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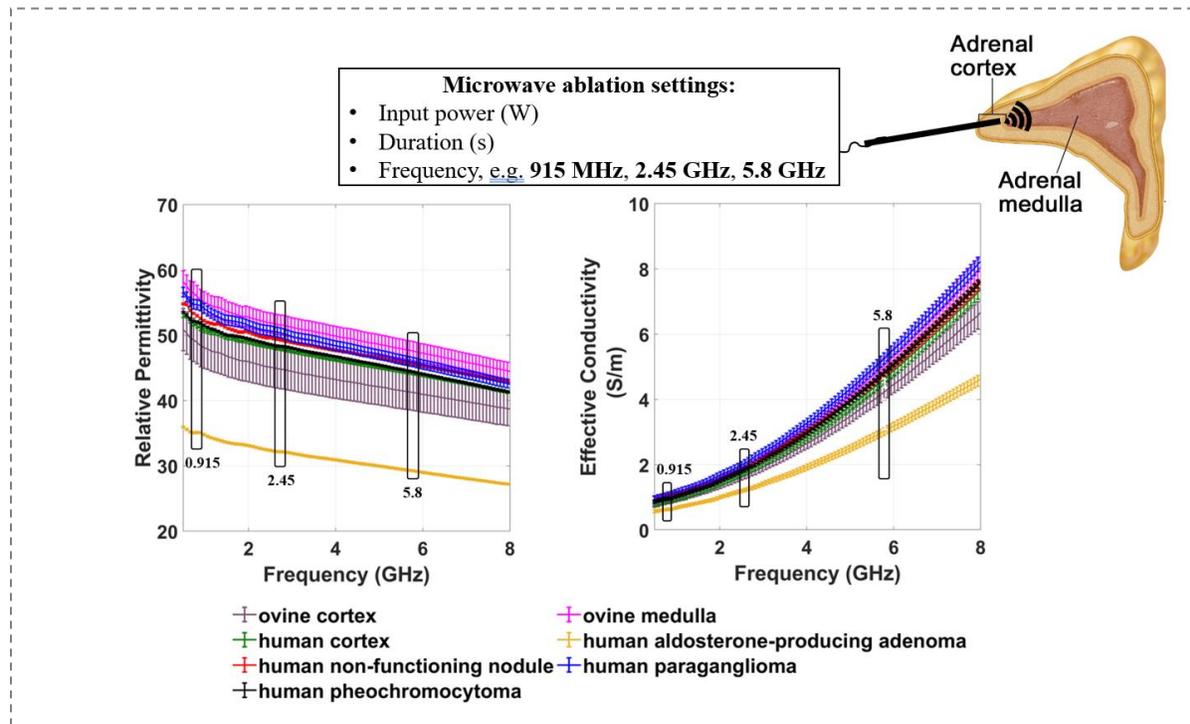
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Dielectric Characterization of *Ex Vivo* Ovine and Human Adrenal Glands for Microwave Thermal Ablation Applications

Anna Bottiglieri, Atif Shahzad, Pdraig Donlon, Michael Conall Denny, Aoife Lowery, Martin O'Halloran, *Member, IEEE*, Laura Farina, *Member, IEEE*



A graphical representation of the variability of relative permittivity and effective conductivity (S/m) of the functional tissues composing the adrenal gland and related diseases in the frequency range of the microwave thermal ablation techniques. The operating frequencies generally adopted to excite the electromagnetic field by an interstitial antenna are: 915 MHz, 2.45 GHz and 5.8 GHz.

Take-Home Messages

- Ovine dielectric data are collected, distinguishing between the two functional tissues composing the adrenal gland (cortex and medulla): a sizable difference between the dielectric properties of the two tissues is observed.
- Optimized Cole-Cole model of the ovine dielectric properties are presented to allow integration of the data into numerical electromagnetic models.
- Human data are collected considering both healthy and diseased adrenal tissues. For the first time, dielectric properties of *ex vivo* human adrenal glands are measured, presented and compared with data of *ex vivo* animal models.
- The ovine adrenal gland is a feasible model for the optimization of electromagnetic based devices tackling Primary Aldosteronism, such as microwave thermal ablation devices. The ovine model electromagnetically resembles the composition of the human adrenal gland. The ovine model can potentially be adopted in pre-clinical studies to test the safety and performances of MWA.

