Real-time Contactless Bio-Sensors and Systems for Smart Healthcare using IoT and E-Health Applications

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Abstract: - The population surge and geographical mass transit for survival and healthcare is increasing exponentially since the 1900 and climate change has made it inevitable. These geographical dynamics have mandated the requirement of contactless or non-invasive scalable and smart healthcare methods and techniques across the globe. The recent pandemic has obliged contactless sensing technologies in all the bio-sensing domains. In this work, the contactless bio-capacitive electrode for cardiological condition assessment has been addressed for researchers, technologists, scientists, and clinical professionals to understand the gradual innovation and enrichment in contactless bio-sensing techniques, methods, and materials, devices, and systems is exponentially increasing over the last seven decades. This work is a comprehension of major contributions in contactless capacitive bio-sensors and systems developed from 1950 to 2020. An overall of 500 articles in contactless capacitive bio-sensors and systems domain from top journals were selected for study; out of which 100 have been referred in this work. Starting from bio-capacitive electrodes to IoT-based indigenous contactless smart nodes have been introduced in this article.

Keywords: - bio-sensors, CoVID19, EEG, ECG, MRI, PET, IoT, eHealth.

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1 Introduction

The term "biosensor" refers to a bio-electronic or electro-chemical instrument that can sense and measure life activities through some biological sensing element and may have a variety of other applications covered in that body of knowledge in [1, 2] by M. Cremer et al (1906) and Soren Peder Lauritz Sorensen (1909) and onwards by Griffin and Nelson (1909-4922) in [3]. In 1962, the first biosensor system was invented by Clark and Lyons to measure glucose in biological samples that utilized the strategy of electrochemical detection of oxygen or hydrogen peroxide [3] and a sequence of experiments documented by Clarke et al [4] and Joseph et al in [5] and a comprehensive chronological verdict [6]. The ubiquity of impedance is mainly leveraged to realize the bio-transducers eloquent from the works [7, 8]. Formally, contactless impedance sensors being passive requires an external field excitation source to inject some energy into the observation specimen [9] explained by Birgette et al (1950). The feedback of this energy can have many numerical relationships with the induced signal termed a working response (capacitive coupling) [10]. For decades, capacitive impedance sensors have been well consolidated in the industry; thanks to their versatility and two key properties: they are (1) noninvasive and (2) contactless [11-15].

In this work, we will exclusively discuss biocapacitive sensing. Different names are used to realize the unique types of EEG capacitive electrodes and contactless bio-capacitive systems. This practice leads to transparency and resolution of conceptual complexities in recognizing the similarities and differences between contactless capacitive sensing systems and the contributions of new techniques. The contributions of this paper are chrono-logically comprehending:

- 1. A scientific coherence to clarify and classify contactless capacitive electrodes, their fabrication, and assemblies.
- 2. A guideline for CCEB generations based on their signal conditioning and data acquisition.
- 3. A detailed survey of past work and recommendations for EEG/ECG system design.
- 4. EEG health platforms utilizing bio-capacitive sensors. The overall study carried out in this research is presented in figure 1.



Fig 1. A Chronological Walkthrough of Capacitive Bio-Sensors and Systems [1-100]

2 Origin to Application of Capacitive Sensing Electrodes

Different types of capacitive electrodes or terminals can be used to assess the physical properties [16] such as touch capacitive [17-19], proximity capacitive [18], or shape variation by measuring the capacitive impedance between two or more conductors [19]. These conductors, which are termed as electrodes, are solid metal parts as a material [20, 21], but they can also be made from other conductive materials including foils, various transparent films (e.g., indium tin oxide, InTO) [22, 23], plastics, rubber, textiles, inks, and paints. In other cases, electrodes include the human body or objects in the environment [24, 25] by Chan et al and Elif et al. The first a foremost fundamental model of capacitive sensing is presented in figure 2.





Figure 2 (a) presents the working principle of a generic parallel plate capacitor and figure 2b realizes

a capacitive electrode concept for sensing applications based on a transmit electrode, a receive electrode [26-28]. The dielectric variation leads to a change in capacitance C due to displacement current I during some time interval Δt . The capacitive electrodes sensing mechanism is entirely electrical, low power, and requires low-cost electronics with static parts or mechanical intermediaries [26-31].

