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An improved design of EEG monitoring system with dry electrodes

Seungchan Lee, Anil Kumar, Younghak Shin, and Heung-No Lee, Senior Member, IEEE

In this paper, we aim to introduce our EEG measurement system with dry electrodes. The dry electrode has eighteen spring-loaded probes for dry contact with a scalp without conductive paste. With careful circuit design techniques for lowering noise, the system board was designed to integrate a 32-bit microcontroller, a 24-bit analog-to-digital converter (ADC), and power management circuits for 8-channel EEG acquisition. From the alpha rhythm detection test with the conventional wet electrodes, we show that our system can acquire EEG signals with a sufficient correlation using dry electrodes.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the advanced in neurobiological research, various neuroimaging techniques [1] such as Electroencephalography (EEG), magnetoencephalography (MEG) and Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) are being developed. Among these techniques, the EEG signals can be measured with a low cost and portable system. Therefore, it is widely applied in various medical and research fields such as brain-computer interface, which require real-time neural monitoring [2]. However, it is not easy to acquire high-fidelity EEG signals because of their microvolt amplitudes, hairy scalp, and resulting higher noise sensitivity [3].

In this paper, an efficient EEG measurement system is introduced with dry electrodes for real-time and ambulatory applications, and it is tested for detection of alpha rhythm.

II. MATERIALS AND SYSTEM DESIGN

Our EEG measurement system consists of dry electrodes and a system board. The dry electrodes have eighteen spring-loaded probes, which are connected each other by soldering to a PCB board. Due to their flexible structure, conductive paste is not required for improvement of electrical coupling between probes and the scalp. The electrode housings are manufactured by 3D printing.

The system board was designed to integrate a 32-bit microcontroller, a 24-bit analog-to-digital converter (ADC), and power management circuits for measurements of 8-channel EEG signals from the dry electrodes. To reduce the



Figure 1. A designed dry electrode and a system board for EEG measurements

system noise and electrical interference, the analog circuit including ADC is designed fully isolated from the digital circuits by using dedicated power and logic isolator ICs. In addition, the ultralow noise linear regulators are also used in the power supply for analog circuits. As an ADC in this system, ADS1299 (Texas Instruments, USA) [4] is employed, which integrates eight programmable gain amplifiers, and eight simultaneous-sampling ADCs. The number of measurement channels can be expanded by stacking additional expansion boards.

III. TEST RESULTS AND SUMMARY

Among the EEG rhythms, the alpha rhythm, which occupies in 8~12Hz band can be easily maximized by closing the eyes. For verification of EEG measurement, we have measured the alpha rhythm by using our EEG measurement system with dry electrodes, and conventional wet electrodes. The correlation coefficient has been calculated from the two EEG waveforms for 60 seconds. The correction coefficient obtained from these waveforms is 0.88, which evidences our EEG measurement system with dry electrode can acquire EEG signals well. Based on our system design, we will develop a hybrid brain monitoring system by combination with functional near-infrared spectroscopy system in future research.

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- [4] ADS1299 datasheet, http://www.ti.com/lit/ds/symlink/ads1299.pdf

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