Dielectric Characterization of *Ex Vivo* Ovine and Human Adrenal Glands for Microwave Thermal Ablation Applications

Anna Bottiglieri, Atif Shahzad, Pdraig Donlon, Michael Conall Dennedy, Aoife Lowery, Martin O'Halloran, *Member, IEEE*, Laura Farina, *Member, IEEE*

Abstract – Historically, adrenal glands diseases causing hypertension, such as Primary Aldosteronism (PA), have been treated through pharmacotherapy or surgical resection. Given the shortcomings of the available treatment options, the interest in alternative and less invasive treatment modalities such as microwave ablation (MWA), has increased. In order to develop and optimize this novel electromagnetic-based therapy, an accurate knowledge of the dielectric properties of human adrenal glands, as well as preclinical animal models, is crucial. In particular, ovine models represent a feasible animal model to test the safety and performances of MWA. In this study, the dielectric properties of ovine adrenal glands and of normal and diseased human adrenal glands are characterized *ex vivo* in the microwave frequency range. The dielectric properties of the two functional tissues (cortex and medulla) composing ovine adrenal glands are measured using the open-ended coaxial probe technique and represented with a two pole Cole-Cole model in the frequency range from 0.5 GHz to 8 GHz. This paper presents the first dielectric data of normal and diseased human adrenal tissues, including a functioning adenoma responsible for PA and it compares the human data with data from the animal model.

Keywords — dielectric properties, microwave thermal ablation, adrenal gland, open-ended coaxial probe, Cole-Cole model

I. INTRODUCTION

THE adrenal glands are paired organs located on the top of the kidneys, each one surrounded by a fat capsule. The gland is characterized by two functional tissues: the inner tissue named medulla and the external tissue named cortex. The cortex is responsible for the regulation of blood pressure, through the release of the aldosterone hormone [1].

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Within the different types of endocrine tumours that can affect adrenal glands, adreno-cortical adenoma is the most common adrenal tumour [2], [3]. In the cases of adreno-cortical adenomas inducing unregulated production of the aldosterone hormone and the consequent increase of the blood pressure, the pathological state is called Primary Aldosteronism (PA) [4], [5]. The current curative approach to unilateral PA is surgical resection of the gland. Bilateral disease is currently managed, but not definitively treated, through pharmacotherapy. Hence, a less invasive and more effective treatment appears a clear requirement, to completely cure the condition with minimal side effects [6]–[8]. Thermal ablation techniques represent an effective potential alternative in the context of these cancerous lesions treatment [9], [10]. In particular, microwave ablation (MWA) has been recently investigated as an alternative approach for the treatment of adrenal diseases [11], [12]. The objective of the thermal ablation techniques is to induce coagulation necrosis of the cancerous cells by increasing the temperature above 50–60 °C in the target tissue [9], [13], [14]. The increase of temperature is achieved through the interaction between the target tissue and the electromagnetic (EM) field excited by an interstitial antenna at 915 MHz, 2.45 GHz or 5.8 GHz [15], [16].

The interactions of the EM field with the surrounding tissues are governed by the relative permittivity and the effective conductivity of the tissues. Therefore, a comprehensive

knowledge of the dielectric properties of the biological tissue facilitates accurate modelling of new medical devices as well as human safety studies tissues enables accurate simulations of the antenna performances, the optimization of the antenna geometry and the power delivery settings [17]–[20].

Although a large number of experimental studies was conducted acquiring the dielectric properties of healthy and diseased tissues [21] - [26], the literature reports only a limited number of data on the dielectric properties of adrenal glands [27], [28]. In [27], the dielectric properties of the outer layer of the gland (the cortex) are measured in *in vivo* porcine models; while in [28] the dielectric properties of *ex vivo* bovine adrenal glands are measured distinguishing between the cortex and the medulla.

In this study, measurements of the dielectric properties of freshly excised ovine tissues (eight samples, N=48) were conducted, distinguishing between the cortex and the medulla. The data are reported together with the optimized parameters of the two pole Cole-Cole model. The ovine model has been chosen for this study since it is a good candidate for pre-clinical studies for a comprehensive experimental investigation of novel ablative approaches [29], [30]; ovine models are indeed currently adopted [31] - [33].

