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Xiangbo LIN

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# Knowledge-based image segmentation using deformable registration: application to brain MRI images.

## Directeurs de thèse Su RUAN; Frédéric MORAIN-NICOLIER; Tianshuang QIU

#### Jury

M. Kaihua LIU Mme. Mireille GARREAU M. Fuliang YIN Mme. Su RUAN M. Frédéric MORAIN-NICOLIER M. Tianshuang QIU

Rapporteur Rapporteur Examinateur Directrice co-directeur Directeur

Tianjin Univ. Univ.de Rennes I Dalian Univ. of Technology Univ. de Reims Univ. de Reims Dalian Univ. of Technology

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## Introduction

#### 1 Aim of the dissertation

Image registration can be described as finding an optimal spatial transformation for matching the source image to the target image [1]. It is an important issue in image processing, analyzing and understanding domains. Among different applications, medical image registration is a very important aspect [2][3][4]. With the development of medical imaging, different imaging technologies have been widely used in clinical diagnosis. Images of different modalities contain different information. They are usually complementary. Therefore, to acquire comprehensive information of pathological tissues or structures, fusing images of different modalities is a critical way. Successful image fusion depends on accurate image registration, which is usually named intermodality registration. Another application of medical image registration is intra-modality registration. It is often used to track disease evolvement and to evaluate the treatment effects. In addition, it can also be used to compare population differences by segmenting and reconstructing region of interests. This dissertation aims at researching intra-modality image registration techniques and segmenting organs or structures from MRI images based on this approach.

#### 2 Method description

Registration based image segmentation methods rely on a reference image volume with a corresponding atlas in which structures of interest have been carefully segmented by experts. To segment a new image volume, a transformation that registers the reference volume to the target volume is computed, which gives a spatial correspondence between the two image volumes. Then regions labeled in the atlas can be projected onto the volume of interest using the obtained transformation. Hence the segmentation problem is converted to a registration problem [5][6][7]. Because the source image with segmented structures (the atlas) does not generally come from the same subject as the target image, non-rigid image registration should be a suitable choice, which reflects the nonlinear relations between the reference image and the target image. Figure 1 describes the flowchart of such registration-segmentation medical image segmentation method.

#### 3 Main works of the dissertation

Medical image registration is far from a solved problem. Although there have been some encouraging results, further improvements are needed for high quality image registration. Our research focuses on intensity based nonrigid registration methods. Intensity based methods perform well in many applications. However, they are problematic when there are significant intensity differences. These differences might come from different acquisition processes or inherent anatomical differences between individuals. So our first work is to perform intensity and geometric normalization to get a good initial match after studying Demons non-rigid registration carefully. Our second work focus on researching topology preserved non-rigid registration method. Because our final goal is to segment normal structures of different individuals, it is important to ensure the obtained spatial transformation accurate, robust and physically reasonable. So the topology preservation attributes of a deformation field have to be considered carefully. It has been recognized that only image intensity information is used in the cost function for matching under the constraint of a smooth deformation field is insufficient in some applications. Mismatch often occurs at that case, which will degrade the segmentation quality. To solve the problem, we propose a new non-rigid registration algorithm integrates intensity and feature knowledge. That is our third main work.

The dissertation organization is as follows

Chapter 1 -Non-rigid registration: stat of the art

Review of non-rigid registration methods and study on Demons algorithm.

Chapter 2 –Image Registration Considering Simultaneous Intensity and Spatial Normalization Proposition of a registration method based on Demons algorithm and general elastic registration algorithm. This method carries out both intensity and spatial normalizations simultaneously.

Chapter 3 – Topology preserved Demons Algorithm

Study on topology preservation problem of non-rigid registration and proposition of a topology preserved Demons registration algorithm on the basis of analyzing the geometrical features of a vector field.

Chapter 4 –Hybrid intensity and shape features non-rigid registration: segmenting internal nuclei from brain MRI images

Proposition of a new registration method to segment adjacent tiny structures with similar intensities.

- Conclusions and perspectives



Figure 1The flow chart of registration-segmentation method

## Chapter 1 Non-rigid registration: state of the art

#### 1.1 Review of Non-rigid registration

Non-rigid registration is local nonlinear registration method. The obtained spatial transformation has high degree of freedom and describes the localized differences between two data sets [8][9]. According to the used image properties, non-rigid medical image registration are classified into *feature based* registration, *intensity based* registration and *hybrid intensity and feature based* registration techniques [3][8][9][10].

*Feature based* methods attempt to extract the contours or surfaces of anatomical structures in the images to be registered, and find correspondence between them [11][12][13][14]. They are efficient in representation and independent of imaging modality. Point based registrations have been widely researched. The representative algorithms include affine registration [15], Talairach transformation [16], elastic spline [11], thin-plate spline [12], and so on. Curve based registrations are also active research topics, especially gyrus and sulcus features used in human brain MRI image registrations [13][17]. For medical image registrations [18]. Recently, a new proposed HAMMER algorithm [19] promoted the development of feature based registrations greatly. The introduced GMI attributes provided a flexible frame for other relative researches [20][14]. However, feature based registration is dependent on the quality of feature extraction, which is not trivial since anatomical structures tend to have complex shapes and ill defined boundaries.

Intensity based registration methods obviate the need for explicit feature extraction or segmentation. They have excellent performances in intra-modality registration and are paid more attentions by researchers [9] [21] [22] [23] [24]. Based on the mathematical or statistical principles, the intensity statistical properties of all the voxels are used directly to perform the registration. The similarity measure between the source image and the target image reflects the intensity correspondence of the two images. Intensity based registrations come from two main categories according to their theoretical basis: those originate from physical models of materials and those originate from interpolation and approximation theory. The researches related to the two categories are very active at present. The main algorithms based on physical models of materials include linear elasticity model [25][26], viscous fluid flow model [27][28], optical flow model [29] [30]and continuum mechanics model [31]. The main algorithms based on interpolation and approximation theory include radial basis functions expansion [32], B-

splines functions expansion [33], wavelets functions expansion [34], and so on. Nevertheless, it is not sure that the optimized solution leads to anatomically consistent transformations.

Both *feature based* registration and *intensity based* registration have their own unique advantages, but they also have their deficiencies. So *hybrid intensity and feature based* registration methods are developed to integrate the advantages of the two [35][36][37][38]. With the development of non-rigid registration research, hybrid intensity and feature based registration would be main future research directions.

Image registration has many applications. In some medical applications, such as compare images from different subjects, the physical characteristics of soft tissue determine that the non-rigid registration is more suitable. In this chapter, we propose a new deformation force computation method after studying a variant of classical Demons non-rigid registration [29], the active Demons algorithm [39].

#### **1.2 Studying Demons non-rigid registration algorithm**

The main idea of the Demons registration algorithm is to consider the non-rigid registration as a diffusion process. A 'demon' is a selective effector situated in a point p of the boundary of an object O in the target image (*S*). The source image (*M*) is considered to be a deformable grid, whose vertex is labeled inside point or outside point. The role of a 'demon' is to push *M* inside O if the corresponding point of *M* is labeled inside, and outside O if it is labeled outside. The inside/outside attribute determines the force direction of a grid vertex. Suppose the spatial coordinate of a 'demon' is p with an intensity s(p), and the intensity of the corresponding point in *M* is m(p). If m(p) < s(p), this point is labeled inside and pushed toward  $-\nabla s$ . If m(p) > s(p), this point is labeled outside and pushed toward  $+\nabla s$ . The behavior of a 'demon' can be designed in different ways, where the implementation method based on the optical flow theory is usually used for medical image analysis. The basic deformation force formulation is

$$f = \frac{(m-s)\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + (m-s)^2}$$
(1.1)

The deformation force is optimized iteratively. When the optimized f is obtained, the source image can be registered to the target image.

Equation (1.1) indicates that the gradient information driving the deformation is taken from the static image only. It is insufficient in solving large deformation problem. If assuming the diffusion be bi-directional, a 'demon' at any point in the image space will produce not only a force that allows a deformable object diffuse into a corresponding static object, but also produce a force that allows the static object diffuse into the corresponding deformable object. The new idea will accelerate registration speed and can cope with large deformation registration problem. Based on Newton's third law of motion, the new deformation force in active Demons algorithm is

$$f = (m-s) \left( \frac{\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^{2} + \alpha^{2} (m-s)^{2}} + \frac{\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^{2} + \alpha^{2} (s-m)^{2}} \right)$$
(1.2)

To facilitate the following analysis, the force  $f_s = \frac{(m-s)\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + \alpha^2 (m-s)^2}$  is named the 'passive' force and the force

 $f_m = -(s-m) \frac{\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^2 + \alpha^2 (s-m)^2}$  'active' force.

#### **1.2.1** Parameter analysis

To better understand active Demons algorithm and achieve the best performance, we analyzed it in depth. In active Demons algorithm, there are two important parameters. One is the elastic parameter  $\sigma$ , which is the standard deviation of the Gaussian smoothing filter, determining the smoothness of the deformation field. The other is the equalization parameter  $\alpha$ , which determines the limits of the deformations.

By analyzing the relationship between the registration accuracy and its parameters, we find that a smaller  $\sigma$ and  $\alpha$  will give a faster convergence, while a larger  $\sigma$  and  $\alpha$  will give a higher registration accuracy. Therefore adjustable parameters are better choices during the iteration process. The relationship between the two parameters is show in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1 Relationship between elastic factor  $\sigma$  and homogenization factor  $\alpha$ 

#### **1.2.2 Improvement**

In classical Demons algorithm, the force principle of the two corresponding points is shown in Figure 1.2. It can be seen that the force direction of the point **p** in M is according to  $-\nabla s$  if  $m(\mathbf{p}) < s(\mathbf{p})$ , and according to  $+\nabla s$ if m(p) > s(p). This procedure is obviously in line with the reality and consistent with equation (1.1). However equation (1.1) also shows that when the gradient value of the 'demon' point is very close to zero, the force of the corresponding point will be approximation to zero. So the effective region of the force is a style of monotone function in Figure 1.2. But in reality, the intensity function of most real images is non-monotone function, which will substantially affect the deformation procedure based on equation (1.1). Let us consider a very simple deformation with only translation between the source image and the target image, which is shown in Figure 1.3. Notice that the intensity curve is not a monotone function. There are three representative 'demon' points, a, b and c, in Figure 1.3. The gradients of these points are  $\nabla s(a)$ ,  $\nabla s(b)$  and  $\nabla s(c)$ , depicted using solid line with the arrow in the Figure. f(a), f(b) and f(c) are the forces of the corresponding points in the source image computed using the equation (1.1). These forces are depicted using the dashed line with the arrow. It can be seen that the direction of f(b) is opposite to that of f(a) and f(c). Obviously f(a) and f(c) are consistent with the real moving direction. In Demons algorithm, the forces are computed pixel by pixel. The neighborhood relations between different pixels are processed by Gauss smoothing. Although smoothing could make some correction, points with incorrect forces will still remain.

The added 'active' force makes the active Demons algorithm more efficient than classical Demons algorithm. However, it can still not solve the discussed problem. It can be analyzed from Figure 1.3 clearly. Let's look at points in region II. For any point p in this region, it gets m(p) - s(p) > 0 and the force direction is towards  $+\nabla m$ , which is similar to f(b). Such forces will also result in unexpected deformations. Fortunately the region I with wrong  $f_s$  and the region II with wrong  $f_m$  will not overlap. It is benefit to weaken the unexpected deformation when equation (1.2) is adopted. But the problem has not been solved completely, because it is hard confirm that the correct force is always larger than the incorrect one. Meanwhile it is noticeable that when the gradient directions of the corresponding points are the same, both the 'active' force and the 'passive' force are right. Based on the analysis above, we can modify equation (1.2) as

$$\boldsymbol{f} = (m-s) \left[ 2(1-\omega) \frac{\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + \alpha^2 (m-s)^2} + 2\omega \frac{\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^2 + \alpha^2 (s-m)^2} \right]$$
(1.3)

The value of the parameter  $\omega$  is determined according to the parameter c, where  $c = \nabla s \cdot \nabla m / || \nabla s || \cdot || \nabla m ||$ . The value of  $\omega$  is 0.5 in the case of  $c \ge 0$ , which means the direction of  $f_s$  and  $f_m$  being the same. The composition of forces is the same as equation (1.2). When c < 0, an additional condition should be added to give  $\omega$  a proper value. Since the goal of these registration algorithms is to decrease the sum of squared difference (SSD) between the target image s(p) and the deformed source image m(T(p)), the intensity differences between the two images using  $f_s$  and  $f_m$  as the deformation force respectively can be used to determine the  $\omega$  value. The final formulation is as follows:

$$\omega = \begin{cases} 0, & c < 0, and \mid m(f_s(p)) - s(p) \mid \ge \mid m(f_m(p)) - s(p) \mid \\ 0.5, & c \ge 0 \\ 1, & c < 0, and \mid m(f_s(p)) - s(p) \mid < \mid m(f_m(p)) - s(p) \mid \end{cases}$$
(1.4)



Figure 1.2. Force illustration. (a) m(p) < s(p) (b) m(p) > s(p)



Figure 1.3. New force illustration.

#### **1.2.3 Validation and experiments**

We carried out simple 2D images registration experiments to evaluate the performance of the improved active Demons algorithm (MAD). It was compared to the classical Demons algorithm (D) and the active Demons algorithm (AD). The results were showed in Figure 1.4.



Figure 1. 4 Evaluation results on simple images registration

(a) Target image (b) Source image (c) D registration (d) AD registration (e) MAD registration (f) Deformation field of D registration (g) Deformation field of AD registration (h) Deformation field of MAD registration

Figure 1. 4(a) is the target image and (b) is the source image with the dimensions 128×128. The source image is acquired by shifting the target image 10 pixels towards left along horizontal direction. The known conditions indicate that the source image should shift 10 pixels toward right as a whole along horizontal direction. Figure 1. 4(c-e) presents the deformed source images using D, AD, and MAD registration algorithm respectively. It can be seen form the deformed images that the MAD registration result gives a better match. The deformation fields of D

and AD registration shown in Figure1. 4(f) and (g) are irregular and the grid has been deformed in a wrong way in some special regions. Comparison to D and AD algorithm, the MAD algorithm gives a much smoother deformation field, which is shown in Figure1. 4(h). Almost all the points of the grid have the same deformation direction, which is consistent with the true deformation.

# Chapter 2 Image Registration Considering Simultaneous Intensity and Spatial Normalization

#### 2.1 Algorithm description

Demons registration algorithm is based on the implicit assumption that the intensities of two corresponding voxels are equal, and seeks to maximize the intensity similarity using the sum of squared difference between a source image and a target image. However this condition is seldom fulfilled in real-world medical image registration without intensity normalization, because there are many factors that may affect observed intensity of a tissue over the imaged field, such as the different scanner or scanning parameters, normal aging, different subjects, and so on. So intensity normalization must be done before performing Demons non-rigid registration. Another preprocess step is global spatial normalization, which will benefit the following non-rigid registration. Or else, the inter-subject registration might be failed or less effective. For intensity normalization, a simple scaling of the intensities considering mean and standard deviation normalization often appears to be insufficient since the relationship between intensities of two images can be non-linear, in particular when both images come from different scanners. So the commonly used preprocessing techniques are based on image histogram or joint histogram [7][40]. For spatial normalization, global rigid or affine transformation is often used as initialization of a following nonlinear registration [41]. Figure 2.1 shows the examples verifying the importance of intensity and spatial normalization before performing the Demons algorithm. Figure 2.1(a) and Figure 2.1(b) are the source image and the target image, respectively. There are large differences between them in image brightness/contrast, geometrical feature, and space coordinate. Figure 2.1(c) and Figure 2.1(d) are the registration results based on Demons non-rigid registration algorithm without any preprocessing. Figure2.1(c) is the deformed source image and Figure 2.1(d) is the residual deformation between the deformed source image and the target image. The two images show that only a rough contour match can be acquired with little internal details, and the residual deformation becomes very large without any preprocessing before registration. Figure 2.1(e) and Figure 2.1(f) depict the results based on Demons non-rigid registration algorithm with the intensity and spatial normalization. Compared to Figure 2.1(c) and (d), Figure 2.1(e) shows a better similarity between the deformed source image and the target image and Figure2. 1 (f) depicts a smaller residual deformation, which proves the contribution of

the preprocessing step to the registration performance. Therefore intensity and spatial normalization before using Demons registration are necessary steps.

Traditional pre-processing strategies often employ two stage normalization processes, first dealing with the spatial correspondence, and then being the intensity correspondence [41]. In this chapter we discard the traditional way and propose to take into account both spatial information and intensity normalization simultaneously.

The proposed preprocess model is

$$m_{\gamma}f(x, y, t) + m_{8} = f(m_{1}x + m_{2}y + m_{5}, m_{3}x + m_{4}y + m_{6}, t - 1)$$
(2.1)

Where  $m_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, 6$  are position parameters,  $m_7$ ,  $m_8$  are brightness and contrast parameters, and a temporal parameter t is used to distinguish the two images. The error function is

$$E(m) = \sum_{x,y\in\omega} \left[ m_{\gamma} f(x,y,t) + m_{8} - f(m_{1}x + m_{2}y + m_{5},m_{3}x + m_{4}y + m_{6},t-1) \right]^{2}$$
(2.2)

Where  $\omega$  denotes a small spatial neighborhood. By minimizing Equation (2.2), the expected optimized model parameters can be obtained. The distinctive characteristic of this model is that it combines geometric model and intensity variations model into a unified model. The geometric shape and image intensity can be modified simultaneously. It is named general elastic registration method (GE) [42].





(c) Result without preprocessing (d) Residual deformation - 12 -



(e) Result with preprocessing (f) Residual deformation Figure 2.1 Registration result based on Demons algorithm with and without preprocessing

Although the discussed preprocess model has the advantages of making good intensity and spatial correspondences, it also has some disadvantages. Firstly, the satisfactory registration result is at the cost of time consuming. The local affine and contrast/brightness parameters are assumed to be constant over a small spatial neighborhood. The parameters are optimized in a piece-wise way. The smaller the spatial neighborhood, the slower the convergence is. Secondly, the model is insufficient in dealing with subtle local deformations. The parameter optimization procedure includes inverting a parameter matrix defined in suitable image regions during iterations. To guarantee the invertible attributes, the divided image regions should be large enough. The localization ability will suffer from the tradeoff between small spatial neighborhood and matrix invertibility. Fortunately, computational complexities can be reduced tremendously in Demons algorithm. Moreover, all points in the image are free to move towards any direction, suggesting a high localization ability of this algorithm. By combing the advantages of the two models, we propose a new registration strategy. Firstly, global GE registration is adopted to give a rough match in geometric shape and image intensity, and then followed by a complete final registration with fast Demons algorithm.



(a) Source image (left) and target image (right)

#### THESIS ABSTRACT



(b) Deformed source image (left) and residual deformation (right) without intensity correction



(c) Deformed Source Image (left) and Residual deformation (right) with intensity correction

Figure 2.2 Registration result based on GE algorithm

#### 2.2 Experimentations and validation

To illustrate the role of brightness and contrast parameters, a comparative experiment is carried out and the results are depicted in Figure 2.2. Figure 2.2 (b) and Figure 2.2 (c) show the results with and without intensity correction, respectively. The contributions of intensity correction to the registration performances can be clearly verified by comparing the different results. It can be clearly seen from Figure 2.2 (c) that the result with intensity correctness is good enough.

Figure 2.3 depicts a registration result based on the proposed two-step non-rigid registration algorithm, named GE<sub>c</sub>D algorithm. It shows a much smaller residual deformation.

For the quantitative comparison, the adopted evaluation criteria are usually mutual information (MI)[43]and program running time. The comparison results between four methods are summarized in Table2.1. Here symbols  $D_{ITK}$ ,  $GE_C$ ,  $GE_{NC}$  and  $GE_CD$  denote the involved methods, which are ITK based standard Demons algorithm, the GE algorithm with and without intensity correction, and the proposed method, respectively. Comparison of results indicates that when the intensity correspondence is perfect and the deformations between different subjects are small, the  $D_{ITK}$  algorithm runs faster and has better intensity similarity. For the GE algorithm, the added bright and contrast parameters could improve the registration quality without increasing the running time. The proposed GECD algorithm got the best registration accuracy without increasing the running time too much, compared to  $D_{ITK}$  algorithm.

The robustness of the proposed GE<sub>c</sub>D algorithm must be evaluated through registration experiments using more individuals. Therefore, the evaluation experiments are carried out on public MRI image data. The target image used in the experiment is the one from the Surgical Planning Laboratory of Harvard Medical School [44], which consists of 256×256×160 voxels with a spatial resolution of 0.9375mm×0.9375mm×1.5 mm. The source images are real brain MRI images of twenty normal subjects provided by the Center for Morphometric Analysis at Massachusetts General Hospital and available from Internet Brain Segmentation Repository (IBSR) [45]. The coronal three-dimensional T1-weighted spoiled gradient echo MRI scans were performed on two different imaging systems. Ten FLASH scans were performed on a 1.5T Siemens Magnetom MR System (Iselin, NJ). Ten 3D-CAPRY scans were performed on a 1.5T General Electric Sigma MR System (Milwaukee, WI). They all consist of 256×256×61 voxels with a spatial resolution of 1.0mm×1.0mm×3.0 mm.

Registration results are summarized in Table 2.2 using  $D_{ITK}$  algorithm,  $GE_C$  algorithm and  $GE_CD$  algorithm respectively. The results indicate that the proposed  $GE_cD$  two-step registration algorithm was better than  $D_{ITK}$  and  $GE_C$  algorithm in MI evaluation criterion. For a registration of two 256×256 images, the computing time was about 35 seconds using  $D_{ITK}$ , 148 seconds using  $GE_C$ , and 63 seconds using  $GE_cD$ , respectively.

Method	MI	Time(sec.)
D <sub>ITK</sub>	1.243	35
GE <sub>NC</sub>	0.932	148
GE <sub>C</sub>	1.050	148
GE <sub>C</sub> D	1.4	60

Table2. 1 Evaluation results of DITK, GENC , GEC and GECD registration algorithms



(a) Source image (b) Target image



(c) Deformed source image (d) Residual deformation



Table 2.2 The comparisons of  $D_{\text{ITK}},$   $GE_{\text{C}}$  and  $GE_{\text{c}}D$  registration algorithm on 20 individuals

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
D <sub>ITK</sub>	1.188	1.188	0.994	1.125	1.084	1.099	1.129	1.204	1.205	1.148
GE <sub>C</sub>	1.070	1.070	1.080	1.190	1.220	1.050	1.040	1.110	1.120	1.100
GE <sub>c</sub> D	1.390	1.390	1.400	1.470	1.500	1.400	1.420	1.450	1.460	1.400
Subject	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Subject D <sub>ITK</sub>	11 1.161	12 1.147	13 1.076	14 1.256	15 1.159	16 1.206	17 1.167	18 1.206	19 1.195	20 1.119
Subject D <sub>ITK</sub> GE <sub>C</sub>	11 1.161 1.200	12 1.147 1.160	13 1.076 1.060	14 1.256 1.190	15 1.159 1.110	16 1.206 1.130	17 1.167 1.080	18 1.206 1.110	19 1.195 1.190	20 1.119 1.120

# Chapter 3 Topology preserved Demons non-rigid registration algorithm

For non-parametric non-rigid registrations, the obtained spatial transformations are represented by dense deformation fields. In some applications, such as registration based homeomorphic targets segmentation, it is important to ensure the obtained spatial transformation accurate, robust and physically reasonable. Therefore the topology preservation attributes of a deformation field have to be considered carefully. Topology preservation means the unchanged connectivity inside a structure and the relationships between the neighboring structures in the deformed image. There is no tearing, no folding and no appearance or disappearance of structures. By adding this constraint on the deformation field, the optimal solution space can be limited to physically accepted ones. Topology preservation can be generally implemented by ensuring a positive Jacobian of the transformation [7] [46]. One way to enforce topology preservation consists in adding further constraints on the deformation model such as penalization of small Jacobian values. Another way is to track the Jacobian during the registration procedure. In this chapter, we first discuss the topology preservation problem of a transformation based on analyzing the geometrical features of a vector field. Then we give a simple local displacements correction method to design a topology preservation Demons algorithm.

In original Demons algorithm, bijectivity and smoothing techniques are adopted in optimizing the cost function to prevent topological changes. However, it is hard to have a theoretical verification. In fact, the topology preservation problem of the Demons algorithm has been investigated in recent years and some cases without topology preservation using this method have been found in some published reliable experiments [47][48].

Analyzing the Jacobian determinant of a spatial transform is an important aspect of studying topology preservation problem. Let T = (X, Y, Z) denote the deformation field, where (X, Y, Z) is the new position of point p(x, y, z) after deformation. Then its Jacobian at point p is

 $J_{T}(\mathbf{p}) = \det[\partial X/\partial x \quad \partial X/\partial y \quad \partial X/\partial z; \partial Y/\partial x \quad \partial Y/\partial y \quad \partial Y/\partial z; \partial Z/\partial x \quad \partial Z/\partial y \quad \partial Z/\partial z]$ (3.1) A topology preservation deformation field must satisfy  $J_{T}(\mathbf{p}) > 0$  at any point.

#### 3.1 Deformation field analysis

The obtained deformation field in dense non-rigid image registration is a vector field, which reflects the spatial transformation between the corresponding structures in the two images. To improve the understanding of the underlying physical procedure and the implied topology information described by the deformation field, it is useful to analyze the characteristics of the vector field. A vector field can be characterized by its critical points. The most important critical points are attractors, repellors and vortices, which are depicted in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1 Important critical points of a vector field. (a) Attractor (b) Repellor (c) Vortice

The obtained displacement vector field using Demons algorithm is a function of the gradient of a scalar field. So in this discussed deformation field, only attractors and repellors are considered because of the irrotationality of a gradient vector field. The critical points of the vector field represent different physical properties, which is dependent on the applications. For inter-subject brain MRI image registration, the attractors characterize the expansion of the corresponding brain structures, while the repellors characterize the contraction. Such intrinsic relationship coincides with the relationship between the Jacobian and the real physical properties.  $J_T > 1$  means the expansions of the brain structures,  $J_T < 1$  means the contractions,  $J_T = 1$  means volume preservations and  $J_T \le 0$  means the changed topologies. As is mentioned above, topology violation induced by image deformation mainly shows tears or overlaps. According to the diagrammatic characteristics of the critical points (Figure 3.1), it is easy to see that overlaps due to extrusions or folds will occur in attractors and tears due to over expansions will occur in repellors. The common situations in 2D are shown in Figure 3.2.



Figure 3.2 Paradigms of the changed topology in 2D space due to the deformations. (a) fold (b) overlap (c) tear

The number 1, 2, 3, 4 in Figure 3.2 represent the four vertexes of an initial rectangle grid. The thick line denotes the deformed grid, whose vertexes numbered 1', 2', 3', 4'. They correspond to the initial four points. The dashed line represents the deformation path of each vertex. It can be seen from Figure 3.2(a) that overlap due to folds occurs during the deformation procedure, just like a plane not only changed in the shape but also reversed. Figure 3.2(b) depicts the overlap due to extrusions, where points 2 and 3 cross in the deformation procedure and the grid twists. Figure 3.2(c) depicts the tears because of the over expansions that exceed the permitted tension strength. Here 5' and 6' are new inserted points coming from surrounding regions to fill the gap.

It can be clearly seen that if the displacement magnitudes of the adjacent points along the primary deformation direction are not suitable, the new position of the point behind overlaps the new position of the point ahead after deformation, folds will occur. So it is the cross problem. If the deformation directions of the adjacent points near the attractors are opposite and they have unexpected large displacement magnitudes, crosses will occur. Therefore both intuitive and easy solutions are to change such points' displacements in a proper way in order to preserve the topologies, where the prerequisite is to preserve the geometrical features of the original deformation fields as much as possible.

#### **3.2 Proposed correction strategies**

If a continuously differentiable deformation field is topology preservation, its Jacobian should be positive everywhere in its domain. A digital image limited by the resolution is defined in the discrete grid, which is not a continuous function. So the corresponding deformation field is discrete. If a continuous deformation field is determined by its discrete counterpart via the bilinear interpolation, its characteristics depend on the discrete deformation field. Therefore, if the Jacobians of various discrete grid points of the discrete deformation field are positive, its continuous counterpart preserves topology in its domain.

