

Biomechanical Model of the Human Body in a Sitting Posture

In this example, a biomechanical model of the human body is developed for evaluating the dynamic response to the vertical vibrations in a sitting posture. It demonstrates how the Multibody Dynamics interface in COMSOL Multiphysics can be used to model various parts and connections in a human body and study the whole body vibrations (WBV). The problem statement and the model parameters are taken from Ref. 1.

The dynamic response of a human body in any vibration environment can be predicted using this biomechanical model. In the automobile industry, this model can be used in ride quality simulations as well as when designing vibration isolators such as the seats.

Model Definition

GEOMETRY AND CONNECTIONS

The biomechanical model of a human body consists of different body parts such as head, torso, pelvis, thighs, viscera, and legs, as shown in Figure 1. All the body parts are treated as lumped masses and defined as rigid bodies. The values of mass and moment of inertia of each body part about its center of mass are given in Table 1.

TABLE I: MASS AND MOMENT C	OF INERTIA OF DIFFERENT	BODY PARTS.
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Body part	Mass (kg)	Moment of inertia (kg·m ²)
Head	7.24	0.411
Torso	19.90	1.627
Pelvis	11.01	0.692
Thighs	20.35	1.180
Viscera	12.92	-
Legs	-	-

The viscera are not allowed to rotate, and the legs are not allowed to translate or rotate. Hence, corresponding values of mass and moment of inertia are not required in the above table.

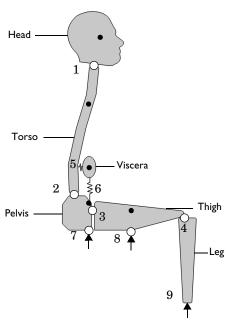


Figure 1: Model geometry showing different body parts and connections between them. The center of mass of each body part and the locations of vibration excitation are also shown.

The connections between different body parts can be approximated using translational and rotational springs and dampers, applied on the relative motion between the two body parts. This type of connection is modeled using the elastic version of fixed joint. Once the elastic version of a joint is used, the translational and rotational stiffness and damping values between the two connected parts can be provided.

In this model, the source of vibration (seat) is not modeled explicitly and instead of that a base motion node is used. Here the input excitation is of 1 m/s² in the vertical direction at three different locations. The body parts, which are directly in touch with the vibrating seat, are legs, thighs, and pelvis. The connections between these body parts and the vibrating seat are also modeled using fixed joint. The elasticity on these joints is included wherever it is required to model the cushioning effect of the seat.

The values of stiffness and damping coefficients, translational as well as rotational, for all the connections in the model are provided in table below.

TABLE 2: JOINT ELASTICITY DETAILS.

Fixed joint	Translational stiffness (kN/m)	Translational damping coefficient (kN·s/m)	Rotational stiffness (kN·m/rad)	Rotational damping coefficient (kN·m·s/rad)
Head-torso	113.7, 113.7	0.066, 0.066	0.915	0.340
Torso-pelvis	0.299, 0.299	1.79, 1.79	0.328	0.724
Pelvis-thigh	6.40, 6.40	0.061, 0.061	0.162	0.030
Thigh-leg	23.55, 23.55	0.154, 0.154	0.220	0.104
Viscera-torso	1.93, 0	0.079, 0	0	0
Viscera-pelvis	0, 18.37	0, 0.197	0	0
Seat-pelvis	0.905, 121.3	0.015, 0.047	0	0
Seat-thigh	0.614, 16.71	0.014, 8.01	0	0
Seat-leg	-	-	-	-

The legs are connected to the seat with the rigid version of fixed joint and hence it does not need joint elasticity parameters.

VIBRATION TRANSMISSIBILITY

In this example, first an eigenfrequency analysis is performed to determine the damped and undamped natural frequencies of vibration. Secondly a frequency response analysis is carried out around the natural frequencies to find out the vertical transmissibility (ratio of vertical acceleration of the head to the input acceleration of the seat), the rotational transmissibility (ratio of angular acceleration of the head to the input acceleration the seat) and the apparent mass (ratio of the force at the seat to the input acceleration of the seat).

$$H_{\text{vert}} = \frac{(\ddot{y})_{\text{head}}}{(\ddot{y})_{\text{seat}}}, \ H_{\text{rot}} = \frac{(\ddot{\phi})_{\text{head}}}{(\ddot{y})_{\text{seat}}}, \ M_a = \frac{(F)_{\text{seat}}}{(\ddot{y})_{\text{seat}}}$$

The transmissibilities and apparent mass are directly related to the comfort feeling. Especially the vertical and rotational transmissibility affect the ride comfort and the vision.

