Reference sheet for acpcdetect usage

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Introduction: The acpcdetect program is a module of the Automatic Registration Toolbox (ART). The program takes a 3D T1-weighted structural MRI of the human brain as input. It automatically detects the mid-sagittal plane (MSP) using the method described in [1]. It then detects the AC and PC intersection points on the MSP using the method described in [2]. Finally, it detects 8 additional landmarks (the so-called Orion landmarks) on the MSP using the method described in [3]. This information is used to tilt-correct the input volume into a standard orientation. In this orientation: (1) the MSP is precisely aligned with the central plane of the FOV; (2) the anterior-posterior (AP) axis is on the MSP and aligned with the AC-PC line; (3) the inferior-superior (IS) axis is on the MSP and perpendicular to the AC-PC line; (4) the left-right (LR) axis is perpendicular to the MSP; and (5) the FOV center is approximately the mid-point between the AC and the PC on the MSP. The FOV center can alternatively be placed on the AC point using the -center-AC option.

Installation on Linux and MacOS systems: A video demonstration of installing a module of ART can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCawMFQr50M&t=26s

Althought I made this video for installing ATRA, the steps are similar. You may need to be logged in as root, depending on the permissions of the directory in which you are installing acpcdetect. Let's assume that acpcdetect will be installed in /usr/local/art.

(a) Set the $ARTHOME environment variable to /usr/local/art. If $ARTHOME is already defined on your system, then you can skip this step. Otherwise, "sh" or "bash" users may define $ARTHOME using the following command:

    export ARTHOME=/usr/local/art

    To do this automatically at login, users should add the above line to their ".bashrc" or ".profile" file. Users of "csh" or "tcsh" may use the following command:

    setenv ARTHOME /usr/local/art

    and add it to their ".cshrc" or ".tcshrc" file.

(b) Download the Linux (acpcdetect2.0_LinuxCensOS6.7.tar.gz) or MacOS (acpcdetect2.0_macOS10.12.6.tar.gz) version of the software from www.nitrc.org/projects/art and move it to $ARTHOME.

(c) Unpack the package:

cd $ARTHOME

tar -xvzf acpcdetect2.0_*.tar.gz

(d) Move the executable program $ARTHOME/bin/acpcdetect to a bin directory in your PATH, or preferably, add the directory $ARTHOME/bin to your PATH. This can be done by executing the following command and adding it to the ".bashrc" file:

export PATH=$ARTHOME/bin:$PATH

Orientation code: In ART, the anatomical orientation of 3D volumes is specified by a 3-letter orientation code consisting of a combination of letters A, P, L, R, S and I, denoting anterior, posterior, left, right, superior and inferior directions, respectively. For example, the orientation code PIL indicates the volume's (i, j, k) voxel coordinates point towards posterior, inferior and left directions. Similarly, the orientation code RAS indicates (i, j, k) point to right, anterior and superior directions. There are 48 possible orientation codes.

Usage:

acpcdetect [options] -i <input-volume>.nii

Required argument:

-i <input-volume>.nii	3D T1W MRI brain volume in NIFTI format of type short or unsigned short

Options:

-v	Enables verbose mode
-lm <landmarks-file >	A text file containing manually determined (i, j, k) coordinates of the AC, PC and VSPS, respectively. When this file is supplied, automatic detection of these landmarks is suppressed. This is useful in cases when automatic landmark detection fails.
-no-tilt-correction	Does not tilt-correct the output, but the SFORM and QFORM are set correctly in the output volume header. This is useful for applications that would like to use acpcdetect as a preprocessing tilt-correction step without applying interpolation at this stage.
-center-AC	Places the output volume's FOV center at AC