Let a continuous deformation field be described as

$$X(x, y, z) = x + u^{x}(x, y, z)$$
(3.2)

$$Y(x, y, z) = y + u^{y}(x, y, z)$$
(3.3)

$$Z(x, y, z) = z + u^{z}(x, y, z)$$
(3.4)

Where  $u^x(x, y, z)$ ,  $u^y(x, y, z)$  and  $u^z(x, y, z)$  are the displacement field components of a point p(x, y, z)along x y z axes. The Jacobian of the point p(x, y, z) is J(x, y, z). Define another deformation field  $T_k$  as,

$$X_k(x, y, z) = x + ku^x(x, y, z)$$
 (3.5)

$$Y_{k}(x, y, z) = y + ku^{y}(x, y, z)$$
(3.6)

$$Z_{k}(x, y, z) = z + ku^{z}(x, y, z)$$
(3.7)

Let  $J_k(x, y, z)$  denote the Jacobian of  $T_k$  at point p(x, y, z). It is easy to see that when k = 0,  $J_k(x, y, z) = 1$ and when k = 1,  $J_k(x, y, z) = J(x, y, z)$ . If the Jacobian of  $T_k$  at point p(x, y, z) is J(x, y, z) < 0, the topology preservation is violated. From the continuity of  $J_k(x, y, z)$  with respect to k, there exists  $k^* \in [0,1]$  such that  $J_{k'}(x, y, z) > 0$ . Because sampling a continuous deformation field results in a discrete deformation field, the topology attributes of a discrete deformation field can be corrected by multiplying a proper factor between 0 and 1 in the original displacement field. Here central-difference method [49] is adopted to compute the discrete gradients. Those points situated in both sides of the central point are named association points.

#### 3.3 Algorithm Summary

Given a source image A with its pre-labeled image (the atlas) and the target image B, the overall registration procedure is proposed as follows (after the brain extraction):

- 1. Initializing A by a global registration by the registration software FSL [50].
- 2. Performing the intensity based Demons non-rigid registration between the global transformed source image *A* and the target image *B* with the following topology correction for the obtained deformation field:
  - (1). Computing J(x, y, z) of each point according to the obtained deformation field;
  - (2). Decreasing the k value from k = 1 with a same step if J(x, y, z) < 0, and the new displacements

of the association points around the central point (x, y, z) will be acquired.

Computing  $J_k(x, y, z)$  according to the new displacements.

Repeating it until the proper  $k^*$  is found, such that for all points of the deformation field,

 $J_{k^*}(x, y, z) > 0;$ 

- (3). Evaluating the similarity between the deformed reference image by the obtained  $T_{k}$  and the target image.
- 3. If the result doesn't meet the convergence requirement, change the reference image with the obtained deformed reference and repeat step 2 again.

#### **3.4 Experimental Results**

We carried out some experimentation on normal brain MRI image to validate the proposed algorithm. The source image used in the experiment is the one obtained from the Surgical Planning Laboratory of Harvard Medical School. It consists of 256×256×160 voxels with a spatial resolution of 0.9375mm×0.9375mm×1.5 mm. The test images are real brain MRI images of normal subjects provided by the Center for Morphometric Analysis at Massachusetts General Hospital and available from Internet Brain Segmentation Repository (IBSR).

The experiment results in Figure 3.3 show some cases of topologic changes after using a classical Demons registration which uses only bijectivity and smooth techniques. The Jacobians are not positive in some regions in these cases. The deformable source image and the target image are showed in Figure 3.3(a) and 3.3(b) respectively, while Figure3.3(c) is the deformed source image by the deformation field without topology correction. It can be seen that the similarity between the deformed reference image and the target image is high in visual inspection. In Figure3.3(c), the white parts represent the positions with negative Jacobians in the deformation field, which means the topology violation in these positions. Three typical regions with changed topologies are highlighted using white rectangle. The enlarged deformation field diagrams of the highlighted regions are depicted in Figure 3.3(d-f), where crosses can be observed near the attractors. Figure 3.4 shows the deformation field with topology correction, where the same regions as in Figure 3.3(c) are highlighted and their enlarged diagrams are depicted in Figure 3.4(b-d). The disappeared white parts in Figure 3.4(a) indicate that the Jacobians of the topology preservation field satisfy the topology preservation requirements. Moreover, the deformation fields with topology preservation are more regular and much smoother. In the experiments, the parameter *k* changes with a step of 0.01. If the cross correlation between the deformed source image and the

target image equals or exceeds the set threshold or the passes of re-registration using the deformed image as the new reference image reach the upper limit (here it is three), the algorithm will stop. Here the cross correlation threshold is  $CC_t = (1 - CC_0) / \gamma + CC_0$ , where  $CC_0$  is the initial cross correlation between the source image and the target image. The value of 1.2 is suitable for parameter  $\gamma$  in the experiment. Figure 3.5 is the magnitude differences of the two deformation fields with and without topology correction. The brighter the intensity is, the larger the difference is. Here the averaged max difference is 2.18 pixels, which means the corrected deformation field is generally able to preserve the original properties of the deformation field.



(a)

(b)



(c)

(d)



Figure 3.3 The deformation field obtained from the original Demons algorithm. (a) source image (b) target image (c) deformed source image (d) enlarged region 1 (e) enlarged region 2 (f) enlarged region 3.



(a)

(b)



Figure 3. 4 The deformation field with corrected topologies. (a) deformed source image (b) enlarged region 1 (c) enlarged region 2 (d) enlarged region 3.



Figure 3. 5 The magnitude differences of the deformation fields before and after topology correction (measured in pixels).

# Chapter 4 Hybrid intensity and shape features non-rigid registration: segmenting internal nuclei from brain MRI images

Brain internal structures play a central role in the intellectual capabilities of the human brain. Additionally, these structures are also relevant to a set of clinical conditions, such as Parkinson's and Creutzfeldt-Jakob diseases. However, segmenting these structures from MRI images remains a challenging task due to their complex shapes, partial volume effects, anatomical variability, and the lack of clearly defined edges.

A variety of computer-assisted methods have been studied to automatically segment brain internal structures, such as deformable models [51], information fusion[52], fuzzy logic [53] and so on. In this chapter, we propose a new non-rigid registration method integrated intensity and a priori shape knowledge, and then use this method to segment brain sub-cortical structures. The segmentation strategy belongs to registration-segmentation category. These methods rely on a reference image volume with a corresponding atlas in which structures of interest have been carefully segmented by experts. To segment a new image volume, a transformation registering the reference volume to the target volume is computed, which gives a spatial correspondence between the two image volumes. Then regions labeled in the atlas can be projected onto the volume of interest using the obtained transformation. Hence the segmentation problem is converted to a registration problem. These methods take advantage of the prior knowledge provided by the atlas (structure shape, relative positions between the structures and so on). Such strategy is helpful to the segmentation of the anatomical structures which are not clearly defined in the input images.

#### 4.1 Intensity Based Non-Rigid Registration

Image registration can be described as finding an optimal spatial transformation  $\tau^*$  for matching the transformed reference image to the target image. The optimal transformation  $\tau^*$  is usually acquired by minimizing the overall cost function E:

$$\boldsymbol{T}^* = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{T} \in \boldsymbol{\Gamma}} \{ E(\boldsymbol{T}) \} = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{T} \in \boldsymbol{\Gamma}} \{ E_{sim}(B, A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) + E_{reg}(\boldsymbol{T}) \}$$
(4.1)

where A and B denote the reference image and the target image respectively. The set  $\Gamma$  is the space of admissible transformations.  $E_{sim}(B, A \circ T)$  as the first part of E denotes the data similarity measure and  $E_{reg}(T)$  as the second part denotes the regularization term to penalize the undesirable transformations.

Different features can be used to construct the similarity measure among which the Sum of Squared Differences (SSD) is a simpler one. The formulation of such metric is defined as:

$$E_{sim}(B, A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) = E_{SSD}^{intensity}(B, A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) = \frac{1}{2} || B - A \circ \boldsymbol{T} ||^2$$
(4.2)

The SSD forms the basis of the intensity-based image registration algorithms and the optimal solution can be obtained by classical optimization algorithms. As is well known, a simple optimization of equation (4.2) over the space of non-parametric transformations leads to unstable and non-smooth solutions. The added regularization term  $E_{reg}(T)$  is exactly used to overcome such problem. Here the defined regularization term is given as follows:

$$E_{reg}(\boldsymbol{T}) = q \| \boldsymbol{T} \|^2$$
(4.3)

where q controls the amount of regularization. Therefore, the cost function can be written as

$$E = E_{sim}(B, A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) + E_{reg}(\boldsymbol{T}) = E_{SSD}^{intensity}(B, A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) + E_{reg}(\boldsymbol{T}) = \frac{1}{2} ||B - A \circ \boldsymbol{T}||^2 + q ||\nabla \boldsymbol{T}||^2$$
(4.4)

However, equation (4.4) will in general lead to computational intensive optimization steps. Fortunately, optimizing the data similarity measure and the regularization term alternately provides a good solution to that problem. The optimization of the data similarity term can be studied from the viewpoint of optical flow theory. Under the assumption of intensity preservation, the image moving velocity v is computed. Generally v is considered simply as a displacement vector field u = -v in image registration problem. Then at each point p of the image, the displacement vector is calculated by:

$$u(p) = -\frac{(A \circ T(p) - B(p))}{(A \circ T(p) - B(p))^2 + \|\nabla B(p)\|^2} \nabla B(p)$$

$$(4.5)$$

The main iterative optimization steps can be described as:

- (a) Given the current transformation T(n), compute the displacement field u(n).
- (b) Smooth the displacement field  $u(n) : u(n) \leftarrow G_{\sigma} * u(n)$ , where  $G_{\sigma}$  is Gaussian smoothing filter.
- (c) Compute the new transformation  $T(n+1) \leftarrow T(n) + u(n)$ .

#### 4.2 Hybrid intensity and shape features non-rigid registration

Only image intensity information is used in the cost function for matching under the constraint of a smooth deformation field is insufficient in many applications. For example, if only a narrow gap exists between two objects with very similar intensities in the target image, or if one of the corresponding objects in the reference image overlaps with both the two target objects, a split problem will occur. Such situation is not a particular case

and is common especially for brain deep gray structures. The final registration result might be good in visual inspection for such cases if we only see image intensities (§chapter 1 and 2). However if we follow up the displacements of the points on the structures, the corresponding points after the transformation could not correctly represent the structures. Therefore some complementary information must be taken into account. Features extracted by special feature extraction algorithms, such as points, lines and surfaces, are commonly used as the complementary information [35]. In this chapter, we choose the shape knowledge derived from the atlas as the complementary information. In common sense, homologous subcortical structures among normal subjects should have similar shapes. Therefore adding a shape similarity term in the cost function would be reasonable.

Let  $\Phi_s : \Omega \to R^+$  be a distance transform of a shape *s*, which defines a partition of the image domain  $\Omega$ . Let  $\omega$  denote the region that is enclosed by *s*, and  $\Omega - \omega$  denote the background region, the shape representation will be

$$\Phi_{S}(\boldsymbol{p}) = \begin{cases} 0, \quad \boldsymbol{p} \in S \\ d(\boldsymbol{p}, S), \quad \boldsymbol{p} \in \boldsymbol{\omega} \\ -d(\boldsymbol{p}, S), \quad \boldsymbol{p} \in \boldsymbol{\Omega} - \boldsymbol{\omega} \end{cases}$$
(4.6)

Where d(p, S) refers to the minimum distance between image point p and the shape S. This distance map allows one to get a deformation measure compared to the original shape. Here Euclidean distance is used as the distance metric.

This representation provides supplementary shape information related to the intensity image that can be conveniently used as a new similarity term

$$E_{SSD}^{shape}(\boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A), \boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T})) = \frac{1}{2} \| \boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) - \boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A) \|^{2}$$

$$(4.7)$$

Where  $\Phi_s(A)$  is the shape representation of the structure in the atlas on the reference image A and  $\Phi_s(A \circ T)$  is the shape representation of the corresponding structure in the deformed atlas after the transformation T. Under the constraint of the shape similarity term, the optimal transform would lead to the final segmented structure shape as closer as that in the atlas. Therefore the above overall cost function can be modified as

$$E = E_{sim}(B, A \circ T) + E_{reg}(T) = E_{SSD}^{intensity}(B, A \circ T) + E_{SSD}^{shape}(\Phi_S(A), \Phi_S(A \circ T)) + E_{reg}(T)$$
(4.8)

The optimal solution can also be obtained by the alternating strategy. The displacement vectors related to the intensity and the shape at the point p of interest regions are:

$$\boldsymbol{u}_{intensity}(\boldsymbol{p}) = -\frac{(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p}) - B(\boldsymbol{p}))}{(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p}) - B(\boldsymbol{p}))^2 + \|\nabla B(\boldsymbol{p})\|^2} \nabla B(\boldsymbol{p})$$
(4.9)

$$\boldsymbol{u}_{shape}(\boldsymbol{p}) = -\frac{(\Phi_{s}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p})) - \Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p})))}{(\Phi_{s}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p})) - \Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p})))^{2} + \|\nabla\Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p}))\|^{2}} \nabla\Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p}))$$
(4.10)

The combined displacement vector is:

$$\boldsymbol{u}(\boldsymbol{p}) = (1 - \beta)\boldsymbol{u}_{intensity}(\boldsymbol{p}) + \beta \boldsymbol{u}_{shape}(\boldsymbol{p})$$
(4.11)

Here the parameter  $\beta \in [0, 1]$  is used to balance the contribution of the intensity metric and the shape metric.  $\beta = 0$  means a pure intensity contribution and  $\beta = 1$  means a pure shape contribution.

A simple piecewise linear function is used to adjust adaptively the weight of the parameter, which is depicted in Figure 4. 1. The symbols used in Figure 4. 1 are as follows:

- x: the intensity I of the target image in the region of interest.
- $x_0 = mean(I_{structure})$ : the average intensity of the structure region enclosed by the boundary of the deformed atlas structure.
- $x_0^- = x_0 \lambda \sigma_{structure}$  and  $x_0^+ = x_0 + \lambda \sigma_{structure}$ : key intensity values where the intensity metric and the shape metric have the same importance. Herein  $\sigma_{structure}$  denotes the intensity standard deviation of the structure region enclosed by the boundary of the deformed atlas structure.  $\lambda$  is an empirical parameter to control the dynamic intensity range in which the shape metric is more or less important than the intensity metric according to the intensity value near to or far from the intensity mean  $x_0$ .



Figure 4.1 The function of the balance parameter  $\beta$ .

To register and segment multi-objects with very similar intensities in one time, we unified multi shape map into one map. Let  $s_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, N$  be N different structures of interest. At any point p, the shape representation of  $s_i$  is  $\Phi_{s_i}(p)$ . Then the N different shape representations are integrated into a unified shape map M(p)according to the following principles

$$M(\boldsymbol{p}) = \begin{cases} \Phi_{s_{s}}(\boldsymbol{p}), & \text{if } \Phi_{s_{s}}(\boldsymbol{p}) \ge 0\\ \max(\Phi_{s_{s}}(\boldsymbol{p})), & \text{if } \Phi_{s_{s}}(\boldsymbol{p}) < 0 \text{ and } | \max(\Phi_{s_{s}}(\boldsymbol{p})) | \le \varepsilon \end{cases}$$

$$(4.12)$$

$$0, & \text{if } \Phi_{s}(\boldsymbol{p}) < 0 \text{ and } | \max(\Phi_{s}(\boldsymbol{p})) | > \varepsilon$$

where  $\varepsilon$  is the threshold,  $\varepsilon = \min_{i} \{\max_{p} (\Phi_{s_i}(p))\}$ . Therefore,  $\Phi_s(\cdot)$  in equation (7), (8) and (10) should be replaced by  $M(\cdot)$  in the implementation procedure.

#### 4.3 Brain internal nuclei segmentations

The proposed algorithm is tested by segmenting the brain subcortical structures from MRI images. The reference image used in the experiment is the one got from the Surgical Planning Laboratory of Harvard Medical School. It consists of 256×256×160 voxels with a spatial resolution of 0.9375mm×0.9375mm×1.5 mm. The test images are real brain MRI images of normal subjects provided by the Center for Morphometric Analysis at Massachusetts General Hospital and available from Internet Brain Segmentation Repository (IBSR).

In the experiment, one should remember that the combined intensity and shape non-rigid registration is performed only on structures of interest. The additional transform of structures should influence other regions as little as possible. Therefore a region of interest selection must be done before refinement according to equation (4.11). The selection of the parameter  $\lambda$  is to be mentioned. It can be seen from the Figure 4.1 that the parameter  $\beta$  varies with intensities of structures. Therefore only parameter  $\lambda$  is constant and will be determined empirically. Its value is not arbitrary but is easy to find a convenient one. Because a relative good intensity match has been obtained after the previous registration, more weightiness should be given to the shape metric. Hence a larger parameter  $\lambda$  should be convenient. We set it to be 0.7 in our experiments for all cases.

The experiment results are depicted in Figure 4.2. Figure 4.2(a) is the reference image superimposed the boundaries of the subcortical structures and Figure 4.2 (c) is the target image to be segmented. It can be seen from Figure 4.2(d) that the segmentation of the left putamen by pure intensity based non-rigid registration is a local optimum (the part enclosed by a black circle). The left putamen is close to the cortex gray matter with a narrow white matter gap between them. They have similar intensities and at the meanwhile both of them partly overlap with the putamen in the reference image. There are more possibilities to stick into the local optimum if only intensity metric is used. Figure 4.2 (b) is an example of the shape representation based on Euclidean distance for the left putamen, where the distance map of the left atlas putamen is superimposed by its boundary. Darker the intensity is, farther away the distance from the edge of the putamen. Figure 4.2 (e) is the distance map of the

deformed putamen based on the original intensity based non-rigid algorithm superimposed by its boundary. It can be seen that the shape match between the left atlas putamen and its deformed version is not very good. Under the joint constrains of both the intensity and the shape, the reference shape and the target shape will match as much as possible. Therefore, using the proposed method with the integrated shape metric, a better segmentation is obtained, which is showed in Figure 4. 2(f).



Figure 4. 2 Segmentation results: comparison between Demons non-rigid registration and the proposed method. (a) the reference image superimposed by the atlas of subcortical structures (b) the shape representation of the left putamen in the atlas superposed by the structure's boundary (c) the target image (d) segmentation by pure intensity based non-rigid registration (e) the shape representation of the deformed left putamen superposed by the structure's boundary (f) the segmentation based on the proposed method.

Comparative studies between the original Demons method and the proposed method are carried out by segmenting brain internal structures from all volumes. Result on a typical volume is shown in Figure 4. 3. Both three planes superposed with the segmented subcortical structures and the final 3D view are presented.
#### THESIS ABSTRACT



Figure 4.3 Segmentation results on a T1 weighted volume. (a) Coronal (b) Axial (c) Sagital (d) 3D view

To validate the results quantitatively, a kappa statistic based similarity index [54][55] is adopted in this chapter. The similarity index measures the overlap ratio between the segmented structure and the ground truth, which is defined as

$$KI = \frac{2 \times TP}{2 \times TP + FN + FP}$$
(4.13)

The definitions of the parameters are as follows:

 $TP = G \cap E$ : the number of true positive;

 $FP = \overline{G} \cap E$ : the number of false positive;

 $FN = G \cap \overline{E}$ : the number of false negative;

Where G is the ground truth segmentation of a given structure, E is the estimated segmentation of the same structure, and  $\overline{O}$  denotes the complement of a set O. Perfect spatial correspondence between the two segmentations will result in KI=1, whereas no correspondence will result in KI=0.

The KI values are computed for all the structures of all the volumes. The results are presented in Figure 4.4, and the associated critical values are summarized in Table 4.1. The segmented structures are left and right caudate (*L-Caudate*, *R-Caudate*), putamen (*L-Putamen*, *R-Putamen*) and thalamus (*L-Thalam*, *R-Thalam*). The proposed method and the original method are represented by 'Pro.' and 'Ori.' in Table 1 respectively. The 'max', 'min', 'mean' and 'SD' items list the maximum, minimum, mean and standard deviation of KI values derived from all volumes. These results indicate that in most cases, the proposed method gives better segmentations than the original method. As is known, the brain subcortical structures have relatively small sizes, complex shapes. Moreover, there is only small spacing between different structures, while their intensities in MRI images are very similar. All these negative

factors make the fully automatically accurate segmentation a challenging task. According to accepted views [56], a value of KI >0.7 indicates a strong agreement. So the results are satisfactory as the KI of the segmented structures is larger than 0.7 for almost all 15 cases.

We also compared our structures segmentation results with those using original Demons algorithm and those reported in reference<sup>1</sup> and reference<sup>2</sup>, because all the adopted algorithms belong to registration-segmentation method and the used validation data are from the same public database. In reference<sup>1</sup>, the validation criterion is the same as equation (4.13) and the results were averaged on 34 structures. While the validation criterion in reference<sup>2</sup> named the relative overlap (RO) is different, which is defined as

$$\mathrm{RO} = \frac{G \cap E}{G \cup E} \times 100 \tag{4.14}$$

The comparison results are showed in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 respectively. It can be seen that both the validation criteria indicate a better segmentation of the proposed algorithm than that of the Demons registration. And the obtained KI value reaches the best result in reference<sup>1</sup> well, while the standard deviation (SD) is much smaller, which means a more robust segmentation for different data. Table 4.3 depicts the comparison of the RO value between our results and the results published in reference<sup>2</sup>, where 'best' and 'worst' mean the best results and the worst results of the involved algorithms in reference<sup>2</sup>. As it can be seen, our results are inferior to those published in reference<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, there are too many parameters to be selected in reference<sup>2</sup>, which is a challenge for unskilled users.



Reference<sup>1</sup>, V. Noblet, C. Heinrich, F. Heitz, *et al.* Retrospective evaluation of a topology preserving non-rigid registration method. Medical Image Analysis, 10(2006): 366–384.

Reference<sup>2</sup>, Michaël Sdika. A fast nonrigid image registration with constraints on the jacobian using large scale constrained optimization. IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging, 27(2)(2008): 271-281.



Figure 4.4 Comparisons of KI values. (a) left caudate (b) right caudate (c) left putamen (d) right putamen (e) left thalamus (f) right thalamus

Structure	L-Caudate		R-Caudate		L-Putamen		R-Putamen		L-Thalam		R-Thalam	
Method	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.
max	0.812	0.729	0.813	0.691	0.831	0.752	0.829	0.759	0.857	0.806	0.850	0.788
min	0.539	0.537	0.567	0.571	0.694	0.633	0.743	0.666	0.735	0.680	0.747	0.665
mean	0.739	0.699	0.717	0.658	0.767	0.725	0.783	0.739	0.809	0.740	0.801	0.730
SD	0.072	0.049	0.062	0.031	0.037	0.029	0.031	0.027	0.031	0.032	0.030	0.032

Method		Reference <sup>1</sup>								
	$\mathbf{B}_{\text{topo}}$	В	$B_{0.5 < J < 2}$	$B_{topo(^{\lambda}=1)}$	D <sub>Itk</sub>	D <sub>10-JHGM</sub>	Affine	Proposed	D <sub>mat</sub>	
KI	0.765	0.727	0.710	0.777	0.754	0.778	0.627	0.770	0.717	
(SD)	(0.107)	(0.152)	(0.142)	(0.116)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.150)	(0.064)	(0.072)	

Table 4.2 Comparison of averaged KI value between our results and the results published in reference<sup>1</sup>.

Symbols:  $B_{topo}$ —B-spline-based registration with topology preservation and without regularization; B—B-spline-based registration without topology preservation and without regularization;  $B_{0.5 < J < 2}$ —B-spline-based registration with the constraint  $J_{min} = 0.5$  and  $J_{max} = 2$  on the Jacobian and without regularization;  $B_{topo(\lambda=1)}$ —B-spline-based registration with topology preservation and with regularization;  $D_{Itk}$ —the Demons algorithm based on ITK;  $D_{10-JHGM}$ —the Demons algorithm using the intensity normalization; Affine—affine registration with 12 parameters; Proposed—The proposed method in this paper;  $D_{mat}$ —the demons algorithm based on our Matlab code.

Table 4.3 Comparison of RO value between our r	esults and the results published in reference <sup>2</sup> .
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Method			L-Caudate	R-Caudate	L-Putamen	R-Putamen	L-Thalam	R-Thalam
Ours	Proposed		58.6	56.3	62.3	65.3	68.2	68.1
Ouis	D <sub>mat</sub>		53.8	49.0	56.9	58.7	58.7	57.5
	в	best	62.7	/	68.9	/	73.7	/
Pafaranca <sup>2</sup>	D <sub>topo</sub>	worst	56.7	/	66.4	/	71.5	/
Kelefellee	D.	best	61.3	/	61.0	/	69.4	/
	DItk	worst	54.2	/	56.8	/	67.2	/

# **Conclusion and perspectives**

# **1** Conclusion

Segmenting deep brain internal structures from MRI images is not trivial due to their complex shapes, partial volume effects, anatomical variability, and the lack of clearly defined edges. In this dissertation, we study registration-segmentation methods to achieve the segmentation. These methods rely on a reference image volume with a corresponding atlas in which structures of interest have been carefully segmented by experts. To segment a new image volume, a transformation registering the reference volume to the target volume is computed, which gives a spatial correspondence between the two image volumes. Then regions labeled in the atlas can be projected onto the volume of interest using the obtained transformation. Hence the segmentation problem is converted to a registration problem. According to the compared image properties, registration algorithms can be classified into feature based registration, intensity based non-rigid registrations have excellent performances in intramodality registration. So our researches focus on intensity based and hybrid intensity and feature based registration algorithms.

The first work of this dissertation is to study the active Demons non-rigid algorithm, where image intensities are used as the matching features. This algorithm did good works in registering different medical images with the same modalities. To better understand active Demons algorithm and achieve better performance, we analyzed its two important parameters. The conclusion is that at the beginning of the registration, small values should be used for the two parameters to accelerate the convergence, while at the end of the registration, they are should be large to get more accurate results. In addition, we analyzed the deformation driven force in theory. The original given deformation driven force has limitations in some image regions. In such regions, mismatch might easily occur. On the basis of theoretical analysis, we proposed a new force computation equation and carried out experimentations on synthetic images and MRI images to validate our method.

Intensity based registration using SSD similarity measure usually assumes that the intensities of two corresponding voxels are equal, and seeks to maximize the intensity similarity through optimization. When there are significant intensity differences between different images, such assumptions will be problematic. So intensity normalization must be done before performing intensity based registration. Moreover, in inter-subject registration, there are great geometric differences between different individuals. So it is necessary to apply a spatial normalization to benefit the following non-rigid registration. Traditional normalizations are two stage styles. Spatial normalization follows by intensity normalization. We discard the traditional way and use a unified model to do spatial and intensity normalizations simultaneously. The experimental results proved its contributions to obtain an accurate non-rigid registration. This is our second contribution.

Preserving topologies unchanged during deformations is an expected attributes in homeomorphic targets registration. Topology preservation means the unchanged connectivity inside a structure and the relationships between the neighboring structures in the deformed image. It can ensure the obtained spatial transformation physically reasonable. Demons non-rigid registration algorithm adopts bijectivity and smoothing techniques to prevent topological changes. However, it has been proved insufficient by some published reliable experiments. Through analyzing the geometrical features of a vector field, we proposed a topology preserved Demons non-rigid registration algorithm, which is our third work. It is examined by brain MRI image registration. The results indicate that without changing the original deformation fields too much, the obtained deformation fields can be topology preserved.

Only image intensity information is used as similarity measure for matching is proved insufficient in some applications. The final registration result might be good in visual inspection for such cases if we only see image intensities. However if we follow up the displacements of the points on the structures, the corresponding points after the transformation could not correctly represent the structures. Therefore we propose a hybrid intensity and shape features non-rigid registration algorithm. Since homologous subcortical structures among normal subjects should have similar shapes, we choose shape information of the target structures as features. The information comes from the atlas and the preregistration directly. Distance map is used to represent the shape knowledge. Then the intensity similarity measure and shape similarity measure form the new cost function. The proposed algorithm is evaluated by segmenting brain subcortical structures from fifteen MRI images. Compared to pure intensity based method, better segmentations are obtained when the shape knowledge are integrated. In conclusion, the main contributions of this dissertation include:

(0) Analyzing, optimizing and implementing Demons registration algorithm.

(2) Proposing a topology preserved Demons non-rigid registration algorithm, which can avoid unreasonable physical deformations.

(3) Proposing a hybrid intensity and shape features non-rigid registration algorithm, which can complete challenging segmentation task effectively.

# **2** Perspectives

In the medical image analysis and understanding fields, a vast number of non-rigid registration techniques have been proposed. However, more work is needed to further develop inter-subject registration techniques in various aspects. Future works will be towards to the following aspects:

- Study the intrinsic character of different registration techniques from mathematical views. This will certainly pave the way for more reasonable registration techniques.
- (2) Study physical models to imitate the deformations. In principle, present physical models have the advantage of providing physically realistic solutions. However, in reality, tissue exhibits complex behaviors. Only in certain conditions can it be considered as an elastic or visco-elastic material. So new intelligent physical model should be a future direction of research.
- (3) Research more complicated hybrid intensity- and feature-based techniques. Extract more prior knowledge, which would be beneficial to drive the non-rigid registration algorithm.
- (4) Research more advanced regularization terms, such as ensuring the transformation which is diffeomorphic.
- (5) Introduce multimodal similarity criteria into intra-modality inter-subject registration algorithms, which would avoid the intensity normalization errors.
- (6) Explore evaluation projects more complete. Evaluation plays an important role in providing feedback when new registration techniques are proposed. However, there is a lack of evaluation studies of non-rigid algorithms with different transformation models.