Moreover, in this study, for the first time, the dielectric properties of normal and diseased (i.e. paraganglioma, pheochromocytoma, non-functioning nodule and aldosterone-producing adenoma) *ex vivo* human adrenal tissues (six samples, N = 39) are presented. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: in Section 2 the materials and the measurement method of the dielectric properties with the related uncertainty values are described. In Section 3, the results of the measurements of dielectric properties related to the *ex vivo* ovine and *ex vivo* human adrenal glands are reported and discussed. In Section 4, the conclusions are presented.

II. METHODS

A. Source of tissue

Eight adrenal glands (N = 8) of 16.0 ± 1.0 mm (length), 8.0 ± 1.0 mm (width), 6.0 ± 1 mm (thickness) with medulla sizes ranging between 3 – 4 mm in width and 8 – 9 mm in length, were obtained from the local slaughterhouse immediately after their excision from eight different animals and transported to our laboratories in sealed containers; the samples arrived in our laboratories within one hour from excision. The glands remained embedded within their fat capsule to prevent the dehydration of the tissues. Once in the laboratory, the adrenal glands were separated from their surrounding structures, including the kidney, and the fat capsule was kept in place.

The protocol for measuring dielectric properties of *ex vivo* human adrenal glands, was approved by the Galway University Hospitals Research Ethics Committee. Six patients (N = 6) with diagnosed adrenal abnormalities and scheduled to undergo unilateral adrenalectomy were

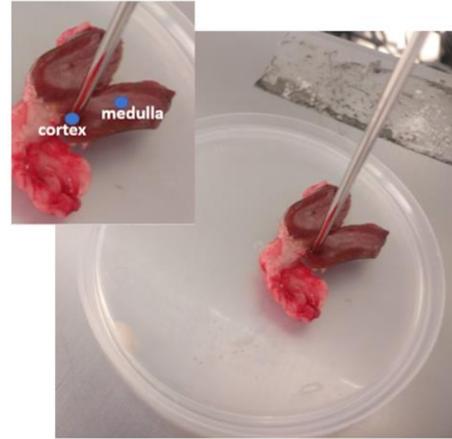


Fig. 1. Example of *ex vivo* ovine adrenal gland in contact with the open-ended coaxial probe. The measurement points are marked and labeled.

included in the study. The examined human adrenal samples varied between 9 mm to 70 mm in maximum dimension. The types of adrenal abnormalities include: paraganglioma (n=1), pheochromocytoma (n=3), non-functioning nodule (n=1) and aldosterone-producing adenoma (n=1) which is responsible for PA condition. In two of six samples, measurements of the normal healthy tissue were also acquired: on the normal tissue adjacent to the pheochromocytoma and on the normal tissue surrounding the non-functioning nodule.

In the cases where either the histology analysis or the gross description of the removed gland was not provided by the pathologist, the sample was excluded from the study.

B. Dielectric Properties Acquisition

The measurements of the dielectric properties were performed using a slim form open-ended coaxial probe (Keysight 85070E, Santa Rosa, CA, US). Extensive prior studies demonstrated the reliable performances of the slim form coaxial probe. In this study, the 2.2 mm diameter probe allowed consistent contact with the tissue sample, resulting in robust performances. The sensing depth of the probe is within 1 mm [34], while the sensing radius is 1 mm beside the diameter of the probe [35]. For each measurement, the tip of the probe was placed in contact with the tissue under test, as shown in Fig.1. A vector network analyser (Keysight VNA E5063A, Santa Rosa, CA, US) was used to record the reflection coefficient at the calibration plane of the probe. The data were recorded at 101 linearly spaced frequency points over a frequency range from 0.5 GHz to 8 GHz. The conversion from the complex reflection coefficient into the real part ($\epsilon'(\omega)$) and imaginary part ($\epsilon''(\omega)$) of the complex permittivity ($\epsilon^*(\omega)$) is automatically executed by the Keysight software (Keysight N1500A, Santa Rosa, CA, US) [36]. A lift table was used to position the tissue sample in contact with the probe, connected directly to the port of the VNA, in order to limit the effect of any cable movement in