Results and Discussion

Figure 2 shows one of the rotational eigenmodes of the undamped biomechanical model. In this mode, rotational movement of the head and torso segments can be seen. The

viscera, pelvis, thighs and legs do not have considerable movement as compared to the other two.

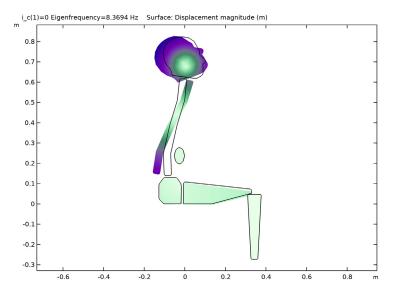


Figure 2: One of the rotational eigenmodes of the undamped biomechanical model.

The first major translational eigenmode of the damped biomechanical model is shown in Figure 3. In this mode, there is a downward movement of head, pelvis, and viscera whereas other body parts do not move much.

Figure 4 shows the second major translational eigenmode. In this mode, body parts like head, torso, and pelvis move downward whereas viscera move upward.

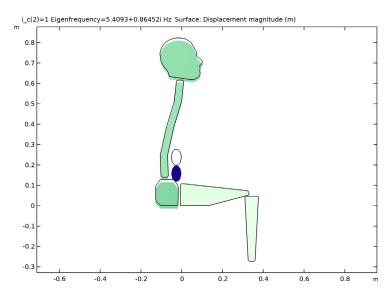


Figure 3: First major translational eigenmode of the damped biomechanical model.

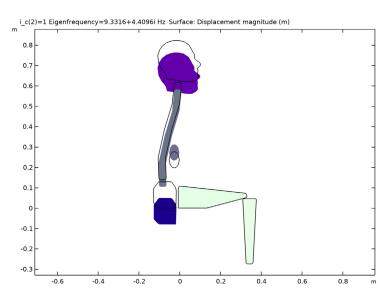


Figure 4: Second major translational eigenmode of the damped biomechanical model.

Figure 5 shows the variation of vertical transmissibility with the excitation frequency. The primary and secondary resonance are visible in the range of 4–6 Hz and 8–10 Hz respectively. The eigenmodes for these two translational modes are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

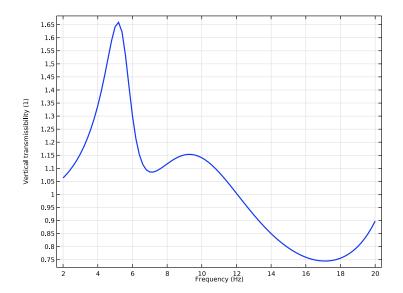


Figure 5: Vertical transmissibility versus excitation frequency.

Figure 6 shows the variation of rotational transmissibility with the excitation frequency. A high value of rotational transmissibility is not recommended as apart from reducing the comfort level it also directly affects the vision.

While vertical and rotation transmissibility depicts the endpoint characteristics of the model, apparent mass conveys the driving point characteristics, relating the force and the motion at the seat. Figure 7 shows the variation of apparent mass of the system with the excitation frequency.

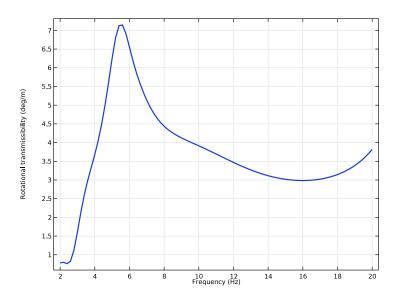


Figure 6: Rotational transmissibility versus excitation frequency.

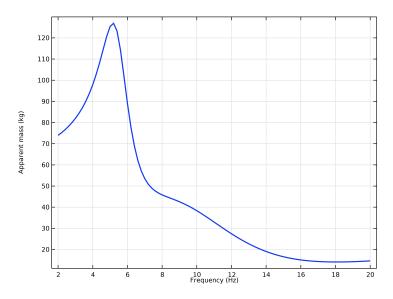


Figure 7: Apparent mass versus excitation frequency.