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# 摘要

图像分割在医学图像分析中起着至关重要的作用。医学图像分割的目的是将一幅 图像分成不重叠的多个区域,各区域对应人体明确的解剖结构。采用医学 MRI 图 像,将人脑的不同器官分割出来并分析是临床诊断和辨识脑部疾病进程的重要手段。 医学图像的复杂性使医学图像分割是一个非常复杂的任务,借助医学图谱提供的先验 知识有助于更好的完成分割任务。配准技术是将医学先验知识融入分割过程的一个重 要途径,形成了一种新的分割技术,即基于配准的分割。该类方法采用配准得到模板 图像变形为目标图像的空间变换,然后利用这个空间变换将与模板图像相对应的已知 分割结果,即图谱信息,映射到目标图像,从而得到对目标图像感兴趣区域的分割。 所以,基于配准的分割质量主要取决于配准质量。

人体结构的复杂性使得简单的刚性配准无法表示人体复杂结构的局部细节,而这 些细节却是临床诊断的重要依据,因此有必要采用具有更高自由度的非刚性配准技 术。同刚性配准相比,非刚性配准还不成熟,如何建立合理的形变模型,如何提高非 刚性配准的速度、精度以及对非刚性配准的评估都需要进一步的研究。

在目前的非刚性配准技术中,基于物理模型的非刚性配准以其特有的描述组织自然行为的能力,成为该领域中的一个重要分支。本文在深入研究基于热力学扩散模型的Demons非刚性配准技术的基础上,就灰度与空间标准化、变形场的正则化、先验知识对配准算法的性能影响等问题展开了研究,并提出了具有拓扑保持性的适用于单模态图像配准的混合灰度与特征信息的非刚性配准算法,然后将其应用到3D脑深层灰质结构分割中。具体成果介绍如下:

1. 分析、优化并实现了基于扩散模型的Demons非刚性配准算法。

基于物理模型的配准是一类重要的非刚性配准技术,其中Demons非刚性配准 是该类方法中适用于单模态图像配准的一个优秀代表。本文对Demons算法及其重 要的改进算法-主动Demons算法进行了深入细致的分析和算法实现,重点研究了该 算法的两个重要参数,弹性系数和均化系数,及其形变驱动力的局限性,得出了 实际应用时参数设置的一般性原则,并给出了改进的形变驱动力。

2. 提出了同时完成灰度与空间标准化的非刚性配准算法。

以两图像灰度差的平方和作为衡量图像相似程度的非刚性配准算法完全依赖 图像的灰度信息,其假设前提是两图像中对应像素点的灰度相同。然而,对于 MRI图像,受不同扫描仪器、不同参数设置以及不均匀场、干扰、噪声等影响, 难以满足这样的假设条件,需要进行灰度匹配预处理。另外,对于不同个体间的 配准问题,不同个体的生理差异较大。过大的图像空间位置差异也会影响非刚性 配准技术的配准质量,因此需要预先进行空间标准化处理。本文研究了非刚性配 准的灰度和空间标准化问题,结合Demons算法,提出了一种分步配准策略,不仅 能够完成灰度和空间的同步标准化,而且具有较高的描述局部微小形变的能力。 3.提出了具有拓扑保持性的Demons非刚性配准算法。

Demons算法的一个主要缺陷是不能从理论上保证配准得到的空间变换具有拓扑保持性。尽管该算法试图通过双射和变形场平滑技术得到具有拓扑不变性的空间变换,然而其可靠性未能得到理论证明和实验支持。该算法得到的是一个稠密的变形场,图像具有很高的变形自由度。高自由度意味着有更多的像素可以自由运动,如果没有附加约束,不能保证得到的空间变换是合理的,可以实现的。因此本文重点研究了变形场的约束问题,通过分析矢量场关键点特性,提出了在尽量保持原有变形场几何特性的前提下校正原变形场拓扑性的非刚性配准算法,并通过实验对算法性能进行了评价。

4. 提出了基于灰度与形状混合信息的非刚性配准算法。

人脑的深层灰质结构,如尾状核、壳体、苍白球、丘脑、海马体等等,与帕 金森氏综合征、癫痫、痴呆、克雅氏病等脑部疾病关系密切,通过分析这些结构 的体积、形状变化等有助于相关的疾病诊断。然而这些结构形状复杂,体积小, 在核磁共振图像中,它们的边界模糊,受部分容积效应的影响大。因此,深层脑 结构的全自动分割是一个具有挑战性的问题。在己有的研究中,基于配准技术的 分割是解决该问题一种有效手段。本文通过分析基于灰度的非刚性配准算法的基 本原理和不足,在配准能量函数中引入形状相似度项,提出了新的灰度信息与形 状信息相结合的非刚性配准算法。算法适用于相似灰度多目标分割问题,在分割 体积小、形状复杂、边缘模糊的深层脑结构的应用中得到了较好的结果。

关键词:非刚性配准;人脑结构标注;核磁共振图像;形状先验知识;拓扑保持; 医学图像分割 博士学位论文

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# 1 绪论

# 1.1 图像配准的概念

对于图像的分析和理解,除了需要分析灰度、纹理等信息,空间位置信息也是非常重要的一个方面。而图像配准就是将不同图像进行空间变换以达到对应结构相互对 齐的处理过程,多年来一直是图像处理、分析与理解领域的一个研究热点<sup>111</sup>。设符号 *SI*和*TI*分别表示源图像和目标图像,二者的相似程度用能量函数*E*(*T*)表征,其中符 号*T*表示从源图像到目标图像的一个映射,即

$$\boldsymbol{T}: \boldsymbol{x}_{n} \mapsto \boldsymbol{x}_{n} \Leftrightarrow \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{x}_{n}) = \boldsymbol{x}_{n} \tag{1.1}$$

空间变换**T**将特征点在原图像空间中的坐标与对应的特征点在目标图像空间中的坐标 联系起来。图像配准就是寻找使能量函数最优的最佳空间变换**T**\*,即

$$\boldsymbol{T}^* = \operatorname*{arg\,min}_{\boldsymbol{T} \in \boldsymbol{\Gamma}} \{ E(\boldsymbol{T}) \}$$
(1.2)

其中,符号Γ表示T所在的解空间。

配准技术主要由以下四个元素所决定[2][3]:

- (1) 确定配准所用特征的特征空间。该特征空间是从图像中提取的用来完成图 像匹配的信息;
- (2) 确定有效的解空间;
- (3) 寻找最优解的优化策略;
- (4) 确定匹配程度的相似性测度。

### 1.2 医学领域研究图像配准技术的意义

图像配准技术最初提出只是作为实现一幅图像向另外一幅图像进行几何学变换的 图像处理方法,如今已经在多个领域得到广泛应用。如在计算机视觉与模式识别领 域,其应用范围包括目标分割与识别、形状重构、运动跟踪、立体测图等;在遥感数 据处理领域,其应用范围包括农业、地质、海洋、石油与矿产开发,生态环境监测, 军事目标识别等;此外,医学图像处理与分析也是图像配准技术的一个重要应用领 域,包括图像分割、图像融合、脑功能分析、数字减影、手术导航、病变检出 <sup>[4][5][6][7][8][2]</sup>等。本文以医学图像为研究背景。

医学图像可以分为解剖性成像模式和功能性成像模式两大类<sup>[9]</sup>,解剖成像设备主要描述人体组织形态结构,用于诊断身体内部组织结构的病变,如 X 射线、CT 计算机断层扫描成像、MRI 核磁共振成像、US 超声成像,以及各种内窥镜产生的视频图

- 1 -

#### 博士学位论文

像,如腹腔镜图像、关节镜图像等;还有一些以上面这些基本成像技术发展而来的相关成像技术,如 MRA 核磁共振血管造影、DSA 数字减影血管造影、CTA 计算机断层血管造影等。功能成像设备主要描述人体组织的新陈代谢信息,它们能够在病变早期器官组织还没有发生结构上的改变之前,通过对器官组织新陈代谢功能上的成像而发现早期病变,如 SPECT 单光子发射计算机断层成像、PET 正电子发射断层成像, 还有 fMRI 功能核磁共振成像和近几年才出现的 DT-MRI 扩散张量磁共振成像等。还有很多功能成像设备使用较少或者处于临床前的试验阶段,如 pMRI 灌注核磁共振成像、fCT 功能计算机断层扫描成像、EIT 电阻抗成像和 MRE 磁共振流体弹性动力学成像。图 1.1 给出了几种常见的医学图像。

通常在临床过程中获得的两种图像所包含的信息不是孤立存在的,而是相互补充,相互说明的关系,在计算机辅助手术中,外科医生根据配准的图像精确定位病灶及周围相关的解剖结构信息,设计出缜密的手术计划。不同的成像方式在解释目标的状态方面有各自独特的优势,如 X 线、CT 图像表现的是人体的解剖结构信息,PET 图像虽然在空间分辨率方面比 CT 图像差,但它具有 CT 图像不具备的独特的功能显像能力。在放射治疗中,医生应用 CT 和 MRI 图像配准和融合来制定放疗计划和进行评估,用 CT 图像精确计算放射剂量,用 MRI 图像描述肿瘤,用 PET 和 SPECT 图像对肿瘤的代谢、免疫及其他生理方面进行识别和特性化处理,整合的图像可用于改进放射治疗计划或立体定向活检或手术。因此将不同模态的图像融合在一起,可以得到更丰富的信息以便了解病变组织或器官的综合情况,从而做出准确的诊断或制订出合适的治疗方案。融合的前提就是各类图像的准确配准。

如何利用三维图像丰富的信息资源来帮助诊断和治疗也是当今研究的一大热点。 三维可视化技术使医生能够利用虚拟的三维手术环境在实施手术之前在计算机上就能 模拟出手术中间将要遇到的情况,从而提高了医生的手术成功率。一般用于三维重建 的二维图像来源于一次采样所获得的 CT 或 MR,由于扫描过程中病人的呼吸、移动 可能会使得这些图像在方位和角度上发生变化,因此不能直接用于三维重建,首先需 要进行配准以便得到真正的三维图像。

除了多模态的图像配准,单一设备间图像的配准是另外一个重要的临床应用领域,它可以用来分析同一设备不同时期成像的差异,用来进行病情变化的跟踪和治疗效果的评价。因为不同病灶在身体不同部位的不同生长时期具有不同的生长规律,对它的这些生长规律性进行研究,将对疾病的诊断和治疗提供重要的先验信息。为了研究其生长规律,采取的方式一般为采集不同时期的图像数据,如 CT 或 MR,然后对两组图像数据进行图像配准,分析其中病灶随着时间的变化情况,再通过数学模型预测其生长规律。另外也可以根据手术前后图像的差异对治疗的效果进行评价。



图 1.1 几种常见的医学图像。左上: 超声图像; 右上: CT 图像; 左中: MRI 图像, T1; 右中: MRI 图像, T2; 左下: DSA 数字减影血管造影; 右下: X 射线图像 Figure 1.1 some conventional medical images. Upper left: ultrasonic image; upper right: CT images; middle left: MRI images, T1; middle right: MRI images, T2; bottom left: DSA digital subtraction angiography; bottom right: X-ray image

近年来,医学图像配准在神经医学诊断和治疗研究中的应用增长很快,在许多图像解释过程中扮演着越来越重要的角色。fMRI磁共振功能成像,是一种安全的影像

学检查手段,在完全无创伤的条件下可以对人脑进行功能定位分析。在 fMRI 实验中,为了获取具有统计意义的结果,需要进行多次实验,获取多个时间序列。但是在不同的成像过程中,人体体位的不同以及呼吸、心跳等生理活动都会使获得的图像发生空间位置的变动,给进一步的处理和分析带来困难。所以在对脑功能图像进行统计分析时,有必要对时间序列脑功能成像中的图像进行配准,去除在图像采集过程中由于被试者运动而产生的影响。

以上是关于图像配准技术的几个较新应用领域的简介,另外几种典型的应用还有 实际医学图像和图谱的比较、基于配准的分割、心脏运动估计等等。本文主要以 MRI 图像为研究对象,研究图像的配准技术并对医学目标进行分割。

# 1.3 图像配准技术的分类

图像配准的方法很多,根据不同的准则可以有不同的分类[10][11]。

### 1.3.1 空间变换的性质

采用什么样的空间变换类型对配准过程而言是很重要的,不合适的变换类型可能 导致不成功的配准效果。大致来讲,按照变换函数的不同,可以将配准分成以下几种 类型:

(1) 刚体变换。源图像只能进行全局平移和旋转操作,源图像中任意两点间的距 离在变换前后保持不变;

通常情况下,三维刚体变换包括三次平移操作和三次旋转操作。设点(*x*,*y*,*z*)经 刚体变换后,坐标变为(*X*,*Y*,*Z*),则二者的函数关系可以表示成:

 $X = x\cos(\phi)\cos(\omega) + y[\sin(\phi)\cos(\theta) + \cos(\phi)\sin(\omega)\sin(\theta)] + z[\sin(\phi)\sin(\theta) - \cos(\phi)\sin(\omega)\cos(\theta)] + p$ 

 $Y = -x\sin(\phi)\cos(\omega) + y[\cos(\phi)\cos(\theta) - \sin(\phi)\sin(\omega)\sin(\theta)] + z[\cos(\phi)\sin(\theta) + \sin(\phi)\sin(\omega)\cos(\theta)] + q$ 

 $Z = x\sin(\omega) - y\cos(\omega)\sin(\theta) + z\cos(\omega)\cos(\theta) + r$ 

其中, p,q,r表示沿 x轴、 y轴和 z轴的平移参数,  $\theta,\omega,\phi$ 表示绕 x轴、 y轴和 z轴旋转的角度。

在医学图像配准中,刚体变换常用于骨骼图像的配准。另外在多模态脑图像配准 中,因为脑组织局限于颅骨中,颅骨可以看成是刚体,所以可以认为短时间内得到的 脑图像之间没有非线性差异。 (2) 仿射变换。源图像可以进行全局平移、旋转、缩放和切变操作,直线映射成 直线,直线的平行性在映射后保持不变,但相交直线之间的夹角可以改变;

仿射变换的一般形式包含12个参数,其表达式如下:

 $X = a_1 x + a_2 y + a_3 z + a_4$  $Y = b_1 x + b_2 y + b_3 z + b_4$  $Z = c_1 x + c_2 y + c_3 z + c_4$ 

(3)投影变换。变换后直线映射成直线,但映射后直线之间的平行或相交关系可以改变;投影变换是最一般的线性变换,包含15个参数,其表达式如下:

 $X = (a_1 x + a_2 y + a_3 z + a_4) / (mx + ny + pz + 1)$ 

 $Y = (b_1x + b_2y + b_3z + b_4) / (mx + ny + pz + 1)$ 

 $Z = (c_1 x + c_2 y + c_3 z + c_4) / (mx + ny + pz + 1)$ 

投影变换比较适合描述从一个点源发出的射线形成的图像,如光学图像,所有的 光线都要经过镜头的焦点;放射图像,所有的射线从同一个点源发出,穿过目标投影 到一个平面上。用投影变换描述断层成像技术得到的图像则不够准确。

(4)弹性变换,也称非刚体变换或非线性或柔性变换,映射后直线可以变成曲
 线。非线性变换可以用于描述成像过程中仪器引入的非线性失真,其模型通常比较简
 单,可以根据成像的物理过程得到。非线性变换最常应用的场合是异体医学图像配
 准,用于描述生物个体之间的非线性差异。

图1.2给出了不同空间变化的几何特点。前三种变换类型自由度较小,只有几个可 调参数,配准完成后只能保证两幅图像在大体位置上的对齐。经过多年的发展,用于 同一模式和不同模式的刚性配准算法己经基本成熟,可以达到较高的配准精度。对于 配准精度要求不高的应用场合或应用本身具有线性特性,采用线性配准就足够了。例 如在医学应用中,由于大脑的变形基本上被颅骨限制,所以同一患者的大脑图像可以 通过刚性变换来联系。但是当两幅图像差异较大,存在非线性变形或配准精度要求较 高时,必须采用具有更高自由度的非线性变换技术。例如比较不同个体之间的差异或 进行开颅手术导航等。

## 1.3.2 图像的成像方式

随着成像技术的发展,图像的来源是多种多样的,如普通光学成像、雷达遥感图像以及医学图像中的CT图像、MRI图像、PET图像等等。由于成像原理不同,对同样的目标得到的图像特征也就有较大的差异。这里,每一种图像被称为一个模态。因此,根据图像的成像方式,可以将配准分为以下两类:

(1)单模态图像配准。两个图像来源于同样的成像方式,如CT-CT图像配准、 MRI-MRI图像配准;

(2)多模态图像配准。两个图像来源于不同的成像方式,如CT-MRI图像配准、 MRI-PET图像配准等。

## 1.3.3 成像目标

完成配准任务使用的图像可能是同一个目标或场景,也可能是不同的目标或场 景,根据这点不同,可以将配准分为下面两类:

(1)同体图像配准(intra-subject)。所有图像来自同一目标或场景,成像方式或成像时间不同,可用于信息融合、目标变化监测等;

(2) 异体图像配准(inter-subject)。图像来自具有相同自然属性的不同个体,通常 采用同一种成像方式,可用于比较群体差异、目标识别等。

此外,还可以根据图像的数据维数、采用的图像特征、优化策略等对图像配准算 法进行分类。本文主要研究适用于医学图像的单模态异体非刚性配准算法。

## 1.4 异体非刚性配准算法概述

在医学图像处理与分析领域,医生往往通过统计分析,比较病人的异常器官与正常人的差异以及疾病的发展情况,得出尽量正确的诊疗方案,比如说脑部异常或脑肿瘤的诊断与治疗。但是,个体差异增大了医生完成正确、可靠的分析和诊疗的难度。 不过,图像配准技术的发展可以在一定程度上帮助医生克服这个困难。鉴于不同个体 之间的差异是非线性关系,采用非刚性配准是合理的选择。

非刚性配准技术属于一种局部配准的方法,这种局部配准技术不再局限于旋转、 平移和缩放等几种全局性的变换,而是描述两个数据集之间存在的所有的局部性细节 差异,其空间变换具有更高的自由度,通常三维数据的非刚性配准具有数以百万计的 变换自由度。随着非刚性配准技术研究的深入,这种图像配准算法已经成为一种极其 重要的研究工具,在各类医学图像处理和分析研究中发挥了巨大的作用。但同刚性配 准相比,非刚性配准还不成熟,配准速度、配准精度、配准性能的合理评价等方面仍 然需要进行深入地研究。目前非刚性配准仍然是一个有意义的非常活跃的研究领域。

随着研究队伍的壮大,有关非刚性医学图像配准的研究成果也在快速增加[12][13] [14][15]。总的来说,这些算法可分为三大类,即基于特征的配准算法、基于灰度的配准 算法和特征与灰度相结合的综合性算法。

,原图像



图1.2 空间变换类型

Figure 1.2 type of spatial transformation

# 1.4.1 基于特征的配准算法

基于特征的配准算法首先需要从每个用于匹配的数据集中提取出合适的、具有代 表性的特征,然后将这些特征参数化后,与目标数据中的对应特征进行匹配。配准中 使用的特征一般为能够表现图像本质的典型结构,如提取的图像边界、外部轮廓线、 表皮等,或是在图像内部提取的显著的几何特征,如轮廓线中具有的局部曲率最大 点、局部图像窗口中方差的最大点、闭合曲线或面中均匀介质的质心、典型特征线的 交叉点等,还包括线、面的曲率、傅立叶变换中的频率描述等。还有可能是基于统计 知识特性的特征,如特征的距离空间、边界、面、体特征的几何矩、正交矩、投影矩 等。由于基于特征的配准方法直接计算点少,所以配准速度快。而且配准的表述依据 在于特征,对图像像素的依赖性小,对于不同模态和相同的图像配准可以得到相同的 配准精度。但是该方法配准的精度受到特征提取的影响,如果特征提取和特征匹配不 准确,会对配准结果产生很大的干扰。

在这一类配准算法中,基于特征点的配准是一个重要的组成部分,得到了广泛的研究,如仿射配准<sup>[16]</sup>,Talairach变换<sup>[17]</sup>,弹性样条<sup>[18]</sup>,薄板样条<sup>[19] [20]</sup>等。基于特征点配准算法的关键是如何在数据集中发现对应的特征点,从而催生了自动寻找配准对应点的研究<sup>[21] [22]</sup>。文献[22]提出的利用小波特征向量作为每个像素的形态学签名,然后选择两个数据集对应点的方法,取得了很好的效果。这种基于小波的特征向量从经过小波变换的图像区域中提取,能够在多尺度空间中反映每个像素点与周围邻近像素之间的空间结构关系。通过结合像素空间位置等先验信息,文献给出的该方法确定对应点的准确性可以与专家确定的对应关系相媲美<sup>[22]</sup>。

基于曲线的配准是该类算法的另一个重要组成部分。当建立一个形变场来配准两 个图像数据集时,使用曲线作为驱动特征能够获得更大的配准精确度。事实上,许多 基于特征点的配准算法都包括了点的方位属性或方向信息来加强对变形的限制<sup>[23][24]</sup>。 利用沟线实现三维配准自二十世纪九十年代以来一直是人脑磁共振图像配准研究的活 跃课题<sup>[25][26][27][28]</sup>。文献[29]使用嵴线来驱动容积数据配准。嵴线是指物体表面上满足 下述几何准则的曲线部位:即在相关的主要方向上其最大主曲率必须是局部最大。利 用阈值法分割出MRI数据的脑皮质和脑室系统后,首先定义这些表面的嵴线,然后利用 迭代最近点算法<sup>[30]</sup>(Iterative Closest Point, ICP)将它们与目标脑图像的对应曲线匹配。 ICP算法的目标就是在备选的曲线中发现相互匹配的曲线,拓朴结构规则强制曲线的一 对一匹配,并保证它们内部的点能够达到相互的一致,最后通过使规则化测度和失匹 配测度达到最小值得到一个三维形变场。该形变场被表示为B样条函数的三维张量积。 失匹配测度的作用是通过容忍需要配准曲线之间的部分偏离限制虚假配准。基于1CP的 配准算法得到了广泛的研究和应用,也提出了许多新的改进算法<sup>[31][32]</sup>。

第三类经常用到的特征是表面,主要利用目标边界表面信息,来确定匹配变换。 对于医学图像来说,表面特征比点或线特征更容易通过自动分割的方法得到,也就更 容易完成精确配准的任务。文献[33]给出的方法是基于表面的配准算法的一个代表。 该算法首先从每个数据集中提取出脑表面模型,该表面模型包括许多重要的功能区域 和三维空间中不同组织结构以及不同脑叶的交界区。然后重新构造提取出来的表面和 曲线,最后与目标数据的对应结构进行匹配。基于表面的配准可以通过多种途径扩展 到全体积配准,如文献[33]提出的算法,利用径向基函数的加权线性组合来描述形变 网格表面对其临近点的影响,把基于表面的形变延伸到全脑形变。 近年来,文献[34]提出的HAMMER算法进一步推动了基于特征的图像配准技术的 发展,它引入的几何不变矩(geometric moment invariant, GMI)属性向量概念为后续的相 关研究<sup>[35][36][37]</sup>提供了一个灵活的框架。GMI属性向量的特点是为每一个体素定义一系 列的图像特征,作为该体素的形态学标记。此后,文献[38][39]在HAMMER算法中加 入表面特征,文献[40][22]通过小波分解,在子图像中定义GMI属性向量。将统计形变 模型与HAMMER算法相结合,可以使配准算法更具有韧性<sup>[41]</sup>。

此外,结合水平集演化和统计形状模型理论的基于特征的配准技术也在不断发展 中<sup>[42][43]</sup>。

### 1.4.2 基于灰度的配准算法

直接利用图像的灰度信息完成配准任务直观上很容易理解,因为如果两幅图像匹配地非常好,看起来就应该非常相像。也就是说,在单模态配准中,如果两个图像是互相匹配的,则两幅图像上对应体素的灰度值应该是相似的。基于灰度的配准算法省却了对配准质量影响较大的图像特征提取过程,在单模态图像配准中表现出了卓越的性能,因而蓬勃发展起来<sup>114</sup>。该类方法通常采用数学或统计学的原则,直接利用图像的所有像素数据的统计特性进行配准,以相对应的每个区域的灰度特征为配准元素。通过在可变形数据和目标数据之间定义一个反映灰度相似性的度量,衡量两幅图像的相似程度。配准的过程是通过一种合适的优化方法不断的变换参数,寻找最优变换,使得配准图像的相似性测度达到最优。

首先被选作相似性测度的是互相关(Cross-Correlation, CC)<sup>[41][45]</sup>。如果两幅图像 完全相同,则互相关值等于1;如果两幅图像之间存在差异,则互相关值小于1。由于 采用数值方法对互相关相似性测度寻优不易实现,限制了该测度的进一步推广。最简 单的相似性测度是灰度差的平方和(Sum of Squared intensity Differences, SSD),当两 幅图像之间只存在由高斯噪声引起的差异时,SSD测度达到最优。SSD测度的数值寻优 很容易实现,可以很好地完成大量参数的优化,配准精度可到亚像素级,因此得到了 广泛关注<sup>[46][47][48][49][50][51][52][53][54][55][56][57]。与SSD测度相似的还有均方误差测度(Mean Square Differences, MSD)和加权均方误差测度(weighted Mean Square Differences, WMSD)<sup>[58][59][60][61][62][63]</sup>。另一类表现不俗的相似性测度是基于信息论的,目标是使两 幅图像拥有最多的共有信息。在信号与图像处理领域最常使用的信息论测度是来源于 通信领域的香农-维纳熵测度,其中被移植到图像配准问题的一个测度是联合熵(Joint Entropy)<sup>[64][65]</sup>。该测度测量两幅图像的合成信息量,两幅图像的相似度越高,联合熵 越低。该测度隐含一个假设,即图像的大块区域在配准完成后应该尽量重合,而实际 上背景因素的影响易导致误匹配,降低了该测度的可靠性,这就是重叠区域问题。互 信息测度(Mutual Information, MI)的提出<sup>[66][67]</sup>在一定程度上解决了这个问题,它不仅</sup>

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考虑两幅图像的联合信息,而且考虑每幅原图像对重叠区域的贡献,当两幅图像完全匹配时,互信息取最大值。基于互信息测度的配准近年来取得了较大的进展,特别是其在多模态配准应用中的良好表现引起了研究人员的广泛兴趣<sup>[68][69][70][71][72][73][74]</sup>。互信息测度并没有完全解决重叠区域问题,因此又出现了其它基于信息论的测度,如标准化的互信息测度(Normalized Mutual Information, NMI)<sup>[75][76][77][5]</sup>,KLD测度<sup>[78][79][80]</sup>等。此外,还有一些文献使用其它的相似性测度,如图像比值的均匀性测度(Ratio Image Uniformity, RIU)<sup>[81][82]</sup>,分离的灰度均匀性测度(Patitioned Intensity Uniformity)<sup>[83]</sup>等。

在灰度驱动的图像配准算法发展过程中,从理论基础角度分析,主要来源于两种 理论分支,即与材料的物理形变模型理论相关或从数学上讲是基于偏微分方程的配准 算法,和插值与近似理论或称为基于基函数拟合的配准算法。目前与这两类算法相关 的研究都非常活跃,下面分别介绍几种典型的用于医学图像配准的方法。

### 1.4.2.1 基于物理模型的非刚性配准算法

#### 1 弹性配准

弹性配准是基于压力和张力理论的。它的基本思想是将源图像变形成目标图像的 过程模拟成拉伸一个弹性材料的物理过程(例如橡皮)。这样的物理过程主要由两个 力来控制,一个是内力,是弹性体发生形变时产生的力以及阻止弹性体离开平衡态的 阻力;另一个是外力,直接作用在弹性材料上。当这两个力达到平衡时,弹性体停止 变形。这一物理过程可以用Navier-Cauchy线性弹性偏微分方程描述,即

$$\mu \nabla^2 \boldsymbol{u}(x, y, z) + (\lambda + \mu) \nabla (\nabla \boldsymbol{\cdot} \boldsymbol{u}(x, y, z)) + \boldsymbol{f}(x, y, z) = 0$$
(1.3)

其中**u**表示位移矢量场,**f**是作用在弹性体上的外力,用以驱动整个配准过程,λ和 μ为Lamé常数,用于描述弹性体的变形方式。Navier-Cauchy线性弹性偏微分方程的求 解可以看成是一个优化问题,也就是在代表外力的图像相似性测度和代表内力的变形 场平滑性之间取得平衡<sup>[84]</sup>。可以采用多种方式取得最优解,如变分法<sup>[1]</sup>,有限差分法 <sup>[85][86]</sup>,有限元法<sup>[87]</sup>等等。

