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(54) **ESOPHAGEAL ELECTROCARDIOGRAM FOR TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY**

ÖSOPHAGEALES ELEKTROKARDIOGRAMM FÜR TRANSÖSOPHAGEALE
ECHOKARDIOGRAFIE

ÉLECTROCARDIOGRAMME DE L'ŒSOPHAGE POUR UNE ÉCHOCARDIOGRAPHIE
TRANSOESOPHAGIENNE

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Description

[0001] The present invention generally relates to trans-esophageal echocardiography ("TEE"). The present invention specifically relates to esophageal electrocardiogram ("ECG") for purposes of improving upon ultrasound scanning and image reconstruction aspects of TEE procedures.

[0002] TEE as known in the art is a procedure for generating high resolution images of a heart by use of high-frequency sound waves (i.e., ultrasound). For example, in a sagittal planar view 10 of a heart H and esophagus E as shown in FIG. 1, a TEE probe 20 having an ultrasound transducer 21 is passed through a patient's open mouth, down into the patient's throat and into the patient's esophagus E. Due to the proximity of esophagus E to a left atrium chamber LA, a right atrium chamber RA, a left ventricle chamber LV and a right ventricle chamber RV of heart H, very clear ultrasound images of the heart chambers and valves may be generated by an ultrasound machine 40 as known in the art. Please note, while in reality esophagus E is positioned behind and between a left atrium chamber LA and a right atrium chamber RA of heart H, FIG. 1 shows esophagus E is spaced from atrium chambers LA and RA for clarity of TEE probe 20.

[0003] ECG as known in the art is a procedure for recording electrical activity of chambers of a patient's heart by the strategic placements of electrodes relative to the patient's heart. For a standard non-invasive ECG, surface electrodes are strategically placed according to well established anatomical landmarks on a skin surface of the thoracic region of the patient as known in the art. However, disadvantages of surface electrodes include (1) a poor signal to noise ratio of an atrial component of surface ECG, (2) a masking of atrial component of ECG by the much larger ventricular component, and (3) a changing phase of atrial ECG activation compared to ventricular activation whereby traditional ECG gating impedes high resolution cine loops for the atrium chambers.

[0004] For a standard echocardiogram whereby a probe is placed on the skin surface of the thoracic region of the patient, an invasive ECG may be implemented in the form of a "pill" Electrode passed through a patient's open mouth, down into the patient's throat and into the patient's esophagus. The pill Electrode is utilized to diagnose difficult atrial arrhythmia, because the atrial signal is so strong and clear when it is measured near the atrium chambers from the esophagus. However, this procedure is not commonly used because of the inconvenience and uncomfortable nature of swallowing a pill on a string and pulling it back out. Moreover, the application of the pill Electrode has been restricted to ECG recording and pacing.

[0005] Document DE 23 05 501 A1 relates to an ultrasound probe adapted to be inserted into the body of a patient and capable of producing sectional images of a beating heart. The ultrasound probe comprises a probe tube, which including an ultrasound transceiver system

for the scanning of body-internal organs, and ECG electrodes for the internal ECG collection.

[0006] In WO 2011/097312 A1 there are described devices and methods for obtaining and using endovascular electrograms in a number of clinical applications and settings. In one example, a method for triggering analysis of an endovascular ECG waveform is based on the detection of a peak in a skin-based ECG waveform in order to determine a location of an indwelling medical device, such as a catheter. In another example, the position of a catheter or other medical device within the vasculature can be determined by analysis of the energy profile of a detected P-wave.

[0007] The present invention recognizes TEE probes are already near the heart with tight physical coupling to the esophagus for high resolution echocardiograms and a strong atrial ECG signal from the TEE probe would facilitate various novel applications for ultrasound imaging. For example, atrial ECG signal alone facilitates an automated detection and alarming for various form of atrial arrhythmia (e.g., atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter and atrial tachycardia). By further example, again using the strong atrial ECG signal, atrial gating of ultrasound is possible allowing for cine loops of the fast moving atrium chambers during high atrial rate arrhythmia.

[0008] The invention is defined by the independent claims. Advantageous embodiments are provided in the dependent claims.

[0009] One form of the present invention is a medical imaging system employing (1) a TEE probe including an ultrasound transducer and one or more atrial electrodes, (2) one or more ventricular electrodes, (3) an ECG machine, and (4) an ultrasound machine. In operation, the TEE probe is positioned in an esophagus of the patient adjacent a heart of the patient whereby the ultrasound transducer scans the patient's heart and whereby each atrial electrode on the TEE probe generates an atrial electrocardiogram signal predominately representative of electrical activity by atrium chambers of the patient's heart.

[0010] The ventricular electrode(s) are attached to a surface thoracic region of a patient whereby each ventricular electrode generates a ventricular signal predominately representative of electrical activity by ventricle chambers of the patient's heart.

[0011] The ECG machine generates an electrocardiogram waveform of the patient's heart from the indicated electrical activities of the chambers of the patient's heart, and additionally generates a cardiac gating signal indicative of a cyclical cardiac phase period of the electrocardiogram waveform.

[0012] From the ultrasound scanning of the patient's heart and a generation of the cardiac gating signal, the ultrasound machine reconstructs an ultrasound image of the patient's heart encompassing a time-segment or an entirety of the cyclical cardiac phase period of the electrocardiogram waveform.

[0013] For example, the ECG machine may derive the

cardiac gating signal from a normal atrial phase of the electrocardiogram waveform (e.g., a P-wave trigger) or a normal ventricular phase of the electrocardiogram waveform (e.g., a QRS complex trigger) whereby the cardiac gating signal triggers a control by the ultrasound machine of the ultrasound scanning of the patient's heart by the ultrasound transducer and/or an image reconstruction of the patient's heart during a time segment or an entirety of the cyclical cardiac phase period of the electrocardiogram waveform.

