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# Effective diffusion tensor computed by homogenization

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## Introduction

Diffusion MRI can give useful information on cellular structure and structural change (for a review see [1]). We show that the effective diffusion tensor obtained by mathematical homogenization theory (see e.g. [2,3]) is a good approximation to the long time apparent diffusion tensor under realistic DMR scanning conditions for both isotropic and anisotropic diffusion and general geometries. The homogenized diffusion tensor is obtained by solving three steady-state Laplace equations, which is a more computationally efficient approach than long time simulation in the time domain, either via Monte-Carlo simulation or numerical solution of the time-dependent Bloch-Torrey PDE.

## Theory

In the two-compartment model, we consider the two compartments,  $\Omega^i$  and  $\Omega^e$ , to be the ensemble of cells and the extra-cellular compartment, respectively. The two compartments have the same intrinsic diffusion coefficient  $D$ . The cell membrane is modeled by an infinitely thin permeable interface characterized by permeability  $\kappa$ . Given the diffusion gradient with profile  $f(t)$  and gradient strength  $\vec{g} := \vec{q} / \gamma$ , where  $\gamma$  is the gyro-magnetic ratio, the DMRI signal attenuation is  $\Psi(\vec{q}, t)$ , from which we define the apparent diffusion tensor  $D^A$  from the Taylor expansion in  $\vec{q}$ :

$\log \Psi(\vec{q}, t) = -\vec{q}^T D^A \vec{q} \int_0^t \int_s^u f(s) ds + O(\|\vec{q}\|^4)$ . The long time limit of  $D^A$  can be well approximated by the effective diffusion tensor of homogenization,

$$D^{eff} = \begin{pmatrix} D_{11}^{eff} & D_{12}^{eff} & D_{13}^{eff} \\ D_{21}^{eff} & D_{22}^{eff} & D_{23}^{eff} \\ D_{31}^{eff} & D_{32}^{eff} & D_{33}^{eff} \end{pmatrix} \text{ where } D_{jk}^{eff} = D \int_{\Omega} \nabla v_j \cdot \vec{e}_k d\vec{x}, \quad \vec{e}_k \text{ is the unit vector in the } k\text{th coordinate}$$

direction and the unknown function  $v_j$  can be found by solving the Laplace equation on the right over the box  $\Omega = [0, l_1] \times [0, l_2] \times [0, l_3]$  which contains a representation sample of the cellular structure. In an nearly isotropic medium,  $D^{eff}$  is nearly diagonal and all the diagonal entries are close to each other. But in the general anisotropic case, the eigenvalues of  $D^{eff}$  are not equal to each other.

## Results and discussion

Simulated DMRI signals were obtained for the PGSE sequence with  $\delta=10\text{ms}$  and  $\Delta=10\text{ms}$ ,  $50\text{ms}$  and  $190\text{ms}$  in two gradient directions  $\vec{q} / \|\vec{q}\|^2 = [1, 0]$ , and  $[0, 1]$  (2D case) and  $\delta=10\text{ms}$  and  $\Delta=10\text{ms}$  and  $90\text{ms}$  in three gradient directions  $\vec{q} / \|\vec{q}\|^2 = [1, 0, 0]$ ,  $[0, 1, 0]$  and  $[0, 0, 1]$  (3D case) by numerically solving the two-compartment Bloch-Torrey partial differential equation on a sample  $\Omega = [-40; 40]^d$  ( $d = 2, 3$ ) containing numerous convex cells in two dimensions with volume fraction  $v^i=0.88$ , average surface to volume ratio  $S/V=0.51\mu\text{m}^{-1}$  (Fig 1) and convex-shaped cells in three dimensions (Fig 2) with  $v^i=0.66$ ,  $S/V=0.34\mu\text{m}^{-1}$ . The average radius of cells is  $3.9\mu\text{m}$  for 2D and  $8.8\mu\text{m}$  for 3D. We simulated the DMRI signal for  $D=2.8 \cdot 10^{-3} \mu\text{m}^2/\mu\text{s}$  and  $\kappa=10^{-5} \mu\text{m}/\mu\text{s}$  and  $\kappa=10^{-4} \mu\text{m}/\mu\text{s}$ , giving computed ADCs of between  $0.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$  and  $2.2 \cdot 10^{-3} \mu\text{m}^2/\mu\text{s}$  (3D case). In Table 1 and 2 we see the simulated apparent diffusion tensor  $D^A$  approaches the steady-state tensor  $D^{eff}$  computed by the homogenization method described above. The convergence of  $D^A$  to  $D^{eff}$  is faster at higher permeability. The calculation of  $D^{eff}$  for 3D took between 10 minutes to two hours for spatial discretizations of between  $80 \times 80 \times 80$  and  $160 \times 160 \times 160$  on a Dell Latitude E6410 laptop computer (Intel(R) Core(TM) i7 CPU M640 @ 2.8GHz).

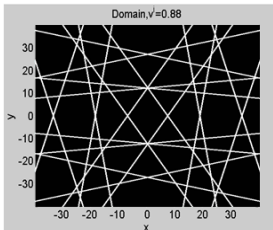


Fig 1. Convex cells with average radius  $3.9\mu\text{m}$ , volume fraction  $v^i=0.88$

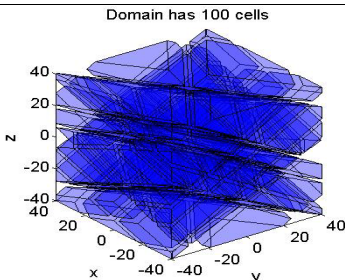


Fig 2. Convex cells with average radius  $8.8\mu\text{m}$  and volume fraction  $v^i=0.66$ .

		$\kappa=10^{-4} \mu\text{m}/\mu\text{s}$			$\kappa=10^{-5} \mu\text{m}/\mu\text{s}$			
		$\vec{q}^T D^A \vec{q}$			$\vec{q}^T D^A \vec{q}$			$\vec{q}^T D^{eff} \vec{q}$
$\vec{q}$		$\delta=10, \Delta=10$	$\delta=10, \Delta=50$	$\delta=10, \Delta=190$	$\delta=10, \Delta=10$	$\delta=10, \Delta=50$	$\delta=10, \Delta=190$	
(1,0)		$1.1 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$8.3 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$7.5 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$7.1 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$8.3 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$4.5 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$3.2 \cdot 10^{-4}$
(0,1)		$1.1 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$8.8 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$7.9 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$7.6 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$8.9 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$4.8 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$3.3 \cdot 10^{-4}$

Table 1. The simulated apparent diffusion tensor  $D^A$  approaches the steady-state tensor  $D^{eff}$  computed by homogenization (2D case).

		$\kappa=10^{-4} \mu\text{m}/\mu\text{s}$			$\kappa=10^{-5} \mu\text{m}/\mu\text{s}$		
		$\vec{q}^T D^A \vec{q}$			$\vec{q}^T D^A \vec{q}$		
$\vec{q}$		$\delta=10, \Delta=10$	$\delta=10, \Delta=90$		$\delta=10, \Delta=10$	$\delta=10, \Delta=90$	
(1,0,0)		$1.7 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.6 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.4 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-3}$
(0,1,0)		$2.2 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$2.1 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$2.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$2.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.2 \cdot 10^{-3}$
(0,0,1)		$1.2 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$1.0 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$0.8 \cdot 10^{-4}$	$0.5 \cdot 10^{-3}$	$0.4 \cdot 10^{-3}$

Table 2. The simulated apparent diffusion tensor  $D^A$  approaches the steady-state tensor  $D^{eff}$  computed by homogenization (3D case).

## References

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