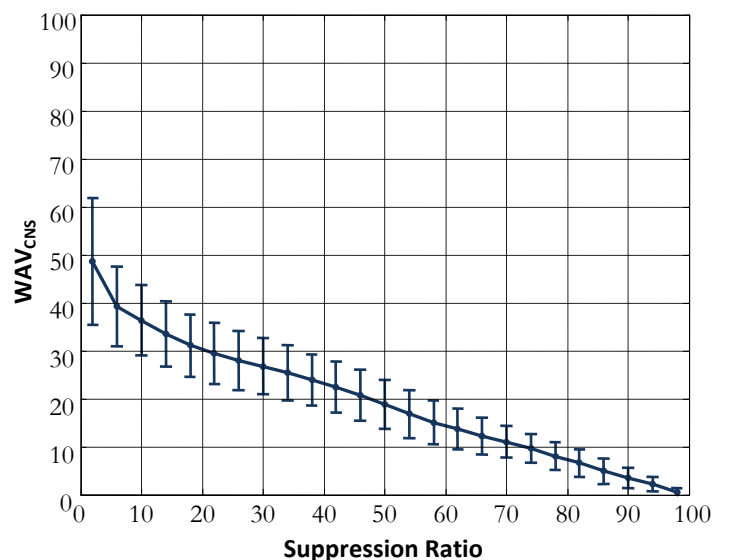


Fig. 5 – Effect of suppression on the WAV_{CNS} (mean index value ± standard deviation) (adapted from [32]).

to be between 40 and 60. Any level below 40 may be an indication that the patient is too deep, while levels above 60 may indicate increased chances for intra-operative awareness. However, it is important to note that the appropriate cortical depth target is always a function of the patient, the requirements of the surgery and the intensity of the next surgical stimulus.

Figure 5 shows the behavior of the WAV_{CNS} index in presence of burst suppression. The index exhibits a desirable, monotonously decreasing characteristic with increasing levels of suppression [32].

A Delay-Free Response

An important distinguishing factor of the WAV_{CNS} quantifier is the deterministic approach used in its derivation. The main innovation is the wavelet-based quantification of the cortical activity where each segment of EEG is processed using a unique method of computation that does not depend on the current or past values of the patient state. This approach inherently avoids any interpretation of the EEG signal via expert-type systems, such as neural network classifier, weight-based discriminant analysis, fuzzy logic, etc. Consequently, regardless the current status of the patient state, any rapid cortical change will start to be reflected by the WAV_{CNS} within 1 second of the change onset. As such, the algorithm does not introduce any delay in the quantification of the patient’s cortical state.

Clinically, the instantaneous response of the WAV_{CNS} can be easily observed, e.g., during anesthesia induction, where the patient’s cortical state evolves rapidly from conscious state to a level suitable for airway management,

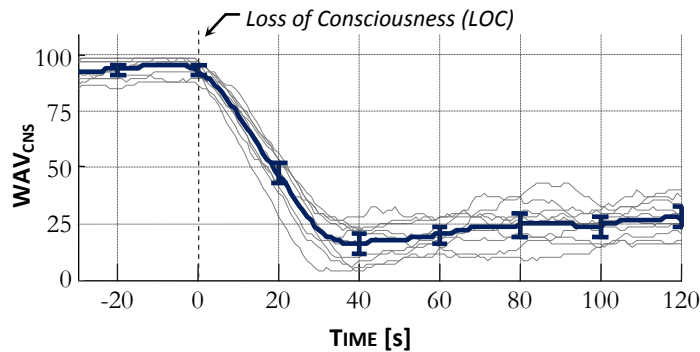


Fig. 6 – WAV_{CNS} time courses during induction (adapted from [23]).

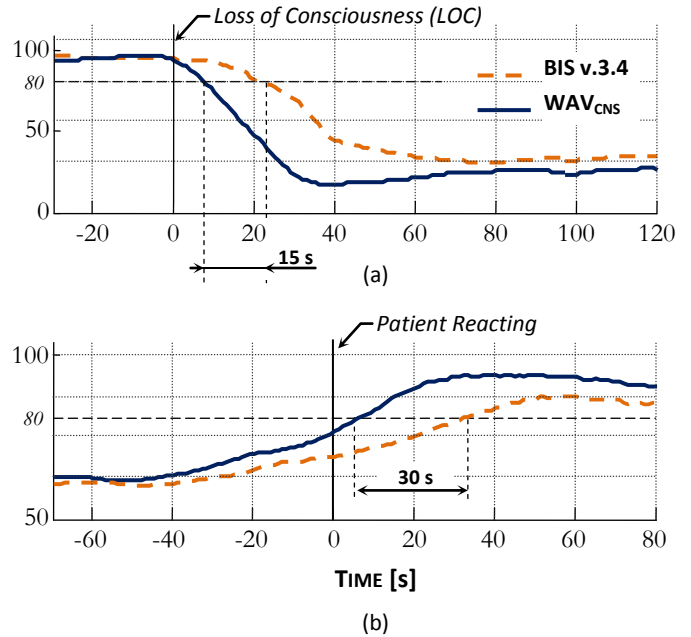


Fig. 7 – Comparison between WAV_{CNS} and BIS during (a) induction and (b) emergence. Individual time courses were synchronized based on the loss of consciousness and the patient reacting event. Crossing the 80 level was considered to be a significant event for both loss and return of consciousness (adapted from [23]).