-standard	Tilt-correction is performed without using the Orion landmarks. Tilt-correction is done using the AC, PC and MSP only. This is the method used in version 1.0 of acpcdetect. In the current version, the 8 Orion landmarks are also used to stabilize the standardization of the orientation. Using this option, therefore, reverts back to the method of version 1.0 without using the additional Orion landmarks.
-output-orient <code>	Specifies the orientation of the output volume (default: RAS). In ART, orientation codes are 3-letter codes consisting of 6 letters: A, P, I, S, L, R. There are 48 possible combinations. For example PIL for Posterior-Inferior-Left or RAS for Right-Anterior-Superior.
-nx <int>	Number of voxels in i direction (the fastest varying index) of the output volume. The default value is determined from the input volume.
-ny <int>	Number of voxels in j direction (the 2nd fastest varying index) of the output volume. The default value is determined from the input volume.
-nz <int>	Number of voxels in k direction (the slowest varying index) of the output volume. The default value is determined from the input volume.
-dx <float>	Voxel dimension of the output volume in i direction. The default value is determined from the input volume.
-dy <float>	Voxel dimension of the output volume in j direction. The default value is determined from the input volume.
-dz <float>	Voxel dimension of the output volume in k direction. The default value is determined from the input volume.
-version	Prints software version
-help	Prints help information
-noppm	Prevents outputting *.ppm images
-nopng	Prevents outputting *.png images
-notxt	Prevents outputting *.txt files
-rvsps <r>	Search radius for VSPS (default = 50 mm)
-rac <r>	Search radius for AC (default = 15 mm)
-rpc <r>	Search radius for PC (default = 15 mm)
-nn	Uses the nearest neighbor interpolation for tilt-correction

Outputs:

<output-volume>.nii	Where the output volume is saved. The default filename is <input-volume>_<output-orientation-code>(default <output-orientation-code>is RAS). This volume will be the tilt-corrected version of the input volume. However, if the -no-tilt-correction option is selected, the output volume will not be resliced (only reoriented). The tilt-correction information, however, are still written in the QFORM and SFORM entries of the image header as well as in the *.mrx and *.mat files (described below).
<input-volume>.mrx	Transformation matrix for tilt-correction in ART format
<input-volume>_FSL.mat	Transformation matrix for tilt-correction in FSL format
<input-volume>_ACPC_sagittal.ppm	Sagittal view of the detected AC/PC locations in PPM format (output suppressed by -noppm option)
<input-volume>_ACPC_sagittal.png	Sagittal view of the detected AC/PC locations in PNG format (output suppressed by -nopng option)
<input-volume>_ACPC_axial.ppm	Axial view of the detected AC/PC locations in PPM format (output suppressed by -noppm option)
<input-volume>_ACPC_axial.png	Axial view of the detected AC/PC locations in PNG format (output suppressed by -nopng option)
<input-volume>_orion.ppm	Mid-sagittal view of the detected Orion landmarks in PPM format (output suppressed by -noppm option)
<input-volume>_orion.png	Mid-sagittal view of the detected Orion landmarks in PNG format (output suppressed by -nopng option)
<input-volume>_ACPC.txt	Stores the detected AC, PC and VSPS (i, j, k) coordinates and the estimated mid-sagittal plane (output suppressed by -notxt option)
<input-volume>_orion.txt	Stores (i, j, k) coordinates of the 8 detected Orion landmarks (output suppressed by -notxt option)

The -no-tilt-correction option:

When this option is selected, the output volume is not tilt-corrected. IF the orientation of the input and output volumes are different, the voxel order will just be reoriented without any interpolation. However, but the SFORM and QFORM matrices of the output volume are adjusted to store the information necessary for tilt-correction. This option is makes it possible for other applications, e.g., image registration methods, to use acpcdetect as a preprocessing method for tilt-correction without applying interpolation at this stage.

Example 1: The default behavior of the program is demonstrated in this example.
Command:

acpcdetect -i $ARTHOME/example1/v1.nii -v

Program printout:

Input image: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1.nii
Input image orientation: ASL
Input image matrix size: 256 x 256 x 128
Input image voxel size: 1.0000 x 1.0000 x 1.2500
Output image: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1_RAS.nii
Output image matrix size: 128 x 256 x 256
Output image voxel size: 1.2500 x 1.0000 x 1.0000
Output image orientation: RAS
Output transformation matrix: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1.mrx
Output transformation matrix (FSL format): /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1_FSL.mat

Note that in my case the $ARTHOME environment variable is set to "/Users/ardekb01/babak_lib". In your case the outputs' path will depend on your $ARTHOME directory. The program prints the names of the input volume, its orientation code as determined from the file header, and its matrix and voxels size.