3 Capacitive Electrodes Sensing Approaches and Operating Modes

Fundamentally, there are only two capacitive electrode sensing approaches; a) active sensing: active sensing systems mandatorily generate an electric field [34-145] and b) passive sensing: passive sensing systems depend on the existing electric field [33-51]. Furthermore, there are four operative modes for each approach; a) Isometric, b) receive, c) transmit, and d) loading [33-124].

Comprehensive research by Zimmerman et al in active capacitive sensing realized that there is a specific signal generated from the transmit electrode to receive electrode and in between exists dielectric or human body dielectric to vary the signal strength [38-55]. The majority of research in the past has been conducted in touch sensing [7-54]. An emerging area in capacitive sensing is passive capacitive sensing in which there are opportunist existing or external electric fields sensing [39, 40]. In simpler words, active sensing is about generating or transmitting electric flux, whereas passive is capturing or receiving the flux inference [42, 45]. Let us briefly discuss operating modes for capacitive sensing approaches.

3.1 Isometric Mode (Mutual Coupling)

Identical or isometric coupling by 1:1 TX/RX is a combination of transmitting and receive mode occurs. In this case, a variable dielectric is introduced like the human body as exhibited in the figure below [34-37].



Fig 3. Human body active is bi-directional flow field conductor [35, 36]

3.2 Receive Mode

The receive mode is made possible by making the body as an extension of the receiver electrode to access surrounding electric fields. In this case, a human body acts as a multi-channel receiver for multi-variable sensing as exhibited in the figure below [41-43].



Fig 3. Human body acting as a collaborative flux receiver [41, 43]

3.3 Transmit Mode

The transmit mode is made possible by making the body an extension of the transmit electrode to improvise the nearest transmitter created electric fields.



Fig 3. Human body acting as a collaborative flux transmitter [44]

In this case, the human body acts as a multiimpedance transmitter for multi-variable sensing receivers as exhibited in the figure below [44].

3.1 Loading Mode

In loading mode, an offset current flow through the body to the ground through the capacitively-loaded electrode. A single electrode is utilized as a transmitter and receiver of flux as exhibited in the figure below [45-49].



Fig 3. Single capacitive electrode being used as TX/RX [43-47]

Different types of capacitive electrodes or terminals can be used to assess the physical properties [50, 51] such as touch capacitive.

2 Contactless Capacitive Electrode Biosensors (CCEBs)

In 1907, the first bio-sensors were registered by Cremer, i.e. a string electrometer to approximate the epithelial movement in heart of a frog [5, 18, 62]. The heart of the frog was placed between the plates of a capacitor, and as it vibrated with each beat a change in capacitance was observed. Later, in 1920, Leon Theremin demonstrated a gesture-controlled electronic 'musical instrument known as the Theremin [18, 19], consisting of bi-capacitive tuned resonant circuits controlling pitch and volume [53]. While capacitive sensing grew to be an important tool for many engineering applications, such as sensing distance, acceleration, force, pressure, etc. [54-59]. Since the invention of the glucometer in 1962 as the first commercially available biosensor by Clark and Lyons [61-63], several techniques and strategies became ambient. The major types of biosensors that emerged and made their ground in different measurement conditions were [65-75]:

- 1. Electrochemical biosensors (by Clark and Lyons (1962) [4, 5], Wang et al. (2014) [63], Erden and Kilic (2013) [64] and Kim et al. (2015) [65], Pundir and Chauhan (2012), and Marrazza (2014)).
- Optical/visual biosensors by Schneider and Clark (2013) [64, 66], Khimji et al. (2013), Peng et al. (2014) and Shen et al. (2014) [64, 65, 67].
- 3. Silica, quartz/crystal and glass biosensors (by Ogi (2013)) [64, 66-68].
- Nanomaterials-based biosensors (by Ko et al. (2013), Senveli and Tigli (2013), Valentini et al. (2013), Li et al. (2011), Kwon and Bard (2012), Zhou et al. (2012), Guo (2013), Hutter and Maysinger (2013), Lamprecht et al. (2014) and Sang et al. (2015)) [64, 66-72].
- 5. Genetically encoded or synthetic fluorescent biosensors (by Kunzelmann et al. (2014), Randriamampita and Lellouch (2014), Oldach and Zhang (2014), and Wang et al. (2015)) [66, 68-71].
- 6. Microbial biosensors through synthetic biology and genetic/protein engineering (by Sun et al. (2015) and Gutierrez et al. (2015)) [72-74].

