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Award Number: W81XWH-10-1-0739

TITLE: Voxel-Wise Time-Series Analysis of Quantitative MRI in Relapsing-Remitting MS: Dynamic Imaging Metrics of Disease Activity Including Prelesional Changes”

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REPORT DATE: October 2014

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Approved for Public Release;
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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1. REPORT DATE October 2014		2. REPORT TYPE Annual		3. DATES COVERED 30 Sep 2013 - 29 Sep 2014	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE TITLE: Voxel-Wise Time-Series Analysis of Quantitative MRI in Relapsing-Remitting MS: Dynamic Imaging Metrics of Disease Activity Including Prelesional Changesô				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER W81XWH-10-1-0739	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Aaron S. Field M.D., Ph.D. E-Mail: Afield@UWHealth.org				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
				7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of Wisconsin Madison, WI 53715-1218	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
				13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	
14. ABSTRACT Previous MRI studies in MS have retrospectively analyzed normal-appearing brain tissue in locations where typical MS lesions ultimately appeared, finding pre-lesional changes in several MRI metrics. However, studies have not been entirely consistent and the development of a prototypical MS lesion cannot as yet be prospectively predicted. The primary objective of this project is to validate the "preactive" lesion hypothesis in MS by identifying the spatiotemporal imaging signature of white matter destined to undergo acute, focal inflammation and demyelination-specifically, one that will allow reliable, prospective detection of nascent lesions before they appear on conventional (non-quantitative) imaging. The specific aim is to acquire a longitudinal set of quantitative MRI metrics in MS patients and perform a multivariate spatiotemporal analysis of pre-lesional, normal-appearing white matter, seeking spatially clustered interval changes that presage the appearance of a typical MS plaque.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Multiple Sclerosis, magnetic resonance imaging, longitudinal studies, preactive lesions					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 5	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON USAMRMC
a. REPORT U	b. ABSTRACT U	c. THIS PAGE U			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

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INTRODUCTION: Previous MRI studies in MS have retrospectively analyzed normal-appearing brain tissue in locations where typical MS lesions ultimately appeared, finding pre-lesional changes in several MRI metrics. However, studies have not been entirely consistent and the development of a prototypical MS lesion cannot as yet be prospectively predicted. The primary objective of this project is to validate the “preactive” lesion hypothesis in MS by identifying the spatiotemporal imaging signature of white matter destined to undergo acute, focal inflammation and demyelination—specifically, one that will allow reliable, prospective detection of nascent lesions before they appear on conventional (non-quantitative) imaging. The specific aim is to acquire a longitudinal set of quantitative MRI metrics in MS patients and perform a multivariate spatiotemporal analysis of pre-lesional, normal-appearing white matter, seeking spatially clustered interval changes that presage the appearance of a typical MS plaque.

BODY: We completed the development and optimization of the quantitative MRI pulse sequences to be used for the project, summarized as follows: (1) myelin water mapping based on the mcDESPOT pulse sequence as originally reported by Deoni et al [1] and adapted by our group [2,3]; (2) magnetization transfer (MT) imaging as adapted and optimized by our group [4-9]; and hybrid diffusion imaging (HYDI), developed and optimized by our group [10-12]. Additionally, we developed the post-processing pipeline to be used for these multiparametric images, with key stages including brain extraction, co-registration of images from different modalities and time-points, and segmentation of normal-appearing white matter. We completed enrolling and scanning subjects and are now set to begin the extensive image processing and statistical analysis.

KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Novel approaches to improve the accuracy and reliability of quantitative MRI (qMRI) targeting cerebral white matter have been developed as detailed in previous progress reports. Further accomplishments await completion of image processing and statistical analysis.

REPORTABLE OUTCOMES: Several of our technical developments that preceded the initiation of scanning have been reported [2-9, 12]. Further reports now await completion of image processing and statistical analysis.

APPENDICES: None.

SUPPORTING DATA:

The following abstract resulting from this work was presented earlier this year:

Mossahebi P, Alexander AL, Field AS, Samsonov AA. Analysis and optimization of quantitative magnetization transfer imaging considering the effect of non-exchanging component. Presented at the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM) 22nd Scientific Meeting, Milan, Italy, May 2014.

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