文献[85]首次将线性弹性模型用在非刚性配准问题中,采用迭代方式得到位移场的最优解。该方法在求解偏微分方程时,在矩形网格上进行有限差分运算。需要注意的是,弹性配准方法适合处理小变形配准问题,一般用于较为精确的、局部的非线性配准。当两幅图像之间形变较大时,算法性能劣化。文献[86]对文献[85]提出的算法进行了有益的改进,在进行弹性配准之前对图像进行了全局预配准,尽量减小两幅图像之间的差异。而且,通过采用多分辨率配准策略<sup>[86][88]</sup>,进一步减小了配准误差。该

算法的图像相似性测度采用互相关。文献<sup>[89][90]</sup>进一步扩展了弹性配准框架,允许弹性 参数随空间位置而变,可以保证某些特定的结构更加自由地变形。

#### 2 流体配准

弹性配准技术尽管可以很好地模拟局部的微小变形,但是它也是有局限性的。 Navier-Cauchy线性弹性偏微分方程是建立在小变形的假设前提下,而且压力导致变形 能量随变形强度按比例增加,因此它不能模拟较大的形变问题。医学上的异体配准应 用非常需要能够模拟较大形变的高自由度的非刚性配准算法,因为人类个体之间的差 异是非常大的。文献[91][92][93]提出了粘滞流体模型,解决大形变图像配准问题, 可以简称为流体配准技术。流体配准技术是建立在连续力学理论基础上的,满足质量 守恒、能量守恒等物理定律。从数学角度讲,弹性配准技术通常在Lagrangian框架中分 析,与系统的初值相关,而流体配准技术则在Eulerian框架中分析,与系统的终值相 关。在Eulerian框架下,流体配准算法用Navier-Stokes流体偏微分方程描述,即

$$\mu \nabla^2 \boldsymbol{v}(x, y, z) + (\lambda + \mu) \nabla (\nabla^T \cdot \boldsymbol{v}(x, y, z)) + \boldsymbol{f}(x, y, z) = 0$$
(1.4)

其中*v*(*x*, *y*, *z*)表示速度矢量场, *f*(*x*, *y*, *z*)是作用在流体上的外力, λ 和 μ 为粘滞流体参数。与弹性模型相比,除了微分算子是作用于速度场*v*,而不是位移场 *u*之外,粘流体满足的方程和弹性模型是类似的。速度场同位移场之间的联系如下:

$$\mathbf{v}(x, y, z) = \partial \mathbf{u}(x, y, z, t) / \partial t + \mathbf{v}(x, y, z, t) \cdot \nabla \mathbf{u}(x, y, z, t)$$
(1.5)

Navier-Stokes流体偏微分方程从内在本质上描述了作用在流体区域的力的平衡关系。在流体配准中,源图像可看成是粘流体,流体在内力的作用下去拟合待配准图像。经过一段时间后,内力消失,流体停止流动。内力在图像随着时间变形的过程中释放,能够模拟高度局部化的变形,如转角。因此从原理上讲,流体配准能够提供大变形和更大程度的可变性,特别适合不同个体之间(包括图谱匹配)的配准。

由于流体模型与弹性模型具有高度的相似性,所以Navier-Stokes流体偏微分方程的 求解可以借鉴Navier-Cauchy线性弹性偏微分方程的求解方式,只是将微分算子的作用 对象由位移矢量 u 改为速度矢量 v。具有代表性的流体配准算法是Christensen提出的逆 一致流体配准算法<sup>[91][92][93]</sup>,其配准策略采用自由度逐级增长的分级变换过程。首先采 用仿射变换,然后是弹性变换,最后采用流体变换。Christensen提出的算法采用逐次超 松弛迭代法求解Navier-Stokes流体偏微分方程,计算量非常大,在大型并行分布式计算 机上运行也需要几个小时,这成为制约该算法应用的一大主要障碍。文献[94]提出了 一种快速算法,通过从线性弹性算子的主值函数中提取卷积滤波器的方式解偏微分方 程,极大的降低了该算法的计算量。

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流体模型的优点是允许大变形,原则上它可以实现任何复杂的形变。然而选择流体模型的时候应该小心,因为大变形并不总是适合所有的应用。比如涉及大脑的医学 应用,由于允许大变形,有可能会通过相同的机理导致形式上相联的不同组织结构的 自动误匹配。

### 3 扩散模型

基于Maxwell的热力学理论,当容器中存在半透膜时,其上的分子选择器-demons 控制着不同分子的扩散方向,一段时间后,分子会按类分开。借助这种分子扩散模型 的思想,文献<sup>[95][54]</sup>提出了用于图像配准的Demons配准算法,它的思想是假想目标图像 的轮廓上存在着具有选择性的选择器,即demons。将源图像看成是可以变形的网格, 网格的每个点分别被标记为内点或外点,如果为内点,参考图像的选择器就将其推入 到目标位置,如果是外点,则将其推出。Demons配准算法的图像相似性测度为SSD, 可以灵活选择驱动图像变形的作用力,特别适合完成医学图像配准的是基于光流场理 论的作用力<sup>[54][96]</sup>。

光流理论来源于运动估计问题,应用范围很广,如机器人或虚拟现实中的 3D 场 景分析、遥感或图像压缩中的运动图像补偿等。光流场理论的假设前提是图像 *I* 在运 动的过程中保持灰度不变<sup>[97]</sup>,即

$$I(x(t), y(t), z(t), t) = \text{const}$$
(1.6)

对式(1.6)求微分得

$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial t} = -\frac{\partial I}{\partial t}$$
(1.7)

对于图像配准问题,可以看成是由源图像到目标图像的运动过程,设运动时间是单位 时间,则上式变为

$$\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla t \mathbf{i} = s \mathbf{i} - t \mathbf{i} \tag{1.8}$$

其中速度**v**=[∂x/∂t,∂y/∂t,∂z/∂t], si和ti分别表示源图像SI和目标图像TI的灰度。 令图像中各控制点的运动方向与该点的梯度方向相同,则

$$\mathbf{v} = (si - ti)\nabla ti / \|\nabla ti\|^2 \tag{1.9}$$

这个速度就代表了变形网格点受到的作用力。其稳定解的形式为

$$\mathbf{v} = \frac{(si - ti)\nabla ti}{\|\nabla ti\|^2 + (si - ti)^2}$$
(1.10)

光流方程利用图像灰度在时间上的微分和空间上的梯度估计运动状态,但由于被 估计的未知量个数大于方程个数,使之成为病态问题。解决这个问题的方法是增加附 加约束,比如平滑光流。Demons算法采用简单的高斯滤波器与变形场卷积的方式对变 形场进行平滑处理,计算效率极高,因此成为备受关注的一种算法 [98][99][100][1][101][102][103]

在光流理论的假设前提下, Demons 配准算法适合于处理小变形问题,不能满足 大变形图像配准应用的需要。为了扩大该算法的应用范围,文献[98]提出了改进的 Demons 算法,我们称之为主动 Demons 算法。该算法假设扩散是双向的,位于图像 上的选择器不仅允许滑动图像扩散到静态的参考图像中,而且也能施加作用力,使参 考图像扩散到滑动图像中。因此,基于牛顿的作用力与反作用力原理,文献中给出了 新的图像形变驱动力,采用了滑动图像的梯度信息,即

$$\mathbf{v} = (si - ti) \left( \frac{\nabla ti}{\|\nabla ti\|^2 + (si - ti)^2} + \frac{\nabla si}{\|\nabla si\|^2 + (si - ti)^2} \right)$$
(1.11)

由于只有滑动图像变形,所以该作用力只作用在滑动图像上。文献[98]证明,该算法 不仅提高了配准的正确性和一致性,而且收敛速度更快,能够完成变形较大的两幅图 像间的配准,在一定程度上克服了Demons算法不能处理具有较大形变的图像配准问题 的缺陷。

文献[100]在 Demons 相关算法的基础上<sup>[54][97][104]</sup>,提出了更具一般性的 PASHA 算法,以便于用常规的优化理论来解释这一类算法。其联系两图像 *I* 和 *J* 的能量函数 *E* 设计为

$$E(\boldsymbol{C},\boldsymbol{T}) = S(I,J,\boldsymbol{C}) + \sigma \|\boldsymbol{C} - \boldsymbol{T}\|^{2} + \lambda \sigma R(\boldsymbol{T})$$
(1.12)

其中函数*S* 是图像相似性测度,符号*C* 表征了图像中点的对应性,即对图像*I* 中的每 一个点,都能在图像*J* 中找到它的对应点。符号*T* 是估计得到的变换,该变换是一个 平滑矢量场,受正则化能量*R* 的约束。参数λ控制变形的平滑性,而参数σ与图像受 噪声干扰的程度相关。PASHA 算法的优越性在于它寻找最优变换的过程。一般常规 的优化方法是同时优化*C* 和*T*,但是当正则化能量具有正交性的时候,可以采用快 速的交替寻优策略。

基于李群理论, 文献[101]提出了具有微分同胚映射特性的非参数Demons配准算法, 进一步推动了Demons配准算法的发展。

#### 4 连续生物力学模型

虽然弹性模型可以很好地分析弹性材料的行为特点,但是对于复杂的生物材料 (如软组织)的行为特点进行解释却稍显不足,需要借助于连续生物力学理论。虽然 柔软的生物组织具有多种形态,但本质上是由两个分量构成:细胞和细胞外基质,因 此细胞层级的力学模型应该能够解释软组织的行为特点<sup>[105]</sup>。软组织可以看成是各向异 性的,粘弹性和无弹性物质的合成。应该基于这样的构成关系描述在某些特定条件下 组织的行为特点,而不是只关注材料本身的属性。基于连续生物力学模型的配准算法 的研究应该是未来的一个具有潜力的研究方向<sup>[106]</sup>。

### 1.4.2.2 基于基函数拟合的非刚性配准算法

这一类配准算法与基于物理模型的算法有本质上的不同,它们利用一系列的基函 数模拟图像的变形过程,通过调整基函数组合系数拟合形变场。从数学意义上看,其 理论基础来自于函数的插值和近似理论。可用于图像配准的基函数多种多样,最为直 观的一种基函数应该是多项式函数<sup>[107]</sup>。但是,低于二阶的多项式基函数只能模拟全局 形变,而高阶多项式的性能不稳定,非常容易引入伪差,严重影响算法的性能<sup>[108]</sup>,因 此限制了多项式函数在非刚性配准问题中的应用。另一类可选用的基函数为傅立叶基 函数<sup>[109]</sup>、小波基函数<sup>[110][111][12]</sup>等。近年来,将样条函数用于基于基函数拟合的非刚性 配准算法具有较大的影响力,如薄板样条<sup>[113][114][11]</sup>,弹性体样条<sup>[115][116]</sup>以及B样条 <sup>[117][18][119]</sup>等。在信号处理领域中,B样条的应用非常广泛,常用于解决插值问题,甚至 有文献认为B样条是最优秀的近似函数<sup>[120]</sup>。

通常情况下,基函数有无限支集,因此每个基函数分量对空间变换都有贡献,而 日每个控制点都对变换具有全局影响,这样的特点对某些应用有不利的影响,比如需 要模拟高度的局部形变时,这些基函数往往会力不从心。基函数配准技术的另一个缺 点是,控制点数目过多时,计算复杂度过大,影响了它们的应用。自由变形技术(Free Form Deformation, FFD)<sup>[117]</sup>的引入改变了这一状况。FFD技术通常使用具有紧支集的 基函数,如B样条,该技术是模拟三维物体变形的强大工具,如今已经成功拓展到图像 配准领域[117][30]。自由变形的基本思路是,将物体嵌入一个空间中,当所嵌的空间变形 时,物体随之变形。B样条可以控制局部变形,改变控制点只影响它附近局部邻域的形 状改变。控制点网格的分辨率确定了变形的自由度,同时也确定了计算复杂度。大间 距的控制点能够模拟全局的非刚性变形,小间距的控制点可以模拟高度的局部变形, 但是小间距的精细网格计算复杂度很大。为了在非刚性变形程度和计算代价之间达到 最佳平衡,可以采用分级多分辨率方法,控制网格的分辨率随图像分辨率由粗到细增 加。基于样条的FFD要求使用规则网格,控制点之间的间距 $\delta$ 是均匀的。FFD技术比较 接近单样条张量积的思想。已知图像域 $\Omega = \{(x, y, z) | 0 \le x \le X, 0 \le y \le Y, 0 \le z \le Z\}, \Phi$ 表示 $n_x \times n_y \times n_z$ 维网格,控制点为 $\phi_{i,i,k}$ ,间距均匀,则位移场u(x, y, z)可以表示成一维 样条的三维张量积,即

$$\boldsymbol{u}(x, y, z) = \sum_{l=0, m=0, n=0}^{3, 3, 3} \beta_l(u) \beta_m(v) \beta_n(w) \phi_{l+i, m+j, n+k}$$
(1.13)

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其中 $i = \lfloor \frac{s}{\delta} \rfloor - 1$ ,  $j = \lfloor \frac{s}{\delta} \rfloor - 1$ ,  $k = \lfloor \frac{s}{\delta} \rfloor - 1$ ,  $u = \frac{s}{\delta} - \lfloor \frac{s}{\delta} \rfloor$ ,  $v = \frac{s}{\delta} - \lfloor \frac{s}{\delta} \rfloor$ ,  $w = \frac{s}{\delta} - \lfloor \frac{s}{\delta} \rfloor$ ,  $\beta_l \gtrsim \pi l$  阶样条函数。文献[121]采用的三次B样条在图像配准应用中具有卓越的性能,它是 有限支集,改变控制点只影响该点周围区域的空间变换,同时还能得到光滑的 $\mathbb{C}^2$ 连续 变换。三次B样条的基函数如下:

 $\beta_0(s) = (1-s)^3 / 6$ 

 $\beta_1(s) = (3s^3 - 6s^2 + 4)/6$ 

$$\beta_2(s) = (-3s^3 + 3s^2 + 3s + 1)/6$$

 $\beta_{3}(s) = s^{3}/6$ 

三次B样条FFD配准技术在医学图像配准中有比较典型的应用,如文献[117]提出的基于体素灰度相似性测度NMI的三次B样条FFD配准,文献[122]采用三次B样条配准 医学MR、SPECT和CT图像等。

### 1.4.3 综合特征非刚性配准算法

尽管基于灰度的和基于特征的配准算法均具有各自独特的优势,但同时也具有各自的不足。模型驱动算法具有明确的解剖结构几何模型,能够保证对应解剖结构在空间上的一一对应关系,但创建一个完整、准确的几何模型往往需要手工的介入,难以实现配准过程的启动化。而基于灰度的配准方法一般不需要人工的介入,比较容易实现配准过程的自动化,但难以保证配准后解剖结构之间的完全一一对应关系。混合特征非刚性配准算法就是为了克服单纯基于灰度和基于特征配准算法的不足,综合两者优势提出的算法。文献[123]将组织分割与分类与体素类别概率结合,构造MI和KLD信息论测度实现配准。PASHA算法<sup>[100]</sup>综合了Demons算法<sup>[54]</sup>,特征匹配技术<sup>[124]</sup>和非线性ICP算法<sup>[30]</sup>的优点,实现了体素灰度信息与目标特征信息的良好结合。文献[125] 提出的标志点激发的逆一致线性弹性配准算法给混合特征配准技术提供了一个综合性框架。算法中采用的对应特征包括人工标记的标志点,通过人工神经网络的半自动分割得到的结构特征,组织分类特征以及归一化的灰度相似性测度。可以预见,在医学图像配准领域,随着成像技术的发展,随着应用标准的提高,更为有效的混合特征配准技术的研究应该是未来的一个主要发展趋势。

### 1.4.4 异体非刚性配准理论中存在的问题

虽然现有的方法<sup>[126]</sup>似乎在某些常规应用中已经取得了很好的效果,但是非刚性配 准技术的研究仍未成熟,各个方面仍然有很大的提高空间,包括选择空间变换模型和 对应特征,开发优秀的变形场正则化技术和优化技术,以及设计可信的算法评价策略 等。

在现有的异体非刚性配准技术中,基于物理模型的方法具有能提供物理可实现解 的能力,然而这些模型也有其难以克服的缺陷。线性弹性模型对小变形具有好的模拟 能力,然而生物软组织的变形往往较大,采用该模型不易得到非常精确的解。流体模 型可以模拟较大的形变,但不能同时模拟某些组织的弹性变形。求解流体模型不仅计 算复杂度高,而且得到的解在实际情况下经常是不可实现的。随着生物力学技术的发 展,研究新的描述生物组织行为的模型应该是一个值得关注的方向。

基于基函数扩展的非刚性配准算法通过插值或近似函数模拟生物组织的变形,与 基于物理模型的方法相比,具有易于求解的优点,不过这一类方法不能方便地揭示生物组织变形的物理含义。

另外,在配准模型中融入更多的先验知识是提高配准性能的有效手段,当然这些 先验知识的提取应该具有较高的精度。同时,在配准模型中加入拓扑保持或微分同胚 映射约束应该是一个基本原则。

最后是对配准算法性能评价的问题。性能评价应该在配准技术的研究中占有非常 重要的地位,没有合适的评价方法,很难就不同算法对某些应用的适用性得出经得起 推敲的结论,这是一个迫切需要解决的问题。

# 1.5 本文的研究内容及安排

医学图像配准是医学图像分析与理解的重要内容,随着刚体配准技术的日益成熟,医学影像领域对非刚体配准技术的需求日益增多,以便突破刚体配准的限制,深入探索生物软组织的生长发展模式,实现有益的生物群体特性分析。在目前的非刚性配准技术中,基于物理模型的非刚性配准以其特有的描述组织自然行为的能力,成为该领域中的一个重要分支,其中 Demons 非刚性配准是该类方法中适用于单模态图像配准的一个优秀代表。本文的第二章对 Demons 算法及其重要的改进算法-主动 Demons 算法进行了深入细致的分析和算法实现,重点研究了该算法的两个重要参数-弹性系数和均化系数,以及算法中形变驱动力的局限性,得出了实际应用时参数设置的一般性原则,并给出了改进的形变驱动力。

Demons 非刚性配准算法完全基于灰度信息驱动图像变形,采用简单的两图像灰度差的平方和作为衡量图像相似程度的测度。该测度的假设前提是两图像中对应像素点的灰度相同。然而,对于 MRI 图像,受不同扫描仪器、不同参数设置以及不均匀场、干扰、噪声等影响,难以满足这样的假设条件,因此使用该算法之前,需要进行灰度匹配预处理。另外,对于不同个体间的配准问题,不同个体的生理差异较大。过大的图像空间位置差异也会影响 Demons 算法的配准质量,因此需要预先进行空间标

准化处理。本文第三章主要研究非刚性配准之前的灰度和空间标准化问题,提出了二 者同时标准化的预处理方法,改善灰度与空间分步标准化时的不足。同时,结合具有 较高的描述局部微小形变能力的 Demons 算法,在真实脑部 MRI 图像配准应用中得 到了更为准确的结果。

基于物理模型的非刚性配准算法得到的一般是一个稠密的变形场,图像具有很高的变形自由度。高自由度意味着有更多的像素可以自由运动,如果没有附加约束,不能保证得到的空间变换是合理的,可以实现的。因此本文的第四章重点研究了变形场的约束问题,通过分析矢量场关键点特性,提出了在尽量保持原有变形场几何特性的前提下校正原变形场拓扑性的非刚性配准算法,并通过实验对算法性能进行了评价。

已有的研究表明,基于灰度的配准算法和基于特征的配准算法有不同的优点和缺 点,综合两类算法的优势,克服其不足是未来非刚性配准技术的研究趋势。本文的第 五章通过分析基于灰度的非刚性配准算法的基本原理,在配准能量函数中引入形状相 似度项,提出了新的灰度信息与形状信息相结合的非刚性配准算法。算法适用于具有 相似灰度的多目标分割,在分割体积小、形状复杂、边缘模糊的深层脑结构的应用中 得到了较好的结果。

最后一章总结了本文的研究成果,提出了进一步研究的目标和思路。

## 1.6 本章小结

本章主要介绍了医学图像配准的概念、意义、分类及研究进展,重点介绍了单模 态异体非刚性配准技术的研究状况,并简述了本文的具体研究内容。

# 2 主动 Demons 配准算法分析

# 2.1 经典 Demons 算法

# 2.1.1 算法起源

Demons 非刚性配准算法于 1995 年首次提出<sup>[95]</sup>,并在 1998 年正式发表<sup>[54]</sup>。该算法借助 Maxwell 热力学理论中的分子扩散模型来描述图像的配准过程。

十九世纪, Maxwell 在热力学理论中提出了 demons 这个概念, 如图 2.1 所示。 假设某一气体由 a 和 b 两种分子组成, 被一个半透膜分隔在 A、B 区间。半透膜上存 在一些 demons 点, 可以区分这两种不同的分子, 并且只允许 a 分子通过半透膜扩散 到 A 区, b 分子扩散到 B 区,则扩散结束后, A 区只包含 a 分子, B 区只包含 b 分 子。



存在 demons 的半透膜

图 2.1 Maxwell 的 demons 模型 Figure 2.1 Maxwell's demons model

参照这样的分子扩散思想,假想目标图像*S*的目标轮廓上存在着具有选择性的选择器,即 demons,而源图像*M* 是可以变形的网格,网格的每个点分别被标记为内点或外点(相当于不同的分子类型),如果为内点,目标图像的选择器就将其推入到目标位置,如果是外点,则将其推出。可变形网格的柔韧性由各个网格点之间的关系确定,可以是完全的刚体关系,也可以是具有高度自由度的自由变形关系。极性是扩散模型的一个关键点。确定可变形网格点的极性时,参照的是目标图像在 demons 点处的灰度,这个灰度值就是目标的内部区域与外部区域的分界值。假设 demons 点的空

间坐标为 p,其灰度值为 s(p)=I,源图像对应位置处的灰度值为 m(p),若 m(p) < I,则该点为内点,受力方向为  $-\nabla s$ 方向;反之,该点为外点,受力方向为  $+\nabla s$ 方向。

Demons 算法有多种灵活可变的组合,主要可以从以下四个方面考虑:

(1) demons 点的位置:图像的所有像素、图像的边缘等;

- (2) 空间变换的类型: 刚性、仿射、非线性变换等;
- (3) 插值方法:线性插值、样条插值等;

(4) 作用力的形式:常数、基于梯度、基于光流理论等。

不同的组合方式具有不同的特点和不同的应用,下面主要介绍一下常用于医学图像配准的经典 Demons 算法的主要组成部分。

# 2.1.2 经典 Demons 算法的构成

适合配准医学图像的经典 Demons 算法主要构成为:

- (1) demons 点为参考图像的所有像素点;
- (2) 空间变换采用非刚性变换,并用高斯滤波器进行平滑;
- (3) 三次线性插值;

(4) 基于光流理论计算作用力。

### 2.1.2.1 作用力与迭代策略

经典 Demons 算法是基于光流场理论的,将源图像和目标图像看成是连续运动图 像序列中的两帧,目的是找到从源图像运动到目标图像的运动向量v。运动向量v即 是施加在源图像上的外力。光流场理论的假设前提是图像在运动的过程中保持灰度不 变,二维情况下可以表示成

$$I(x(t), y(t), z(t), t) = \text{const}$$
(2.1)

对式(2.1)求微分得

$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial x}\frac{\partial x}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial y}\frac{\partial y}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial z}\frac{\partial z}{\partial t} = -\frac{\partial I}{\partial t}$$
(2.2)

将运动时间看成是单位时间,则上式变为

$$\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla s = m - s \tag{2.3}$$

其中 $v = (\partial x/\partial t, \partial y/\partial t, \partial z/\partial t)$ ,  $m \pi s$ 分别表示图像 $M \pi S$ 的灰度。经过近似处理, 得到运动速度的表达式为

$$\mathbf{v} = \frac{(m-s)\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2} \tag{2.4}$$

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不过,式(2.4)在图像梯度值很小的情况下不稳定,当目标图像中某区域的梯度范数值 很小时,形变驱动力有可能非常大,与实际情况不符。通过增加稳定项,式(2.4)变为

$$v = \frac{(m-s)\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + (m-s)^2}$$
(2.5)

式(2.5)可以保证图像灰度变化较小的地方其变形驱动力接近于零。

Demons 算法中,采用迭代方式得到最优变换,即第i次迭代时:

- (1) 对每一个 demons 点 *p*,根据式(2.5)计算该点处的形变驱动力*v<sub>i</sub>*(*p*),得到该 点处的瞬时位移 *d<sub>i</sub>*(*p*) = -*v<sub>i</sub>*(*p*);
- (2) 计算形变场  $D_i(p) = D_{i-1}(p) + d_i(p)$ ;
- (3)检查变形后的源图像与目标图像的匹配程度,若不满足要求,重复这一迭代过程。

### 2.1.2.2 空间变换与变形场的正则化

经典Demons算法使用的空间变换模型是非刚性自由变换,具有高度的自由度,即 源图像中每一个提取出来的网格点都可以自由移动。高自由度的非线性变换虽然可以 模拟源图像与目标图像之间局部的微小形变,但是得到的变形场将不能满足一般的平 滑性要求。根据Tikhonov正则化理论<sup>[127]</sup>,算法创始人提出了采用高斯滤波器进行平滑 的线性正则化方法。文献[97]分析指出,若对形变场进行高斯滤波,即 $\bar{D}_i = G_\sigma * D_i$ , 则该算法与弹性配准算法近似;若对位移场进行高斯滤波,即 $\bar{d}_i = G_\sigma * d_i$ ,则该算法 与流体配准算法近似。加入平滑处理步骤,2.1.2.1中的第(2)步迭代改为

$$\overline{d}_i(p) = G_\sigma * d_i(p); \quad D_i(p) = D_{i-1}(p) + \overline{d}_i(p)$$

高斯滤波器中的标准差σ称为弹性系数。σ是一个非常重要的参数,实际上反映了相 邻的变形网格点之间的关系,它对整个非刚性配准性能的影响较大。遗憾的是,该参 数需要靠经验选择,因此有必要进行细致的分析。

### 2.1.2.3 多分辨率策略

分层配准是提高配准算法韧性的常用策略,特别是对大变形图像配准问题,通过 采用分层配准,可以尽量避免迭代寻优时陷入局部极值。采用分层配准时,首先进行 粗略层的配准,使用的图像是原始图像下采样后的结果;然后将得到的空间变换上采 样,作为较精细层配准的初值,继续寻优,直到完成最精细层次图像的配准。通过分 层,各层中使用的图像分辨率不同,因而也称为多分辨率配准策略。图2.2给出了图像
从粗略层次到最精细层次的分层过程。一般情况下,下采样系数为2,最粗略的层应尽量保证图像大小不低于32×32×32,以保证图像含有足够的信息。



图2.2 多分辨率策略 Figure 2.2 multi-resolution strategy

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采用多分辨率配准技术除了可以避免迭代寻优陷入局部极值外,还可以加快寻优 速度,因为粗略层图像数据量减少。另外,在不同的层次,高斯滤波器参数相同,其 有效滤波区域不同,因而为优化过程提供了更多的信息,促进了算法的收敛。

# 2.2 主动 Demons 算法

原始 Demons 算法中,在光流场理论前提下,式(2.5)给出的使源图像发生形变的 力单纯取自静态参考图像的梯度信息。这样的模型只适合于处理小变形问题,不能满 足较大变形图像配准应用的需要。为了扩大该算法的应用范围,文献[98]提出了改进 的 Demons 算法,即主动 Demons 算法,可以处理较大变形图像配准问题,即便是在 参考图像的梯度非常小的情况下,该改进算法也能实现较好的图像配准。假设扩散是 双向的,位于图像上的选择器不仅具有驱动可变的源图像扩散到静态目标图像中的 力,而且也能施加作用力,使静态目标图像有扩散到可变源图像中的能力。因此,基 于牛顿第三定律,作用力与反作用力的原理,参照式(2.5),可定义一个新的采用源图 像梯度信息的驱动力,即动态 demons 力

$$f_{m} = -\frac{(s-m)\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^{2} + (s-m)^{2}}$$
(2.6)

并将式(2.5)表示为 
$$f_s = \frac{(m-s)\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + (m-s)^2}$$
,称为静态驱动力。新的计算作用力的公式为

$$\boldsymbol{f} = \boldsymbol{f}_{s} + \boldsymbol{f}_{m} = (m-s) \left( \frac{\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^{2} + (m-s)^{2}} + \frac{\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^{2} + (s-m)^{2}} \right)$$
(2.7)

由于只有源图像变形,所以该作用力只作用在源图像上。文献[98]证明,该算法不仅 提高了配准的正确性和一致性,而且收敛速度更快,能够完成变形较大的两幅图像间 的配准,在一定程度上克服了 Demons 算法不能处理较大图像变形配准问题的缺陷。 为了能够调整作用力的强度,在式(2.7)中又加入了均化系数项,则作用力公式变为

$$f = (m-s) \left( \frac{\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + \alpha^2 (m-s)^2} + \frac{\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^2 + \alpha^2 (s-m)^2} \right)$$
(2.8)