Notes About the COMSOL Implementation

- To model a lumped mass, use Mass and Moment of Inertia subnode of the Rigid Material node and enter the inertia properties given at a certain point. Also make the density zero in the dummy domain.
- To model a bushing, use **Joint Elasticity** node of the **Fixed Joint** node and enter the stiffness and damping properties of the joint.
- Use Base Motion node to excite the system instead of modeling an actual vibrating base (seat).
- The connections set up in the model and net system DOFs can be reviewed in the Joints Summary and Rigid Body DOF Summary sections at the physics node.

Reference

1. Tae-Hyeong Kim, Young-Tae Kim, and Yong-San Yoon, "Development of a biomechanical model of the human body in a sitting posture with vibration transmissibility in the vertical direction," Int. J. Industrial Ergonomics, vol. 35, pp. 817-829, 2005.

Application Library path: Multibody Dynamics Module/Biomechanics/ seated human body

Modeling Instructions

From the File menu, choose New.

NEW

In the New window, click Model Wizard.

MODEL WIZARD

- I In the Model Wizard window, click **2** 2D.
- 2 In the Select Physics tree, select Structural Mechanics>Multibody Dynamics (mbd).
- 3 Click Add.
- 4 Click \Longrightarrow Study.
- 5 In the Select Study tree, select General Studies>Eigenfrequency.
- 6 Click **Done**.

GLOBAL DEFINITIONS

Parameters 1

- I In the Model Builder window, under Global Definitions click Parameters I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Parameters, locate the Parameters section.
- 3 Click Load from File.
- **4** Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file seated human body parameters.txt.

GEOMETRY I

Import I (impl)

- I In the Home toolbar, click Import.
- 2 In the Settings window for Import, locate the Import section.
- 3 Click **Browse**.
- 4 Browse to the model's Application Libraries folder and double-click the file seated human body.mphbin.
- 5 Click Import.

Form Union (fin)

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Geometry I click Form Union (fin).
- 2 In the Settings window for Form Union/Assembly, locate the Form Union/Assembly section.
- 3 From the Action list, choose Form an assembly.
- 4 Click | Build Selected.

MULTIBODY DYNAMICS (MBD)

Do as follows to generate **Rigid Material** nodes for all body parts.

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Multibody Dynamics (mbd).
- 2 In the Settings window for Multibody Dynamics, locate the Automated Model Setup section.
- 3 Select the Include mass and moment of inertia node check box. This automatically sets the density of all rigid domains to zero and adds a Mass and Moment of Inertia subnode to each Rigid Material node.

4 Click Physics Node Generation in the upper-right corner of the Automated Model Setup section. From the menu, choose Create Rigid Domains.

Rigid Material: Pelvis

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Rigid Domains (All) node, then click Rigid Material I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Rigid Material, type Rigid Material: Pelvis in the Label text field.

Mass and Moment of Inertia I

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Rigid Material: Pelvis node, then click Mass and Moment of Inertia 1.
- 2 In the Settings window for Mass and Moment of Inertia, locate the Mass and Moment of Inertia section.
- **3** In the m text field, type m pelvis.
- **4** In the I_z text field, type I_pelvis.
- 5 Locate the Center of Mass section. From the list, choose Centroid of selected entities.
- **6** From the **Entity level** list, choose **Point**.

Center of Mass: Point 1

- I In the Model Builder window, click Center of Mass: Point I.
- **2** Select Point 11 only.

Rigid Materials

Similarly, model the other four body parts by assigning other Rigid Material nodes in the group Rigid Domains (All) and resetting the inputs using the information given in the table below.

Name	Selection	Mass	Moment of Inertia	Center of Mass (Point)
Rigid Material: Head	2	m_head	I_head	46
Rigid Material: Torso	3	m_torso	l_torso	46
Rigid Material: Viscera	4	m_viscera	0	55
Rigid Material: Thigh	5	m_thigh	I_thigh	62

The rotational motion of the viscera is not included in the model. Therefore constrain the rotation of Rigid Material: Viscera by using the Prescribed Displacement/Rotation I subnode. Rigid Material: Viscera

In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Multibody Dynamics (mbd)> Rigid Domains (All) click Rigid Material: Viscera.

