



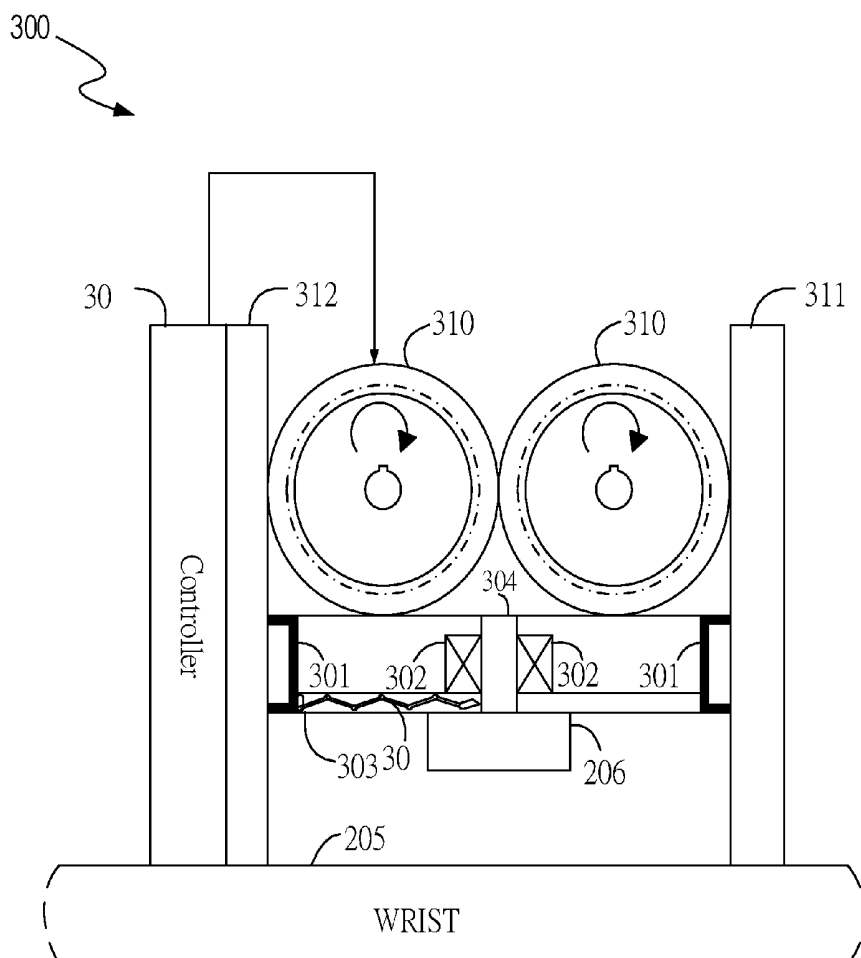
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CHEN et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2019/0282169 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 19, 2019**(54) **AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE FOR
MEASURING PHYSIOLOGICAL
INFORMATION AND A METHOD THEREOF****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.***A61B 5/00* (2006.01)*A61B 5/0205* (2006.01)*A61B 5/1455* (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**CPC *A61B 5/6844* (2013.01); *A61B 5/0205*
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(2) Date: **Jan. 14, 2019****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 62/365,978, filed on Jul.
22, 2016.(57) **ABSTRACT**

One example embodiment is an electronic device that measures physiological information of a living subject. The electronic device includes a sensor assembly, a first driving unit with an electromagnetic structure and a second driving unit. The first driving unit drives the sensor assembly to scan the living subject's skin along a scan path thereabove in a contactless way to determine a measuring position. The second driving unit drives the sensor assembly to move towards and contact the living subject's skin to measure the physiological information based on the measuring position.