主动 demons 驱动力的引入扩展了经典 Demons 算法的适用范围,可以有效地处理大变形图像配准问题。同时,改进算法进一步提高了 Demons 算法的配准速度。

### 2.2.1 参数分析

与经典 Demons 算法相比,主动 Demons 算法只是改进了图像形变驱动力,使之能够处理较大变形图像配准问题,而弹性系数σ,即高斯滤波器标准差的选择仍然是影响配准结果的重要因素。另外,新算法中引入的均化系数α对配准的影响也是有待

研究的问题,而文献[98]并未给出系统的分析。为了深入了解这些参数的影响,为应 用提供合适的参考,我们对这些参数进行了细致的分析,并得到了一些经验结论。

### 2.2.1.1 弹性系数分析

如前所述,弹性系数 $\sigma$ 是一个非常重要的参数,对整个非刚性配准过程有较大的 影响。文献[128]详细分析了原始 Demons 算法中弹性参数的影响,发现 $\sigma$ 越大,变 换的弹性越小,配准结果的均方误差也越大,弹性参数设置在0.5~1.0之间比较合 适。将半圆环图像与四分之一圆环图像配准是验证大形变配准算法性能的常用实验, 由于两幅图像之间的变形较大,原始 Demons 算法基本上不能完成配准要求,或者收 敛很慢,而主动 Demons 算法则完全实现了两幅图像的配准,配准结果如图 2.3 所 示,互相关系数(cross-correlation)为0.9915。



图 2.3 主动 Demons 算法的配准结果 (a)源图像 (b) 目标图像 (c) 变形后的源图像 (d) 形变场 Figure 2.3 result of active Demons algorithm. (a)source image (b) target image (c) deformed source image (d) deformation field

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参数设置如下:

- 图像大小为 256×256;
- demons 点选为图像中的所有像素点;
- 空间变换为自由项变换;
- 双线性插值;
- 三个分解尺度,分别是 256×256,128×128,64×64;
- 相似性测度为互相关函数。

实验中其他参数保持不变, α取 1.0, 弹性系数σ分别取 0.05、0.1、0.4、0.5、 0.6、1.0、1.5、2.0、3.0、4.0。实验结果如图 2.4 所示。图 2.4(a)中横轴代表迭代次 数,完成一次三个尺度的迭代需要 16×2<sup>2</sup>+16×2+16=112 次位移场更新,纵轴表示变 形后图像与参考图像之间的互相关系数,右端的标注栏表示不同的σ值。可以看出, 随迭代次数增加,互相关系数基本上保持单调增长,收敛后保持微幅波动。σ=0.5 时,互相关系数增长最快,迭代两次之后的差异最为明显,此时互相关函数与弹性系 数的关系曲线示于图 2.4(b)中; σ>1之后,算法的收敛特性非常接近; σ值较大时, 变换平滑性较好,波动较小。





#### 2.2.1.2 均化系数分析

分析公式(2.8)可以看出,因为 $\|\nabla s\|^2 + \alpha^2 (m-s)^2 \ge 2\alpha (m-s)\|\nabla s\|$ ,所以作用力的上限为 $\frac{1}{2\alpha}$ 。理论上分析,  $\alpha$  值越小,允许的变形度越大,收敛速度越快。为了考察  $\alpha$  值对主动 Demons 算法的影响,实验中  $\sigma$  值取 1.0,  $\alpha$  分别取 0.05、0.1、0.5、1.0、1.5、2.0、2.5、3.0,考察  $\alpha$  值对主动 Demons 算法的影响,其它实验条件不变。结果如图 2.5 所示。

图 2.5(a)为σ取 1.0 时互相关系数随迭代次数增加而变化的情况,图 2.5(b)为迭代 两次之后,互相关系数与均化系数的关系曲线。实验结果表明,较小的α值可以加快 算法的收敛速度,与理论分析相符。实验中还发现,尽管α值较大时收敛变慢,但是 得到的配准结果较好。

图 2.6 所示为不同 $\sigma$ 和 $\alpha$ 组合情况下,以迭代 2 次之后的互相关系数作为标准,得到的关系曲线,其最大值点位于 $\sigma$ =0.5,  $\alpha$ =0.1 处。

根据实验结果,可以看出σ和α值较小时,收敛速度快,平滑性较差;σ和α值 较大时,收敛速度变慢,但是配准精度高。因此,实际应用时可以首先采用较小的σ 和α值实现较快地初步配准,接近收敛时增大σ和α值,提高配准的精度。



图 2.5 主动 Demons 算法的均化系数分析

Figure 2.5 equalization parameter analysis of active Demons algorithm

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图 2.6 互相关系数与弹性系数和均化系数的关系曲线

Figure 2.6 the relations of the cross-correlation with the elasticity parameter and the equalization factor

## 2.2.2 应用于 MRI 图像的配准实验

2.2.1 节介绍了主动 Demons 算法,并对其重要参数的选取进行了分析实验。本 节将讨论该算法配准医学 MRI 图像的性能,考察参数分析得出的结论对真实医学图像 配准的指导意义。

### 2.2.2.1 模拟变形 MRI 图像的配准

参数选择为 3 个分解尺度,  $\sigma$ =0.5,  $\alpha$ =0.1, 接近收敛时参数改为 $\sigma$ =1,  $\alpha$ =3。 图 2.7(a)所示为一真实脑部 MRI 序列中的一幅图像,作为源图像,经过基于正弦函数 的变换之后,得到图 2.7(b),作为参考图像。2.7(c)是两幅图像的配准结果。配准前 二者的差值图像如图 2.7(d)所示,互相关系数 0.973,配准后二者的差值图像如图 2.7(e)所示,互相关系数 0.992。



图 2.7 仿真数据配准结果.(a)源图像(b)目标图像(c)变形后的源图像(d)目标图像与参考图像 灰度差(e)变形后的源图像与目标图像灰度差

Figure 2.7 registration results on synthetic images. (a)source image (b) target image (c)deformed source image (d) intensity differences between the source image and the target image (e) intensity differences between the deformed source image and the target image

## 2.2.2.2 不同个体真实 MRI 图像的配准

参数选择为 3 个分解尺度,迭代开始时选择 $\sigma$ =0.5,  $\alpha$ =0.1,接近收敛后,参数 更改为 $\sigma$ =1, $\alpha$ =3。图 2.8(a)所示为一真实脑部 MRI 序列中的一幅图像,作为源图 像,图 2.8(b)为另外的一个被试个体的一幅 MRI 图像,作为参考图像。图 2.8(c)是两 幅图像的配准结果。配准前二者的差值图像如图 2.8(d)所示,互相关系数 0.8456,配 准后二者的差值图像如图 2.8(e)所示,互相关系数 0.9856。

实验结果表明,主动 Demons 算法对仿真 MRI 图像和真实的不同个体间的 MRI 图像进行配准,都得到了较好的结果,可以进行具有较大形变的图像间的配准。参数 分析结果对真实 MRI 图像配准有较高的指导意义。



图 2.8 真实数据配准结果.(a)源图像(b)目标图像(c)变形后的源图像(d)目标图像与参考图像 灰度差(e)变形后的源图像与目标图像灰度差

Figure 2.8 registration results on real images. (a)source image (b) target image (c)deformed source image (d) intensity differences between the source image and the target image (e) intensity differences between the deformed source image and the target image

# 2.3 扩展的主动 Demons 算法

# 2.3.1 理论分析

基于扩散模型驱动图像变形的基本思想是: 假设 demons 点的空间坐标为p,其 灰度值为s(p)=I,滑动图像对应位置处的灰度值为m(p),若m(p) < I,则该点为内 点,受力方向为 $-\nabla s$ 方向;反之,该点为外点,受力方向为 $+\nabla s$ 方向。作用力规则示 意如图 2.9 所示。



Figure 2.9 deformation force illustration. (a) m(p) < s(p) (b) m(p) > s(p)

经典 Demons 算法中, 驱动图像变形的力建立在光流理论的基础上, 从式 (2.5) 可以看出,这个驱动力形式符合扩散模型的作用规则。可是,通过分析可以 发现,当 demon 点处图像梯度很小,接近零时,驱动力近似等于零,也就是说,这 种作用规则只是在灰度函数具有单调性时才起作用,图 2.9 给出的作用区域也是在单 调函数区。然而,实际情况并非如此,绝大部分的图像灰度不具有单调性,因此在一 些特殊区域,式(2.5)给出的驱动力公式将会得到不合理的结果。下面我们以一个 简单的例子说明这个问题。如图 2.10 所示,源图像和目标图像之间只存在平移,图 像灰度不是单调函数。点a、b和c是三个具有代表性的 demons 点,分布在三个不同 的区域。在目标图像上,各 demons 点的梯度分别为 $\nabla s(a)$ 、 $\nabla s(b)$ 和 $\nabla s(c)$ ,在图 2.10 中用黑色的实箭头表示,箭头方向表示梯度方向。在源图像中,与点a、b和c 相对应的点所受到的驱动力为 f(a)、 f(b) 和 f(c),根据式(2.5)计算得到,在图 2.10 中用黑色的虚箭头表示,箭头方向表示受力方向。由于源图像和目标图像之间 只存在简单的平移变化,因此配准时理想的空间变换方案应该是源图像整体向目标图 像平移一段距离,所有点的驱动力方向应该是一致的。而从图 2.10 中可以明显看 出,点a和c代表的区域受力方向与理想受力方向一致,而b点代表的区域实际受力 方向与理想受力方向相反,不能保证源图像能整体平移到目标图像。变形场的计算是 逐像素进行的,没有考虑各像素点的邻域关系。通过高斯滤波处理,可以通过引入邻 域信息,使这种不合理的变换得到一定程度的改善,然而当类似**b**点这样的区域过大 时,高斯滤波也不能完全解决这个问题。主动 Demons 算法引入了新的驱动力,作用 在可变形的源图像上,使得到的空间变换更合理,并加速配准过程。然而,这样的改 进并没有从根本上解决上面提出的问题。分析图 2.10 给出的两个特殊区域 I 和 II,

其中区域 I 的下界是目标图像灰度曲线的极值点位置,上界是目标图像与源图像灰度 曲线的交点处,此处也是区域 II 的下界,区域 II 的上界是源图像灰度曲线的极值点 位置,这两个区域不重叠。对于区域 I 内任一点 *p*,*m*(*p*)−*s*(*p*)<0,根据式 (2.5)得到的静态驱动力方向沿 –∇*s*(*p*),根据式 (2.6)得到的动态驱动力方向沿 –∇*m*(*p*),而∇*s*(*p*)与∇*m*(*p*)方向相反,意味着得到的这两个力的方向相反,其作用 相互抵消,因此根据式 (2.7)得到的抵消后的合成驱动力的方向与两个分项力的大 小有关。一样的道理,对于区域 II 内任一点 *p*,*m*(*p*)−*s*(*p*)>0,静态驱动力方向 沿+∇*s*(*p*),动态驱动力方向沿+∇*m*(*p*),而∇*s*(*p*)与∇*m*(*p*)方向相反,两个力的作用 相互抵消,因此根据式 (2.7)得到的合成驱动力的方向与两个分项力的大小有关。 在区域 I 和 II 中,总有一个力的方向与理想变换方向相反,(2.7)式的抵消作用可 以在一定程度上减小不良影响,但是不能完全消除。如果正确的驱动力大于不合理的 驱动力,则可以得到正确的变换,反之则不能得到正确的结果。

通过分析可以发现,当源图像和目标图像在 demons 点处的梯度方向相同时,静态驱动力和动态驱动力方向一致,当二者的梯度方向不同时,这两个驱动力的方向不一致。根据这个特点,本文提出了扩展的主动 Demons 算法,采用新的合成力计算方式,即

$$f = (m-s) \left[ 2(1-\omega) \frac{\nabla s}{\|\nabla s\|^2 + \alpha^2 (m-s)^2} + 2\omega \frac{\nabla m}{\|\nabla m\|^2 + \alpha^2 (s-m)^2} \right]$$
(2.9)

其中参数*ω*用于调整静态力和动态力对合成力的贡献,以保证合成力的方向与目标的 理想受力方向一致。参数*ω*的取值原则如下,

$$\omega = \begin{cases} 1, & c < 0, and | m(f_s(p)) - s(p) | \ge | m(f_m(p)) - s(p) | \\ 0.5, & c \ge 0 \\ 0, & c < 0, and | m(f_s(p)) - s(p) | < | m(f_m(p)) - s(p) | \end{cases}$$
(2.10)

其中 $c = \nabla s \cdot \nabla m / ||\nabla s|| \cdot ||\nabla m||$ ,用于确定源图像和目标图像在 demons 点处的梯度方向是否一致。当二者一致时, $c \ge 0$ , $\omega = 0.5$ ,式(2.9)与式(2.8)完全相同;当二者不一致时,c < 0,参数 $\omega$ 的取值需要分情况讨论。鉴于单模态配准的最终目标是使源图像与目标图像尽量接近,因此本文用尽量减小对应点灰度差的平方和作为确定 $\omega$ 的取值的判据。当 $|m(f_s(p)) - s(p)| \ge m(f_m(p)) - s(p)|$ 时,表示采用动态驱动力比采用静态驱动力完成空间变换得到的形变图像与目标图像的灰度值更接近,因此 $\omega$ 取值为 1,抛弃静态力的作用。反之,则抛弃动态力的作用,只用静态力来驱动图像变形。





### 2.3.2 验证实验

本文采用模拟形变的方式对扩展主动 Demons 算法的性能进行验证。图 2.11 是两 个 2D 仿真图像进行的配准实验,其中图(a)是源图像,图(b)是目标图像,图像 维数都是 128×128。源图像由目标图像沿水平方向左移 10 个像素得到,因此通过配 准得到的理想变换应该是源图像沿水平方向右移 10 个像素。图(2.11)(c-e)为分 别采用经典 Demons 算法(D)、主动 Demons 算法(AD)和扩展主动 Demons 算法 (MAD)得到的配准结果,MAD 算法得到的结果从视觉上看显然优于前两种算法。 图(2.11)(f-h)分别为三种算法得到的形变场,可以看出,由于错误驱动力的影 响,D 算法和 AD 算法得到的形变场平滑性较差,网格有断裂或重叠现象,而 MAD 算法得到的形变场非常平滑,所有点的受力方向基本符合理想变换的要求。







图 2.11 简单图像的配准结果。(a) 源图像 (b) 目标图像 (c) D 配准算法 (d) AD 配准算法 (e) MAD 配准算法 (f) D 算法得到的变形场 (g) AD 算法得到的变形场(h) MAD 算法得到的变形场 Figure 2.11 The registration results on simple images. (a) source image (b) target image (c) D registration (d) AD registration (e) MAD registration (f) Deformation field of D registration (g) Deformation field of AD registration (h) Deformation field of MAD registration 本文进行的另一个验证实验采用真实的人脑 MRI 图像。图像采集设备是 GE 公司 1.5T 核磁共振扫描仪器,三维轴向扫描,T1 加权,参数设置为 TI/TR/TE: 600/10/2,快速梯度回波反转恢复序列。用已知空间变换使源图像发生变形,得到目标图像。图 2.12 给出了实验结果,其中(a)为源图像,(b)为目标图像,(c)为从源图像变形到目标图像的已知变形场。图(d-f)为分别采用 D 算法、AD 算法和 MAD 算法得到的实际变形场。虽然利用不同算法得到的变形后的图像与目标图像之间的相关系数都能高于 0.99,但是 MAD 算法得到的变形场比前两种算法得到的变形场更光滑、更接近已知变形场。对三种算法得到的变形场上前两种算法得到的变形场差异的定量分析见表 2.1,从中可以得到相同的结论,即 MAD 算法的配准质量优于 D 算法和 AD 算法,MAD 算法得到的变形场在较多位置处与已知的变形场差异较小。



图 2.12 真实 MRI 图像的配准结果。(a) 源图像 (b) 目标图像 (c) 已知变形场 (d) D 算法得到的变形场 (e) AD 算法得到的变形场 (f) MAD 算法得到的变形场

Figure 2.12 The registration results on real MRI images. (a) The source image (b) The target image (c) The known deformation field (d) Deformation field of D registration (e) Deformation field of AD registration (f) Deformation field of MAD registration 表 2.1 配准后得到的变形场与已知变形场之差

Table 2.1 the differences between the obtained deformation field and the known deformation field

algorithm	maximum	minimum	Standard deviation
D	1	-1	0.2396
AD	1	-1	0.2269
MAD	1	-0.9961	0.1748

# 2.4 本章小结

本章通过实验详细分析了主动 Demons 算法中的弹性系数和均化系数对配准过程 的影响,得到了实际使用时的参数选择原则,即初始时采用较小的参数以加快收敛, 后期采用较大的参数值提高配准精度。另外,对 Demons 算法的形变驱动力的局限性 进行了理论分析,提出了改进的驱动力并通过实验进行了比较和分析。

# 3 空间与灰度同时匹配的分级配准算法

# 3.1 引言

图像配准是为了找到从源图像变形到目标图像的空间变换,对一个标准的图像配 准算法,首先需要明确该选择什么样的特征来确定这个空间变换。若选择的特征是从 图像中提取的少量信息,如标志点等,则属于基于特征的配准,需要采用合适的特征 提取方法,虽然可以忽略图像灰度差异的影响,但受特征提取的质量影响较大;若选 择的特征是图像完整的灰度信息,则属于基于灰度的配准,虽然会增大计算量,但是 可以避免特征提取带来的问题,而且具有描述细微差异的能力。

本章研究单模态不同个体间脑部 MRI 图像的非刚性配准问题,通过检测图像间 对应点灰度差的平方评价两幅图像的相似程度。该相似性测度的隐含假设是不同个体 的脑 MRI 图像对应结构的灰度值应该相同,而实际上的 MRI 图像由于成像时参数设 置、设备差异、噪声、干扰等影响,不同时间或不同个体的相同部位的 MRI 图像中 一般会有不同程度的灰度差异,不能保证与假设条件一致,从而降低配准质量。因 此,配准之前应该进行灰度标准化或两幅图像的灰度匹配处理。另外,不同个体本身 的生理差异较大,在图像上表现出空间差异大的特点,影响非刚性配准质量,特别对 小变形图像配准算法,因而需要进行全局空间标准化处理。经常采用的空间标准化方 法是线性变换方法,如全局刚体变换或全局仿射变换[126][14],往往需要提取特征点。 近年来进行灰度标准化的主要方法可简单分为两类,一类是单独利用两幅图像的直方 图进行匹配,另一类是根据两幅图像的联合直方图进行匹配。文献[129][130]采用的 是一维直方图匹配技术。从训练集直方图中提取的特征点平均后,产生一个标准特征 点集。然后将拟标准化的图像直方图中的特征点匹配到标准特征点集,各特征点之间 的值利用线性插值的方法得到。这一类方法的局限性是对每一幅图像都需要进行特征 点检测和直方图分析,不能反映二者之间的非线性关系。相比而言,利用两幅图像的 联合直方图进行灰度标准化更为有效一些,因为联合直方图中含有更为丰富的两图像 灰度关系。代表性方法如估计联合直方图的高斯混合模型方法[131][132]。该方法是对文 献[104]给出的直方图截断最小平方韧性拟合技术的扩展。由于图像的灰度和空间几 何属性是图像的两种不同属性,同时完成标准化比较困难,因此大部分的方法是采用 分步标准化策略。本文冀求跳出这一传统框架,通过采用一个统一的模型<sup>[133]</sup>,同时 实现空间和灰度标准化,并结合具有高度局域化能力的 Demons 配准算法<sup>[54]</sup>,完成较 高精度的非刚性配准。

### 3.2 算法描述

根据物体运动原理,设目标图像 *f*(*x*, *y*,*t*)和源图像 *f*(*x*, *ŷ*,*t*-1) 是同一运动场景在 相邻时刻所成的像。由于成像条件的改变,两图像对应结构的灰度发生了缓慢的变 化,二者之间满足如下关系:

$$\widehat{x} = m_1 x + m_2 y + m_5 
\widehat{y} = m_3 x + m_4 y + m_6 
m_7 f(x, y, t) + m_8 = f(\widehat{x}, \widehat{y}, t-1)$$
(3.1)

其中,参数 $m_i$ , $i=1,\dots,6$ 表示两幅图像中像素点的空间对应关系,参数 $m_7,m_8$ 表示二者之间的灰度对应关系。

将  $f(\hat{x}, \hat{y}, t-1)$  在 t 时刻的对应点 (x, y) 处进行泰勒级数展开,忽略二阶以上的 项,得

 $f(\hat{x}, \hat{y}, t-1) \approx f(x, y, t) + (m_1 x + m_2 y + m_5 - x) f_x + (m_3 x + m_4 y + m_6 - y) f_y - f_t$  (3.2) 其中  $f_{\zeta}$  表示 f 对  $\zeta$  的偏导数。则在一个较小的图像空间  $\omega$  内,两图像之间的灰度误 差和为

$$E(\overline{m}) = \sum_{x,y\in\omega} [m_7 f(x,y,t) + m_8 - f(\widehat{x},\widehat{y},t-1)]^2$$
  
=  $\sum_{x,y\in\omega} [(f_t - f + xf_x + yf_y) - (xf_xm_1 + yf_xm_2 + xf_ym_3 + yf_ym_4 + f_xm_5 + f_ym_6 - m_7f - m_8)]^2$  (3.3)  
 $\Im k = f_t - f + xf_x + yf_y$ ,  $c = [xf_x \quad yf_x \quad xf_y \quad yf_y \quad f_x \quad f_y \quad f \quad -1]^T$ ,  $\overline{n}$  将(3.3)式写成向  
量形式:

$$E(\boldsymbol{m}) = \sum_{x,y\in\omega} [\boldsymbol{k} - \boldsymbol{c}^T \boldsymbol{m}]^2$$
(3.4)

 $m = [m_1 \ m_2 \ m_3 \ m_4 \ m_5 \ m_6 \ m_7 \ m_8]^T \circ \diamond \frac{dE(m)}{dm} = \sum_{x,y \in \omega} -2c[k - c^T m] = 0, \ \Pi \ \theta$ 使 E(m) 取得极小值的参数值,

$$\boldsymbol{m} = \left[\sum_{x,y\in\omega} \boldsymbol{c}\boldsymbol{c}^{T}\right]^{-1} \left[\sum_{x,y\in\omega} \boldsymbol{c}\boldsymbol{k}\right]$$
(3.5)

(3.5)式隐含了一个假设条件,即矩阵  $\sum_{x,y\in\omega} cc^{T}$  是可逆的。为保证矩阵的可逆性,必须选择一个足够大,包含较丰富图像内容的分析区间  $\omega$ 。但是,上述模型的假设前提是 图像在小的分析区间内表征灰度变化的参数是常数,若分析区间过大,则不能满足假 设条件。因此,在局域分析区间的选择上,要考虑这两方面的需求,折中处理。为避 开区间选择问题,将假设条件改为灰度变化参数在分析区间上是缓慢变化的。将 (3.4)式的误差函数改写为:

$$E(\boldsymbol{m}) = E_b(\boldsymbol{m}) + E_s(\boldsymbol{m}) \tag{3.6}$$

其中,  $E_b(\boldsymbol{m}) = [\boldsymbol{k} - \boldsymbol{c}^T \boldsymbol{m}]^2$ ,  $E_s(\boldsymbol{m}) = \sum_{i=1}^8 \lambda_i [(\partial m_i / \partial x)^2 + (\partial m_i / \partial y)^2]$ ,  $\lambda_i$ 是大于零的常数,

控制参数 $m_i$ 的权重。令  $\frac{dE(m)}{dm} = 0$ 求得使E(m)取得极小值的参数值。 对 $E_s(m)$ 进行离散化处理,得

$$E_{s}(\boldsymbol{m}(i,j)) = \begin{bmatrix} \lambda_{1}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{1}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{1}(i,j) - m_{1}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{2}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{2}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{2}(i,j) - m_{2}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{3}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{3}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{3}(i,j) - m_{3}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{4}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{4}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{4}(i,j) - m_{4}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{5}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{5}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{5}(i,j) - m_{5}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{6}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{6}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{6}(i,j) - m_{6}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{7}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{7}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{7}(i,j) - m_{7}(i,j+1))^{2}] \\ \lambda_{8}[(m_{1}(i,j) - m_{8}(i+1,j))^{2} + (m_{8}(i,j) - m_{8}(i,j+1))^{2}] \end{bmatrix}$$

则对参数 $m_q$ ,  $q = 1, \dots, 8$ ,

$$\frac{dE_s(m_q(i,j))}{dm_q} = 2\lambda_q[m_q(i,j) - m_q(i+1,j) + m_q(i,j) - m_q(i,j+1)]$$
  
=  $4\lambda_q m_q(i,j) - 2\lambda_q[m_q(i+1,j) + m_q(i,j+1)]$   
=  $4\lambda_q[m_q(i,j) - \overline{m}_q(i,j)]$  (3.7)

写成向量形式

$$\frac{dE_s(\boldsymbol{m})}{d\boldsymbol{m}} = 4L(\boldsymbol{\bar{m}} - \boldsymbol{m}) \tag{3.8}$$

其中L是对角阵,对角元素为 $-\lambda_q$ 。

曲 $E_b(\boldsymbol{m}) = [\boldsymbol{k} - \boldsymbol{c}^T \boldsymbol{m}]^2$ 得

$$\frac{dE_b(\boldsymbol{m})}{d\boldsymbol{m}} = -2\boldsymbol{c}(\boldsymbol{k} - \boldsymbol{c}^T \boldsymbol{m})$$
(3.9)

综合 (3.8)、 (3.9) 两式, 可得  
$$\frac{dE(m)}{dm} = \frac{dE_b(m)}{dm} + \frac{dE_s(m)}{dm} = -2c(k - c^T m) + 4L(\overline{m} - m)$$
(3.10)

然而通过(3.10)式直接求解最优参数非常困难,可通过近似方法得到其迭代求解方法<sup>[133][134]</sup>,

$$\boldsymbol{m}^{(j+1)} = (\boldsymbol{c}\boldsymbol{c}^{T} + L)^{-1}(\boldsymbol{c}\boldsymbol{k} + L\bar{\boldsymbol{m}}^{(j)})$$
(3.11)

该算法寻找最优参数的具体实现过程可参考文献[133]。

图 3.1 所示为采用该模型(GE 模型)完成空间和灰度标准化的例子。其中图 3.1 (a)分别为源图像(左)和目标图像(右),两幅图像之间具有较大的灰度差异、 几何特征差异和对应结构的空间坐标差异。图 3.1 (b)为没有进行灰度匹配的空间标 准化结果(GE<sub>NC</sub>算法),图 3.1 (c)为同时进行灰度和空间标准化的结果(GE<sub>C</sub>算 法),(b)和(c)中的左图都是标准化后的源图像,右图是源图像与目标图像之间 的形变残差。可以明显看出,灰度匹配预处理对基于灰度的配准具有不可忽视的重要 作用。

GE 算法虽然可以给出较好的灰度和空间标准化结果,但是该算法也有其局限 性。首先,计算复杂度较高,要得到比较理想的结果需要较长时间;其次,该算法在 空间变换上采用了局部仿射、全局非线性变换的方式,描述图像细微变形的能力不 足。为了尽量得到高效准确的配准,我们提出了采用 GE 算法同时进行灰度和几何标 准化预处理,结合 Demons 算法的快速,高度局域化能力的优点的分步配准方法。 Demons 算法虽然也属于基于灰度的非刚性配准算法,但其采用的交替优化技术极大 地降低了算法的计算复杂度[98][54],而且,图像中的每一个像素点都可以任意移动, 具有高度的局域化能力。但是, Demons 算法有两个假设前提, 其一为待配准的两幅 图像对应结构的灰度是一致的,其二为图像之间的形变较小。这也意味着要完成不同 个体间的准确配准,需要首先进行空间和灰度标准化处理。我们通过实验进行了验 证,如图 3.2 所示。图 3.2 (a)和 (b)分别是源图像和目标图像,与图 1 采用的数 据相同。图 3.2(c)和 3.2(d)为没有经过空间和灰度标准化,直接采用 Demons 算 法得到的变形后的源图像及它与目标图像之间的灰度差。可以看出,配准之后两个图 像之间仍然有较大的差异存在。图 3.2(e)和(f)为经过空间和灰度匹配之后,再 进行 Demons 非刚性配准得到的变形后的图像和残余灰度差(D<sub>ITK</sub> 算法)。实验使用 了 ITK 配准软件<sup>[135]</sup>,灰度匹配采用默认的分位数统计直方图标准化方法,共 7 个分 位数,1024 个组距数。空间标准化采用了仿射变换。可以看出,与没有预先进行空 间和灰度标准化的结果比,变形后的源图像与目标图像之间的相似度更高,残余灰度 差变小,表明空间匹配和灰度标准化等预处理对基于灰度的配准算法的重要性。