[0014] Concurrently or alternatively, the ECG machine may derive the cardiac gating signal from a detection by the ECG machine of an atrial phase of an atrial arrhythmia of the electrocardiogram waveform (e.g., atrial ECG gating for atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter and atrial tachycardia) whereby the cardiac gating signal again triggers a control by the ultrasound machine of the ultrasound scanning of the patient's heart by the ultrasound transducer and/or an image reconstruction of the patient's heart during a time segment or an entirety of the cyclical cardiac phase period of the electrocardiogram waveform. Note this atrial ECG gating is useful for atrial imaging for any arrhythmia where (a) the atrial and ventricular activities overlap, (b) the atrial and ventricular rates are different or (c) a phase between atrial and ventricular activities varies. In particular, for some atrial arrhythmia's like atrial flutter, there are multiple atrial cycles for each ventricular cycle and the atrial and ventricular activity are completely overlapped in time. Often, the number of atrial cycles per ventricular cycle varies.

[0015] The foregoing form and other forms of the present invention as well as various features and advantages of the present invention will become further apparent from the following detailed description of various embodiments of the present invention read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. The detailed description and drawings are merely illustrative of the present invention rather than limiting, the scope of the present invention being defined by the appended claims.

FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a medical imaging system in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. 2-4 illustrate exemplary cardiac gating in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. 5-7 illustrate exemplary embodiments of atrial electrodes in accordance with present invention.

[0016] For purposes of the present invention, the structural terms "transesophageal probe", "ultrasound transducer", "electrode", "ECG machine" and "ultrasound machine" as well as synonymous and related terms are to be broadly interpreted as known in the art of the present invention.

[0017] To facilitate an understanding of the present invention, exemplary embodiments of the present invention will be provided herein directed to an esophageal ECG for purposes of improving upon ultrasound scan-

ning and image reconstruction aspects of a TEE procedure as implemented by a medical imaging system of the present invention as shown in FIG. 1 employing (1) TEE probe 20 having ultrasound transducer 21 and an X number of atrial electrodes 22, $X \geq 1$, (2) a Y number of ventricular electrodes 23, $Y \geq 1$, (3) an ECG machine 30 and (4) ultrasound machine 40.

[0018] Referring to FIG. 1, as previously stated herein, the TEE procedure involves TEE probe 20 being passed through a patient's open mouth, down into the patient's throat and into the patient's esophagus E. Due to the proximity of esophagus E to heart H, the chambers and valves of heart H may be clearly scanned by ultrasound transducer 21 as known in the art. In accordance with the present invention, the TEE procedure involves a novel arrangement atrial electrodes 22 on TEE probe 20 whereby electrical activity of atrium chambers RA and LA may be directly sensed by atrial electrode(s) 22 also due to the proximity of esophagus E to heart H.

[0019] The TEE procedure further involves an arrangement of ventricular electrodes 23 on a surface thoracic region of the patient as known in the art whereby electrical activity of ventricle chambers RV and LV may be directly sensed by ventricular electrode(s) 23 as known in the art.

[0020] Each atrial electrode 22 generates and communicates an atrial ECG signal AE to an ECG machine 30, and each ventricular electrode 23 generates and communicates a ventricular ECG signal VE to ECG machine 30 whereby ECG machine 30 generates an ECG waveform as known in the art, such as, for example, a normal ECG waveform 31 as shown. Each atrial ECG signal AE is predominately indicative of electrical activity by atrium chambers RA and LA of the heart H, and each ventricular ECG signal VE is predominately indicative of electrical activity by ventricle chambers RV and LV of the heart H. Consequently, a normal ECG waveform generated by ECG machine 30 (e.g., ECG waveform 31 as shown) is optimal in view of an atrial phase of the ECG waveform (i.e., atrial depolarization and atrioventricular node delay) being derived from a direct sensing of atrium chambers RA and LA, and in view of a ventricular phase of the ECG waveform (i.e., atrial depolarization and/or ventricular repolarization) being derived from a direct sensing of ventricle chambers RV and LV. Additionally, a presence of an atrial phase of an arrhythmia of an abnormal ECG waveform (not shown in FIG. 1) is more easily detected via each atrial ECG signal AE similar to the way pacemakers use different connections to pick up signals emphasizing atrial electrical activity rather than ventricular electrical activity.

[0021] For cardiac gating purposes based on the advantages of ECG signals AE and VE of the present invention, ECG machine 30 incorporates a cardiac phase monitor 32 and an atrial arrhythmia monitor 33 as hardware, software, firmware and/or circuit modules in a segregated form or integrated into an existing module (e.g., an automated ECG analyzing unit as known in the art).

[0022] Cardiac phase monitor 32 monitors one or both

ECG signals AE and VE to detect each atrial phase of a normal ECG waveform or each ventricular phase of a normal ECG waveform. From each detection of a designated cardiac phase (i.e., atrial or ventricular), cardiac phase monitor 32 generates and communicates a cardiac gating signal in the form of a cardiac phase signal CP to ultrasound machine 40.

[0023] For atrial phase detection, cardiac phase monitor 32 processes both ECG signals AE and VE or exclusively processes atrial ECG signal(s) AE in detecting each atrial phase of a normal ECG waveform, and communicates cardiac phase signal CP as a scanning and/or image reconstruction trigger for ultrasound machine 40 (e.g., a P-wave trigger).

[0024] For ventricular phase detection, cardiac phase monitor 32 processes both ECG signals AE and VE or exclusively processes ventricular ECG signal(s) VE in detecting each ventricular phase of a normal ECG waveform, and communicates cardiac phase signal CP as a scanning and/or image reconstruction trigger for ultrasound machine 40 (e.g., a QRS complex trigger).