This discussion will follow one type of capacitive bio-sensors (the first type of bio-sensors), further trimmed down to branch contactless capacitive electrodes based bio-sensors [75].

2.1 Unified Structure and Topologies of CCEBs

The basic architecture or structure of a contactless capacitive electrode bio-sensor (CCEB) and its evolution or optimization is comprehended in figure 11 given below [75-78].

Figure 4 shows four generations of CCEBs [75-88]. The blue rectangle presents the earliest vision and breed of CCEBs dedicated to EEG and ECG [75, 76].



Fig 4. Unified Structure and Chronological Evolution of Contactless Bio-Sensor [75-78]

The orange rectangle is a realization of a single sensor for EMG and ECG [18, 77-80] [18, 78-81] and the green one is a single structure [81] put forth to be worked at and improved for all future designs and bio-instrumentation practices. Further improvement created huge gaps in filter design and guard or shielding optimization for CCEBs [82].

2.2 Key Performance Indicators in CCEBs

The key performance indicators (KPIs) in contactless capacitive bio-sensors are [7, 84-101]:

- 1. Electrostatic transients of electrode shape on the signal measured (discovered by Bri-to-Neto et al in coupled contactless conductivity study (2005) [83], da Silva et al in oscillometric detector design (1998) [78], Francisco et al in the design of compact and high-resolution version of a capacitively coupled contactless conductivity detector (2009)[86], Opekar et al in formulating a simple contactless conductivity detector employing a medium wave radio integrated circuit for the signal treatment (2010) [87], Tuma et al in work of contactless conductometric detector with exchangeable capillary (2001) [88], Novotny et al in the study of effects of the electrode system geometry on the properties of contactless conductivity detectors for capillary (2005) [84], Ziemann et al for contactless conductivity detection for capillary electrophoresis (1998) [77, 88], Pumera et al used contactless conductivity detector for microchip capillary (2002) [89].
- 2. Field-effect of the width of the electrode (researched by Wang et al in contactless chipbased capillary conductivity microsystem for fast measurements of low-explosive ionic components (2002) [90], hardware improvement and optimization of input signal amplitude and frequency study by da Silva et al (2002) [91], like-wise Mayrhofer et al (1999) [92], Tuma et al (2002), and Kuban et al (2005) discovered

contactless conductivity detection of ions in narrow inner diameter capillaries [93].

- 3. Displacement or offset between electrodes in research by Novotny et al for the effects of the electrode system geometry on the properties of contactless conductivity detectors (2005) [94].
- 4. Volume and chemistry of dielectric worked in different ways by 96.José Geraldo et al [95]and Zahiyoa et al [96] for high-voltage capacitively coupled contactless conductivity detection for microchip capillary (2002), Mika et al and Opika et al inflow study using thin-layer contactless conductivity cell (2009) [90, 97], Mark et al for comparison of the performance characteristics of two tubular contactless conductivity detectors with different dimensions and application in conjunction with HPLC (2009) [98, 99].
- 5. Transition in input voltage in conductivity detection and assessment studies by Tanyanyiwa et al (2002) [100], Hohercakova et al (2005) [99], and Pavlicek et al (2011) [101].
- 6. Detector noise and signal deformation were inferred by high-voltage studies by Tanyanyiwa et al (2003), Hohercakova et al (2005), and Emaminejad (2012) [102].
- 7. Signal conditioners input scaling and reference voltage offset for detection [101-105]. The basic architecture or structure of a contactless capacitive electrode bio-sensor (CCEB) and its evolution or optimization is comprehended in figure 11 [75-78]