TABLE I

CALCULATION OF UNCERTAINTY COMPONENTS, COMBINED UNCERTAINTY AND EXPANDED UNCERTAINTY FOR MEASURED PERMITTIVITY AND CONDUCTIVITY OF 0.1M NaCl, IN THE FREQUENCY RANGE 0.5-8 GHZ. THE UNCERTAINTY ELEMENTS ARE RELATED TO THE VALIDATION PROCESSES PERFORMED PRIOR TO THE DIELECTRIC ANALYSIS ON *EX VIVO* OVINE ADRENAL TISSUES

	Uncertainty component (%) a	Probability distribution	Divisor b	Standard Uncertainty (%) $u_i = \frac{a}{b}$
Permittivity				
Repeatability	1.6	N	1	1.6
Accuracy	2.4	R	$\sqrt{3}$	1.4
Drift	0.05	R	$\sqrt{3}$	0.03
Combined Uncertainty (u_c)	2.2	$u_c = \sqrt{\sum u_i^2}$		
Expanded Uncertainty ($u_e, k = 2$)	4.4	$u_e = ku_c$		
Conductivity				
Repeatability	0.9	N	1	0.9
Accuracy	2.2	R	$\sqrt{3}$	1.3
Drift	0.1	R	$\sqrt{3}$	0.06
Combined Uncertainty (u_c)	1.6	$u_c = \sqrt{\sum u_i^2}$		
Expanded Uncertainty ($u_e, k = 2$)	3.2	$u_e = ku_c$		

N = normal distribution, R = rectangular distribution

the dielectric data and to enhance the contact between the probe and the sample [36]. The measurement pressure was adjusted to ensure repeatable measurements on the same measurement location following the protocol adopted in [36]. The temperature of each sample was constantly monitored using an infrared thermometer in order to maintain the integrity of the tissue.

The ovine samples were sectioned to provide access to both the cortex and the medulla layers: one measurement location was identified for each layer and three measurements were performed in the same location, for a total of 48 measurements and 16 measurements points (8 for the cortex and 8 for the medulla). On average the temperature of the *ex vivo* ovine samples was $22.2 \pm 1.5^\circ\text{C}$. The probe was cleaned with alcohol wipe prior to every measurement.

Measurements on *ex vivo* human adrenal glands were performed on each tissue type indicated by the surgeon in the operating room. Approximately 30 min after the resection, the sample was transported to the pathology room where the measurements were performed following the same experimental protocol adopted in the animal study. The temperature of the samples varied between 20°C and 23°C . The probe was placed at up to five different locations of a given tissue type, depending on the size of the sample, and

TABLE II

CALCULATION OF UNCERTAINTY COMPONENTS, COMBINED UNCERTAINTY AND EXPANDED UNCERTAINTY FOR MEASURED PERMITTIVITY AND CONDUCTIVITY OF 0.1M NaCl, IN THE FREQUENCY RANGE 0.5-8 GHZ. THE UNCERTAINTY ELEMENTS ARE RELATED TO THE VALIDATION PROCESSES PERFORMED PRIOR TO THE DIELECTRIC ANALYSIS ON *EX VIVO* HUMAN ADRENAL TISSUES

	Uncertainty component (%) a	Probability distribution	Divisor b	Standard Uncertainty (%) $u_i = \frac{a}{b}$
Permittivity				
Repeatability	0.5	N	1	0.5
Accuracy	0.7	R	$\sqrt{3}$	0.4
Drift	0.04	R	$\sqrt{3}$	0.02
Combined Uncertainty (u_c)	0.7	$u_c = \sqrt{\sum u_i^2}$		
Expanded Uncertainty ($u_e, k = 2$)	1.4	$u_e = ku_c$		
Conductivity				
Repeatability	0.7	N	1	0.7
Accuracy	3.1	R	$\sqrt{3}$	1.8
Drift	0.05	R	$\sqrt{3}$	0.03
Combined Uncertainty (u_c)	2.0	$u_c = \sqrt{\sum u_i^2}$		
Expanded Uncertainty ($u_e, k = 2$)	4.0	$u_e = ku_c$		

N = normal distribution, R = rectangular distribution

up to three frequency sweeps were performed at each location. The measurement locations were marked for the following histology analysis. The type of tissue underlying the measurement locations was then univocally identified by the histological analysis; where a univocal identification was not possible the measurement location was discarded. Accordingly, only 39 measurements obtained from 6 different samples were included in this study out of 147 collected on 16 samples.”