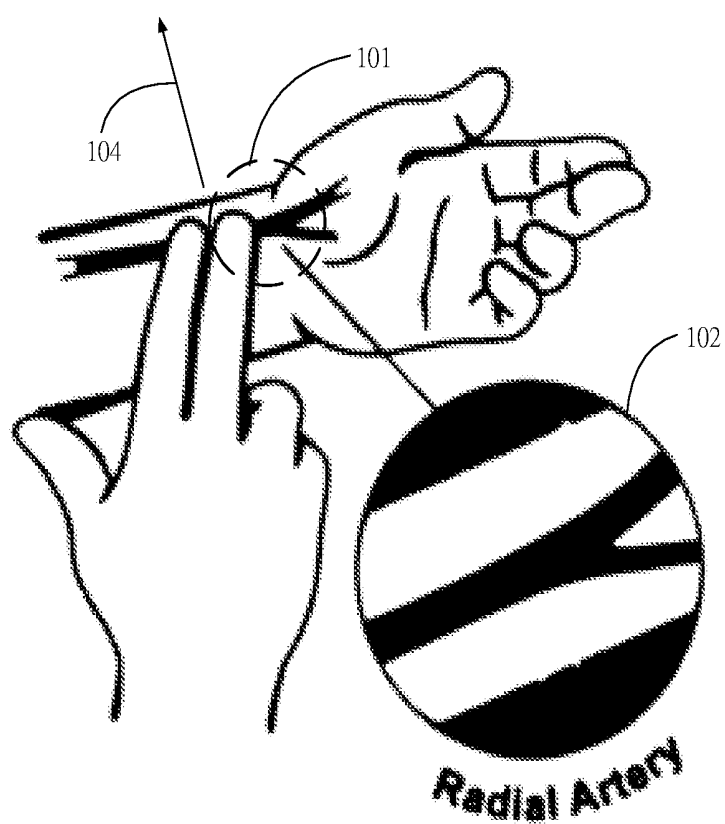


Figure 1

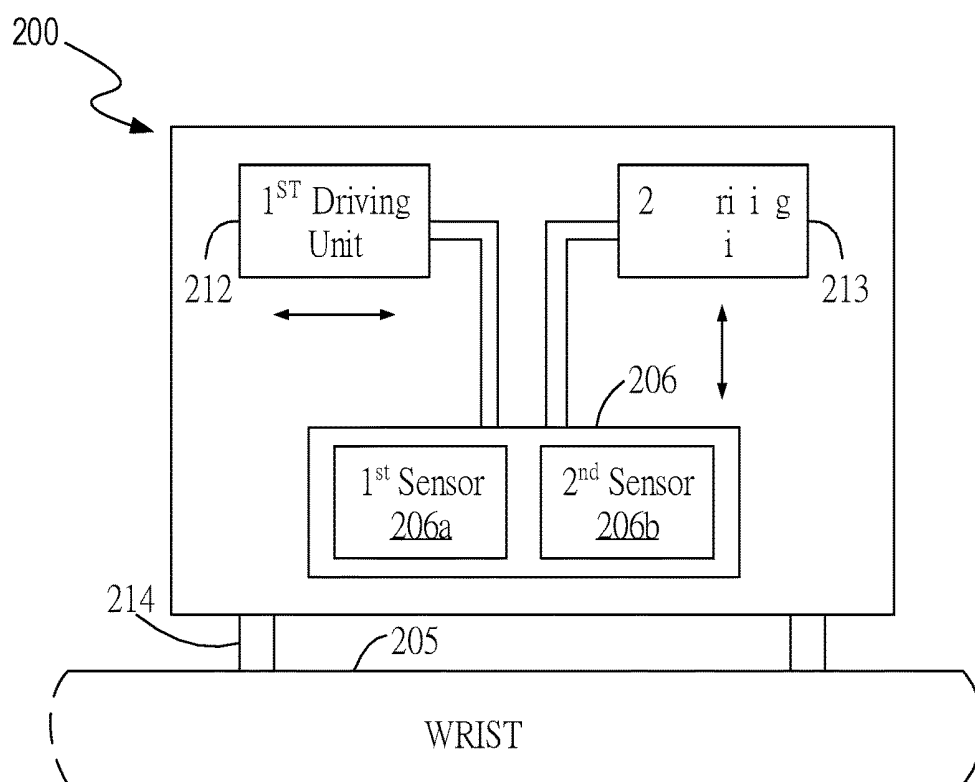


Figure 2

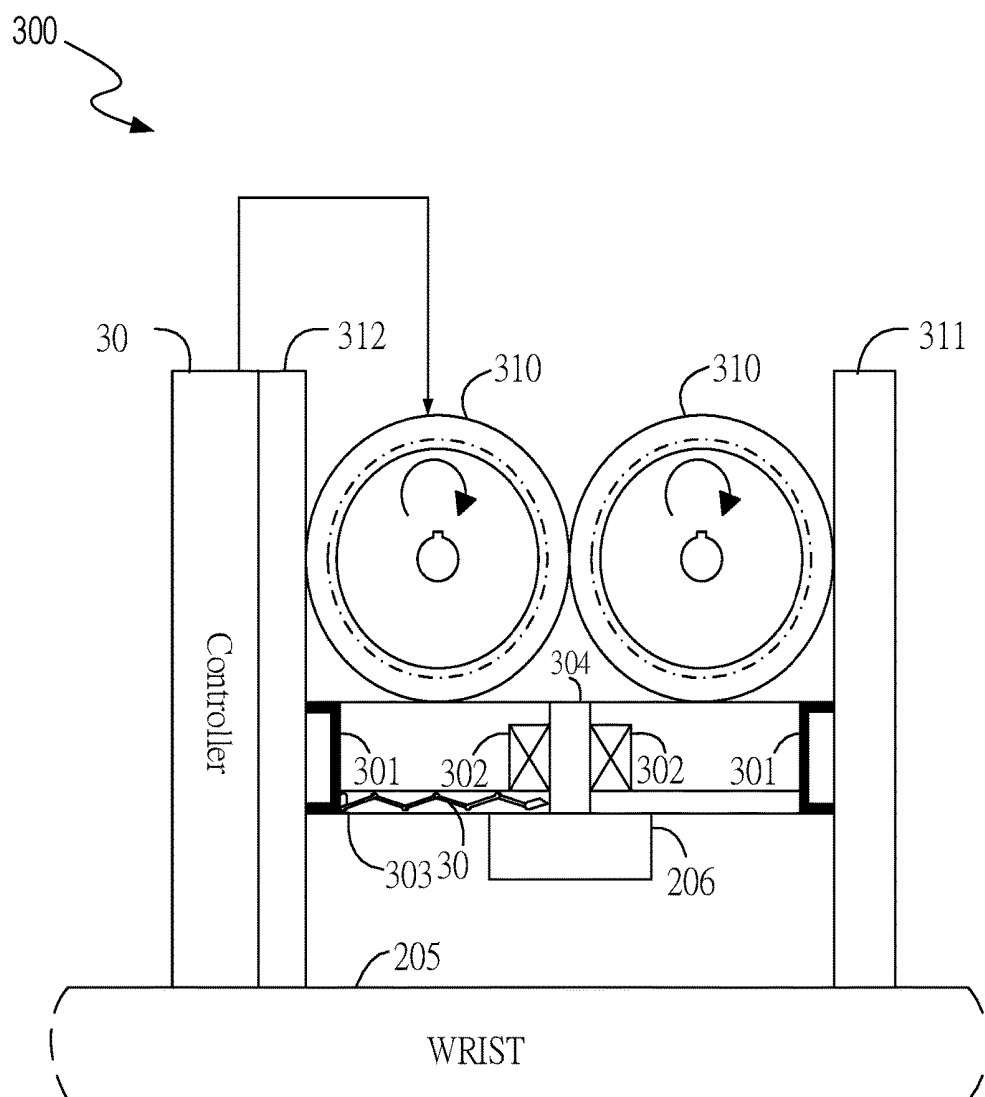


Figure 3

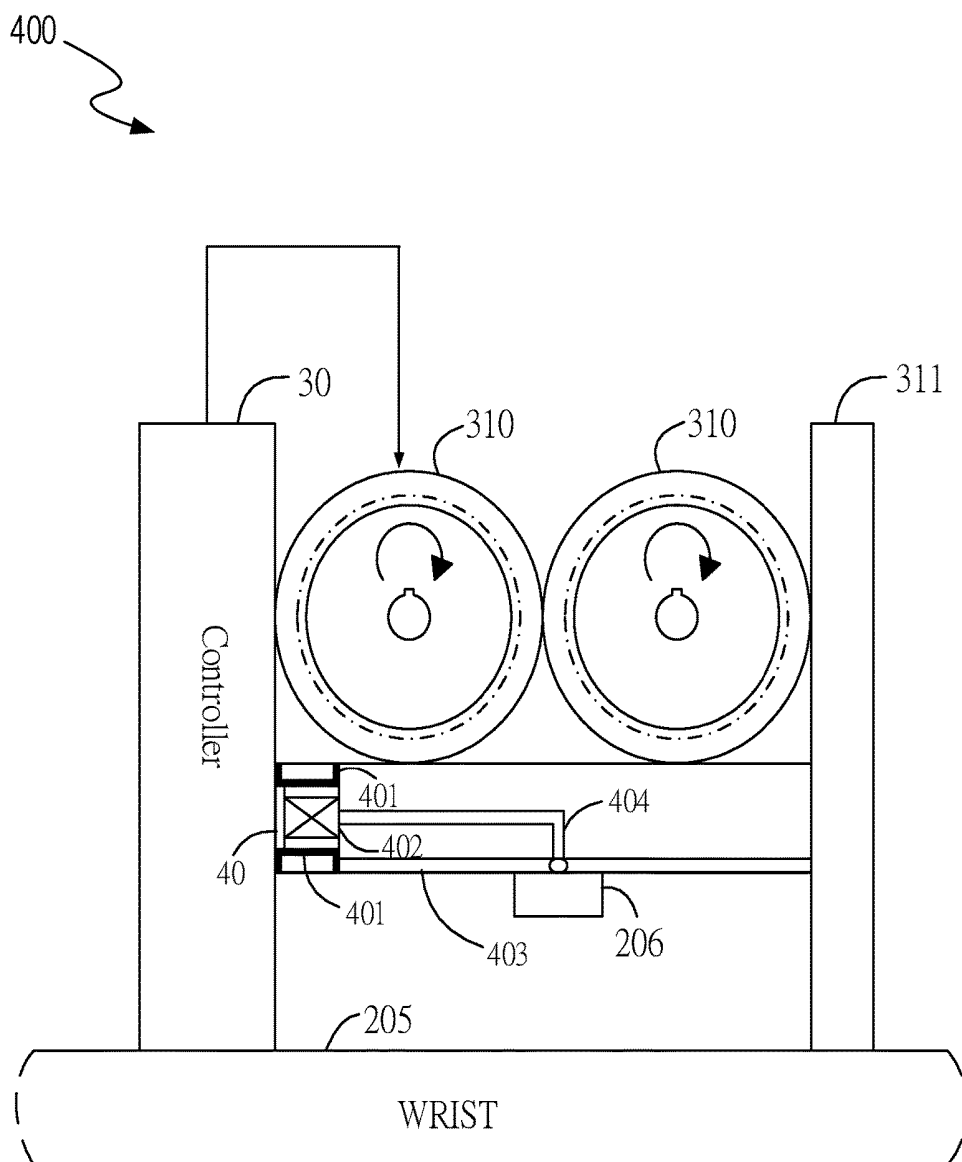


Figure 4

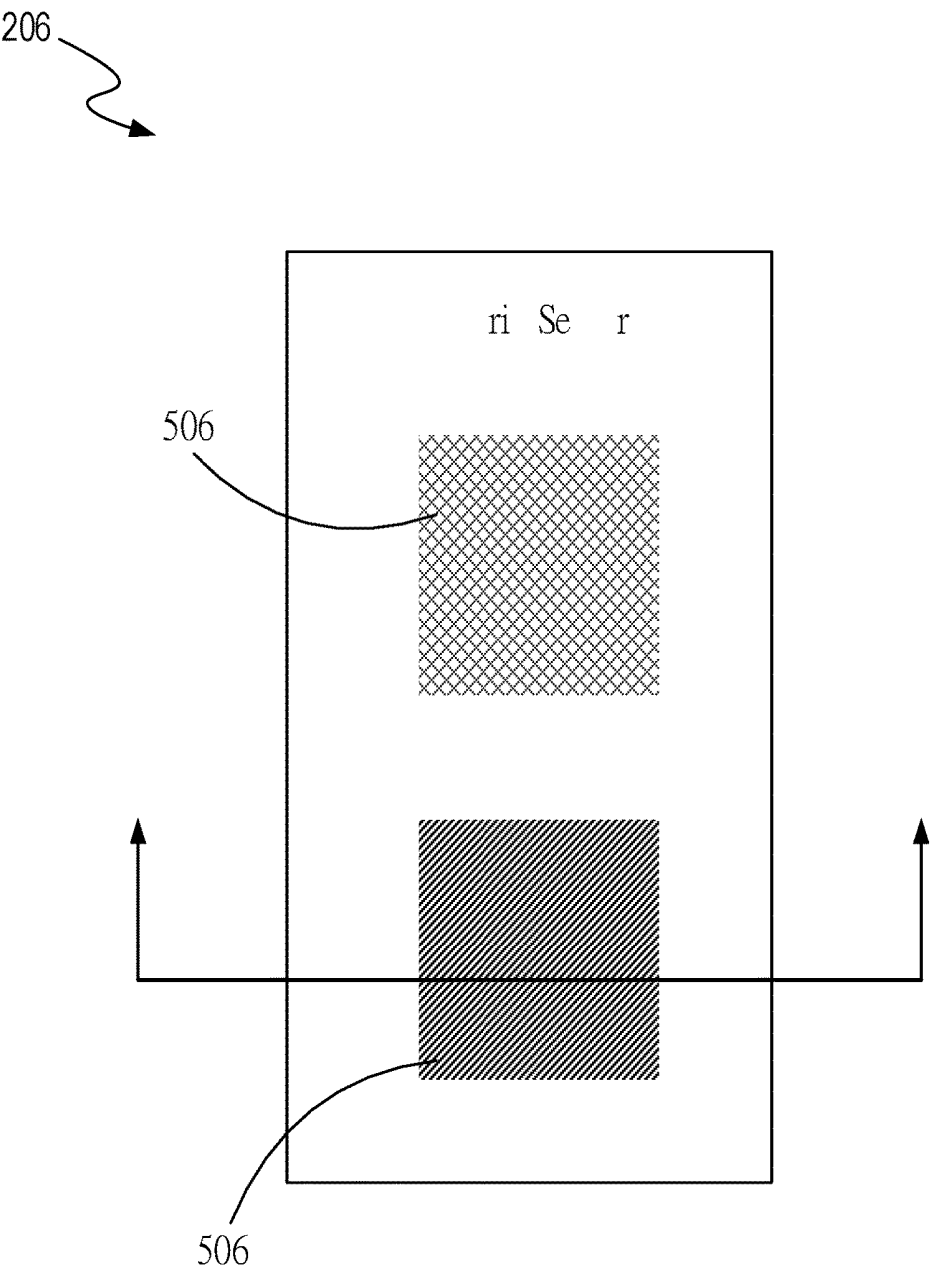


Figure 5

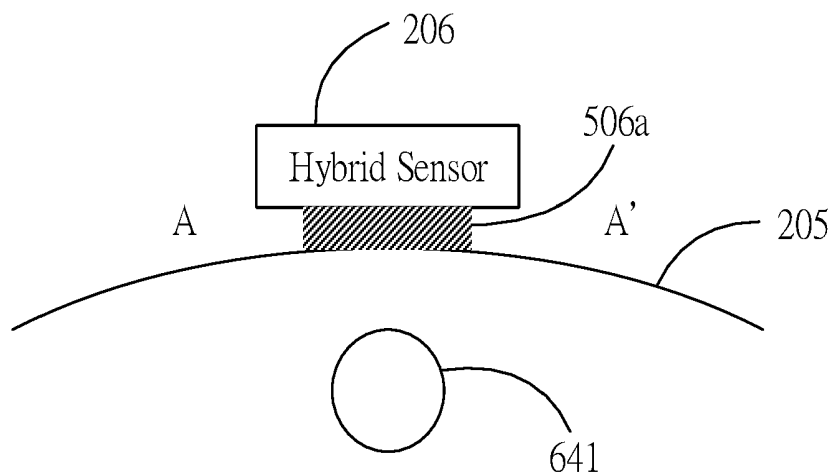


Figure 6a