3 ECG/EEG Systems Architectures and Topologies Implemented using CCEBs

During the first 100 years of EEG CCEBs, a plethora of working models emerged and hold a foundation stone for future developments in this domain. In this section, major contributions will be reviewed and discussed. The improvement from the basic architecture or structure of a CCEB node to the Internet of Everything (IoE) will be revisited in the following sections:

3.1 Wireless Implementations of ECG/EEG Systems using CCEBs

Research niche in wireless CCEBs in ECG/EEG systems resulted in two major and notice-able topologies: a) multiple Wearable EEG/ECG electrode section nodes telemetry segregated at radio interface [144, 150-152]; b) multiple patch electrodes decision edges for EEG/ECGs [121, 122, 144]. Both topologies are presented in fig 16. The common architecture or structure of a contactless capacitive electrode bio-sensor (CCEB) and its evolution or optimization is comprehended in the figure below. It is commonly used by the key contributors Crippa et al (2002) [150], Wang et al (2012) [144], Northdrop el al (2003) [151], and Michael et al (2018) [152] using microcontrollers and SoC interfacing modules with AFEs at the input.



Fig 5. CCEBs Systems Wireless Architectures and Topologies from 2006 to 2007 [36, 121-127, 144, 150-152]

In fig 5, the parallel EEG/ECG CCEBs topology "Eco" for wearable EEG application by Chulsung Park et al (2006) [121] is presented in the pink color block, i.e. three unique EEG node architectures are pooling data to the radio transmitters that are sending it to the edge collector base-station. Eco used Nordic VLSI's nRF24E1 (2.4 GHz RF transceiver) interfaced to DW8051. The base stations employed a GFSK modulation scheme with 125 frequency channels that were 1 MHz apart. The transmission output power is also soft-ware-configurable for four different levels using RainSun chip antenna (AN9520). This topology is significant in handling critically redundant situations. An improved version of CCEBs EEG node can be observed in the blue block in fig 16 by Sumit Majumder et al (2018) [122] with power consumption (19 μ W) by subthreshold DSP and RF transmission power of 397 µW.

3.2 Future ECG/EEG Systems

The research in CCEBs is harnessing towards the remote calibration and optimization of the existing EEG/ECG systems though serial on the go (OTG) interfaces using smartphones and update on the air (OTA) using web interface [144-162]. Five key areas in this effort were found in the literature as:

1. Remote Gain using Trans-conductance operational amplifiers, Filter Tuning, and Improved Signal Conditioners for CCEBs with OTA Parameterization (fig 17) [36, 123-128].

- 2. Patient State CCEBs CMOS ICs for Sensor Calibration OTG for EEG Systems (fig 18).
- 3. Single Board Computer Stand-Alone (with Multi-parametric System-on-Chip (SoC) EEG/ECG Nodes) Systems (fig 19).
- 4. Networked Adaptive Neuro-Fuzzy Inference Engine (ANFIE) EEG/ECG Decision Support Systems (fig 20).

In 1969, the shift-registers technique was first used by Lopez et al [36] by interfacing the core CCEBs block by the current mode single-frequency modulation channel of an IRIG instrumentation tape recorder. In 2007, a gel-free, non-contact EEG/ECG sensor with an onboard electrode that capacitively coupled to the skin was proposed by Thomson J. Sullivan et al [124] with configurable and programmable CCEBs interfaces in a 1-inch diameter enclosure. The measured input-referred noise, over the 1-100Hz-frequency range, is 2µVrms at 0.2mm sensor distance, and 17µVrms at 3.2mm distance using active shield-ing of the high-impedance input significantly that reducing noise pickup, and reduced variations in gain as a function of gap distance. In 2009, Jin Tao Li et al proposed a cur-rent-mode instrumentation amplifier (CMIA) topology using the CMOS 0.35 µm technology. The CMIA consumed 20.22 μ W for a 3 V DC power supply and had a adjustable gain-bandwidth product continuous (GBW)-independent voltage gain via the single resistor. Its CMRR was higher than 120dB up to 1 Hz and more than 80 dB up to 100 Hz as plus to [125]. In 2014, Mahmoud, S. A. et al [126] proposed a six order cascaded power line notch filter for ECG detection systems with noise shaping based on 0.25 μ m technology operating under ± 0.8 V voltage supply 6th order notch filter provided a notch depth of 65 dB (43 dB for 4th order), input-referred voltage noise spectral density with noise shaping of 9 μ Vrms/ \sqrt{Hz} at the pass-band frequencies and 9 mVrms/ \sqrt{Hz} at the notch (zero) frequency and demonstrated the ability of the filter to be used for EEG/ECG signals filtering within the bandwidth of 150 Hz.