C. Calibration and Validation

Calibration was performed before each measurement of biological tissue, in order to visualize and compensate the main sources of error; each measurement session did not exceed a 2 h duration [36]. Measurements on three standard loads were performed: open circuit, short circuit and deionized (DI) water [36]. The mean values of temperature of the DI water used for the calibration both for *ex vivo* animal study and *ex vivo* human study were $23.5 \pm 0.4^\circ\text{C}$ and $22.1 \pm 0.2^\circ\text{C}$, respectively. The quality of the calibration was validated with measurements on reference liquids. Measurements on 0.1M NaCl solution were executed immediately following the calibration and compared with literature data, before acquiring the set of dielectric data on the biological tissue, as in [36], [37]. A second validation was

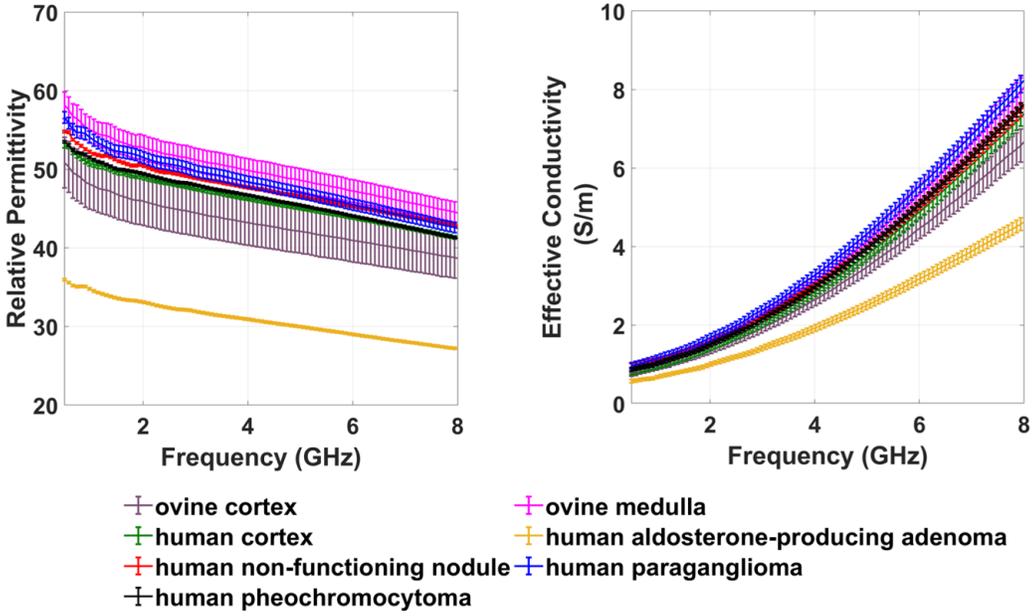


Fig. 2: Mean and standard deviation values of relative permittivity and effective conductivity reported for cortex and medulla of *ex vivo* ovine adrenal glands, normal tissue and diseased tissues (non-functioning nodule, paraganglioma, pheochromocytoma and aldosterone producing adenoma) of *ex vivo* human adrenal glands.

conducted also right after the measurements on the biological tissue. A total of eight and fourteen measurements on 0.1M NaCl solutions were performed during the study for the dielectric characterization of *ex vivo* ovine adrenal glands and *ex vivo* human adrenal tissues, respectively. The mean values of temperature of the 0.1M NaCl solution used for the validation both for *ex vivo* animal study and *ex vivo* human study were $23.4 \pm 0.2^\circ\text{C}$ and $22.3 \pm 0.2^\circ\text{C}$, respectively.

D. Measurement uncertainty

Three main uncertainty sources were identified and calculated within the measurements performed on 0.1M NaCl solution, using the standard analysis explained in [38]. The components of uncertainty related to the repeatability, accuracy and drift error of the measurement system were estimated for each frequency point and averaged over the frequency band of the measurement.