本文通过实验验证了所提出的分步快速高精度配准算法(GEcD 算法)。从图 3.1(c)给出的结果可以看出,GEc 算法得到了较好的结果,但是不能实现快速配 准。既然我们的目的是用 GEc 算法得到一个粗略的配准,然后再用 Demons 算法提高

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配准精度,则可以通过设置合理的参数提高该算法的计算速度。从前面的分析可以看出,寻找最优参数采用了迭代方法,称迭代寻优过程为内循环。多数情况下,源图像只变形一次难以得到满意的不同个体间的配准,因此需要源图像的多次变形过程,可称之为外循环。图 3.1 (c) 是 25 次内循环,5 次外循环的结果。不过,对于粗略配准,可以适当减少内外循环次数。在算法实现过程中,采用解析方法估计参数 m 的初值,这个结果已经比较接近最优解,因此我们只进行了 5 次内循环。同时,1 次外循环足以达到预处理目标。图 3.3 所示为本文 GEcD 算法得到的配准结果。源图像与目标图像与前面的实验采用的图像数据相同,可以看出配准后,其残余形变进一步减小。



(a)



(b)



图3.1 GE算法的配准结果。(a) 源图像(左图)和目标图像(右图)(b)未进行灰度校正时,变形后的源 图像(左图)和目标图像灰度差(右图)(c)灰度校正后,变形后的源图像(左图)和目标图像灰度差 (右图)

Figure 3.1 Registration result based on GE algorithm. (a) source image (left) and target image (right) (b) deformed source image (left) and intensity differences (right) without intensity correction (c) deformed source Image (left) and intensity differences (right) with intensity correction



(a)

(b)

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图 3.2 预处理前后 Demons 算法处理结果。(a) 源图像 (b) 目标图像 (c) 未进行预处理的配准结果 (d) 变形后的源图像和目标图像灰度差(未预处理) (e) 预处理后的配准结果 (f) 变形后的源图像和目标图像灰度差(预处理后)

Figure 3.2 Registration result based on Demons algorithm with and without preprocessing (a) source image (b) target image (c) result without preprocessing (d) intensity differences (without preprocessing) (e) result with preprocessing (f) intensity differences (with preprocessing)





图3.3 GE<sub>c</sub>D算法的配准结果。(a) 源图像(b) 目标图像(c) 变形后的源图像(d) 变形后的源图像和目标图像灰度差

Figure 3.3 Registration result based on GE<sub>c</sub>D registration algorithm (a) source image (b) target image (c) deformed source image (d) intensity differences between deformed source image and target image

同时,我们还对算法进行了定量分析。配准算法性能的评价仍不成熟,还有许多问题需要研究。本文采用的评价指标是变形后的源图像与目标图像之间的互信息和完成配准所需要的程序运行时间。这种评价方法也被其他文献采用<sup>[14][136]</sup>。表3.1给出了采用这四种不同的方法得到的结果。可以看出,如果能够保证两图像对应结构之间灰度的一致性,且形变较小,则D<sub>ITK</sub>算法配准速度最快,且能得到较高的图像相似度。对于GE算法,加入灰度匹配参数没有明显降低配准速度,但是配准质量得到了显著提高。与D<sub>ITK</sub>算法相比,本文给出的GE<sub>c</sub>D方法配准质量最高,配准时间稍有增加。

表3.1 DITK, GENC, GEC和 GECD算法性能的定量评价

方法	MI	时间(秒)
D <sub>ITK</sub>	1.243	35
GE <sub>NC</sub>	0.932	148
GE <sub>C</sub>	1.050	148
GE <sub>C</sub> D	1.4	60

Table 3.1 quantitative evaluation of  $D_{ITK}$ ,  $GE_{NC}$ ,  $GE_C$  and  $GE_CD$  registration algorithms

### 3.3 实验与结果

本文用多个数据对 GE<sub>c</sub>D 算法性能进行了验证。目标图像是哈佛医学院提供的标 准 T1 加权 MRI 图像<sup>[137]</sup>,包含 256×256×160 个体素,每个体素的几何尺寸为 0.9375mm×0.9375mm×1.5 mm。源图像从美国马萨诸塞州总医院形态分析中心提供的 网上脑 MRI 图像库获得<sup>[138]</sup>,共 20 个不同的数据。这 20 个数据来自两个不同的核磁 共振仪器,其中 10 个数据用的是 1.5T Siemens Magnetom MR System (Iselin, NJ),另 外 10 个数据用的是 1.5T General Electric Sigma MR System (Milwaukee, WI),所有数 据都包含 256×256×61 个体素,每个体素的体积为 1.0mm×1.0mm×3.0 mm。从图 3.4 (a)可以看出,成像设备不同,源图像和目标图像之间有较大的灰度差异,而且不 同个体之间的形态差异也比较显著。采用本文算法配准后,所有变形后的源图像与目 标图像的相似程度都较高,二者之间的互信息在表 3.2 中列出,数值上的结果也印证 了这一结论,即 GE<sub>c</sub>D 算法优于 D<sub>ITK</sub>算法和 GE<sub>c</sub>算法。从计算时间上看,同样进行 256×256 图像配准,D<sub>ITK</sub>算法所需平均计算时间为 35 秒,GE<sub>c</sub>D 算法需要 63 秒,而 GE<sub>c</sub>算法则需 148 秒。

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
D <sub>ITK</sub>	1.188	1.188	0.994	1.125	1.084	1.099	1.129	1.204	1.205	1.148
GE <sub>C</sub>	1.070	1.070	1.080	1.190	1.220	1.050	1.040	1.110	1.120	1.100
GE <sub>c</sub> D	1.390	1.390	1.400	1.470	1.500	1.400	1.420	1.450	1.460	1.400
Subject	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
D <sub>ITK</sub>	1.161	1.147	1.076	1.256	1.159	1.206	1.167	1.206	1.195	1.119
GE <sub>C</sub>	1.200	1.160	1.060	1.190	1.110	1.130	1.080	1.110	1.190	1.120
GE <sub>c</sub> D	1.530	1.450	1.400	1.530	1.410	1.480	1.430	1.410	1.500	1.400

表 3.2 D<sub>ITK</sub>, GE<sub>C</sub> and GE<sub>c</sub>D 算法性能在 20 个实验数据上的比较 Table 3.2 The comparisons of D<sub>ITK</sub>, GE<sub>C</sub> and GE<sub>c</sub>D registration algorithm on 20 individuals

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(b)

图 3.4 GE<sub>c</sub>D 算法在 20 个实验数据上得到的结果。(a)20 个源图像(左上角为目标图像)(b) 变形后的源图像(左上角为目标图像)

Figure 3.4 registration results on 20 individuals using GE<sub>c</sub>D algorithm. (a) 20 source images (upper left: target image) (b) deformed source image (upper left: target image)

# 3.4 本章小结

基于图谱的单模配准在医学图像配准领域是一个有意义的研究课题,个体之间的 结构差异增大了问题的复杂性,而不同扫描设备引入的对应结构间的灰度变化又使基 于灰度的配准算法的优势不能充分发挥出来。本章提出了分块弹性配准算法与 Demons 算法相结合的 GE<sub>c</sub>D 算法,能够同时完成空间预匹配和灰度匹配,而且该算 法具有较高的模拟局部变形的能力。文中采用 IBSR 数据库 20 个不同个体的真实脑 部 MRI 图像对该方法进行了验证,结果表明配准精度得到了提高,且结果具有一致 性。

# 4 Demons 非刚性配准算法拓扑保持性的研究

# 4.1 引言

一般情况下,基于物理模型的非刚性配准将得到一个稠密的变形场,使一对或一 组图像之间的对应结构相匹配。在某些应用场合,如基于配准的目标分割与识别 <sup>[14]</sup>,我们期望得到的变形场应该具有良好的物理属性,它应该是平滑的、具有全局 的一一映射特性、连续的、可微的、正反变换是一致的、拓扑保持不变等等 <sup>[139][140][141][142][106][143]</sup>。因此,配准图像之间除了要满足相似性要求之外,必须要在变 形场上加一个约束项。配准问题可看成是能量最小化问题,代价函数是图像匹配函数 和变形场约束函数的合成。

平滑的变形场是非刚性配准技术中的一个基本要求,除此之外,对变形场附加约束的研究主要集中在三个方面,即逆一致变换、拓扑保持变换和微分同胚映射<sup>[106]</sup>。

逆一致变换意味着两个图像中,无论选择哪个图像作为可变形的源图像,得到的变换是一致的。也就是说,图像  $A \ \pi B$  配准,从  $A \ \exists B$  的变换为  $T_{AB}$ ,从  $B \ \exists A$  的变换为  $T_{BA}$ ,若变换是一致的,则  $T_{AB} = T_{BA}^{-1}$ 。对医学图像导航和适应辐射治疗的应用而言,一般希望配准得到的变换是逆一致变换,因为这样的变换可以给出双向体素级的映射,不同图像间的信息传递是一致的。

对于一个配准算法来说,如果正向变换和反向变换是分别独立计算出来的,或者 没有明确的逆一致性约束,很难保证正反变换的一致性。因此,大部分的逆一致配准 算法同时计算正反变换,而且对正反变换的一致性或近似一致性作明确的规定。

文献[62]是早期开始研究逆一致非刚性配准的一个典型算法。该算法设计了一个 对称的代价函数,即

$$E = \int_{\Omega} \frac{\left[ (A \circ T_{AB} - B)^2 + (B \circ T_{BA} - A)^2 + (T_{AB} - T_{BA}^{-1})^2 + (T_{AB} - T_{AB}^{-1})^2 + |L(T_{AB})|^2 + |L(T_{AB})|^2 \right] d\Omega$$
(4.1)

其中,线性弹性算子 $L = -a^2 \nabla^2 - b \nabla + c$ ,  $a \setminus b \cap c$ 是常数。通过这样设计代价函数,可以同时计算正反变换,而且将逆一致约束直接涵盖进去,即代价函数中的 $(T_{AB} - T_{BA}^{-1})^2 + (T_{BA} - T_{AB}^{-1})^2$ 项。正反变换以迭代方式计算,每次迭代时均需要计算正反变换的逆变换。

文献[144]提出的另一种逆一致配准算法没有在迭代过程中明确求解正向变换和 反向变换的逆变换,而是在每次迭代时计算逆一致误差,并且尽力让这个误差最小。 其代价函数为

$$E = \int_{\Omega} \frac{[(A \circ T_{AB} - B)^{2} + (B \circ T_{BA} - A)^{2} + \alpha E^{R}(A, T_{AB}) + \alpha E^{R}(B, T_{BA}) + \beta E^{S}(T_{AB}, T_{BA}) + \beta E^{S}(T_{BA}, T_{AB})]d\Omega$$
(4.2)

其中,  $E^{S}(T_{AB}, T_{BA}) = [T_{AB}(x - T_{BA}(x)) + T_{BA}(x)]^{2}$ ,  $\beta E^{S}(T_{AB}, T_{BA}) + \beta E^{S}(T_{BA}, T_{AB})$  为逆一致 约束项。

文献[145]在文献[62]的基础上提出了一种改进的逆一致非刚性配准算法,在对称 代价函数中用正反变换的函数代替正反变换的逆变换,避免了运动场的求逆问题。

微分同胚映射与逆一致变换有紧密的联系。微分同胚的含义是连续的、可微的、 可逆的变换。文献[146]从理论上证明,微分同胚系统方程的解是唯一的,具有平滑 性、可微性和可逆性。如果映射是微分同胚的,则可以保证图像变形后其拓扑结构保 持不变。不过,可逆变换并不完全等于逆一致变换,因此不能认为微分同胚映射就是 逆一致映射。

早期的微分同胚配准算法以粘流体算法<sup>[147][92]</sup>为基础。该类算法用有限差分法求 解模拟图像变形的偏微分方程,其优点是可以处理大变形问题,并且可以保证变形后 的图像拓扑不变。粘流体算法需要解大量的偏微分方程,计算复杂度高,所以求解时 采用了连续超松弛方法。可是,采用这样的方法求解时容易出现奇异解,因此文献 [148]提出通过对速度场施加约束以避免出现奇异解,得到组群微分同胚映射。设函 数 $\Phi(x,t), x \in \Omega, t \in [0,1]$ 表示微分同胚映射,矢量y为目标图像上的一点, $\nabla \Phi(y,t)$ 是空间变换的雅可比矩阵,则该空间变换满足下列关系:

 $\Phi(\mathbf{x},0) = \Phi^{-1}(\mathbf{x},0) = \mathbf{I}$  $\Phi(\mathbf{x},1) = \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x})$  $\partial \Phi(\mathbf{x},t) / \partial t = \mathbf{v}(\mathbf{x},t)$ 

 $\partial \Phi^{-1}(\boldsymbol{y},t) / \partial t = [\nabla \Phi(\boldsymbol{y},t)]^{-1} \mathbf{v}(\boldsymbol{y},t)$ 

LDDMM 算法<sup>[149]</sup>设计目标是找到处理较大变形的最平滑的微分同胚映射。该算 法并不立即修正每次得到的变形场参数,而是采用梯度下降法持续更新变形参数,直 到找到最小的测地距离。从原理上讲,该算法模型可以用一个初始动量场参数化,这 个动量场对速度、变形随时间的演化规律给出了完全定义。可惜,里面涉及到的微分 方程不好处理,更简单的方法是用大量的速度场实现模型参数化过程,这些速度场对 应着微分同胚映射演化过程的不同时刻。设*t*时刻的速度场用*u*<sup>(1)</sup>表示,则微分同胚 映射的演化过程用下列微分方程表示:

$$d\mathbf{\Phi}/dt = \mathbf{u}^{(t)}(\mathbf{\Phi}^{(t)})$$

其中 $\Phi^{(0)} = x$ ,对时间积分得到最终的映射 $\Phi^{(1)}$ 。

文献[139]通过设定速度场为非时变场,提出了 DARTEL 非刚性微分同胚映射算法。其微分同胚映射的演化过程为

 $d\Phi/dt = u(\Phi^{(t)}), \quad \ddagger \oplus \Phi^{(0)} = x$ 

 $\Phi^{(t+h)} = \Phi^{(t)} + hu(\Phi^{(t)}), h 为小的时间间隔。$ 

近期的微分同胚映射配准算法往往同时考虑变换的逆一致特性。文献[51] 提出一 种用多幅图像构造模板图像的方法,主要在频域进行处理。算法的代价函数为

$$E = \frac{1}{2} \int_{\Omega} (I \circ V - J \circ U) 2d\Omega + \int_{t=0}^{1} \int_{\Omega} ||L v_1||^2 d\Omega dt + \int_{t=0}^{1} \int_{\Omega} ||L v_2||^2 d\Omega dt$$

其中*V*表示图像*I*以中间图像为目标的变形场,*v*<sub>1</sub>是其变形速度。*U*表示图像*J*以中间图像为目标的变形场,*v*<sub>2</sub>是其变形速度。*L*是线性弹性算子。文献[150][151][141] 也提出了类似的微分同胚映射算法。

理论上,微分同胚配准的优点之一是能够保证图像变形后的拓扑结构保持不变, 实际处理时,受多种因素的影响,如近似、差值等,所得变换的微分同胚特性会受到 一定的影响。在一些应用中,如基于配准的医学图像分割,要求变形场具有拓扑保持 性是非常重要的,因为从医学上讲,不同正常个体的同源结构虽大小不同,但形状类 似,具有同样的拓扑。变形场具有拓扑保持性意味着各结构在变形后的图像中仍保持 内部的连接性和结构之间的邻接关系不变,不会发生撕裂或粘贴,不会有新的结构出 现,原有的结构也不会消失。通过将这一约束加在变形场上,可以限制最优解的求解 空间,使它符合真实材料的变形特性。

使配准得到的变形场具有拓扑保持性,其实现方法大体上可以分为两类<sup>[106][132]</sup>, 一类是控制非线性变形场的雅可比行列式的符号,保证其为正<sup>[132]</sup>,另一类是在非刚 性配准模型中附加约束,同时完成可信变形空间的确定和在可信变形空间中确定最优 变换<sup>[152]</sup>。

文献[92]提出的粘流体算法属于基于偏微分方程的配准算法,其算法模型在理论 上是具有拓扑保持性的,然而实现过程中的离散化处理影响了其拓扑保持属性,需要 随时跟踪雅可比行列式的值,计算量很大而且可能出现现实情况下不可能存在的变 形。

基于贝叶斯理论,文献[74]在图像配准模型中加入先验信息,强化对应特征的一一映射属性。算法思想是在将二维图像域进行三角剖分,在得到的三角域上对变换的 雅可比行列式进行约束。即将配准图像划分成 N 个不同区间,将每个区间上空间变 换 **T**(**x**<sub>i</sub>)的雅可比行列式 **J**<sub>i</sub> 分解成 **J**<sub>i</sub> = **U**<sub>i</sub>**S**<sub>i</sub>**V**<sub>i</sub><sup>T</sup>,其总的能量函数设计为

$$E = \frac{1}{2\sigma^2} \sum_{i=1}^{N} [I_1(\boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{x}_i)) - I_2(\boldsymbol{x}_i)]^2 + \sum_{i=1}^{N} [\lambda(1 + \det(\boldsymbol{J}_i))(\log(s_{i11})^2 + \log(s_{i22})^2)/2]$$

其中, $\sigma$ , $\lambda$ 为调节参数, $s_{11}$ , $s_{22}$ 是**S**的对角线分量。参数优化采用梯度下降算法,通过迭代方式得到最优变换。

文献[153]将拓扑保持属性看成是非刚性配准过程中或配准完成后对变形场施加的硬约束,可信变换空间和最优变换的确定是分步进行的。将图像分成不同的四边形区间,在这样的区间上分析处理变形场的雅可比行列式。首先,采用前向和后向差分计算非线性变形场的梯度场,得到完备的有效雅可比行列式集。然后根据这些雅可比行列式的值是否满足阈值要求来调整该变形场的梯度场。最后采用梯度空间的矢量映射操作对梯度场进行积分,重构非线性变形场,得到具有拓扑保持性的最有空间变换。

文献[152]将非刚性图像配准问题转化成有约束优化问题。算法采用 Gauss-Seidel 算法求解,要求变形场的雅可比行列式保持连续的正值,以保证变形后的图像拓扑不 会改变。变形场采用线性 B 样条合成,一次只进行一个节点的优化,从而将对变形 场拓扑不变性的约束转化成两个线性不等式约束。配准过程为

 $\forall (i,j) \in \{0,1,\cdots,n\}^2$ 

最小化代价函数  $E(a_{xi,j}^l, a_{yi,j}^l) = \int_{\Omega_{i,j}^l} |I_1(\mathbf{x}) - I_2(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{u}^l(\mathbf{x}))|^2 ds$ 

约束条件  $M_{i,j}^l \begin{pmatrix} a_{xi,j}^l \\ a_{yi,j}^l \end{pmatrix} + b_{i,j}^l > 0$ 

其中变形场  $u^l(x)$  用线性 B 样条表示,其系数为 $(a^l_{xi,j}, a^l_{yi,j})$ 。 $M^l_{i,j}$  和  $b^l_{i,j}$  是代表 16 个充分且必要的控制点信息。

但是,该算法只分析了 2D 情况,不能方便地推广到 3D 情况。而且,为保证雅可比行列式特征的合理性,只能采用一阶线性差值样条。如果采用更光滑的高阶样条,样条尾端会影响邻域的变形,其雅可比行列式也将不可避免地依赖邻域的变形。 从计算方法上讲,该算法的初始变形场应该是具有拓扑保持性的,然后迭代更新变形场,提高两幅图像之间的相似度,同时分别考虑各点的形变更新是否仍具有拓扑保持性,但是采用的串行处理方式忽略了各个点之间的相互影响。

文献[154]将文献[152]的算法推广到 3D 情况。算法采用区间分析技术沿最优参数搜索方向寻找最大合理步长,确保雅可比行列式是连续的正值。该算法虽然能保证得到可逆变换,但仍然只能采用线性 B-样条,因为如果采用高阶样条,间隔分析时的计算量过大,算法不可行。

文献[155]采用大尺度有约束优化算法处理配准问题,通过附加两个约束确保变 形场的拓扑保持性,在每一点上,雅可比行列式的值都是正值。设*I<sub>f</sub>*和*I<sub>r</sub>*分别是基 于 B-样条描述的源图像和目标图像,该有约束优化问题可用下式描述

$$\min_{g(c,x)\leq 0 \forall x\in P} \frac{1}{|P|} \sum_{x\in P} \rho(I_f(t(c,x)) - I_r(x))$$

其中*P*是目标图像上的像素点集,*t*是在 B-样条函数空间上张成的空间变换,用 B-样条系数 *c* 表征。函数  $\rho(x) = x^2/2$  定义了待配准图像之间的灰度相似性。函数 g(c,x)是约束条件,算法中含两个约束条件,用于解决空间变换的拓扑保持问题。

 $g_1(c,x) = \varepsilon_d - J(c,x)$ 

$$g_{2}(c,x) = \frac{1}{2} \|\nabla J(x)\|_{2}^{2} - \phi(J(x)), \quad \phi_{a,b,c,\varepsilon_{d}}(z) = \begin{cases} -a(z-\varepsilon_{d})^{2}, & z < \varepsilon_{d} \\ \frac{b(z-\varepsilon_{d})^{2}}{1+c(z-\varepsilon_{d})^{2}}, & \ddagger t \end{cases}$$

其中J表示变换的雅可比矩阵,  $a,b,c,\varepsilon_d$ 是大于零的参数。

算法采用 Lagrange 乘子法求解上述的不等式约束优化问题。

通过对雅可比行列式的数学分析,文献[142]认为采用对数变换后的雅可比行列 式描述目标的形态变化是非常重要的,并提出了与雅可比行列式对数变换相联系的具 有拓扑保持性的非线性配准算法,对文献[92]的逆一致粘流体算法进行了改进。算法 构建了一个对称 KL 距离测度表征单位变换和期望的非线性变换,以实现非线性图像 配准。设待配准的图像为*T*,*S*,变形场为*h*,其代价函数为

 $E = C(T, T \circ h^{-1}, S, S \circ h) + \lambda(KL(pdf_h, pdf_{id}) + KL(pdf_{id}, pdf_h))$ 

 $KL(pdf_h, pdf_{id}) + KL(pdf_{id}, pdf_h) = \int (|Dh(x)| - 1) \log |Dh(x)| dx$ 

其中,  $C(T, T \circ h^{-1}, S, S \circ h)$  描述了两幅图像的灰度相似度, Dh 为变形场 h 的雅可比矩阵,  $\lambda$  是调节 KL 测度项权重的参数。

# 4.2 Demons 算法拓扑方面的研究

Demons 算法<sup>[54]</sup>的一个主要缺陷是不能从理论上保证配准得到的空间变换具有拓扑保持性。实际上,该算法诞生之初就已经考虑了相关问题,其出发点是希望得到逆一致变换。具体实现时,算法采用了双射技术。在寻找最优变换的过程中,每一次迭代,都要计算从源图像到目标图像的变换 $T_{12}$ 和从目标图像到源图像的变换 $T_{21}$ ,得到正反变换之间的残余形变 $R = T_{12} \circ T_{21}$ ,然后用R/2补偿 $T_{12}$ 和 $T_{21}$ ,使补偿后的 $T_{12} \circ T_{21}$ 尽量等于单位阵。通过进一步的变形场平滑处理,力求保证其具有拓扑保持性。然

而,研究表明,很难从理论上证明利用双射和平滑技术可以保证变形场具有拓扑不变性,且已有的实验结果也发现了该算法未能有效防止变形后的结构发生拓扑变化的例证<sup>[132][143][101]</sup>,实践中,我们也通过实验发现该算法得到的变形场并不总是具有拓扑不变属性。

以原始的 Demons 算法为基础, Vercauteren 等提出了微分同胚 Demons 配准算法 [101][143]。该算法与微分同胚变换空间的李群结构框架和李群优化算法相结合, 使 得到的最优变换具有微分同胚映射特性, 从而保证变形场的拓扑保持性。

原始 Demons 算法的寻优过程为:

- 根据当前变换T,最小化能量函数E=||TI-SI(T+u)||<sup>2</sup>+||u||<sup>2</sup>,得到位移场
   u;
- 若采用流体模型的正则化方法,则 $T \leftarrow T + G_{\sigma} * u$ ;
- 若采用扩散模型的正则化方法,则 $T \leftarrow G_{\sigma} * (T + u)$ ;
- $G_{\sigma}$ 为高斯平滑函数。

微分同胚 Demons 算法的寻优过程为:

- 根据当前变换T,最小化能量函数E=||TI-SI(T+u)||<sup>2</sup>+||u||<sup>2</sup>,得到位移场
   u;
- 若采用流体模型的正则化方法,则 $T \leftarrow T \circ e^{G_{\sigma} * u}$ ;
- 若采用扩散模型的正则化方法,则 $T \leftarrow G_{\sigma} * (T \circ e^{u});$

 $G_{\sigma}$ 为高斯平滑函数。

算法的出发点是将迭代寻优空间约束在微分同胚映射空间,而不是全变换空间。 算法的实现需要借助李群结构框架。在该框架下,采用文献[156]提出的方法快速计 算矢量场的指数函数:

- 选择整数N, 使 $2^{-N}$ u接近于零;
- 进行指数一阶积分,  $v \leftarrow 2^{-N} u$ ;
- 对v做N次迭代平方运算, $v \leftarrow v \circ v$ 。

文献[143][101]提出的微分同胚 Demons 算法给出了解决非参数微分同胚配准问题的一种思路。不过,该算法是在连续域上对空间变换和矢量场进行分析,不能保证 离散域上的微分同胚性。本章从矢量场的特点出发,详细分析了该算法得到的变形场 拓扑性质,并在此基础上给出了离散域上强化变形场拓扑保持性的方法。

# 4.3 变形场分析

图像配准得到的变形场是一个矢量场,它反映了两图像中相对应结构间的变化。 矢量场的关键点是组成矢量场拓扑的重要元素,其中最重要的几个特征点是源点、汇 点和漩涡中心点,如图 4.1 所示。提取图像配准后得到的矢量变形场的关键点,分析 该矢量场的变形特点,特别是关键点附近区域的变形结构,可以更好地理解变形场所 模拟的物理过程和其中隐含的拓扑信息<sup>[157]</sup>。



图 4.1 矢量场的主要特征点

Figure 4.1 the critical attribute points of a vector field

矢量场的关键点是那些值为零的点。设 $u(x): \Omega \subseteq R^3$ 是任一 3D 矢量场,它在x'点的 $\varepsilon$ 邻域 $U_s$ 定义为:

$$U_{\varepsilon}(\mathbf{x}') = \{\mathbf{x} \mid || \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}' || < \varepsilon, \mathbf{x} \in \Omega\}$$

其中 $\varepsilon > 0, \varepsilon \in R$ 。将u(x)在x'处展为泰勒级数,

$$\boldsymbol{u}(\boldsymbol{x}) = \boldsymbol{u}(\boldsymbol{x}') + \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j} \bigg|_{\boldsymbol{x}} (\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{x}') + O(\boldsymbol{x})$$

设 $A = \frac{\partial u_i}{\partial x_j}\Big|_x$ ,  $A \in \mathbb{R}^{3\times 3}$ , 忽略高阶项, 则

u(x) = u(x') + A(x - x')

定义关键点 $x_{cp}$ 是矢量场拓扑中的平衡点,即 $u(x_{cp})=0$ ,且存在 $\varepsilon > 0, \varepsilon \in R$ ,使得

 $\boldsymbol{u}(\boldsymbol{x}) \neq 0 \; \forall \; \boldsymbol{x} \in U_{\varepsilon}(\boldsymbol{x}_{cn}) \setminus \{\boldsymbol{x}_{cn}\}$ 

矢量场的关键点代表了与应用相关的不同的物理属性。以不同个体间脑部核磁共振图像的配准应用为例,源点表征了对应脑部器官的增大,而汇点则表示对应脑部器官的 缩小,它与变形场雅可比行列式的值所表征的物理特性是相吻合的。 变形场的雅可比行列式是表征变形场拓扑属性的一个重要参量。在 3D 情况下, 变形场向量可以表示成T = (X, Y, Z), X, Y, Z分别表示点 p(x, y, z)变形后的位置, 则变形场在p点处的雅可比行列式可以表示成

$$J_{T}(\mathbf{p}) = \begin{vmatrix} \partial X / \partial x & \partial X / \partial y & \partial X / \partial z \\ \partial Y / \partial x & \partial Y / \partial y & \partial Y / \partial z \\ \partial Z / \partial x & \partial Z / \partial y & \partial Z / \partial z \end{vmatrix}$$
(4.3)

判断给定的变形场是否具有拓扑保持性,一般是考察该变形场的雅可比行列式的值是 否总是大于零<sup>[106]</sup>。也就是说,只有保证在任意点处 $J_r(p) > 0$ ,所得到的变形场才具 有拓扑保持性<sup>[132][152][154][142]</sup>。不同的 $J_r$ 值代表了与应用相关的不同的物理意义。还 是以不同个体间脑部核磁共振图像的配准应用为例, $J_r > 1$ 表征了对应脑部器官的增 大, $J_r < 1$ 表征了对应脑部器官的缩小, $J_r = 1$ 表征了物质既没有增加也没有减少,  $J_r \le 0$ 表示存在拓扑改变<sup>[154][142][158]</sup>。

图像变形带来的拓扑改变主要表现在图像中的目标结构发生粘贴或撕裂,参考矢量场关键点的图示(图 4.1),可见汇点处容易发生挤压粘贴和反折,源点处容易因膨胀过度而撕裂。2D情况下常见的几种情况如图 4.2 所示。

图 4.2 中的编号 1、2、3、4 表示初始状态下一个矩形网格的四个顶点,粗实线 表示变形后的网格,其顶点为 1′、2′、3′、4′,分别与初始状态下的四个顶点相对 应,带箭头的虚线表示各顶点的变化路径。 图 4.2 (a)表示网格变形后出现了反折 粘贴,就像是一个平面不仅形状发生了变化,而且由正面翻扣过来变成了背面; 图 4.2 (b)表示网格变形后出现了挤压粘贴,2、3 两点在变形过程中有交叉现象,导致 网格扭曲; 图 4.2 (c)表示网格变形后向两侧膨胀的幅度过大,超过了两点间连线允 许的拉伸强度而撕裂。

研究表明, Demons 算法得到的变形场有拓扑改变现象, 在某些区域得到的雅可 比行列式的值不为正。观察这些区域的变形场特点, 可见到与图 4.2 示例相近的情 况, 如图 4.3 所示。图 4.3 (a)为可变的模板图像, 图 4.3 (b)为目标图像, 图 4.3 (c)为模板图像在 Demons 变形场作用下变形得到的图像, 可以看出, 二者具有较 高的相似度。上面的白斑表示变形场雅可比行列式的值不大于零的位置, 意味着得到 该结果的变形场在某些位置不具有拓扑保持性。我们选择了三个拓扑发生改变的区 域, 在图 4.3 (c)中用白色矩形框标出。图 4.3 (d-f)给出了这三个区域的变形场图 示, 可以看到在这些矢量场的汇点附近有交叉或反折现象。

从图 4.2 可以看出,变形时发生反折主要表现在沿变形方向上相邻点的位移幅度 不匹配,后面的点位移后的位置超过前面的点位移后的位置。变形时发生交叉主要 是在矢量场汇点附近,相邻的点位移方向相对,各点的位移幅度相对较大导致相互交 叉。因此,既直观又简单的解决方案应是在尽量保持原有变形场几何特性的前提下合 理地改变这些点处的位移,达到拓扑校正的目的。

# 4.4 增强变形场拓扑保持属性的方法

若连续可微的变形场具有拓扑保持性,则其雅可比行列式的值在其定义域内应处 处为正。数字图像受分辨率的限制,是定义在离散网格点上的,不是一个连续函数, 因而得到的变形场也是离散的。文献[153]指出,连续变形场是离散变形场经过插值 得到的,它的特性决定于离散场的特性。如果离散变形场在各个离散网格点处的雅可 比行列式的值为正,那么经过线性插值后得到的连续变形场在定义域内具有拓扑保持 性。



图 4.2 2D 空间中变形导致的拓扑改变示例 (a) 反折粘贴 (b) 挤压粘贴 (c) 撕裂,其中细实线表示 初始状态下的一个矩形网格,其顶点编号为 1、2、3、4;粗实线表示变形后的网格,其顶点为 1′、2′、3′、4′,分别与初始状态下的四个顶点相对应,带箭头的虚线表示各顶点的变化路径;5′ 和 6′表示网格断裂后插入的新顶点。

Figure 4.2 Example of the changed topology in 2D space due to the deformations. (a) fold; (b) overlap; (c) tear. The number 1, 2, 3, 4 represent the four vertexes of an initial rectangle grid depicted by thin solid lines. The thick line denotes the deformed grid, whose vertexes numbered 1', 2', 3', 4'. They correspond to the initial four points. The dashed line represents the deformation path of each vertex. 5' and 6' are new inserted points coming from surrounding regions to fill the gap.