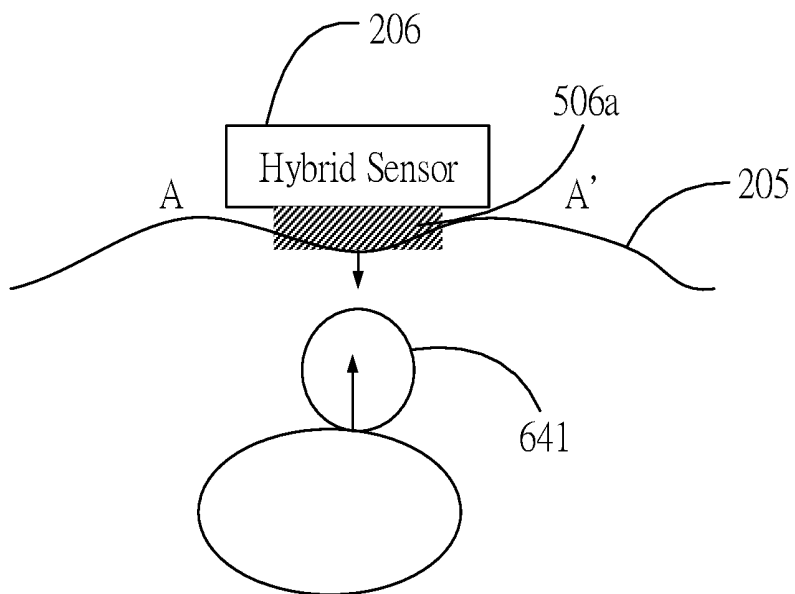


Figure 6b

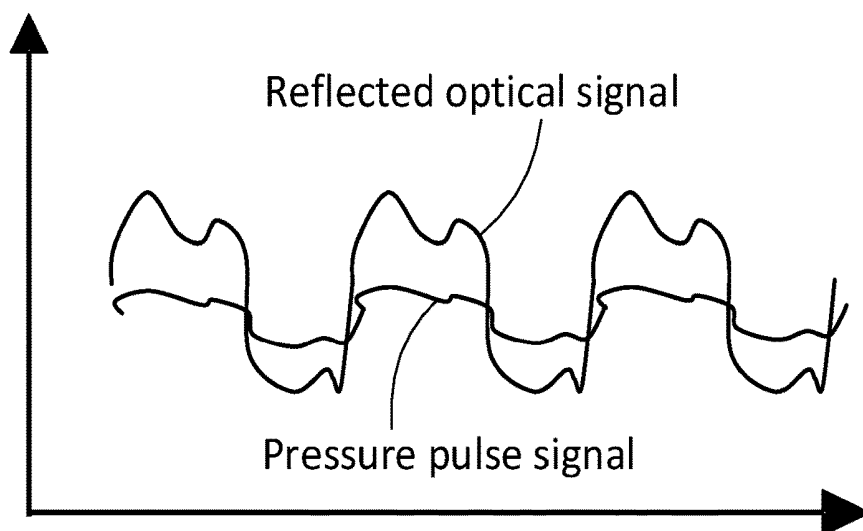


Figure 7a

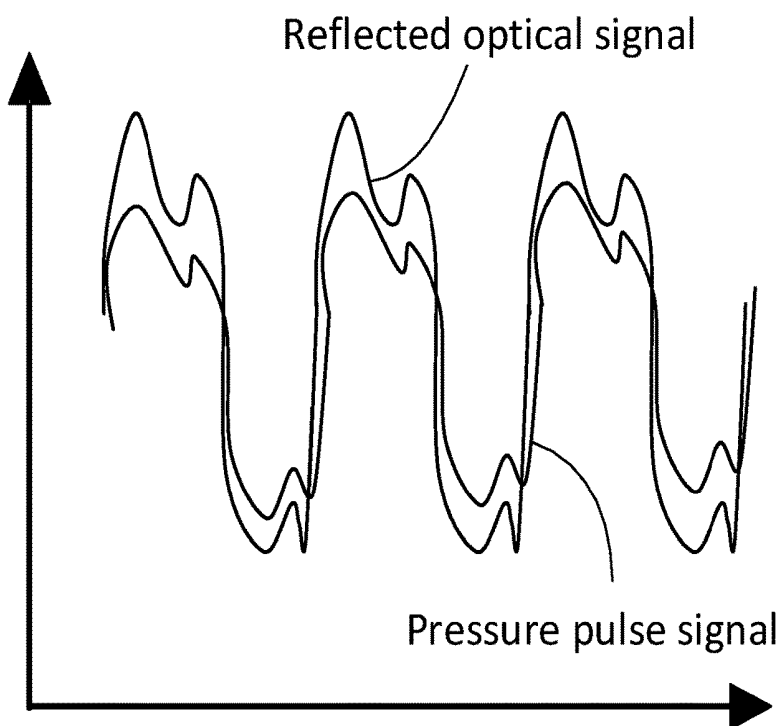


Figure 7b

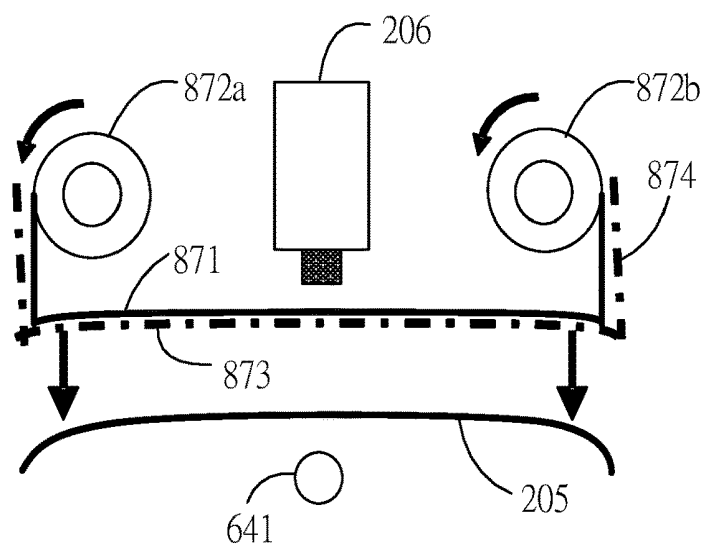


Figure 8a

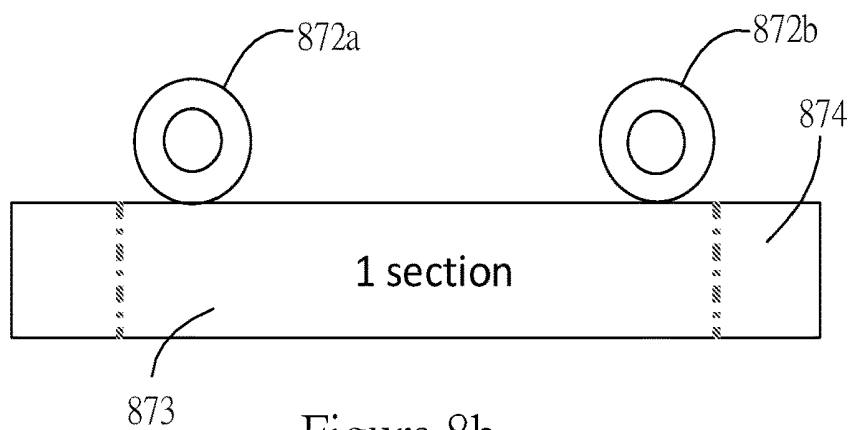


Figure 8b

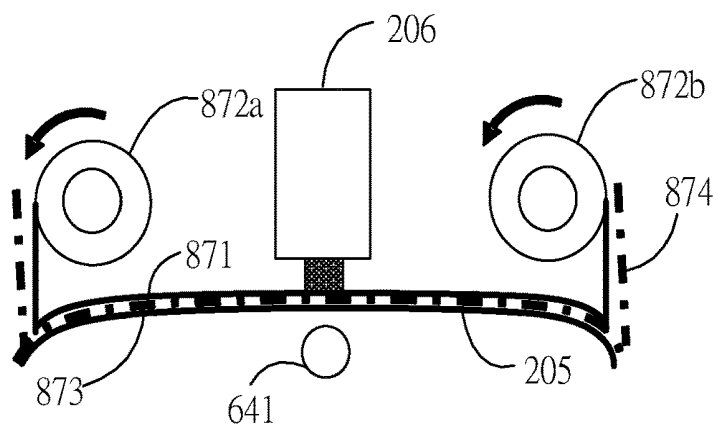


Figure 8c

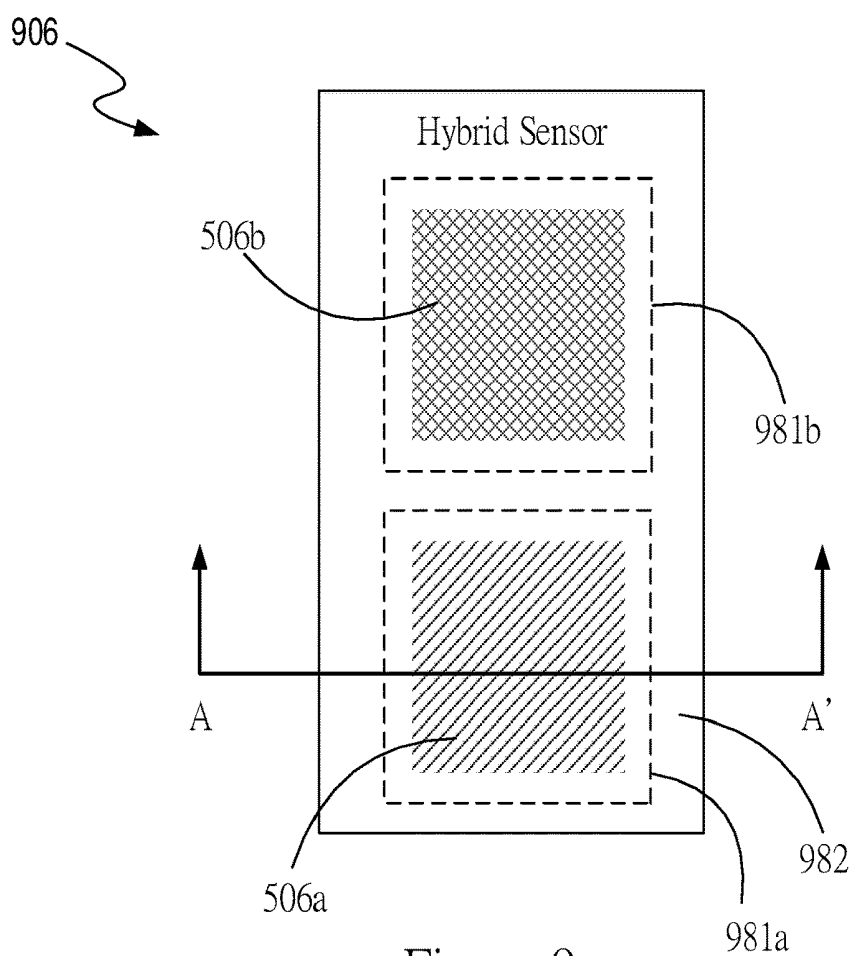