The uncertainty related to the repeatability provides a measure of the random errors affecting the measurement process. The repeatability is expressed as the standard deviation of the data that are repeatedly acquired under the same measurement conditions. The uncertainty component linked to the accuracy of the measurements is the averaged percentage difference between the acquired data and the reference model; in this study the reference model is reported in [37]. Finally, the uncertainty related to the drift was considered evaluating the variability in the dielectric values of deionized water across different calibrations.

In this work, the uncertainty arising from the cable movement was not considered since the probe remains fixed to the port of the VNA during the measurements. Each uncertainty component (u_i) was used to calculate the combined uncertainty (u_c), then the expanded uncertainty

(u_e) was calculated considering a 95% confidence interval, according to the guidelines of the National Institute of Standard and Technology (NIST) [39]. The values of the expanded uncertainty related to the *ex vivo* ovine study are 4.4% for the relative permittivity and 3.2% for the conductivity. In Table I, each uncertainty component, the combined and the expanded uncertainties are listed both for the relative permittivity and effective conductivity.

The calculation of each uncertainty component related to the *ex vivo* human study was performed following the same method adopted in the animal study. The values of the expanded uncertainty related to the *ex vivo* human study are 1.4% for the relative permittivity and 4.0% for the effective conductivity. In Table II the values of each uncertainty component are reported. These data are affected by the different number of measurements when compared with animal data, and by the more controlled environmental parameters of the pathology room.

E. Data analysis

The dielectric spectrum of the tissues presented in this study which spans from 0.5 GHz to 8 GHz, contains two main dispersions (the end tail of β dispersion and part of the γ dispersion) [24]. To obtain the analytical expression of the dielectric spectrum of the *ex vivo* ovine data, a two pole Cole-Cole model was used for the representation of the frequency dependent experimental data:

$$\varepsilon^*(\omega) = \varepsilon_\infty + \frac{\Delta\varepsilon_1}{1 + (j\omega\tau_1)^{(1-\alpha_1)}} + \frac{\Delta\varepsilon_2}{1 + (j\omega\tau_2)^{(1-\alpha_2)}} + \frac{\sigma_s}{j\omega\varepsilon_0} \quad (1)$$

where ε_∞ is the permittivity at infinite frequencies, $\Delta\varepsilon_1$ and $\Delta\varepsilon_2$ are the changes in the permittivity for the first and second pole, τ_1 and τ_2 are the relaxation times for the first and second dispersion, α_1 and α_2 are empirical parameters that account

TABLE III
PARAMETERS OF THE TWO POLE COLE-COLE MODEL
FITTED (5,000 ITERATIONS) TO THE MEASURED ADRENAL DATA (CORTEX
AND MEDULLA), IN THE FREQUENCY RANGE 0.5-8 GHz.

Parameter	This study		Shahzad et al., 2017	
	Cortex	Medulla	Cortex	Medulla
ϵ_{∞}	1.0	1.8	3.57	3.88
$\Delta\epsilon_1$	45.3	51.1	47.08	52.95
τ_1	6.4 ps	7.1 ps	8.33 ps	7.01 ps
α_1	0.1	0.1	0.16	0.17
$\Delta\epsilon_2$	54.6	60.5	52.31	62.05
τ_2	1.7 ns	1.3 ns	1.69 ns	4.28 ns
α_2	0.1	0.1	0.03	0.14
σ_s	0.4	0.4	0.46	0.62

for the distribution of the relaxation time and σ_s (S/m) is the conductivity below 60 MHz linked to the ionic movements.

Weighted nonlinear least squares optimization algorithm was implemented in Matlab (R2017a, The MathWorks, Inc., Natick, MA, US) to fit the parametric model to the experimental data over the specified frequency range.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The post-processed values of the measurements performed on *ex vivo* ovine adrenal glands are reported in Fig. 2; the averaged values of the relative permittivity and effective conductivity of the two layers composing the adrenal gland are plotted with their variability. The experimental data of the two functional tissues composing the adrenal gland highlight a sizable difference in the dielectric properties between the two tissues: 15% in the relative permittivity and 17% in the effective conductivity averaged over the frequency band from 0.5 GHz to 8 GHz. The knowledge of the dielectric difference between cortex and medulla could be further exploited to optimize the EM based energy delivery in the tissue.