The name of the output volume in this case will be the same as the input volume, i.e., "v1" with the additional suffix "RAS" which is the default orientation of output volume. This a resliced tilt-corrected version of the input volume with the following properties:

- The FOV center is approximately the mid-point between the AC and PC landmarks. However, if the -center-AC option is selected, the FOV center will be placed on the AC.
- The MSP bisects the FOV.
- The fastest voxel index i increases from left to right direction.
- The second fastest voxel index j increases from posterior to anterior direction.
- The slowest voxel index k increases from inferior to superior direction.

Note that the default orientation of the output FOV (i.e., RAS) can be changed using the -output-orient option. For example, if -output-orient PIR is specified, then i increases from anterior to posterior direction, j increases from superior to inferior direction, and k increases from left to right.

The tilt-correction matrix will be written to "v1.mrx" in ART format and "v1_FSL.mat" in FSL format. The output volume's matrix and voxel size are determined automatically based on those of the input volume. In addition, the program outputs the following files:

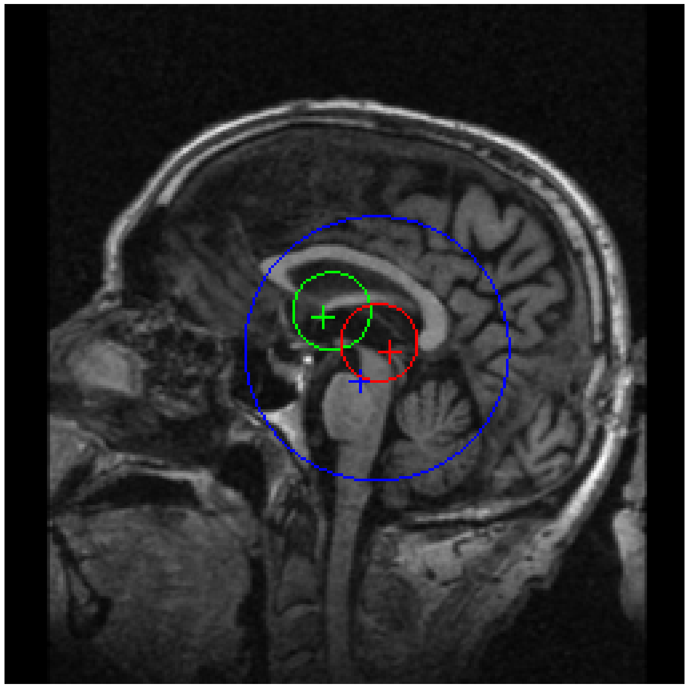

Figure 1: v1_ACPC_sagittal.png shows the automatically detected MSP, the AC (green +), the PC (red +) and the VSPS (blue +). The circles show the search radii for the corresponding landmarks. The search radii can be changes using the -rac, -rpc and -rvsps options described above.

v1_ACPC_sagittal.ppm

v1_ACPC_sagittal.png

v1_ACPC_axial.ppm

v1_ACPC_axial.png

v1_orion.ppm

v1_orion.png

v1_ACPC.txt

v1_orion.txt

The *.ppm and *.png images are the same written in two different formats. To suppress outputting them use the -noppm and -nopng options as described above. Similarly, use -notxt option to suppress outputting the *.txt files. The v1_ACPC_sagittal.png image indicates the detected MSP and detected AC, PC and VSPS landmarks on the MSP (Figure 1). The (i, j, k) coordinates of the AC, PC and VSPS as detected on the input volume are stored in v1_ACPC.txt. The equation of the automatically detected MSP is also saved in this file.

The v1_ACPC_axial.png image (Figure 2) shows a tilt-corrected axial slice through the AC-PC. Finally, v1_orion.png (Figure 3) shows the 8 automatically detected Orion landmarks on the MSP. The (i, j, k) coordinates of the Orion landmarks on the input volume are saved in v1_orion.txt.