a) Accumulation of Contributions [36, 124-131] with programmability leading to CMOS in EEGs



 b) The architecture of a digital active electrode (DAE) chip.
 Fig 6. A journey from Parametric EEGs modules to Programmable and Dedicated DAE ICs [36, 124-132, 134-138, 148]

The contributions in two niches by [36, 124-128, 130] work segregated into a partially con-figurable and programmable CMOS IC with addressable AFEs, switchable amplifications multiplexed to SAR with a static R as presented in fig 6 (a) by T. Denison et al [131] and evolved into the next generation active electrode CCEBs based on dedicated EEG/ECG DAE ICs proposed by Jiawei Xu et in 2015 [132]. In Jiawei Xu et al work, an IC was de-signed and developed that performed real-time EEG signal processing using 12-bit ADC with 15 electrodes interfaces, achieving state-of-the-art performance: 60 nV/sqrt (Hz) at input-referred noise (IRN), an improved CMRR of an AE pair from 40 dB to 102 dB and electrode-offset tolerance 350 mV for the block diagram exhibited in fig 6 (b).



a) Accumulation of Contributions [36, 124-131] with programmability leading to CMOS in EEGs



 b) The architecture of a digital active electrode (DAE) chip.
 Fig 7. A journey from Parametric EEGs modules to Programmable and Dedicated DAE ICs [36, 124-132, 134-138, 148]

The 200 μ W 8-channel EEG acquisition ASIC for ambulatory EEG systems [148] by Refet Firat et al (2008) is considered a masterpiece of ULSI in mobile EEGs presented in fig 7(a).

The major contribution [148] was the novel AC coupled chopper-stabilized instrumentation amplifier (ACCIA) implementation with coarse-fine servoloop achieving 120 dB CMRR at 2.3 muA, noiseefficiency factor (NEF) of 4.3 for an ASIC implemented in 0.5 mum CMOS process, and the total current consumption 66 muA from 3 V power supply.

The dawn of networked or body area network (BAN) of EEG CCEBs was observed since 2010 including SBCs, IoT-edge, and endpoint servers [134-138, 153-162]. In 2010, the WBAN pioneered by Yu M. Chi et al [134] contributed as a novel system with 46 dB of gain over a .7-100Hz bandwidth with a noise level of 3.8μ V RMS for high quality nervous (brain) and heart (cardio) measurements, stored and processed remotely presented in fig 7 (b).



b) Specialized CCEBs EEG SoCs for Future Generation WBAN EEGs [135]

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 c) Ubiquitous WBAN EEG/ECG [136]
 Fig 8. A journey from Parametric EEGs modules to Programmable and Dedicated DAE ICs [36, 124-132, 134-138, 148]

The Aachen SmartChair [135] by A. Aleksandrowicz et al (2017) was a landmark (fig 8 b) in body area networks with mobility and real-time validation of a classical ECG with conductive electrodes and an oxygen saturation signal (SpO2) were obtained simultaneously as presented in fig 9(a) in the green block. The mentioned work opened the floor for many to come.