Fig. 3 shows the two pole Cole-Cole fit to the data of the functional tissues of *ex vivo* ovine adrenal glands from 0.5 GHz to 8 GHz; the average values across the different measurements for a given tissue type are plotted together with the Cole-Cole model. Table III shows the values of the Cole-Cole parameters calculated for each tissue type of the ovine models. For comparison, the Cole-Cole parameters for each functional tissue of *ex vivo* bovine adrenal glands reported in [28] are included. Fig. 3 illustrates the excellent fit of the two-pole Cole-Cole model to the *ex vivo* ovine data over the entire frequency range that was considered, with an accuracy better than 1%. In addition, the Cole-Cole parameters calculated in this study for *ex vivo* ovine adrenal tissues agree with the literature data reported in [28] regarding bovine adrenal glands. Quantitative differences are observed between the relative permittivity and the effective conductivity values obtained in this study and the values related to *ex vivo* bovine adrenal tissues; namely the relative permittivity of ovine adrenal medulla and cortex are

approximately 5% lower than the values of *ex vivo* bovine tissues. Regarding the effective conductivity, the values of adrenal medulla and cortex are respectively 4% and 10% lower than the values of *ex vivo* bovine samples. Nonetheless, there are no relevant qualitative differences in the dispersion trends over the same frequency range. Typically, the quantitative differences in relative permittivity value can be attributed to variations in tissue temperature and/or environmental conditions or to the differences in water content between the two mammalian species. On the other hand, an excellent match in the values of effective conductivity is visible between the two different species.

Together with the ovine data, Fig. 2 shows the values of relative permittivity and effective conductivity of diseased adrenal tissues excised from five different patients. The mean values of available dielectric properties of normal cortex tissue were also reported.

Comparable results between the normal *ex vivo* human adrenal cortex and the ovine adrenal cortex can be observed in Fig. 2. The average value of the cortical human tissue is approximately 6% higher than ovine adrenal cortex for both relative permittivity and effective conductivity over the frequency range.

Looking at the pheochromocytoma data (collected from 3 different samples), in comparison with the normal human adrenal cortex data, we can observe no substantial difference between the two groups of data; they differ less than 1% in relative permittivity and less 4% in effective conductivity values.

For paraganglioma, data were collected only from one sample and it appears noticeably more conductive than normal cortical tissue; relative permittivity and effective conductivity are 4% and 13% higher than normal human adrenal cortex over the frequency range.

Pheochromocytoma and paraganglioma arise from adrenal medulla and extra-adrenal paraganglia, respectively. Paraganglioma and pheochromocytoma are characterized by similar histological composition, and anatomical location is used as guideline to identify them [2], [3].

For non-functioning nodule, arising from the cortex, also data were collected only from one sample. When compared to normal human cortical tissue, the non-functioning nodule appears to differ less than 3% in relative permittivity and less than 6% in effective conductivity values.

According to the dielectric results reported in Fig. 2, only the dielectric values of the *ex vivo* human aldosterone-producing adenoma present sizable differences compared to the other diseased tissues. With respect to the normal *ex vivo* human dielectric values, aldosterone-producing adenoma is approximately 33% lower both in relative permittivity and effective conductivity values. The substantial differences in the dielectric values of the adrenocortical adenomas compared to the other types of diseases may be attributed to the characteristic abundant lipid composition of the aldosterone-producing adenomas. In addition, the infiltration of collagen fibres noticed through the histology analysis