[0025] Atrial arrhythmia monitor 33 monitors one or both ECG signals AE and VE to detect any presence of an atrial arrhythmia phase of an abnormal ECG waveform (e.g., atrial fibrillation, atrial flutter and atrial tachycardia), and communicates a cardiac gating signal in the form of an arrhythmia alarm signal AA to ultrasound machine 40. Preferably, atrial arrhythmia monitor 33 exclusively monitor atrial ECG signal(s) AE in detecting any presence of an atrial arrhythmia phase of an abnormal ECG waveform.

[0026] Ultrasound machines 40 incorporates a scanner 42 as known in the art for controlling a scanning of heart H by ultrasound transducer 21, and an image reconstructor 43 as known in the art for image reconstructing an ultrasound image of heart H from ultrasound echo signals USE received from ultrasound transducer 21. In practice, ultrasound transducer 21 may be any type of ultrasound transducer as known in the art (e.g., two-dimensional or three-dimensional, linear or curved, etc.) and scanner 42 and image reconstructor 43 are structurally configured in accordance with the type of ultrasound transducer.

[0027] For purposes of the present invention, scanner 42 and/or image reconstructor 43 are further structurally configured to execute respective scanning and image reconstruction tasks as triggered by cardiac phase signal CP and/or as triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA.

[0028] For example, as shown in FIG. 2, scanner 42 is structurally configured to execute the scanning task over a continuous scanning period SCP, and image reconstructor 43 is structurally configured to execute the image reconstruction task during a cyclical image reconstruction period IRP as triggered by cardiac phase signal CP for atrial phase detection or as triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA. For a normal ECG waveform 31a, image reconstruction period IRP encompasses a portion (e.g., P-wave only) or an entirety of the atrial phase as triggered

by cardiac phase signal CP. For an abnormal ECG waveform 31b, image reconstruction period IRP preferably encompasses an entirety of the atrial phase as triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA. To this end, image reconstructor 43 may be structurally configured whereby arrhythmia alarm signal AA overrides cardiac phase signal CP whenever an atrial arrhythmia is detected by monitor 33 (FIG. 1).

[0029] Also by example, as shown in FIG. 3, scanner 42 is structurally configured to execute the scanning task during a cyclical scanning period SCP as triggered by cardiac phase signal CP for atrial phase detection or as triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA, and image reconstructor 43 is structurally configured to execute the image reconstruction task during cyclical image reconstruction period IRP coinciding with scanning period SP. For a normal ECG waveform 31a, scanning period SCP and image reconstruction period IRP encompass a portion (e.g., P-wave only) or an entirety of the atrial phase as triggered by cardiac phase signal CP. For an abnormal ECG waveform 31b, image scanning period SCP and reconstruction period IRP preferably encompass an entirety of the atrial phase as triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA. To this end, scanner 42 may be structurally configured whereby arrhythmia alarm signal AA overrides cardiac phase signal CP whenever an atrial arrhythmia is detected by monitor 33 (FIG. 1).

[0030] By further example, as exemplary shown in FIG. 4, an atrial flutter waveform 31c involves multiple atrial cycles (i.e., F-waves) prior to the QRS complex for each ventricular cycle (i.e., T-wave). For this waveform 31c, the atrial electrical activity and the ventricular electrical activity are overlapped in time whereby a number of atrial cycles per ventricular cycle may vary and whereby a phase between an atrial cycle and the QRS complex may vary as shown between FIGS. 4A and 4B. To this end, scanner 42 is structurally configured to execute the scanning task in phases ϕ as triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA, and image reconstructor 43 is structurally configured to execute the image reconstruction task coinciding with scanning phases ϕ . More particularly, as exemplary shown in FIG.4, six (6) phases ϕ are varied slices of each atrial cycle in an effort to build a single longer period image over multiple atrial cycles to show a single complete atrial cycle as would be appreciated by those having ordinary skill in the art (e.g., similar to building a larger 3D ultrasound image from smaller subvolumes captured across many heart beats).

[0031] From the description of FIGS. 2-4, those having ordinary skill in the art will appreciate in practice that scanner 42 and/or image reconstructor 43 may be triggered by cardiac phase signal CP and/or triggered by arrhythmia alarm signal AA to execute respective scanning and image reconstruction tasks in various and numerous operational modes.

[0032] Referring back to FIG. 1, in practice, each atrial electrode 22 may have structural form suitable for directly sensing electrical activity of atrium chambers of heart H.

For example, each atrial electrode 22 may have a lead form as known in the art, or be an electrode ring 22a disposed around TEE probe 20 as shown in FIG. 5. Also in practice, multiple atrial electrode 22 may be arranged on TEE probe 22 in a manner suitable for directly sensing electrical activity of atrium chambers of heart H. For example, atrial electrodes 22 may have a linear arrangement 50 parallel to a longitudinal axis of TEE probe 20 indicated by the dashed line as shown in FIG. 6 or may have a circular arrangement 51 perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of TEE probe 20 as shown in FIG. 7.

[0033] Also in practice, a pair of atrial electrodes 22 or a pairing of an atrial electrode 22 and a ventricular electrode 23 may be utilized to generate a bipolar ECG signal. Such pairings will enhance the cardiac gating feature of ECG machine 30. More particularly, a bipolar difference between electrodes enhances the signal amplitude along the physical axis of the bipolar electrode pair so that different bipolar combinations can be used to enhance signal amplitude in various parts of the heart whereby the electrical conduction goes in the direction of the bipolar electrode pair. This is the reason for multiple ECG electrodes for diagnostic ECG.