设连续变形场T = (X, Y, Z)可以表示成

$$X(x, y, z) = x + u^{x}(x, y, z)$$
(4.4)

$$Y(x, y, z) = y + u^{y}(x, y, z)$$
(4.5)

$$Z(x, y, z) = z + u^{z}(x, y, z)$$
(4.6)

其中 $u^{x}(x,y,z)$ 、 $u^{y}(x,y,z)$ 和 $u^{z}(x,y,z)$ 分别表示点p(x,y,z)在xyz坐标方向上的 位移,该点处雅可比行列式的值为J(x,y,z)。定义另外一个变形场 $T_{k}$ ,其表达式为

$$X_{k}(x, y, z) = x + ku^{x}(x, y, z)$$
(4.7)

$$Y_{k}(x, y, z) = y + ku^{y}(x, y, z)$$
(4.8)

$$Z_{k}(x, y, z) = z + ku^{z}(x, y, z)$$
(4.9)

该变形场在 p(x,y,z) 点处的雅可比行列式的值为  $J_k(x,y,z)$ 。显然,当k=0时,  $J_k(x,y,z)=1$ ;当k=1时, $J_k(x,y,z)=J(x,y,z)$ ;若p(x,y,z)点处 J(x,y,z)<0,意味着其不具有拓扑保持性。 $J_k(x,y,z)$  是k 的连续函数,根据函数的连续性可知,至 少存在一个 $k^* \in [0,1]$ ,使得  $J_{k^*}(x,y,z)>0$ 。 离散场是对连续场的采样,则对于离散 场,通过在原有位移场上乘以一个 0~1 之间的系数,可以校正原离散变形场的拓扑 性。变形场的雅可比行列式建立在对变形场求梯度的基础上。在离散条件下,我们采 用中间差分方式求梯度,任一点的梯度在不同坐标方向上的分量由该坐标方向上待求 点两侧的点(可以称这些点为关联点)确定。具体校正过程如下:

- (1) 根据得到的变形场T计算各点的雅可比行列式值J(x, y, z);
- (2) 若在点(x,y,z) 处 J(x,y,z) < 0,则从 k = 1 开始,等步长减小 k 值,得到点(x,y,z)的关联点的新位移。对每一个 k,根据这些新位移计算J<sub>k</sub>(x,y,z)。重复这个过程,直到找到 k<sup>\*</sup>,使所有的 J<sub>k</sub>\*(x,y,z) > 0;
- (3) 根据得到的T<sub>k</sub>, 检验变形后的模板图像与目标图像的匹配程度,若不满 足要求,则以新得到的变形后的模板图像为可变形模板,重新配准,对得 到的T 重复这一过程,直到满足条件为止。

### 4.5 实验

本文实验采用真实的脑部医学核磁共振图像。 其中模板图像为 SPL<sup>[137]</sup>标准图 谱, T1 加权,包含 256×256×160 个体素。目标图像的采集仪器为 1.5T GE 核磁共振 仪,T1 加权,256×256×124 个体素。实验目的主要是验证本文提出的增强变形矢量 场拓扑保持性方法的性能,主要进行了两方面的对比,分别比较了变形场拓扑校正前 后其矢量空间特性的变化和不同的目标结构分割结果。



(a)

(b)

(c)



图 4.3 原 Demons 算法得到的变形场特点 (a) 模板图像(b) 目标图像 (c) 变形后的模板图像,上面的白斑表示变形时发生拓扑改变的位置,白色矩形框标出了 1、2、3 三个示例区域 (d-f) 图(c)中的三个示例区域的变形场的放大图。

Figure 4.3 the deformation field obtained from the original Demons algorithm. (a) the template image;

(b) the target image; (c) the deformed template image, The white parts represent the positions with negative Jacobians in the deformation field, which means the topology violation in these positions. Three typical regions are highlighted in white rectangles; (d-f) The enlarged deformation field diagrams of the highlighted three regions

图 4.4 所示为原 Demons 变形场经过拓扑校正处理后的结果。实验中改变 k 值时 步长设为 0.01,送代终止条件为变形后的模板图像与目标图像的互相关系数达到给定 的阈值或者以新得到的图像为可变形模板重新配准次数到达上限(本实验中设为 3 次)。本文实验的互相关系数阈值设置方式为:设模板图像与目标图像的初始互相关 系数为  $CC_0$ ,则阈值  $CC_t = (1 - CC_0)/\alpha + CC_0$ ,参数  $\alpha$  的值设为 1.2。分别比较图 4.4

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(a-d) 与图 4.3 (c-f),可以看出校正后的变形场雅可比行列式的值满足拓扑保持性 的要求,而且校正后的变形场更加规则、平滑。从图 4.3(c)给出的实验结果可以看 出,原变形场雅可比行列式的值不大于零的点所占比例较小,也就是说需要校正的点 所占比例较小,因此相对于原算法其计算量只大约增加了 5%。图 4.5 所示为变形场 拓扑校正后,各点位移量的变化值,颜色越浅表示该位置处的位移矢量的幅度改变得 越多,最大改变量为 1.86 个像素,说明校正后的变形场基本保持了原有场的几何特 性。同时,图 4.5 表明位移幅值发生明显变化的像素点的个数相对较少,也证明了采 用本文的拓扑校正方法不会使计算量大幅增加。图 4.6 比较了采用拓扑校正前和校正 后的变形场分割丘脑结构的效果。图 4.6(a)为可变形模板图像,上面叠加了丘脑的专 家分割结果。图 4.6(b)为待分割的目标图像,图 4.6(c)中的白斑给出了校正前的变形 场拓扑发生改变的区域,采用该变形场得到的丘脑分割结果见图 4.6(d),显然得到的 结果有撕裂现象,丘脑的拓扑结构发生了改变,相应位置的变形场有交叉现象,见图 4.6(e)。经过本文提出的拓扑校正处理,表征雅可比行列式的值不为正的白斑消失, 见图 4.6(f),说明此时的变形场具有拓扑保持性,用该变形场进行同样的分割,避免 了丘脑结构的撕裂,如图 4.6(g)所示。对比校正前后该位置的变形场(图 4.6(e)和图 4.6(h)),可看出本文提出的方法消除了其中的矢量交叉,使变形场更平滑、更合 理。不过,从图 4.6(g)可以看出,虽然校正后的变形场具有了拓扑保持性,但其分割 结果仍存在误分割处。这是因为原配准算法是单纯基于图像灰度信息的,当邻近的不 同目标的灰度值相似时,得到的变形场可能是局部最优解,而本算法在对变形场进行 拓扑校正时,遵循尽可能少地改变原有变形场几何特性这一原则,一旦满足拓扑保持 条件,即停止校正,所以不能完全改变这一局部最优变形场的情况。可以考虑增加配 准时所用的信息(如位置,形状等),尽量避免初始变形场陷入局部最优。

### 4.6 本章小结

在非刚性图像配准的研究中,保证变形场的拓扑不变性是一个重要问题。研究表明,经典的基于灰度的 Demons 配准算法虽然采用了双射技术和平滑处理,所得变形场仍然存在拓扑改变问题。本章站在矢量场几何特性的角度,分析了该变形场导致拓扑改变的原因,提出在尽量保持原有变形场几何特性的前提下直接调整点位移的方法校正原变形场的拓扑性,并给出了具体的理论支持。实验表明,该算法能够校正原变形场在拓扑保持方面的缺陷,得到更平滑、合理且具有拓扑保持性的变形场。
博士学位论文



图 4.4 拓扑校正后的变形场 (a) 变形后的模板图像, 三个示例区域位置同图 4.3(c); (b-d) 这三个示例区域的具有拓扑保持性的变形场的放大图。

Figure 4.4 the deformation field with corrected topologies. (a) the deformed template image, where the highlighted regions are the same as those in Fig. 4.3(c); (b-d) The enlarged deformation field diagrams of the highlighted three regions.

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图 4.5 变形场校正前后的幅度差(以像素值度量) Figure 4.5 the magnitude differences of the deformation fields before and after topology correction (measured in pixels)



(b) (c) (a) (e) (f)

(d)

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图 4.6 变形场校正前后脑结构分割对比 (a) 模板图像,上面叠加了丘脑的专家分割结果 (b) 目标图 像 (c) 未进行拓扑校正时,变形过程中发生拓扑改变的区域,图中白斑区域 (d) 采用未进行拓扑校 正的变形场得到的丘脑分割结果 (e) 拓扑发生变化位置处的变形场放大图 (f) 拓扑校正后,变形过 程中没有发生拓扑改变的区域,白斑区域消失 (g) 采用经过拓扑校正的变形场得到的丘脑分割结 果 (h) 拓扑校正后的变形场放大图,放大区域与图(e)区域相同。

Figure 4.6 comparison of brain structures segmentation based on the deformation fields with and without topology corrections. (a) source image, superimposed with the manual segmentation of the thalamus by the expert. (b) target image (c) regions (in white) with changed topologies during the deformation before topology correction. (d) the segmented thalamus based on the uncorrected deformation field. (e) the enlarged diagram of the deformation field in a region with changed topology. (f) the topology preserved deformation field after correction, where no white spots appear. (g) the segmented thalamus based on the corrected deformation field. (h) the enlarged diagram of the corrected deformation field in the same region as (e).

# 5 基于灰度与形状混合特征的非刚性配准算法: MRI 图像中脑 深层结构的分割

#### 5.1 研究意义

图像分割在医学图像分析中起着至关重要的作用,分割的目的是将一幅图像分成 不重叠的多个区域,各区域对应人体明确的解剖结构。采用医学 MRI 图像,将人脑 的不同器官分割出来,分析各器官结构的差异,是临床诊断和辨识脑部疾病进程的重 要手段。MRI 技术目前是占据主导地位的人体软组织成像技术,所得到的图像具有 很高的软组织图像对比度和空间分辨率。MRI 图像是三维图像,可以从三个方向提 供人脑内部结构视图,图 5.1 给出了一个人脑 MRI 图像的三方向视图,这三个方向 分别称作冠状面方向、轴向和矢状面方向<sup>[13]</sup>。

虽然 MRI 图像具有较好的软组织成像能力,但是噪声、射频场强度的非均匀性 引起的图像不均匀现象、分辨率不够导致的部分容积效应等,都会降低 MRI 图像的 质量,增加分割的难度。从医学图像中准确分割软组织是具有相当难度的课题。

人类的大脑有无数个神经元,这些神经元主要由细胞体和轴突构成。从本质上 讲,大脑可以分成三类组织: 灰质、白质和脑脊液,灰质由细胞体构成,而白质的主 要成分是轴突,脑脊液是填充在其间的组织液。不同的组织含水量不同,对射频磁场 能量的反射强度不同,反应在 MRI 图像上,则对应不同的图像强度<sup>[159]</sup>。灰质主要集 中在大脑皮层区域,但大脑内部仍然存在一些灰质结构,如尾状核、壳体、苍白球、 丘脑、海马体等等,它们与帕金森氏综合征、癫痫、痴呆、克雅氏病等脑部疾病关系 密切,通过分析这些结构的体积、形状变化等有助于与此相关的疾病诊断<sup>[160][161]</sup>。图 5.2 所示为大脑的结构分层。



(a)

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图 5.1 人脑 MRI 图像的三方向视图。(a) 3D 人脑外观 (b) 冠状面 (c) 轴向 (d)矢状面 Figure 5.1 (a) 3D human brain appearance (b) coronal (c) axial (d) sagittal



(a) - 61 -



(b)

图 5.2 大脑的结构示例 (a) 脑组织 左上: 人脑轴向 MRI 切片; 右上: 白质; 左下: 灰质; 右下: 脑脊液 (b) 几个脑结构示例 绿色: 尾状核; 蓝绿色: 丘脑; 蓝色: 豆状核; 橙红色: 脑室 Figure 5.2 human brain structures (a) brain tissue upper left: an axial slice of human brain image; upper right: white matter; bottom left: gray matter; bottom right: cerebrospinal fluid (b) some brain structures green: caudate; blue-green: thalamus; blue: putamen; orange-red: ventricle

#### 5.2 深层脑结构分割方法

传统的医学三维 MRI 图像分割方法是人工分割,但一个分辨率较高的三维 MRI 图像往往包含上百个切片,完全手工分割是一件耗时耗力的工作。而且,人工分割中 主观性差异带来的误差不可避免。因此,借助于计算机技术,研究自动分割方法,特 别是全自动分割方法是必要的,而且也是目前的一个活跃的研究领域。

本文的研究目标是全自动分割脑内部的深层结构,这些结构形状复杂,体积小, 受部分容积效应的影响大,边界模糊,不易从周围环境中辨别出来。因此,深层脑结 构的全自动分割是一个具有挑战性的问题。迄今为止,已经有很多研究深层脑结构分 割的算法<sup>[162][163][164][165][166][132][167]</sup>。第一类方法主要是基于可变形模板或活动轮廓演 化的算法<sup>[162][163][165][166][170][171][172][173][174]</sup>。例如,文献[169]采用的活动形状模型首 先利用训练集图像中的标志点得到一个统计模型,然后将这个统计模型与测试图像中 目标边界匹配,实现目标分割。在水平集理论框架下,文献[172]根据训练集中各结 构的灰度信息和形状信息,得到各结构的灰度与形状联合分布模型,利用模型匹配实 现测试图像的分割。基于活动轮廓的算法具有较强的捕捉目标形状和结构信息的能 力,其要点是构建合理的统计形状和灰度模型,利用模型参数寻找最佳目标边界。但 是该类算法也有其不足之处。首先,大脑图像包含很多的边缘,这些边界将灰质、白

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质、脑脊液区分开来。众多复杂的边缘对活动轮廓算法有较大的干扰,影响算法的收 敛性能,因此该类算法需要得到一个尽量准确的初始轮廓。其次,脑 MRI 图像中, 一些结构的边缘模糊不清,与周围结构的图像对比度太低,活动轮廓算法在这种情况 下很难收敛到目标结构的边缘<sup>[175]</sup>。第二类算法主要通过将模糊理论与专家知识或先 验信息相结合,将目标体素分类到具有最大可能性的结构类别中[166][167][176][177]。文献 [166]利用信息融合技术将专家知识与不同结构的形态信息、拓扑信息和组织成分信 息的模糊映射集融合在一起,实现目标结构的分割。文献[167]采用模糊模型表示从 图谱中得到的各结构的形状、距离、相互关系等信息,然后用遗传算法和区域生长算 法对目标结构进行分类识别。文献[177]采用模糊控制策略监督多个活动轮廓的同时 演化过程,分割深层脑结构。模糊逻辑方法的缺点在于很难始终如一地准确分割人脑 的各种结构,特别是体积很小的结构,因为基于模糊理论定义得到的相互关系属性不 够精确,分割准确度必然下降。第三类重要的分割策略是基于配准的分割算法 [160][164][132] [159] [178] [179] [180] [160] [181] [182][183][184] [185][175],可称作配准-分割算法。基于配准 的分割算法将已知标准分割的源图像与待分割的目标图像配准,得到从源图像到目标 图像的空间变换,然后利用这个空间变换把源图像的分割结果映射到目标图像,分割 目标结构。基于配准的分割算法可以充分利用图谱提供的先验信息,理论上可以实现 非常准确的分割,其关键是设计一个合理的非刚性配准算法。本章所采用的方法属于 这一类方法。此外,其他一些先进的现代分割技术在分割深层脑结构中的应用近年来 也逐渐受到越来越多的关注。如基于支持向量机的分割[186][187],基于图割理论的分割 

#### 5.3 基于配准的分割算法

基于配准的分割算法基本原理如图 5.3 所示。该类方法采用配准算法得到模板图 像变形为目标图像的空间变换,然后利用这个空间变换将模板图像得到的已知分割结 果,即图谱信息映射到目标图像,从而得到对目标图像感兴趣区域的分割。

配准分割算法首先依赖于图谱提供的结构信息。较早出现,且迄今仍广为流传的 图谱是 Talairach and Tournoux 图谱<sup>[190] [191]</sup>,准确地给出了人脑各结构的解剖信息。 图 5.4 所示为 Talairach 图谱中的一个切片。

随着计算机技术的发展,纸版图谱的应用受到了限制,数字图谱逐步发展起来<sup>[192][137]</sup>。数字图谱可以从单个个体中获得,也可以来自于群体。广为应用的 SPL 图 谱<sup>[137]</sup>来自于哈佛医学院,基于单个体的三维 MRI 图像分割得到。该图谱含有 256×256×160 个体素,每个体素的尺寸为 0.92×0.92×1.5mm<sup>3</sup>,包含 150 个不同的脑部 结构。图 5.5 所示为该图谱的一个冠状位 MRI 图像,对应的图谱视图以及部分深层脑 结构的 3D 视图。基于群体信息的图谱一般是将多个个体的图像配准到 Talairach 三维

立体空间,然后进行平均处理,得到一个平均脑,以克服单一个体信息不足以代表群体信息的缺陷。



图 5.3 基于配准的分割算法基本原理

基于配准的脑分割在早期的研究中更多地集中在脑组织的分割上,低自由度的空间变换限制了配准算法在分割大脑深部结构上的应用,需要研究具有较高自由度的非刚性配准算法。1997年,文献[164]采用弹性配准技术实现了左右丘脑、尾状核、豆状核和苍白球等身部结构的分割。2002年,文献[160]在 Bayesian 理论框架下,通过训练数据集得到统计图谱,与配准相结合完成 37个内部脑结构的分割。随后的改进算法<sup>[193][194]</sup>均从建立合理的图谱模型的角度进行研究,提出的算法克服了文献[160] 算法不适宜分割不同仪器或不同参数下获得的图像的缺点。此外,基于图谱的分割也 经常用于评价一个配准算法的性能<sup>[132[155]</sup>。

Figure 5.3 basic principles of registration based segmentation methods

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图5.4 一个Talairach图谱切片 Figure 5.4 a slice of the Talairach atlas





Figure 5.5 SPL altas (a)a coronal slice (b) corresponding atlas (c) 3D view of some brain internal structures

基于配准的分割算法近年来发展很快,目前主要需要解决两个问题:创建含有 丰富信息的图谱和研究准确合理的非刚性配准算法。鉴于脑部组织器官的复杂多变 性,灰度与特征相结合的非刚性配准算法应该是未来的一个重要研究方向。这也正 是本章的主要工作。

#### 5.3.1 基于灰度的非刚性配准算法

一般意义上,图像配准可看作是一个优化问题,其基本原理如图 5.6 所示,其中 优化器的作用是根据两个图像之间要达到的相似性目标,找到最佳的空间变换参数  $r^{*}$ 。对于非参数变换,则是找到每个点的最佳空间位移。在优化理论下,配准问题 可以表述为,给定源图像  $A \rightarrow B$ ,在允许的变换空间 $\Gamma$ 中寻找最优变换 $r^{*}$ ,使得图 像  $A \rightarrow B$ 以最佳状态满足规定的相似性测度 $E_{sim}(B, A \circ T)$ ,即

$$\boldsymbol{T}^* = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{T} \in \boldsymbol{\Gamma}} \{ E(\boldsymbol{T}) \} = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{T} \in \boldsymbol{\Gamma}} \{ E_{sim}(B, A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) + E_{reg}(\boldsymbol{T}) \}$$
(5.1)

其中*E<sub>reg</sub>(T)*项为正则化函数,用以保证得到的空间变换满足某些期望的属性,如平 滑、可逆、拓扑不变等等。



图 5.6 图像配准原理

Figure 5.6 principles of image registration

图像之间的相似性测度多种多样,其中两图像灰度差的平方和(SSD)是基于 灰度的配准算法的一种基本测度。该测度简单,易于优化,其表达式如下:

$$E_{sim}(B, A \circ \mathbf{T}) = E_{SSD}^{intensity}(B, A \circ \mathbf{T}) = \frac{1}{2} ||B - A \circ \mathbf{T}||^2$$
(5.2)

已有的研究表明,相对于其它基于灰度的非刚性配准算法,Demons<sup>[54]</sup>及其改进算法 <sup>[98][195][100]</sup> 在很多方面有着卓越的性能,虽然该算法的思想源自热力学的扩散模型, 采用了光流场理论进行处理,但在优化理论框架下,其本质是采用 SSD 相似性测度 的基于灰度的非刚性非参数配准算法<sup>[94][100][1][196][101][143]</sup>。代价函数(5.2)在非参数 空间直接寻优得到的解有可能是不稳定的,且不光滑的,因此有必要加入正则化约 束项,以避免出现这种情况。这样,代价函数变为

 $E = E_{sim}(B, A \circ T) + E_{reg}(T) = E_{SSD}^{intensity}(B, A \circ T) + E_{reg}(T) = \frac{1}{2} ||B - A \circ T||^{2} + q ||\nabla T||^{2}$ (5.3) 其中正则化约束项为 $E_{reg}(T) = q ||\nabla T||^{2}$ ,期望得到的解是光滑的。参数q用于调整约束强度。

引入正则化约束项解决了变换的稳定性和光滑性问题,却使优化过程变得复杂, 不易实现。基于Tikhonov正则化理论<sup>[197]</sup>,Demons算法提出了新颖的交替优化策略,即 首先优化相似性测度,然后用高斯滤波器平滑得到的变形场。根据Tikhonov正则化理 论,与信号D最为接近的Tikhonov正则化解*D*使能量函数

$$E(\hat{D}) = \frac{1}{2} \int [(\hat{D} - D)^2 + \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \frac{\sigma^i}{i!} (\frac{\partial^i D}{\partial x^i})^2] dx$$
(5.4)

最小。该能量函数的解为

$$\widehat{D} = D * h$$

其中符号\*表示卷积运算。滤波器h的付立叶变换为

$$G(\omega,\sigma) = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \frac{\sigma^{i}}{i!} \omega^{2i}} = e^{-\omega^{2}\sigma}$$

是高斯滤波器 $G_{\sigma}$ 的形式。因此,采用交替优化策略时,首先得到使相似性测度最优的解T,经正则化处理后得到的近似优化解为 $\hat{T} = T * G_{\sigma}$ 。关于配准算法中正则化处理问题可参阅文献[1]。

这种交替优化算法的主要步骤如下:

(a) 第*n*次迭代时,对图像中的每一点*p*,根据当前空间变换*T<sub>n-1</sub>(p)*,计算当前源图像向目标图像变形的位移矢量*u<sub>n</sub>(p)*。

 $\boldsymbol{u}_{n}(\boldsymbol{p}) = -\frac{(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}_{n-1}(\boldsymbol{p}) - B(\boldsymbol{p}))}{(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}_{n-1}(\boldsymbol{p}) - B(\boldsymbol{p}))^{2} + \|\nabla B(\boldsymbol{p})\|^{2}} \nabla B(\boldsymbol{p}) , \quad \text{其详细导出过程参看文献}$ 

[54]。

(b) 平滑位移矢量场:  $u_n \leftarrow G_\sigma * u_n$ ,  $G_\sigma$  是高斯滤波器。

(c) 计算新的空间变换:  $T_n \leftarrow T_{n-1} + u_n$ 。

算法中,不同的平滑处理方式可以处理不同的配准需求。若对位移场进行平滑,则可以处理较大的变形,若对变形场进行平滑,则用于处理较小的变形。

#### 5.3.2 基于灰度与形状混合特征的非刚性配准算法

基于灰度的非刚性配准算法只使用了图像的灰度信息,虽然在很多情况下能够满 足应用的要求,但是在某些应用中,特别是要求较高的应用中,单纯使用灰度信息不 能更好地解决问题。例如,在脑深层灰质结构分割中,若待分割的几个结构在目标图 像中距离很近,中间只有很窄小的分界,而且这些结构的灰度值非常接近,则很难实 现准确的分割。采用单纯基于灰度的配准方法时,得到的其中某一个结构变形后的位 置很可能与其相邻的结构相重叠,进一步迭代后易于造成单一结构的分裂,得到不合 理的分割结果。这是在脑深层灰质结构中的常见情况。

由于这些相邻的结构灰度相似,使用灰度信息配准得到的结果从视觉上看效果不错,然而如果我们用这样的空间变换将图谱上的结构标记映射到目标图像,其分割结 果往往是不正确的,因此有必要增加与目标结构相关的新信息。通常情况下,人们会 采用某些合适的特征提取算法,提取相关的点、线、面等特征,用于补充灰度信息的 不足,构建灰度与特征信息相混合的配准算法。这样的混合配准算法可以充分发挥基 于灰度的配准算法和基于特征的配准算法的优点,提高配准质量<sup>[100][27][28]</sup>。

在配准过程中,与源图像相对应的图谱信息能够提供感兴趣区域的形状、相对位 置等先验信息。一般来说,正常人脑的同源深层灰质结构,特别是尾状核、豆状核、 丘脑等结构的形状是类似的,因此在灰度相似要求的基础上引入形状相似信息,应该 是提高配准精度的一个有效途径。