Prescribed Displacement/Rotation I

- I In the Physics toolbar, click ___ Attributes and choose Prescribed Displacement/Rotation.
- 2 In the Settings window for Prescribed Displacement/Rotation, locate the Prescribed Rotation section.
- 3 From the By list, choose Constrained rotation.

Use the Rigid Material 6 node to model the legs.

Rigid Material: Leg

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Multibody Dynamics (mbd)> Rigid Domains (All) click Rigid Material 6.
- 2 In the Settings window for Rigid Material, type Rigid Material: Leg in the Label text field.

Add a **Base Motion** node to model the effects of a vibrating seat.

Base Motion: Seat

- I In the Physics toolbar, click A Global and choose Base Motion.
- 2 In the Settings window for Base Motion, type Base Motion: Seat in the Label text field.
- 3 Locate the Base Motion section. From the Base motion type list, choose Acceleration.
- **4** Specify the **a**_b vector as

0	x
vtt_in	у

Fixed Joint: Head-Torso

- I In the Physics toolbar, click Signature Global and choose Fixed Joint.
- 2 In the Settings window for Fixed Joint, type Fixed Joint: Head-Torso in the Label text field.
- 3 Locate the Attachment Selection section. From the Source list, choose Rigid Material: Head.
- 4 From the Destination list, choose Rigid Material: Torso.
- **5** Locate the **Center of Joint** section. From the **Entity level** list, choose **Point**.
- **6** Locate the **Joint Elasticity** section. From the list, choose **Elastic joint**.

Center of Joint: Point I

- I In the Model Builder window, click Center of Joint: Point I.
- **2** Select Point 24 only.

Joint Elasticity I

- I In the Model Builder window, click Joint Elasticity I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Joint Elasticity, locate the Spring section.
- **3** From the list, choose **Diagonal**.
- **4** In the \mathbf{k}_{u} table, enter the following settings:

k1	0
0	k1

- **5** In the k_{θ} text field, type kr1.
- **6** Locate the **Viscous Damping** section. From the list, choose **Diagonal**.
- **7** In the \mathbf{c}_{u} table, enter the following settings:

8 In the c_{θ} text field, type if (i_c==1,cr1,0).

Fixed Joints

Similarly create eight more fixed joints between the different body parts by duplicating Fixed Joint: Head-Torso and resetting the inputs using the information given in the table below.

Name	Source	Destination	Center of joint selection (points)
Fixed joint: Torso-Pelvis	Rigid Material: Torso	Rigid Material: Pelvis	39
Fixed joint: Pelvis-Thigh	Rigid Material: Pelvis	Rigid Material: Thigh	14
Fixed joint: Thigh-Leg	Rigid Material: Thigh	Rigid Material: Leg	64
Fixed joint: Viscera-Torso	Rigid Material: Viscera	Rigid Material: Torso	55
Fixed joint: Viscera-Pelvis	Rigid Material: Viscera	Rigid Material: Pelvis	55

Name	Source	Destination	Center of joint selection (points)
Fixed joint: Seat-Pelvis	Base motion: Seat	Rigid Material: Pelvis	13
Fixed joint: Seat-Thigh	Base motion: Seat	Rigid Material: Thigh	61
Fixed joint: Seat-Leg	Base motion: Seat	Rigid Material: Leg	69, 70

Joint Elasticity

Enter the joint elasticity parameters using the following table:

Name	KU (Diagonal Values)	ктн	CU (Diagonal Values)	стн
Fixed joint: Torso-pelvis	k2, k2	kr2	If(i_c==1, c2, 0), If(i_c==1, c2, 0)	If(i_c==I, cr2, 0)
Fixed joint: Pelvis-thigh	k3, k3	kr3	If(i_c==1, c3, 0), If(i_c==1, c3, 0)	If(i_c==I, cr3, 0)
Fixed joint: Thigh-leg	k4, k4	kr4	If(i_c==1, c4, 0), If(i_c==1, c4, 0)	If(i_c==I, cr4, 0)
Fixed joint: Viscera-torso	kh5, 0	0	If(i_c==I, ch5, 0), 0	0
Fixed joint: Viscera-pelvis	0, kv6	0	0, lf(i_c==1, cv6, 0)	0
Fixed joint: Seat-pelvis	kh7, kv7	0	If(i_c==I, ch7, 0), If(i_c==I, cv7, 0)	0
Fixed joint: Seat-thigh	kh8, kv8	0	If(i_c==I, ch8, 0), If(i_c==I, cv8, 0)	0

In this model, the legs are directly mounted to the vibrating base. Therefore, disable the joint elasticity of the Seat-Leg joint.