see **Fig. 6**. The UBC group has further shown that the WAV_{CNS} quantifier leads the BIS (v.3.4) index during both loss and return of consciousness by a significant margin of 15 and 30 seconds on average respectively, see **Fig. 7**. This

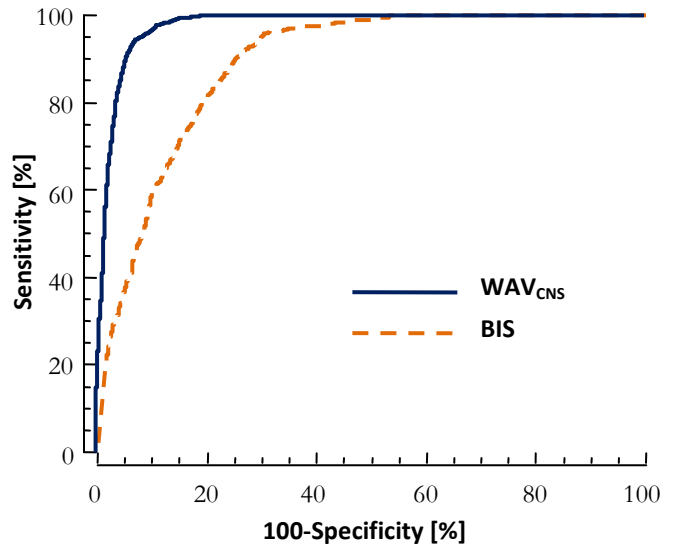


Fig. 8 – Performance comparison of the WAV_{CNS} and BIS during propofol induction (data from 54 patients and 2 channels). The ROC curves show the superior performance of WAV_{CNS} in discriminating between conscious and unconscious state (adapted from [42]).

result is a direct consequence of a delay-free per-second quantification of the cortical state.

With an aim to further explore the rapid quantification of the cortical state during induction, the UBC group conducted a study designed to assess the performance of the WAV_{CNS} for determining whether a patient has lost consciousness after a standard bolus-based propofol induction. It was found that 95% of patients had lost consciousness under a WAV_{CNS} level of 72 [42]. The PK prediction probabilities were 0.975 for the WAV_{CNS}, and 0.890 for the BIS (v.3.4). The difference in performance between the two systems was further demonstrated through a standard sensitivity/specificity analysis, see Fig. 8. The limited performance of the BIS, assessed by the comparison of the ROC curves, could be explained by its lag at induction. We also believe that this result illustrates the potential of the WAV_{CNS} to help detect instances of consciousness during anesthesia procedures.

A Known Transient Behavior

A particularly important advantage of the WAV_{CNS} quantifier lies in its consistent and well-defined transient behavior during cortical changes. The WAV_{CNS} always exhibits the same, delay-free response to changes in cortical activity, regardless of the anesthetic level or the amplitude of change. The only dynamic difference between the physiological effect and its quantification through the WAV_{CNS} algorithm is due to the post-analysis trending filter, which is well-defined, linear and time-invariant.

This characteristic can be captured through a simple test. A signal composed of random EEG segments obtained from patients at different anesthetic levels (awake, sedated, anesthetized, deep, and isoelectric) is used as input to the WAV_{CNS} quantifier. The resulting WAV_{CNS} levels are then used to identify a model describing its transient behavior, see Fig. 9. In case of the WAV_{CNS}, there exists a linear time-invariant function that adequately predicts the evolution of the index [36].

In contrast, Fig. 9 also illustrates the limited fit obtained with the BIS index. We believe that its apparent non-linearity and time-variance may pose limitations for its use

in, e.g., pharmacodynamic (PD) modeling or closed-loop anesthesia delivery.

Conversely, the existence of a reliable mathematical function relating a physiological change in drug effect and its corresponding quantification by the WAV_{CNS} entitles researchers to derive PD drug models independent of the monitor used to observe the effect. This essentially means that the effect of the monitoring technology can be mathematically removed from the model. Therefore, these models can be identified in such a way that they describe the real physiological effect of the administered drugs.