Example 2: In this example we customize the size and orientation of the tilt-corrected output

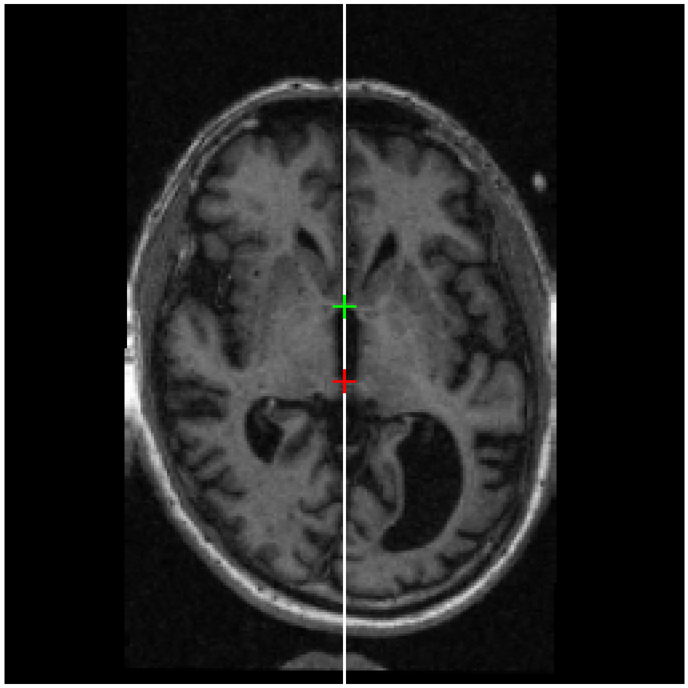

Figure 2: v1_ACPC_axial.png shows the automatically detected MSP, the AC (green +), the PC (red +).

Figure 3: v1_orion.png shows the 8 automatically Orion landmarks on the pitch-corrected MSP.

volume.

Command:

acpcdetect -i $ARTHOME/example1/v1.nii -v -nx 255 -ny 255 -nz 189 -dx 1.0 -dy 1.0 -dz 1.0 -output-orient PIL

Program printout:

Input image: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1.nii
Input image orientation: ASL
Input image matrix size: 256 x 256 x 128
Input image voxel size: 1.0000 x 1.0000 x 1.2500
Output image: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1_PIL.nii
Output image matrix size: 255 x 255 x 189
Output image voxel size: 1.0000 x 1.0000 x 1.0000
Output image orientation: PIL
Output transformation matrix: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1.mrx
Output transformation matrix (FSL format): /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example1/v1_FSL.mat

Note that is this example the program printout changes to reflect the customized output volume dimensions and orientation. Incidentally, this custom dimensions specified in this example match those of the volume $ARTHOME/PILbrain.nii which represents the frequency that after tilt-correction using acpcdetect an (i, j, k) voxel coincides with intra-cranial space [3].

Example 3: Occasionally the automatic detection of MSP, AC, PC and/or VSPS fails. Failures would be apparent by viewing the *.png images. Such is a case for image $ARTHOME/example2/v1.nii. For these cases, the (i, j, k) coordinates of the AC, PC and VSPS landmarks on the input volume must be supplied to the program manually. I recommend using the AFNI software for manual identification of these landmarks. A video instruction for how this is done can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5GBaNnjOa8

The manually identfied landmarks would be supplied to acpcdetect using the -lm argument. For $ARTHOME/example2/v1.nii we have found these landmarks and saved them in $ARTHOME/example2/v1.lm. The acpcdetect program can then be run as follows:

acpcdetect -i $ARTHOME/example2/v1.nii -lm $ARTHOME/example2/v1.lm -v

Program printout:

Input image: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example2/v1.nii
Input image orientation: ASL
Input image matrix size: 256 x 256 x 128
Input image voxel size: 1.0000 x 1.0000 x 1.2500
Output image: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example2/v1_RAS.nii
Output image matrix size: 128 x 256 x 256
Output image voxel size: 1.2500 x 1.0000 x 1.0000
Output image orientation: RAS

Manually specified landmarks: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example2/v1.lm

Output transformation matrix: /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example2/v1.mrx

Output transformation matrix (FSL format): /Users/ardekb01/babak_lib/example2/v1_FSL.mat

Note that the printout indicates that the landmarks are manually specified.

References

[1] B. A. Ardekani, J. Kershaw, M. Braun, and I. Kanno. Automatic detection of the mid-sagittal plane in 3-D brain images. *IEEE Trans Med Imaging*, 16(6):947–952, Dec 1997.

[2] B. A. Ardekani and A. H. Bachman. Model-based automatic detection of the anterior and posterior commissures on MRI scans. *Neuroimage*, 46(3):677–682, Jul 2009.

[3] B. A. Ardekani. A New Approach to Symmetric Registration of Longitudinal Structural MRI of the Human Brain. *Neuroinformatics*, 2018 (under review).