Fixed Joint: Seat-Leg

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Multibody Dynamics (mbd) click Fixed Joint: Seat-Leg.
- 2 In the Settings window for Fixed Joint, locate the Joint Elasticity section.
- 3 From the list, choose Rigid joint.

Enable the joint force computation for the Seat-Pelvis and the Seat-Thigh joints to compute the apparent mass.

Fixed Joint: Seat-Thigh

- I In the Model Builder window, click Fixed Joint: Seat-Thigh.
- 2 In the Settings window for Fixed Joint, locate the Joint Forces and Moments section.
- 3 From the list, choose Computed using weak constraints.

Fixed Joint: Seat-Pelvis

- I In the Model Builder window, click Fixed Joint: Seat-Pelvis.
- 2 In the Settings window for Fixed Joint, locate the Joint Forces and Moments section.
- 3 From the list, choose Computed using weak constraints.

Fixed Joint: Head-Torso, Fixed Joint: Pelvis-Thigh, Fixed Joint: Seat-Leg, Fixed Joint: Seat-Pelvis, Fixed Joint: Seat-Thigh, Fixed Joint: Thigh-Leg, Fixed Joint: Torso-Pelvis, Fixed Joint: Viscera-Pelvis, Fixed Joint: Viscera-Torso

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl)>Multibody Dynamics (mbd), Ctrl-click to select Fixed Joint: Head-Torso, Fixed Joint: Torso-Pelvis, Fixed Joint: Pelvis-Thigh, Fixed Joint: Thigh-Leg, Fixed Joint: Viscera-Torso, Fixed Joint: Viscera-Pelvis, Fixed Joint: Seat-Pelvis, Fixed Joint: Seat-Thigh, and Fixed Joint: Seat-Leg.
- **2** Right-click and choose **Group**.

Fixed Joints

In the Settings window for Group, type Fixed Joints in the Label text field.

MESH I

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) click Mesh I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Mesh, locate the Physics-Controlled Mesh section.
- 3 From the Element size list, choose Coarser.
- 4 Click Build All.

STUDY I: EIGENFREQUENCY

- I In the Model Builder window, click Study I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Study, type Study 1: Eigenfrequency in the Label text field.

Add a parametric sweep to find the undamped and damped natural frequencies of the system by changing the value of the damping controller parameter.

Parametric Sweep

- I In the Study toolbar, click Parametric Sweep.
- 2 In the Settings window for Parametric Sweep, locate the Study Settings section.

- 3 Click + Add.
- **4** In the table, enter the following settings:

Parameter name	Parameter value list	Parameter unit
i_c (Damping controller)	0 1	

Step 1: Eigenfrequency

- I In the Model Builder window, click Step I: Eigenfrequency.
- 2 In the Settings window for Eigenfrequency, locate the Study Settings section.
- 3 Select the Desired number of eigenfrequencies check box. In the associated text field, type 12.
- 4 In the Search for eigenfrequencies around shift text field, type 0.
- 5 In the Study toolbar, click **Compute**.

RESULTS

Mode Shape (mbd)

Follow the instructions below to plot the eigenmodes shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4.

- I In the Settings window for 2D Plot Group, locate the Data section.
- 2 From the Eigenfrequency (Hz) list, choose 5.4093+0.86452i.
- 3 In the Mode Shape (mbd) toolbar, click Plot.
- 4 Click the **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.
- 5 From the Eigenfrequency (Hz) list, choose 9.3316+4.4096i.
- 7 Click the **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.
- 8 From the Parameter value (i c) list, choose 0.
- 9 From the Eigenfrequency (Hz) list, choose 8.3694.
- 10 In the Mode Shape (mbd) toolbar, click Plot.
- II Click the **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

Add a new study to carry out the frequency response analysis of this system.