[0034] Referring to FIGS. 1-7, those having ordinary skill in the art will appreciate numerous benefits of the present invention including, but not limited to, an atrial arrhythmia alarm during a TEE procedure that may be used for cardiac gating purposes to display cine loops of fast moving atrial phases. For example, referring to FIG. 4, through short scan periods at varied phases of an atrial depolarization across multiple atrial cycles, a very high resolution image may be generated of the atrial depolarization.

[0035] While various embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the embodiments of the present invention as described herein are illustrative, and various changes and modifications may be made and equivalents may be substituted for elements thereof without departing from the true scope of the present invention. In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt the teachings of the present invention without departing from its central scope. Therefore, it is intended that the present invention not be limited to the particular embodiments disclosed as the best mode contemplated for carrying out the present invention, but that the present invention includes all embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

1. A medical imaging system for ultrasound imaging a heart of a patient, the medical imaging system comprising:

a transesophageal probe (20) operable to be positioned in an esophagus of the patient adjacent

the heart,

wherein the transesophageal probe (20) includes an ultrasound transducer (21) operable to scan the heart, and

wherein the transesophageal probe (20) further includes at least one atrial electrode (22), each atrial electrode (22) being operable to generate an atrial electrocardiogram signal predominately indicative of electrical activity by atrium chambers of the heart;

at least one ventricular electrode (23) operable to be attached to a surface thoracic region of the patient, each ventricular electrode (23) is further operable to generate a ventricular electrocardiogram signal predominately indicative of electrical activity by ventricle chambers of the heart; an electrocardiogram machine (30) operable to generate an electrocardiogram waveform of the heart responsive to a generation of the at least one atrial electrocardiogram signal by the at least one atrial electrode (22) and responsive to a generation of the at least one ventricular electrocardiogram signal by the at least one ventricular electrode (23),

wherein the electrocardiogram machine (30) is further operable to generate a cardiac gating signal indicative of a cyclical cardiac phase period of the electrocardiogram waveform; and an ultrasound machine (40) to reconstruct at least one ultrasound image of the heart encompassing at least a portion of the cyclical cardiac phase period of the electrocardiogram responsive to an ultrasound scanning of the heart by the ultrasound transducer (21) and responsive to a generation of the cardiac gating signal by the electrocardiogram machine (30).

2. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein the electrocardiogram machine (30) includes a cardiac phase monitor (32) operable to derive the cyclical cardiac phase period from a normal atrial phase of the electrocardiogram waveform or from a normal ventricular phase of the electrocardiogram waveform.
3. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein the electrocardiogram machine (30) includes an atrial arrhythmia monitor (33) operable to derive the cyclical cardiac phase period from an atrial arrhythmia phase of the electrocardiogram waveform.
4. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein the electrocardiogram machine (30) includes a cardiac phase monitor (32) operable to derive an atrial phase of the electrocardiogram waveform exclusively from the at least one atrial electrocardiogram signal.

5. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein the electrocardiogram machine (30) generates the electrocardiogram waveform as a function of:
- a bipolar signal derived from a pair of atrial electrodes (22); or
 - a bipolar signal derived from an atrial electrode (22) and a ventricular electrode (23); or
 - a signal derived from a combination of the at least one atrial (22) electrode and the at least one ventricular electrode (23).
6. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein each atrial electrode (22) is a lead electrode externally disposed on the transesophageal probe (20), and wherein preferably the transesophageal probe (20) includes a plurality of atrial electrodes (22) in an arrangement parallel to a longitudinal axis of the transesophageal probe (20) or in an arrangement perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the transesophageal probe (20).
7. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein each atrial electrode (22) is a ring electrode externally disposed around the transesophageal probe (20).
8. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein the ultrasound machine (40) includes a scanner (42) operable to control the ultrasound scanning of the heart by the ultrasound transducer (21) during a cyclical scanning period; and wherein the scanner (42) derives the cyclical scanning period from the cyclical cardiac phase period.
9. The medical imaging system of claim 1, wherein the ultrasound machine (40) includes an image reconstructor (43) operable to image reconstruct the ultrasound image of the heart during a cyclical image reconstruction period; and wherein the image reconstructor (43) derives the cyclical image reconstruction period from the cyclical cardiac phase period.
10. The medical imaging system of claim 9, wherein the image reconstructor (43) derives the cyclical image reconstruction period as a larger three dimensional ultrasound cine loop made from smaller subvolumes.

Patentansprüche

1. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem zur Ultraschallbildgebung des Herzens eines Patienten, wobei das medizinische Bildgebungssystem Folgendes umfasst:

eine transösophageale Sonde (20), die betriebsfähig ist, um in dem Ösophagus des Patienten angrenzend an das Herz positioniert zu werden,

wobei die transösophageale Sonde (20) einen Ultraschallwandler (21) umfasst, der betriebsfähig ist, um das Herz zu scannen, und wobei die transösophageale Sonde (20) ferner mindestens eine atriale Elektrode (22) umfasst, wobei jede atriale Elektrode (22) betriebsfähig ist, um ein atriales Elektrokardiogrammsignal zu erzeugen, das vorwiegend elektrische Aktivität durch Atriumkammern des Herzens angibt;

mindestens eine ventrikuläre Elektrode (23), die betriebsfähig ist, um an einer Thoraxoberflächenregion des Patienten angebracht zu werden, wobei jede ventrikuläre Elektrode (23) ferner betriebsfähig ist, um ein ventrikuläres Elektrokardiogrammsignal zu erzeugen, das vorwiegend elektrische Aktivität durch Ventrikelkammern des Herzens angibt;

eine Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30), die betriebsfähig ist, um als Reaktion auf die Erzeugung des mindestens einen atrialen Elektrokardiogrammsignals durch die mindestens eine atriale Elektrode (22) und als Reaktion auf die Erzeugung des mindestens einen ventrikulären Elektrokardiogrammsignals durch die mindestens eine ventrikuläre Elektrode (23) eine Elektrokardiogrammwellenform des Herzens zu erzeugen, wobei die Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30) ferner betriebsfähig ist, um ein kardiales Gating-Signal zu erzeugen, das eine zyklische Herzphasenperiode der Elektrokardiogrammwellenform angibt; und eine Ultraschallmaschine (40), um als Reaktion auf das Ultraschallscannen des Herzens durch den Ultraschallwandler (21) und als Reaktion auf die Erzeugung des kardialen Gating-Signals durch die Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30) mindestens ein Ultraschallbild des Herzens umfassend mindestens einen Teil der zyklischen Herzphasenperiode des Elektrokardiogramms zu erzeugen.

2. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30) einen Herzphasenmonitor (32) umfasst, der betriebsfähig ist, um die zyklische Herzphasenperiode von einer normalen atrialen Phase der Elektrokardiogrammwellenform oder von einer normalen ventrikulären Phase der Elektrokardiogrammwellenform abzuleiten.

3. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30) einen atrialen Arrhythmie-monitor (33) umfasst, der betriebsfähig ist, um die zyklische Herzphasenperiode von einer atrialen Arrhythmiephase des Elektrokardiogramms abzuleiten. 5
4. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30) einen Herzphasenmonitor (32) umfasst, um eine atriale Phase der Elektrokardiogrammwellenform ausschließlich von dem mindestens einen atrialen Elektrokardiogrammsignal abzuleiten. 10
5. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Elektrokardiogrammmaschine (30) die Elektrokardiogrammwellenform als Funktion erzeugt von: 15
 - einem bipolaren Signal abgeleitet von einem Paar atrialer Elektroden (22); oder
 - einem bipolaren Signal abgeleitet von einer atrialen Elektrode (22) und einer ventrikulären Elektrode (23); oder
 - einem Signal abgeleitet von einer Kombination aus der mindestens einen atrialen Elektrode (22) und der mindestens einen ventrikulären Elektrode (23). 25
6. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei jede atriale Elektrode (22) eine Ableitungselektrode ist, die extern an der transösophagealen Sonde (20) angeordnet ist, und wobei vorzugsweise die transösophageale Sonde (20) eine Vielzahl von atrialen Elektroden (22) in einer Anordnung parallel zu einer Längsachse der transösophagealen Sonde (20) oder in einer Anordnung senkrecht zu einer Längsachse der transösophagealen Sonde (20) umfasst. 30 35 40
7. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei jede atriale Elektrode (22) eine Ringelektrode ist, die extern um die transösophageale Sonde (20) herum angeordnet ist. 45
8. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Ultraschallmaschine (40) einen Scanner (42) umfasst, der betriebsfähig ist, um das Ultraschallscannen des Herzens durch den Ultraschallwandler (21) während einer zyklischen Scanperiode zu steuern; und wobei der Scanner (42) die zyklische Scanperiode von der zyklischen Herzphasenperiode ableitet. 50 55
9. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Ultraschallmaschine (40) eine Bildrekon-

struktionseinheit (43) umfasst, die betriebsfähig ist, um das Ultraschallbild der Herzens während einer zyklischen Bildrekonstruktionsperiode zu rekonstruieren; und

wobei die Bildrekonstruktionseinheit (43) die zyklische Bildrekonstruktionsperiode von der zyklischen Herzphasenperiode ableitet.

10. Medizinisches Bildgebungssystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei die Bildrekonstruktionseinheit (43) die zyklische Bildrekonstruktionsperiode als eine größere dreidimensionale Ultraschall-Cineloop herstellt aus kleineren Subvolumina ableitet.

Revendications

1. Système d'imagerie médicale pour une imagerie échographique d'un coeur d'un patient, le système d'imagerie médicale comprenant :

une sonde transoesophagienne (20) actionnable pour être positionnée dans un oesophage du patient au niveau adjacent au coeur, dans lequel la sonde transoesophagienne (20) inclut un transducteur à ultrasons (21) actionnable pour effectuer un balayage du coeur, et dans lequel la sonde transoesophagienne (20) inclut en outre au moins une électrode auriculaire (22), chaque électrode auriculaire (22) étant actionnable pour générer un signal d'électrocardiogramme auriculaire principalement indicatif de l'activité électrique dans les oreillettes du coeur ;

au moins une électrode ventriculaire (23) actionnable pour être fixée à une région thoracique de surface du patient, chaque électrode ventriculaire (23) étant en outre actionnable pour générer un signal d'électrocardiogramme ventriculaire principalement indicatif d'une activité électrique dans les ventricules du coeur ;

une machine d'électrocardiogramme (30) actionnable pour générer une forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme du coeur répondant à une génération de l'au moins un signal d'électrocardiogramme auriculaire pour l'au moins une électrode auriculaire (22) et répondant à une génération de l'au moins un signal d'électrocardiogramme ventriculaire par l'au moins une électrode ventriculaire (23),

dans lequel la machine d'électrocardiogramme (30) est en outre actionnable pour générer un signal de déclenchement cardiaque indicatif d'une période de phase cardiaque cyclique de la forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme ; et une machine d'échographie (40) pour reconstruire au moins une image échographique du