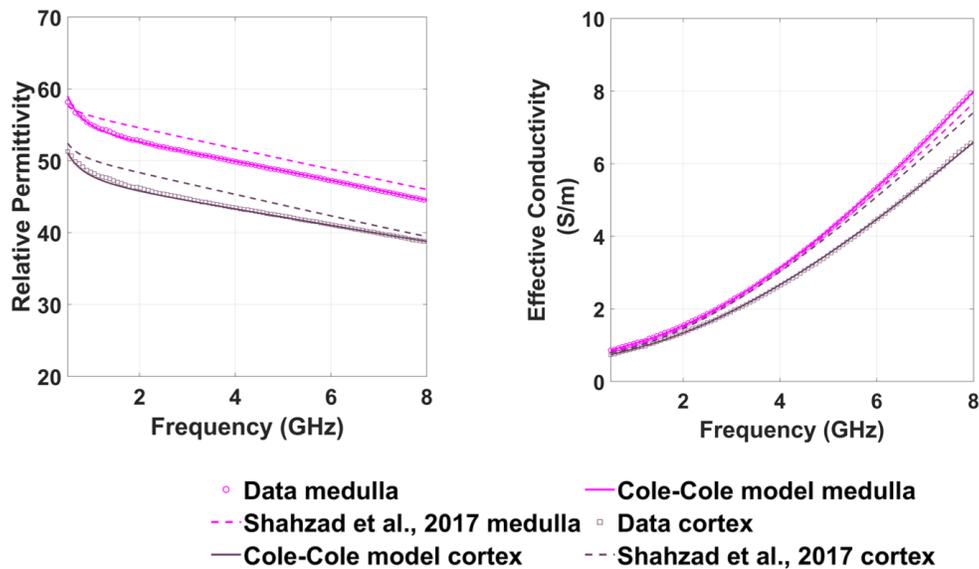


Fig. 3. Relative permittivity and effective conductivity of adrenal cortex and medulla in the frequency range 0.5-8 GHz: data and two pole Cole-Cole model from this study, and reference from literature [28]

executed after the excision may further contribute to the lower dielectric values of the adreno-cortical adenoma. The other types of adrenal abnormalities, i.e. non-functioning nodule, paraganglioma and pheochromocytoma are not characterized by a lipidic composition.

This study provides new insights into the dielectric properties of adrenal glands of different animal species as well as normal and diseased human adrenal tissues. This study is the starting point for a more extensive dielectric characterization of the adrenal glands at temperatures of interest for MWA. Studies on dielectric properties as function of the temperature have been conducted only in liver so far; and have showed a correlation with the water content of the tissue (varying with the temperature increase) [17]-[20]. A decrease of about 20% in the water content and of 37-33% in the relative permittivity and effective conductivity of the liver when the temperatures overcome 60 °C was observed.

The design of this study did not allow us to access the inner part of the human adrenal gland, i.e. the medulla. Among the tumours investigated, the paraganglioma appears to show a sizable difference when compared with normal human cortex in terms of effective conductivity; and the conductive values observed are closer to the ovine medulla data reported. Therefore, further investigations on human samples should be conducted and designed to access such target. Moreover, further data should be collected to support the interesting preliminary data observed, especially the results concerning the aldosterone-producing adenomas, responsible for PA. The dielectric difference between the PA adenoma, and the surrounding cortex, may suggest the investigation of novel EM-based diagnostic imaging techniques [40] - [42] in the detection of such tumours.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this study the results of the dielectric characterization of *ex vivo* ovine adrenal models are reported. The tissue properties were investigated in the frequency range from 0.5 GHz to 8 GHz in order to include the main frequencies of interest for microwave thermal ablation (i.e. 915 MHz, 2.45 GHz and 5.8 GHz). In addition, the dielectric data of normal and diseased *ex vivo* human adrenal gland are presented. To the best of authors' knowledge, this is the first study where an accurate characterization of *ex vivo* ovine adrenal glands as well as dielectric data of normal and diseased *ex vivo* human adrenal glands were provided.

The results of this study indicate that no substantial differences exist in *ex vivo* adrenal functional tissues for different mammalian species. Moreover, the dielectric properties of normal *ex vivo* human adrenal tissues are in agreement with the values of the ovine models, confirming that ovine adrenal glands represent a feasible model to be adopted in pre-clinical numerical and experimental studies. Finally, this study showed that out of various adrenal gland diseases only aldosterone-producing adenomas show noticeably lower values in relative permittivity than the other types of diseases.

However, further measurements are required to confirm and support these preliminary data and better compare the dielectric properties of *ex vivo* animal and human adrenal glands. The accurate characterization of such properties is fundamental in the development and optimization of EM based therapeutic solutions such as the recently investigated MWA based selective treatment of shallow adenomas arising from the cortex of the adrenal gland and responsible for hypersecretion of aldosterone hormone and persistent hypertension.

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