在基于灰度的配准能量函数中引入先验的形状信息,首先需要选择合适的形状表示方法。用于描述形状的方法很多,如点群<sup>[198][199]</sup>,参数曲线或曲面<sup>[200]</sup>,付立叶描述符<sup>[201]</sup>,中轴<sup>[202]</sup>,以及隐性距离函数<sup>[203][204][205]</sup>等。点群表示法可以方便地描述 2D 和 3D 具有任意拓扑形态的形状,但受形状样点的采样规则影响较大,不利于建立样点之间的正确的对应关系。参数曲线或曲面方法虽然可以保证较好的点对应关系,但不便于用来表示较高维形状或复杂形状。相比而言,隐距离函数表示法更适合建立形状边界的稠密对应关系。这种方法可以表示任意维数、任意拓扑结构的形状,直接使用形状的距离变换图像,抗干扰能力强,近年来在形状配准和统计形状建模领域受到较多的关注<sup>[206]</sup>。因此,我们选用距离函数表示形状信息,建立形状之间的相似性测度。

形状*s* 将图像空间 $\Omega$ 分成两个相邻的区域,设 $\omega$ 表示*s* 包围的区域, $\Omega - \omega$ 表示形状外部的背景区域, $\Phi_s: \Omega \rightarrow R^+ \& s$ 的距离变换,图像中的任一点p到形状*s* 的最小距离为d(p,S),则该形状的距离图为

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$$\Phi_{S}(\boldsymbol{p}) = \begin{cases} 0, \quad \boldsymbol{p} \in S \\ d(\boldsymbol{p}, S), \quad \boldsymbol{p} \in \boldsymbol{\omega} \\ -d(\boldsymbol{p}, S), \quad \boldsymbol{p} \in \boldsymbol{\Omega} - \boldsymbol{\omega} \end{cases}$$
(5.5)

*d*(*p*,*S*)可以采用任意的距离函数,本文使用常规的欧式距离。经过距离变换,二值的形状信息转换成灰度值为距离的灰度图像。基于距离图像,构建新的形状相似性测度为

$$E_{SSD}^{shape}(\boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A), \boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T})) = \frac{1}{2} || \boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}) - \boldsymbol{\Phi}_{S}(A) ||^{2}$$
(5.6)

其中**Φ**<sub>s</sub>(*A*)表示源图像*A*中目标结构的形状表示,**Φ**<sub>s</sub>(*A*•**T**)表示基于空间变换**T** 该结构变形后的形状表示,即目标结构预分割结果的形状表示。在形状相似性测度的约束下,目标图像中分割得到的对应结构的形状应该与原图谱中的结构的形状近似。因此,新的能量函数为

 $E_{new} = E_{sim}(B, A \circ T) + E_{reg}(T) = E_{SSD}^{intensity}(B, A \circ T) + E_{SSD}^{shape}(\Phi_{s}(A), \Phi_{s}(A \circ T)) + E_{reg}(T)$  (5.7) 参照 Demons 算法的交替优化策略,可以得到感兴趣区域中任意点 p 处,与灰度匹配 相对应的位移矢量为

$$\boldsymbol{u}_{intensity}(\boldsymbol{p}) = -\frac{(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p}) - B(\boldsymbol{p}))}{(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p}) - B(\boldsymbol{p}))^2 + ||\nabla B(\boldsymbol{p})||^2} \nabla B(\boldsymbol{p})$$
(5.8)

与形状匹配相对应的位移矢量为

$$\boldsymbol{u}_{shape}(\boldsymbol{p}) = -\frac{(\Phi_{s}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p})) - \Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p})))}{(\Phi_{s}(A \circ \boldsymbol{T}(\boldsymbol{p})) - \Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p})))^{2} + \|\nabla\Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p}))\|^{2}} \nabla\Phi_{s}(A(\boldsymbol{p}))$$
(5.9)

为了兼顾灰度匹配和形状匹配对图像变形的影响,本文引入平衡参数 $\beta \in [0, 1]$ ,用于平衡灰度信息和形状信息对配准的贡献。因此,p点处的合成位移场为

$$\boldsymbol{u}(\boldsymbol{p}) = (1 - \beta)\boldsymbol{u}_{intensity}(\boldsymbol{p}) + \beta \boldsymbol{u}_{shape}(\boldsymbol{p})$$
(5.10)

β=0表示只考虑灰度信息的贡献,该算法即为标准的基于灰度的配准算法。β=1则 只考虑形状信息的贡献,可用于一般的形状配准问题。本文采用简单的分段线性函数 自适应地调整参数β的权值,如图 5.7 所示。图中的符号含义如下:

- x: 目标图像感兴趣区域的像素点灰度值1。
- $x_0 = mean(I_{structure})$ : 目标结构区域的平均灰度值。
- $x_{0}^{-} = x_{0} \lambda \sigma_{structure} \pi x_{0}^{+} = x_{0} + \lambda \sigma_{structure}$ : 灰度阈值,此时灰度测度和形状测度在驱动图像变形的过程中具有同等重要的作用。 $\sigma_{structure}$ 表示目标结构区域灰度值的标准差。 $\lambda$ 是可调参数,根据各点的灰度值与 $x_{0}$ 的关系确定形状测度的权重。



图 5.7 平衡参数 β 的值

Figure 5.7 value of the balance parameter  $\beta$ 

进行各结构的形状匹配时,可以采用单结构顺序处理方式,得到的单结构分割更为准确。当待分割结构较多时,顺序处理方式需要较多的处理时间<sup>[102]</sup>。如果待分割的多个结构具有相似的灰度分布,可以采用合成形状映射图同时分割。

设 $s_i$ , i = 1, ..., N 为N 个不同的待分割结构,对任一点p,  $s_i$ 的形状表示为  $\Phi_s(p)$ ,则定义这N 个结构的合成形状映射图为M(p),

 $M(\boldsymbol{p}) = \begin{cases} \Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p}), & \text{if } \Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p}) \ge 0\\ \max(\Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p})), & \text{if } \Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p}) < 0 \text{ and } | \max(\Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p})) | \le \varepsilon \\ 0, & \text{if } \Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p}) < 0 \text{ and } | \max(\Phi_{s_i}(\boldsymbol{p})) | > \varepsilon \end{cases}$ (5.11)

其中 $\varepsilon = \min_{i} \{ \max_{p} (\Phi_{s_{i}}(p)) \}$ 为确定有效区域的阈值。采用合成形状映射图后,算法实现时,应该用 $M(\bullet)$ 代替公式(5.6),(5.7)和(5.9)中的 $\Phi_{s}(\bullet)$ 。

综上,给定源图像 *A*、目标图像 *B*,以及与源图像相对应的图谱 *Atlas*,本文提出的配准-分割算法具体实现过程如下:

- (1) 采用 BrainSuite<sup>[207]</sup>软件完成非脑组织剥离,校正图像中的非均匀场;
- (2) 采用 FSL 软件<sup>[208]</sup>实现源图像 *A* 和目标图像 *B* 的全局预配准,得到初始变换*T*<sub>1</sub>;
- (3) 以图像 A T<sub>1</sub> 为新的源图像,采用拓扑保持 Demons 算法实现基于灰度的非
   刚性配准,得到非线性变换 T<sub>2</sub>;
- (4) 通过图谱映射,得到感兴趣区域的初始分割  $Atlas \circ T_1 \circ T_2$ ;
- (5) 提取源图像和目标图像中的感兴趣区域,计算待分割结构的合成形状映射 图,采用本章提出的基于混合灰度与形状信息的非刚性配准算法优化*T*<sub>2</sub>,

得到**T**,';

(6) 图谱映射,得到目标结构的分割结果  $Atlas \circ T_1 \circ T'_2$ 。

#### 5.3.3 实验与结果

我们用本文提出的算法从正常人脑的核磁共振图像中分割尾状核、豆状核和丘脑 等深层脑灰质结构,以验证算法的性能。模板图像采用哈佛医学院提供的标准 T1 加 权 MRI 图像,及其对应的图谱<sup>[137]</sup>,包含 256×256×160 个体素,每个体素的几何尺寸 为 0.9375mm×0.9375mm×1.5 mm。待分割的目标图像为 15 个正常人的脑部 T1 加权 MRI 图像,从美国马萨诸塞州总医院形态分析中心提供的网上脑分割库获得<sup>[138]</sup> (Internet Brain Segmentation Repository (IBSR2.0))。IBSR2.0 数据库提供 18 个高分

辨率不同人脑 T1 加权 MRI 图像,以及与这 18 个图像相对应的专家分割结果。每一个图像中都包含 256×256×128 个体素,其中第一组数据含 8 个图像,体素几何尺寸为 0.9375×0.9375×1.5mm<sup>3</sup>,第二组数据含 6 个图像,体素几何尺寸为 1.0×1.0×1.5mm<sup>3</sup>,第三组数据含 4 个图像,体素几何尺寸为 0.8371×0.8371×1.5mm<sup>3</sup>。
18 个数据从数据库中下载后,有一个数据无法读取,另外两个图像灰度非均匀现象 比较严重且不易校正,因而剔除。

需要注意的是,本文算法要求待配准的两图像间要满足对应结构间的变形较小和 灰度变化较小的前提条件。本研究的最终目标是实现不同个体间的图像配准,从而完 成对不同个体的脑深层结构分割。因为获得源图像与目标图像的采集设备不同,参数 设置有差异,不同个体之间也有结构上的差异,以及成像过程中干扰与噪声的影响 等,使得待配准的两个图像不一定满足算法要求的前提条件,所以首先要进行图像灰 度直方图匹配和快速的全局预配准。另外在算法实现过程中,从合成形状映射图的构 建方法中可以看出,灰度与形状联合配准过程只作用于目标结构上,这样的优化调整 过程几乎对周围的区域没有影响。

算法中需要人为调整的参数是λ。从图 5.7 所示曲线可以看出,参数β跟随不同 结构的灰度自动变化,只有λ的值需要人为确定。不过,该参数的取值也是有一定规 律可循的。鉴于在前面的纯灰度配准过程中,已经得到了较好的图像灰度配准质量, 则在进行灰度与形状相结合的细化配准中,应该赋予形状相似度更多的权重,所以λ 值取大一些会更好。实验中,这一参数对所有的结构都设置为 0.7。

算法采用迭代寻优,终止条件为变形后的模板图像与目标图像的互相关系数达到 给定的阈值或者以新得到的图像为可变形模板重新配准次数到达上限(本实验中设为 3次)。本文实验的互相关系数阈值设置方式为:设模板图像与目标图像的初始互相 关系数为*CC*<sub>0</sub>,则阈值*CC*<sub>t</sub> = (1-*CC*<sub>0</sub>)/α+*CC*<sub>0</sub>,参数α的值设为 1.2。 在图像配准问题中,对图像进行多分辨率分解,分别在多个图像尺度上配准的方法已经成为提高配准精度和运算速度的常用手段。该方法首先对低分辨率的图像进行 配准,然后将得到的形变结果作为较高分辨率图像配准时的迭代初值,从而得到更准确地变形场。本文在采用的分解系数为2,最小分辨率为32。



图 5.8 基于灰度的算法和本文算法的分割性能比较。(a) 源图像,上面叠加了分割好的脑内部结构 的轮廓(b)图谱中左豆状核的形状表示,上面叠加了该结构的边缘(c)目标图像(d)采用基于灰度 的配准算法得到的分割结果(e)变形后的左豆状核的形状表示,上面叠加了该结构的边缘(f)采用 本文算法得到的分割结果

Figure 5.8 Segmentation results: comparison between Demons non-rigid registration and the proposed method. (a) the reference image superimposed by the atlas of subcortical structures (b) the shape representation of the left putamen in the atlas superposed by the structure's boundary (c) the target image (d) segmentation by pure intensity based non-rigid registration (e) the shape representation of the deformed left putamen superposed by the structure's boundary (f) the segmentation based on the proposed method.

为了更清楚地比较不同算法的分割性能,图 5.8 给出了一组实验结果的二维视 图。图 5.8(d)给出了只采用灰度相似度配准得到的左豆状核的分割结果,考察图中黑 色圆圈画出的位置,显然这一结果不够理想。左豆状核与皮层的灰质结构相距很近, 中间只隔着一条很窄的白质带。从 MRI 图像上看,豆状核与皮层的灰质结构相距很近, 中间只隔着一条很窄的白质带。从 MRI 图像上看,豆状核与皮层的灰质结构和距很近, 五目标图像中左豆状核与邻近的皮层灰质结构的位置与源图像中的豆状核结构都 有一部分的重叠,因此如果只考虑灰度相似度,极有可能陷入局部最优解。图 5.8(b) 是采用欧氏距离表示左豆状核形状的距离图,其上叠加了图谱中左豆状核的边缘曲 线。图 5.8(e)是变形后的左豆状核的距离图,该变形是采用灰度相似度配准后得到的 变换结果,可以看出,左豆状核变形后的形状与原来的形状间有较大的差异。随后在 灰度相似度和形状相似度的联合作用下,源图像中左豆状核形状与分割得到的目标图 像中左豆状核形状相似性增加,分割结果较好,参见图 5.8(f)。一组分割结果的三维 视图如图 5.9 所示。



图 5.9 本文算法得到的分割结果示例。(a) 冠状视图 (b)轴状视图 (c) 矢状视图 (d) 3D 视图 Figure 5.9 Segmentation results on a T1 weighted volume. (a) Coronal (b) Axial (c) Sagital (d) 3D view

本文采用相似度指数对算法的分割性能进行定量评价,该评价指标常用在基于图 谱的分割应用中<sup>[161][165][132][126][177]</sup>。相似度指数主要用来表征各结构的自动分割结果 与标准分割结果之间的重叠程度。设*G*表示某结构的标准分割,*E*表示该结构的自 动分割结果,则相似度指数的定义如下:

$$KI = \frac{2 \times TP}{2 \times TP + FN + FP}$$
(5.12)

其中TP= $G \cap E$ 表示正确分割率; FP= $\overline{G} \cap E$ 表示假阳性率; FN= $G \cap \overline{E}$ 表示假阴性率, 符号 $\overline{O}$ 代表集合O的补集。KI 在 0 到 1 之间取值,当自动分割结果完全等于标准分割时,KI=1;当自动分割结果与标准分割完全不同时,KI=0。

实验中,我们分割了 15个正常人脑 MRI 图像中的左右尾状核、豆状核和丘脑结构,并计算了他们的 KI 值,结果如图 5.10 所示,相关的统计数据列于表 5.1。表 5.1 中各符号分别表示: *L-Caudate*—左尾状核; *R-Caudate*—右尾状核; *L-Putamen*—左 豆状核; *R-Putamen*—右豆状核; *L-Thalamus*—左丘脑; *R-Thalamus*—右丘脑; Ori.—原算法; Pro.—本文提出的算法; max—15 个分割结果中的最大 KI 值; min—15 个分割结果中的最小 KI 值; mean—15 个分割结果的平均 KI 值; SD—15 个分割结果的 KI 值标准偏差。分析图和表中给出的结果,可以看出,大多数情况下,本文给出的算法比原算法的分割结果精确。众所周知,脑深层灰质结构一般体积较小,形状复杂,灰度接近,相邻结构之间的间距较小,而且各结构的边缘不清,对这样的结构进行全自动分割难度较大。文献[209]提出,同时也被该领域的研究人员认可的观点是,KI >0.7 即表明自动分割与标准分割非常接近。本文的 15 个数据分割后得到的KI 值基本大于 0.7,可见本文算法在该应用中具有较好的分割性能。





图 5.10 不同算法得到的 KI 值比较。(a) 左尾状核 (b) 右尾状核(c) 左豆状核 (d) 右豆状核(e) 左丘脑 (f) 右丘脑

Figure 5.10 Comparisons of KI values. (a) left caudate (b) right caudate (c) left putamen (d) right putamen (e) left thalamus (f) right thalamus

表 5.1 KI 值的统计结果

|--|

Structure	L-Caudate		R-Caudate		L-Putamen		R-Putamen		L-Thalamus		R-Thalamus	
Method	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.	Pro.	Ori.
max	0.812	0.729	0.813	0.691	0.831	0.752	0.829	0.759	0.857	0.806	0.850	0.788
min	0.539	0.537	0.567	0.571	0.694	0.633	0.743	0.666	0.735	0.680	0.747	0.665
mean	0.739	0.699	0.717	0.658	0.767	0.725	0.783	0.739	0.809	0.740	0.801	0.730
SD	0.072	0.049	0.062	0.031	0.037	0.029	0.031	0.027	0.031	0.032	0.030	0.032

我们将本文提出的算法得到的分割结果与文献[132][155]给出的结果进行了对 比,因为这些文献采用的方法也是配准-分割算法,使用的数据与我们的数据相同, 所以具有一定的可比性。文献[132]采用的量化评价标准与本文相同,给出的结果是 对 34 个结构的分割结果平均后得到的。文献[155]采用的量化评价标准与相似度指数 略有不同,称为相对空间重叠率,其定义如下:

$$\mathrm{RO} = \frac{G \cap E}{G \cup E} \times 100 \tag{5.13}$$

为此,我们也计算了该项指标。比较结果分别列于表 5.2 和表 5.3 中。通过比较可以 发现,本文算法优于 Demons 算法,分割结果与文献[132]给出的最好结果相近,而标 准差较小,表明算法性能比较稳定,数据差异对算法的影响较小。表 5.3 中, 'best'和 'worst'分别表示文献[155]算法得到的最好和最差分割结果。可以看出, 该结果略优于我们的结果,但是文献[155]采用的算法需要人为设置较多的参数,受 人为影响较大。

#### 表 5.2 本文算法和文献[132]算法得到的分割结果的 KI 值比较 Table 5.2 Comparison of averaged KI value between our results and the results published in [132].

Method			Ours						
	B <sub>topo</sub>	В	$B_{0.5 < J < 2}$	$B_{topo(^{\lambda}=1)}$	D <sub>Itk</sub>	D <sub>10-JHGM</sub>	Affine	Proposed	D <sub>mat</sub>
KI	0.765	0.727	0.710	0.777	0.754	0.778	0.627	0.770	0.717
(SD)	(0.107)	(0.152)	(0.142)	(0.116)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.150)	(0.064)	(0.072)

符号含义:  $B_{topo}$ —基于B样条的配准,有拓扑保持性,未进行正则化处理; B—基于B样条的配准,不具有拓扑保持性,未进行正则化处理; B<sub>0.5<J-2</sub>—基于B样条的配准,雅可比行列式的约束条件为 $J_{min} = 0.5 \pm J_{max} = 2$ ,未进行正则化处理;  $B_{topo(\lambda=1)}$ —基于B样条的配准,有拓扑保持性,进行了正则化处理;  $D_{ttk}$ —ITK 软件中 实现的Demons 算法;  $D_{10,JHGM}$ —进行了灰度标准化处理的Demons算法; Affine—12参数的仿射变换; Proposed—本文提出的算法;  $D_{mat}$ —本文实现的Demons算法

#### 表5.3本文算法和文献[155]算法得到的分割结果的RO值比较

Table 5.3 Comparison of RO value between our results and the results published in [155].

Method			L-Caudate	R-Caudate	L-Putamen	R-Putamen	L-Thalam	R-Thalam
Ours	Proposed		58.6	56.3	62.3	65.3	68.2	68.1
Ours	D <sub>mat</sub>		53.8	49.0	56.9	58.7	58.7	57.5
Ref. [155]	в	best	62.7	/	68.9	/	73.7	/
	D <sub>topo</sub>	worst	56.7	/	66.4	/	71.5	/
	D <sub>Itk</sub>	best	61.3	/	61.0	/	69.4	/
		worst	54.2	/	56.8	/	67.2	/

符号含义: Proposed—本文提出的算法; D<sub>mat</sub>—本文实现的 Demons 算法; B<sub>topo</sub>—基于 B 样条的配准,有拓扑保持性; D<sub>ttk</sub>—ITK 软件中实现的 Demons 算法

#### 5.4 本章小结

本章通过分析基于灰度的非刚性配准算法的基本原理,在配准能量函数中引入形 状相似度项,提出了新的灰度信息与形状信息相结合的非刚性配准算法。理论分析与 实验表明,新增的形状相似度项对原算法的信息缺失处进行了有益的补充,且具有形 式简单、易于理解、完全自动处理的优点。形状信息的加入提高了该算法分割边界模 糊、相距很近的不同目标的能力。本章所提出的算法直接利用了图像的灰度信息,以 两图像灰度差的平方衡量二者的匹配程度,适用于同模态图像之间的配准。

### 结论与展望

#### 1. 结论

从 MRI 图像中分割深层脑结构仍然是一个未完全解决的难题,因为这些结构不仅 形态复杂、收部分容积效应的影响较大、同源结构在不同个体间的差异较大,而且边 界模糊,不易辨别。本文重点研究采用配准-分割策略实现脑深层结构的分割。该类方 法采用配准算法得到模板图像变形为目标图像的空间变换,然后利用这个空间变换将 模板图像得到的已知分割结果,即图谱信息映射到目标图像,从而得到对目标图像感 兴趣区域的分割。因此问题的关键是研究合理的性能优越的非刚性配准算法。根据衡 量图像相似程度时所关注的特征,可大体将配准算法分为三类:基于特征的配准算 法、基于灰度的配准算法和基于灰度与特征的混合配准算法。已有的研究表明,基于 灰度的配准算法和基于灰度与特征的混合配准算法。

首先,本文研究了 Demons 配准算法及其改进算法。该算法采用整个图像的灰度信息作为匹配特征,已经成功应用于单模态医学图像配准中。本文深入分析了该算法中的两个重要参数(弹性参数和均化参数)的作用与性能,得到了有助于深入理解Demons 算法的结论。即,时变参数可以改善算法的性能。开始迭代时,选用较小的参数值以加快算法的收敛速度,而后期寻优时应该选用较大的参数值以提高配准精度。 另外,本文从理论上分析了该算法中驱动图像变形的作用力,发现原形变驱动力在某些区间作用时,易导致误匹配。因此,本文提出了改进的形变驱动力,并通过仿真图像间的配准实验和真实的 MRI 图像配准实验进行了验证,得到了较好的结果。

基于灰度的配准算法通常采用的 SSD 相似性测度基于如下假设:两图像中对应体素的灰度相等。因此配准过程就是通过优化处理找到使两个图像灰度最接近的空间变换。然而这样的假设条件过于严格,当两图像来自不同成像设备或成像参数设置不同时,很难满足这样的假设要求,因此必须进行灰度标准化,使两个图像之间的灰度相匹配。另外,对于不同个体间的配准,个体之间的形态差异较大,进行空间标准化预处理,有助于后期的非刚性配准得到较为满意的结果。空间位置和灰度是图像的两种不同属性,传统的预处理策略往往将灰度标准化和空间标准化分开进行。本文采用一个统一的模型同时完成空间和灰度标准化,尽量减小两种标准化之间的相互影响。通过与 Demons 算法相结合,本文得到了更为准确的配准结果,并通过实验验证了算法的可行性。

图像在变形过程中,保持各结构的拓扑不变,是同源结构配准需要关注的一个重要问题。拓扑不变属性意味着各结构在变形后的图像中仍保持内部的连接性和结构之间的邻接关系不变,不会发生撕裂或粘贴,不会有新的结构出现,原有的结构也不会消失。Demons 算法利用双射和平滑技术满足变形场拓扑保持性的要求。然而,已有结果表明,这样的处理方式不足以保证拓扑保持性。通过分析变形场的几何属性,本文提出了拓扑保持 Demons 算法并用真实的脑部 MRI 图像配准实验进行了算法验证。结果表明,该算法得到的变形场与原算法的变形场不仅差异小,而且能够保证目标的拓扑结构不发生变化。

在某些基于图像配准的应用中,单纯基于图像的灰度信息不足以获得满意的结果。虽然变形后的灰度图像表面上看起来与目标图像相似度较高,但是有些结构变形后,并不能真实反映该结构在目标图像中的形态。因此,本文提出了一种灰度与特征信息相结合的混合非刚性配准算法以实现深层脑灰质结构的分割。医学研究表明,虽然人类个体不同,但是正常人中同源的深层脑灰质结构形状相似,因此我们选择目标结构的形状信息作为新的特征。形状信息直接来源于已知图谱和预配准过程,表示为距离映射图。新的形状相似性测度和灰度相似性测度相结合,构成了新的配准能量函数。本文算法对15个不同脑 MRI 数据中的深层脑结构进行了分割,其结果优于单纯基于灰度的非刚性配准算法。

综上,本文的主要工作总结如下:

- (1) 分析、优化和实现了主动 Demons 非刚性配准算法;
- (2) 提出了拓扑保持 Demons 非刚性配准算法,得到具有合理物理特性的变形场;
- (3) 提出了基于灰度与形状特征的混合非刚性配准算法,提高了脑深层结构分割的 准确度。

#### 2. 展望

虽然在医学图像分析与理解领域已经提出了许多非刚性图像配准技术,但是对于 不同个体间的配准而言,仍然有很多问题需要解决。总的来说,将来的研究工作可以 在以下几个方面展开:

- (1) 从数学角度研究不同配准技术的本质特性,有助于促进更为合理的非刚性配准技术的研究。
- (2) 研究更为先进的物理模型来模拟实际物质的变形。人体组织的变形过程非常复

- 杂,虽然现有的物理模型已经能够在一定程度上提供较为合理的变形场,但是 弹性材料模型和粘滞流体模型也是有局限性的,因此有必要开发新的模型,更 好的描述人体组织的行为。
- (3) 研究更为复杂有效的灰度与特征相混合的非刚性配准算法,充分利用各类先验 知识。
- (4)研究更为先进的变形场正则化技术,实现微分同胚映射。
- (5) 将多模态图像配准技术引入单模态不同个体配准技术中,寻找合适的方法避免 灰度不一致引入的不良影响。
- (6) 开展配准质量评价方面的研究。算法性能评价是促进算法发展的重要手段,但 是目前在这方面仍然缺乏充分的研究,所以也是一个值得关注的研究方向。

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## 攻读博士学位期间发表学术论文情况

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## Résumé

L'objectif de la thèse est de contribuer au recalage élastique d'images médicales intersujetintramodalité, ainsi qu'à la segmentation d'images 3D IRM du cerveau dans le cas normal. L'algorithme des démons qui utilise les intensités des images pour le recalage est d'abord étudié. Une version améliorée est proposée en introduisant une nouvelle équation de calcul des forces pour résoudre des problèmes de recalages dans certaines régions difficiles. L'efficacité de la méthode est montrée sur plusieurs évaluations à partir de données simulées et réelles. Pour le recalage intersujet, une méthode originale de normalisation unifiant les informations spatiales et des intensités est proposée. Des contraintes topologiques sont introduites dans le modèle de déformation, visant à obtenir un recalage homéomorphique. La proposition est de corriger les points de déplacements avant des déterminants jacobiens négatifs. Basée sur le recalage, une segmentation des structures internes est étudiée. Le principe est de construire une ontologie modélisant le connaissance a-priori de la forme des structures internes. Les formes sont représentées par une carte de distance unifiée calculée à partir de l'atlas de référence et celui déformé. Cette connaissance est injectée dans la mesure de similarité de la fonction de coût de l'algorithme. Un paramètre permet de balancer les contributions des mesures d'intensités et de formes. L'influence des différents paramètres de la méthode et des comparaisons avec d'autres méthodes de recalage ont été effectuées. De très bon résultats sont obtenus sur la segmentation des différentes structures internes du cerveau telles que les noyaux centraux et hippocampe.

Mots clés : Segmentation, recalage non rigide, similarité, modèle de formes, IRM cérébrale, structures cérébrales.

## Abstract

The research goal of this thesis is a contribution to the intra-modality inter-subject non-rigid medical image registration and the segmentation of 3D brain MRI images in normal case. The well-known Demons non-rigid algorithm is studied, where the image intensities are used as matching features. A new force computation equation is proposed to solve the mismatch problem in some regions. The efficiency is shown through numerous evaluations on simulated and real data. For intensity based inter-subject registration, normalizing the image intensities is important for satisfying the intensity correspondence requirements. A non-rigid registration method combining both intensity and spatial normalizations is proposed. Topology constraints are introduced in the deformable model to preserve an expected property in homeomorphic targets registration. The solution comes from the correction of displacement points with negative Jacobian determinants. Based on the registration, a segmentation method of the internal brain structures is studied. The basic principle is represented by ontology of prior shape knowledge of target internal structure. The shapes are represented by a unified distance map computed from the atlas and the deformed atlas, and then integrated into the similarity metric of the cost function. A balance parameter is used to adjust the contributions of the intensity and shape measures. The influence of different parameters of the method and comparisons with other registration methods were performed. Very good results are obtained on the segmentation of different internal structures of the brain such as central nuclei and hippocampus.

Keywords : Segmentation, non-rigid registration, similarity, shape model, brain MRI, brain structures.