- coeur couvrant au moins une partie de la période de phase cardiaque cyclique de l'électrocardiogramme répondant à une échographie du coeur par le transducteur à ultrasons (21) et répondant à une génération du signal de déclenchement cardiaque par la machine d'électrocardiogramme (30).
2. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la machine d'électrocardiogramme (30) inclut un moniteur de phase cardiaque (32) actionnable pour dériver la période de phase cardiaque cyclique d'une phase auriculaire normale de la forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme ou d'une phase ventriculaire normale de la forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme.
 3. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la machine d'électrocardiogramme (30) inclut un moniteur d'arythmie auriculaire (33) actionnable pour dériver la période de phase cardiaque cyclique d'une phase d'arythmie auriculaire de la forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme.
 4. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la machine d'électrocardiogramme (30) inclut un moniteur de phase cardiaque (32) actionnable pour dériver une phase auriculaire de la forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme exclusivement à partir de l'au moins un signal d'électrocardiogramme.
 5. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la machine d'électrocardiogramme (30) génère la forme d'onde d'électrocardiogramme en fonction :
 - d'un signal bipolaire dérivé d'une paire d'électrodes auriculaires (22) ; ou
 - d'un signal bipolaire dérivé d'une électrode auriculaire (22) et d'une électrode ventriculaire (23) ; ou
 - d'un signal dérivé d'une combinaison de l'au moins une électrode auriculaire (22) et de l'au moins une électrode ventriculaire (23).
 6. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel chaque électrode auriculaire (22) est une électrode à dérivation disposée au niveau externe sur la sonde transoesophagienne (20), et dans lequel de préférence la sonde transoesophagienne (20) inclut une pluralité d'électrodes auriculaires (22) dans un agencement parallèle à un axe longitudinal de la sonde transoesophagienne (20) ou dans un agencement perpendiculaire à un axe longitudinal de la sonde transoesophagienne (20).
 7. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel chaque électrode auriculaire (22) est une électrode circulaire disposée au niveau externe autour de la sonde transoesophagienne (20).
 8. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la machine d'échographie (40) inclut un scanner (42) actionnable pour commander le balayage échographique du coeur par le transducteur à ultrasons (21) durant une période de balayage cyclique ; et dans lequel le scanner (42) dérive la période de balayage cyclique de la période de phase cardiaque cyclique.
 9. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la machine d'échographie (40) inclut un reconstituteur d'image (43) actionnable pour reconstruire en image l'image échographique du coeur durant une période de reconstruction d'image cyclique ; et dans lequel le reconstituteur d'image (43) dérive une période de reconstruction d'image cyclique de la période de phase cardiaque cyclique.
 10. Système d'imagerie médicale selon la revendication 9, dans lequel le reconstituteur d'image (43) dérive une période de reconstruction d'image cyclique en tant que boucle cinématique échographique tridimensionnelle constituée à partir de sous-volumes inférieurs.