ADD STUDY

- I In the Home toolbar, click Add Study to open the Add Study window.
- **2** Go to the **Add Study** window.

- 3 Find the Studies subsection. In the Select Study tree, select General Studies> Frequency Domain.
- 4 Click Add Study in the window toolbar.
- 5 In the Home toolbar, click Add Study to close the Add Study window.

STUDY 2: FREQUENCY RESPONSE

- I In the Model Builder window, click Study 2.
- 2 In the Settings window for Study, type Study 2: Frequency Response in the Label text field.

Step 1: Frequency Domain

- I In the Model Builder window, under Study 2: Frequency Response click Step 1: Frequency Domain.
- 2 In the Settings window for Frequency Domain, locate the Study Settings section.
- 3 In the Frequencies text field, type range (2,0.2,20).

Define the transmissibility variables to use them in the postprocessing.

DEFINITIONS

Variables 1

- I In the Model Builder window, under Component I (compl) right-click Definitions and choose Variables.
- 2 In the Settings window for Variables, locate the Variables section.
- **3** In the table, enter the following settings:

Name	Expression	Unit	Description
H_vert	abs(mbd.rd2.u_tty)/vtt_in		Vertical transmissibility
H_rot	abs(mbd.rd2.th_ttz)/vtt_in	rad/m	Rotational transmissibility
M_a	<pre>abs(mbd.fxj7.Fy+ mbd.fxj8.Fy)/vtt_in</pre>	kg	Apparent mass

STUDY 2: FREQUENCY RESPONSE

In the **Home** toolbar, click **Compute**.

Follow the instructions below to plot the vertical transmissibility shown in Figure 5

RESULTS

Vertical Transmissibility

- I In the Home toolbar, click Add Plot Group and choose ID Plot Group.
- 2 In the Settings window for ID Plot Group, type Vertical Transmissibility in the Label text field.
- 3 Locate the Data section. From the Dataset list, choose Study 2: Frequency Response/ Solution 5 (sol5).
- 4 Click to expand the **Title** section. From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.
- 5 Locate the Plot Settings section.
- **6** Select the **x-axis label** check box. In the associated text field, type Frequency (Hz).

Global I

- I Right-click Vertical Transmissibility and choose Global.
- 2 In the Settings window for Global, click Replace Expression in the upper-right corner of the y-Axis Data section. From the menu, choose Component I (compl)>Definitions> Variables>H_vert - Vertical transmissibility - I.
- 3 Click to expand the Coloring and Style section. From the Width list, choose 2.
- 4 Click to expand the **Legends** section. Clear the **Show legends** check box.
- 5 In the Vertical Transmissibility toolbar, click **Plot**.
- 6 Click the Zoom Extents button in the Graphics toolbar.

Duplicate the vertical transmissibility plot to create the rotational transmissibility plot shown in Figure 6.

Vertical Transmissibility

In the Model Builder window, right-click Vertical Transmissibility and choose Duplicate.

Rotational Transmissibility

- I In the Model Builder window, under Results click Vertical Transmissibility I.
- 2 In the Settings window for ID Plot Group, type Rotational Transmissibility in the Label text field.

Global I

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Rotational Transmissibility node, then click Global I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Global, locate the y-Axis Data section.

3 In the table, enter the following settings:

Expression	Unit	Description
H_rot	deg/m	Rotational transmissibility

- 4 In the Rotational Transmissibility toolbar, click Plot.
- **5** Click the **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

Duplicate the rotational transmissibility plot to create the apparent mass plot shown in Figure 7.

Rotational Transmissibility

In the Model Builder window, right-click Rotational Transmissibility and choose Duplicate.

Apparent Mass

- I In the Model Builder window, under Results click Rotational Transmissibility I.
- 2 In the Settings window for ID Plot Group, type Apparent Mass in the Label text field.

Global I

- I In the Model Builder window, expand the Apparent Mass node, then click Global I.
- 2 In the Settings window for Global, click Replace Expression in the upper-right corner of the y-Axis Data section. From the menu, choose Component I (compl)>Definitions> Variables>M_a - Apparent mass - kg.
- 3 In the Apparent Mass toolbar, click Plot.
- 4 Click the **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.