Fig 9. Machine Learning-based SoCs/ASICs for EEG based on CCEBs

In 2013, Jerald Yoo pioneered the scalability in EEG SoC (fig 9 (b)) dedicated to seizure classification and recording processor [138]. An 8-channel AFE with **Chopper-Stabilized** Capacitive Coupled Instrumentation Amplifier (CCC-IA) to show NEF of 5.1 and noise RTI of 0.91 for 0.5-100 Hz bandwidth scalable EEG acquisition SoC with a ma-chinelearning seizure classification processor and a 64 KB SRAM. The EEG-SoC employed the Distributed Quad-LUT filter architecture to minimize the area while sup-port-vector machine as a classifier, with a GBW controller that gave real-time gain and bandwidth feedback to AFE to maintain accuracy. The CCC-IA SoC for EEGs was implemented in 0.18 1P6M CMOS process with an accuracy of 84.4% in eye blink classification test, at 2.03 /classification energy efficiency. The 64 KB on-chip memory had stored up to 120 seconds of raw EEG data. Recently, a successful clinical trial was demonstrated by a multimodal EEG-NIRS proposed by Unsoo Ha et al (2019) [153]. The multimodal EEG and near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) canceled out the ±300-mV electrode-dc offset for dried gel condition with 3.59 noise-efficiency factor by achieving a dynamic range of 60-dB crafted on a chip 16-mm2 (4 mm \times 4 mm) SoC fabricated (65-nm) CMOS presented in fig 20 (b) and incorporated into a 3.5 cm \times 26 cm head patch. Later a comprehensive contribution in EEG was documented by Jaehyuk Lee et al (2019) for an in-ear brain-computer interface (BCI) controller [154] implemented with a dedicated system-on-chip (SoC) for electroencephalography (EEG) readout and body channel communication (BCC) transceiver (TRX). The 8-mm2 chip fabricated with 65-nm CMOS packaged with a current reusing low-noise amplifier (CRLNA), bootstrapping dc servo loop (BDSL) and dual-mode programmable gain amplifier (DMPGA) that reduced TRX power consumption by the Chopper-Stabilized Capacitive Coupled Instrumentation Amplifier to show NEF of 5.1 and noise RTI of 0.91 for 0.5-100 Hz bandwidth and IC consumed 82.9 µW.





b) Human++ [162].

Fig 10. State of the Art WBAN EEG IoT Platforms with ML capabilities [156-161] [164-169]

In fig 10(a), Shanshan Jiang et al documented CareNet [161] as an integrated WBAN platform and WSN environment to facilitate remote care in EEG applications using TinyOS and NesC presented in fig 22 (a). Various SDN techniques were demonstrated along with the reliable and privacy-aware patient data collection using SSL, transmission, and access over the cloud using IPV4. The most comprehensive EEG WBAN implementation and contribution were registered by Bert Gyselinckx et al as HUMAN++ project (fig 10(b)) utilizing the full spectrum of capabilities in achieving highly miniaturized and autonomous transducer systems by employing 3D System-in-a-Package (SIP), wireless ultra-lowpower communications with ball-grid-array (BGA), 3D integration technologies, MEMS energy scavenging techniques using TEGs with 200 cm2K/W per cm² and low-power design techniques.

4 Conclusion

The key contributions in the study of contactless biocapacitive electrodes used for bio-sensors measurement, assessment, sensors, systems, and their life-cycle were chronologically elaborated in this work in a systematic portrait with state-of-the-art contributions by re-searchers around the world. This research served its purpose in key factors and criterion in contactless bio-capacitive sensors a) the effective impedance assessment techniques at skin, scalp and cloth level defined the credibility and accuracy of bio-metrics status; b) the electrodes processing selection and optimizable signal components contributed to achieve the desired measurements; c) the tactical and strategic orientation of capacitive plates assemblies and arrays were used to meet critical application challenges; d) the state-of-the-art sensors on chip options assisted in meeting the cutting edge market needs; e) the fabrication technologies and methods streamlined the properties, specifications and capabilities of biocapacitive plates; f) the gradual improvement in testing methods of bio-capacitive plates harnessed enhanced calibration methods using ICs, ASICs and SoCs; g) the multi-parametric and dedicated sensor testing and calibration systems gave better in-sights of operational, measurement, and transient anomalies using programmable signal conditioners, ADCs, trans-impedance operational amplifiers, programmable gain amplifiers, analog front end; h) the application of machine learning based signal processing techniques and approaches was state-ofthe-art evaluation method that served as a horizon in accuracy and credibility of bio-metric measurements; i) the selection of appropriate key performance indicators assisted in the quality of WBAN EEG topologies.

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Contribution of individual authors to the creation of a scientific article (ghostwriting policy)

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Hasan Tariq performed the conceptual study, research methods, and case study (sections 1-3). Shafaq Sultan has organized the manuscript and formatting and done the write-up (sections 4-5).

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