In that respect, the UBC group developed a new PD modeling approach based on the WAV_{CNS} quantifier [38]. They have shown that, by using only data obtained during induction, they could adequately model propofol pharmacodynamics [37]. They have further shown that, contrary to published models, the effect rate constant k_{e0} is significantly higher when the transient behavior introduced by the cortical monitor is removed from the

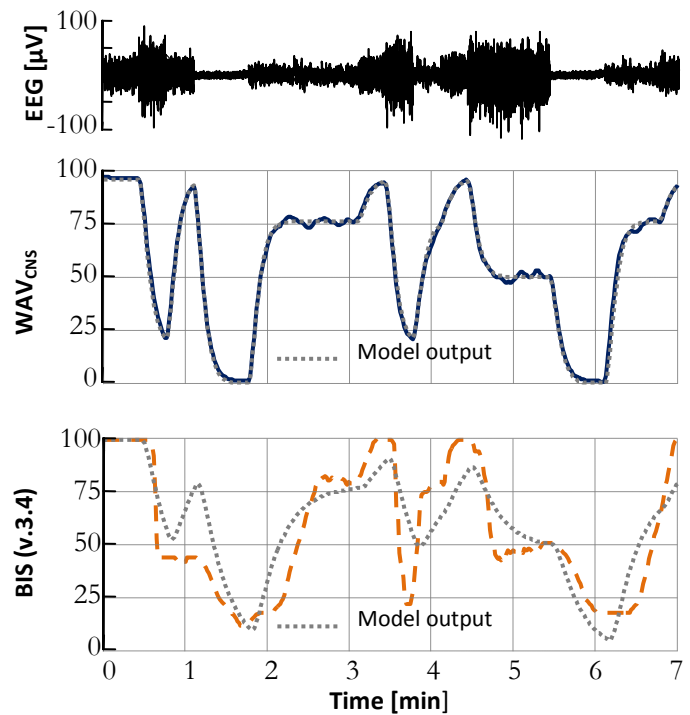


Fig. 9 – Transitory behavior of the WAV_{CNS} and BIS for large and rapid cortical changes. A linear time-invariant model was identified for the two indexes. The large difference between the model output and the BIS index indicates that the BIS index cannot be adequately described by a linear time-invariant function (adapted from [36]).

identification data. This suggests that the equilibration time constant between the plasma concentration of propofol and the physiological effect is much faster than initially anticipated [44].

In addition to PD modeling, the WAV_{CNS} quantifier is also a good candidate for use within a closed-loop framework. The fact that its transient behavior is linear and time-invariant allows for a more aggressive control design, and therefore optimized performance.

The NeuroSENSE® Monitor

In 2003, the UBC technology was licensed to the NeuroWave Division of Cleveland Medical Devices Inc. (Cleveland, OH, USA), a medical device manufacturer specializing in portable electrophysiological monitors. In 2007, the Division was incorporated into NeuroWave Systems Inc., a company dedicated to advanced EEG signal acquisition and processing for neuromonitoring applications.

Since 2003, NeuroWave has been actively working on the development of the NeuroSENSE monitor (see Fig. 10), which integrates the WAV_{CNS} technology and is dedicated to cortical monitoring during anesthesia and sedation.

The NeuroSENSE acquires and processes 2 frontal EEG signals. The device was specifically designed for use in electrically hostile environments, such as the Operating Room (OR). The EEG acquisition module, referred to as Patient Module, integrates cardiac defibrillation protection, electro-surgical interference detection and filtering, and continuous impedance check of the electrode-skin contact. It was also designed with a low noise profile ($< 0.3 \mu V_{rms}$) for accurate detection of electro-cortical silence, and a large bandwidth (0.125 to 300 Hz) for improved artifact detection. The Patient Module acquires EEG data from 2 frontal channels at a sampling rate of 900 samples/second and resolution of 16 bits. It is designed to be attached to an IV pole and positioned close to the patient's head in order to minimize motion artifacts, and ensure data integrity and reliability. A data cable links the Patient Module to the NeuroSENSE Display Module, which displays the high-resolution EEG tracings, hosts the touch-screen user interface and stores the data archive of cases.

In addition to the advantages provided by the WAV_{CNS} technology (i.e., delay-free, linear and time-invariant response to cortical changes), the NeuroSENSE monitor offers clinicians and researchers a number of beneficial features:

- **Bilateral monitoring:** the NeuroSENSE acquires 2 frontal EEG channels corresponding to the left and right temple areas that are referenced to the F_{pz} electrode location. The WAV_{CNS} is calculated, trended and displayed for both channels.