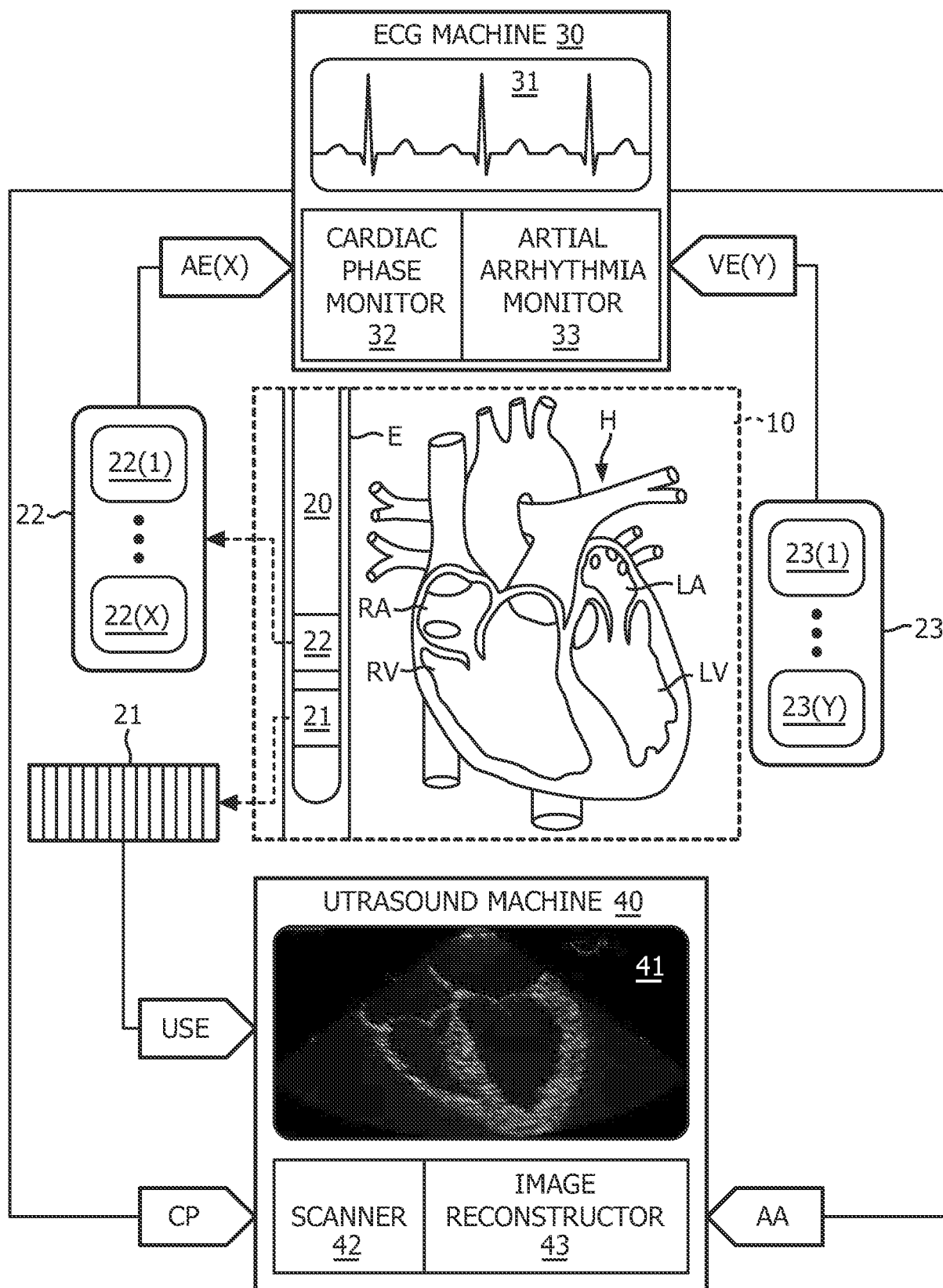


FIG. 1

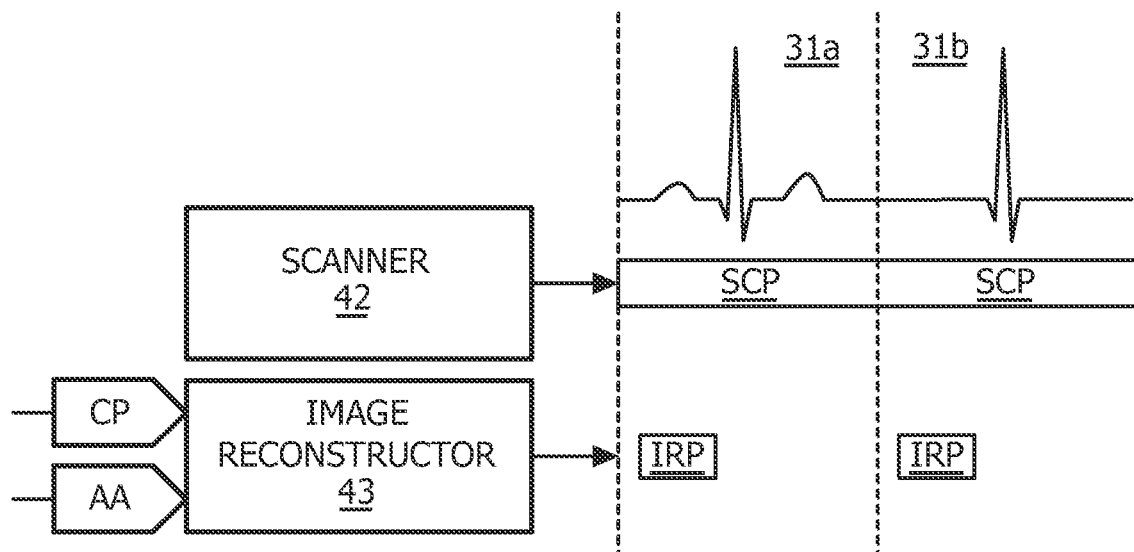


FIG. 2

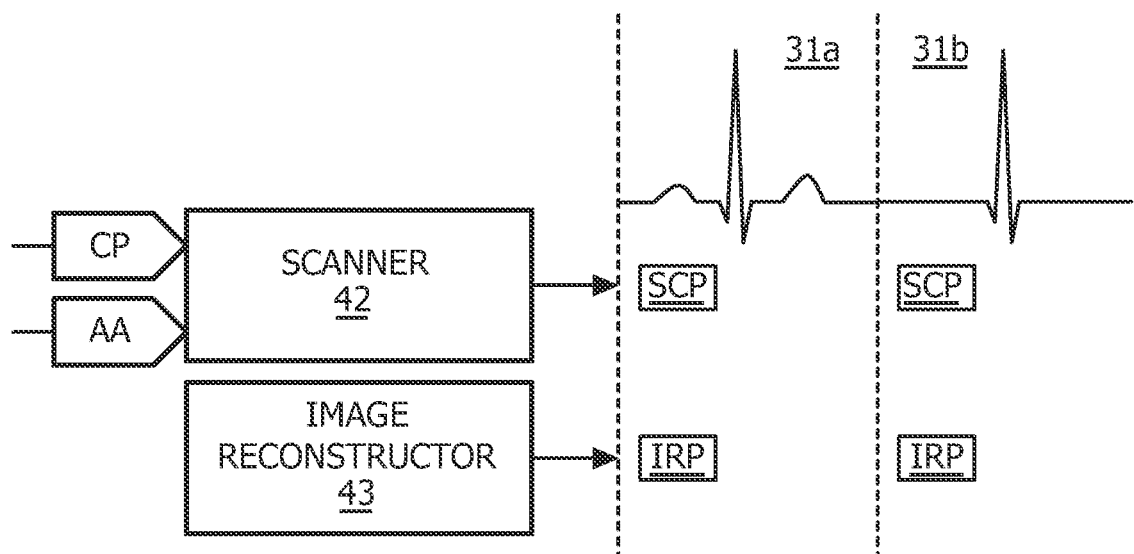


FIG. 3

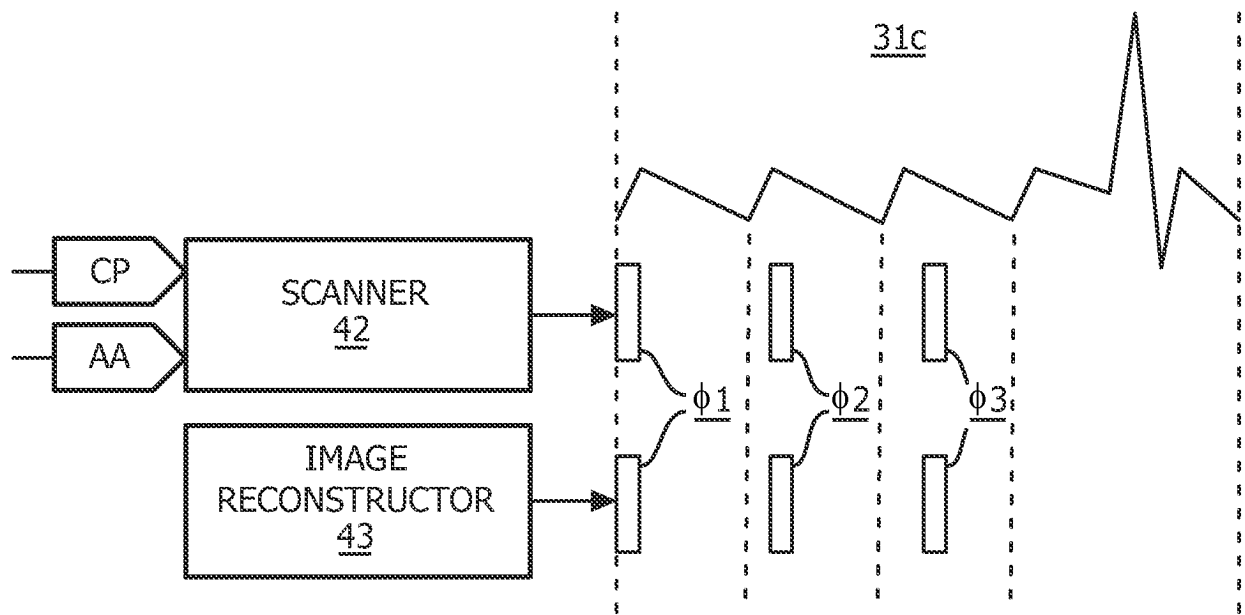


FIG. 4A

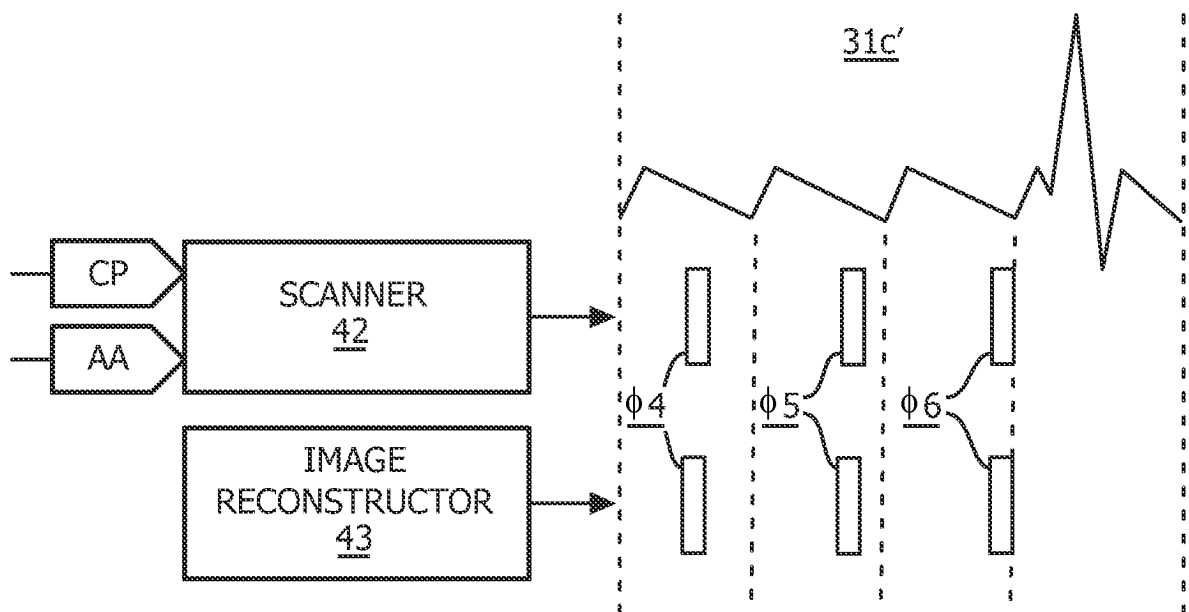


FIG. 4B

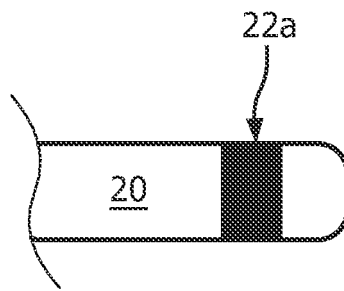


FIG. 5

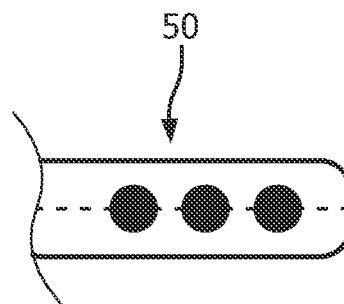


FIG. 6

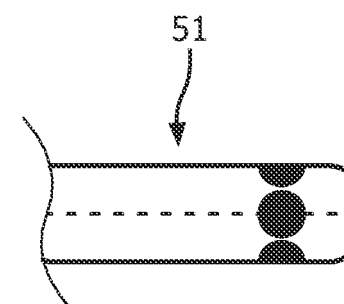


FIG. 7

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

- DE 2305501 A1 [0005]
- WO 2011097312 A1 [0006]

专利名称(译)	食管心电图用于经食管超声心动图检查		
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摘要(译)

医学成像系统采用经食道探针 (20) , 其包括用于扫描患者心脏的超声换能器 (21) 和用于产生主要指示心房腔室的电活动的心房电极信号 (22) 。病人的心脏。医学成像系统还使用心室电极 (23) 来产生心室心电图信号, 其主要指示患者心脏的心室腔室的电活动。医学成像系统还使用心电图机 (30) , 用于基于患者心脏的指示电活动产生心电图波形, 并用于产生表示心电图波形的周期性心脏相位周期的心脏门控信号。医学成像系统还使用超声机器 (40) 来重建患者心脏的超声图像, 其包括时间段或整个周期性心脏相位时段。