The left and right channels are in general very similar during anesthesia. However, some differences are to be expected. In the absence of unilateral brain pathology and with good signal quality, the level of agreement between the WAV_{CNS} indexes for the left and right cerebral hemispheres is typically within ± 8 units with a negligible bias [33], in comparison to ± 15 units for the BIS index. Furthermore, if we consider only sustained differences in anesthetic depth (at least 30s in duration), only 2.22% of WAV_{CNS} readings suggested different depths as compared to 8.03% for BIS.

In [43], we have assessed the bilateral reproducibility of the WAV_{CNS} and BIS (v.3.4) specifically during



Fig. 10 – NeuroSENSE Monitor (model NS-701).

anesthesia induction in 57 patients. The 95% limits of agreement, as defined by a standard Bland-Altman analysis, were [-12 ; +11] for the WAV_{CNS}, and [-18 ; +19] for the BIS. Hemispheric discrepancy where channels diverged for more than 10 units (20 units) occurred in 9% (<1%) of the time for WAV_{CNS} vs. 19% (6%) of the time for BIS [43].

In addition, discrepancies may be expected as a result of, e.g., an underlying neurological pathology, or due to a focal disruption in blood flow and/or oxygenation (e.g., during cardio-vascular procedures, see for instance Fig. 11).

Differences between channels may also arise when one channel is strongly perturbed by environmental noise. This situation is typically resolved by improving the electrode impedances, and/or moving away potential sources of electromagnetic interferences (e.g., warmers).

Finally, in our experience, sudden differences between the two channels may also be related to a marked increase in EMG activity in the channel with the higher WAV_{CNS} value.

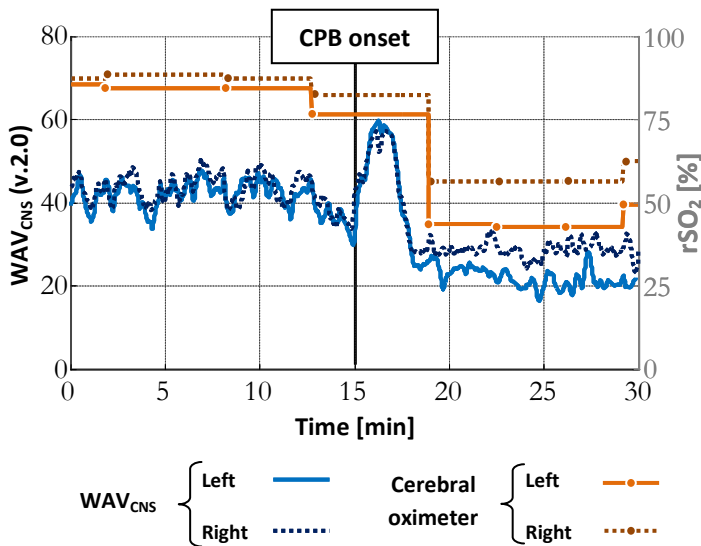


Fig. 11 – Bilateral WAV_{CNS} during onset of cardio-pulmonary bypass. In this case, a significant depression of the cortical state can be observed after the bypass was initiated. A sustained moderate hemispheric asymmetry followed. These observations were confirmed by the INVOS™ cerebral oximeter (adapted from [41]).

As compared to unilateral monitoring, we believe that bilateral monitoring provides a more comprehensive insight into the patient’s state. We further believe that neuromonitoring during anesthesia should not ignore any one hemisphere. Further research needs to be conducted to establish the benefits of bilateral monitoring.

- **Automated artifact detection and removal:** the NeuroSENSE also incorporates advanced algorithms for artifact recognition and removal including ocular activity, epileptic spikes and electro-surgical interference detection [3],[4]. These algorithms also provide signal quality assessment through continuous electrode-skin impedance and electromagnetic interference measurements. The system is fully automated and warns users if the signal quality and/or artifacts prevent the accurate quantification of the cortical state.
- **User-accessible case data:** all raw EEG signals and processed data are systematically archived for later review. Users can access the data files, which include the full 900 samples/second resolution EEG, directly through the NeuroSENSE user interface. In addition, real-time processed data are available through the Ethernet port for easy integration in advisory and/or closed-loop systems.

CONCLUSION

The WAV_{CNS} technology provides a deterministic approach to EEG quantification. Conversely to interpretative indexes, the WAV_{CNS} quantifier is delay-free with respect to its response to cortical changes. It is also characterized by a linear and time-invariant transitory behavior, which allows the WAV_{CNS} to be optimally used in pharmacodynamic studies and closed-loop systems.

The NeuroSENSE monitor, which incorporates the WAV_{CNS} technology and bilateral hemisphere monitoring, provides clinicians and researchers with an easy-to-use and robust cortical monitoring platform. Built around the WAV_{CNS} technology, we believe that the NeuroSENSE represents a technological step forward in brain function monitoring during anesthesia.

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