Figure 9a

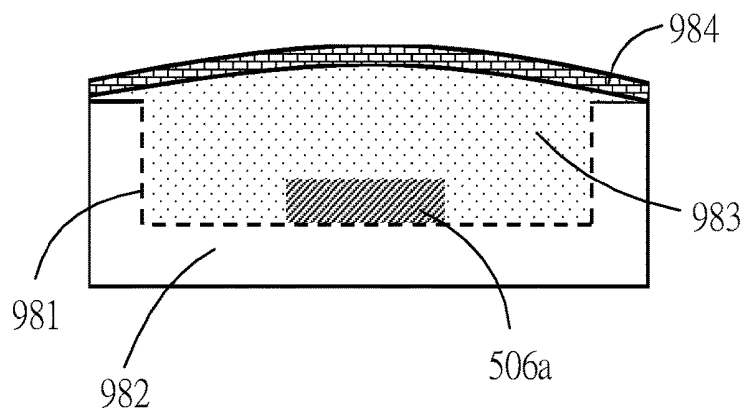


Figure 9b

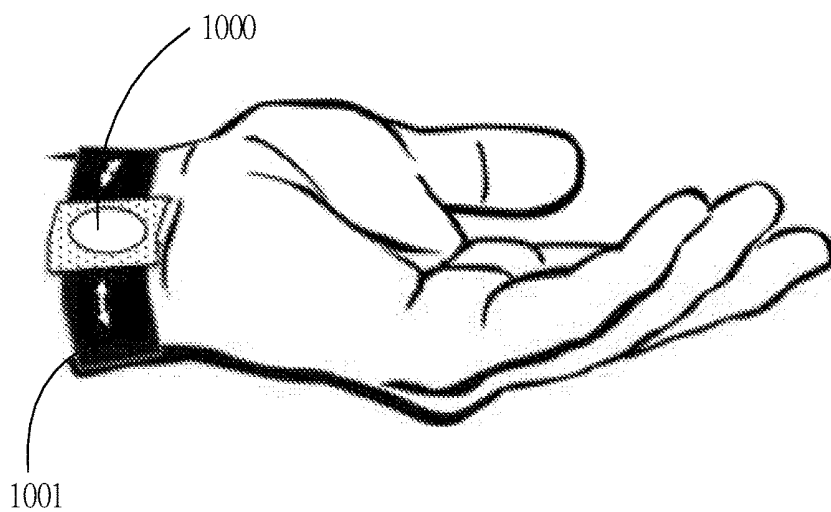


Figure 10a

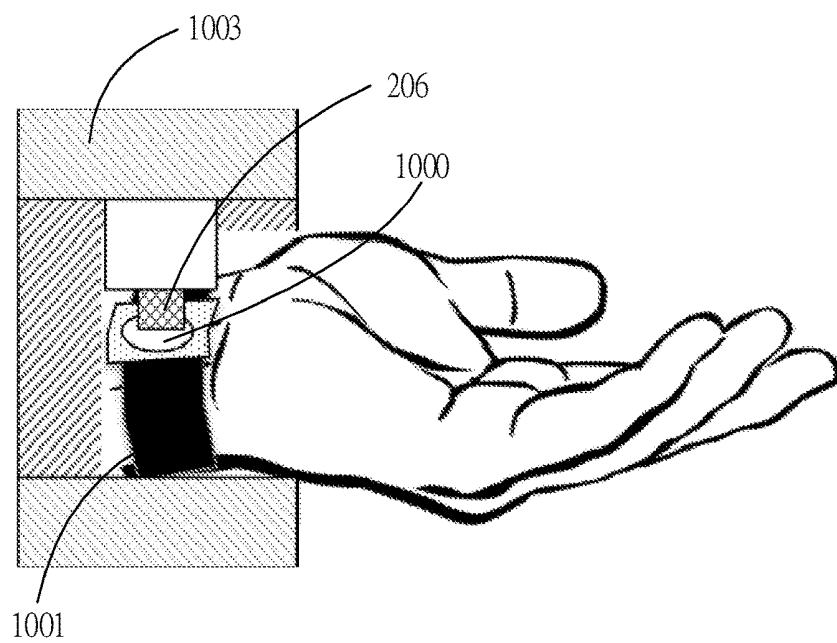


Figure 10b

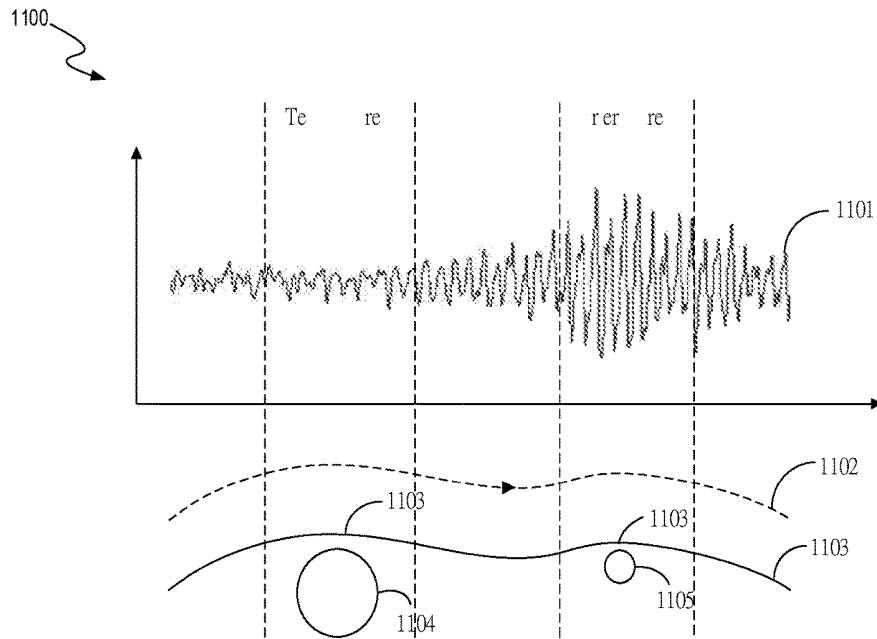


Figure 11

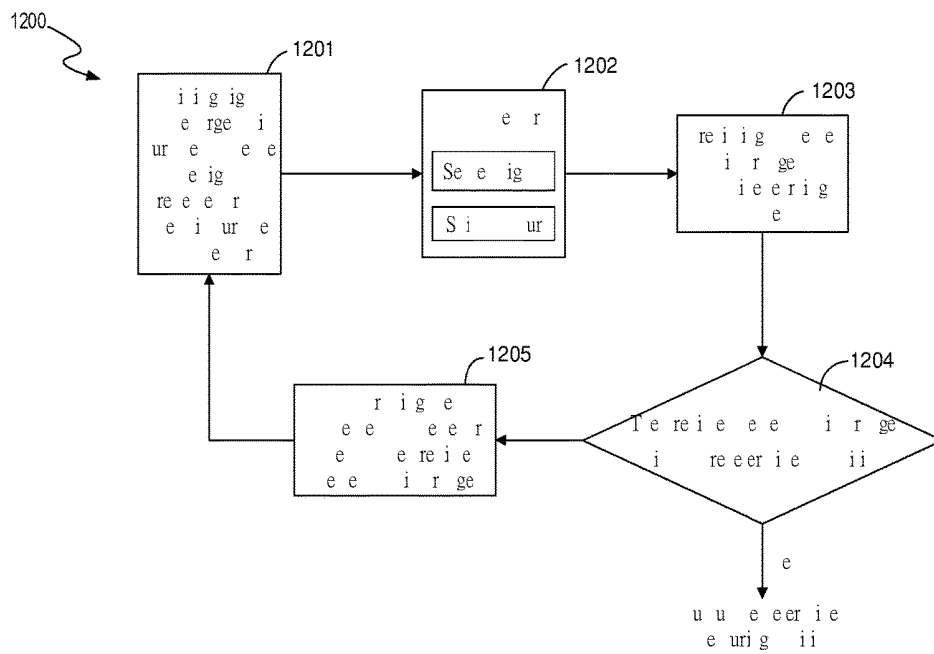


Figure 12

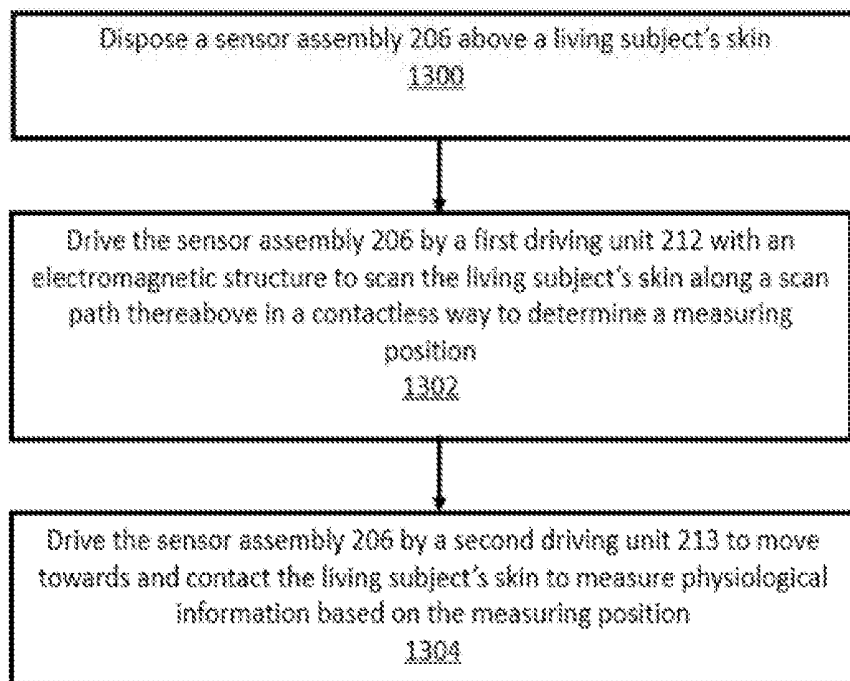


Figure 13

AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE FOR MEASURING PHYSIOLOGICAL INFORMATION AND A METHOD THEREOF

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This invention relates to an electronic device that measures physiological information of a living subject.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] Nowadays, technology integrated with health tools are becoming a popular trend within the healthcare industry and are being used on a more regular basis. Many of the electronic devices are providing a plethora of health data from the growing roster of available tools that can be used by consumers for both personal and clinical decisions. Generally, the electronic devices with health tools could measure heart rate (HR), heart rate variability (HRV), blood pressure, temperature, motion, and/or other biological information of the user via a noninvasive method.

[0003] In one application field, an electronic device is designed to measure health data of a user, e.g., heart rate and blood pressure, via the blood vessel of the wrist. A cuff-type wrist blood pressure meter occludes all blood vessels around the wrist to measure the blood pressure. Hence, it cannot be used to measure continual blood pressure. In order to measure continual blood pressure, some electronic devices measure photoplethysmography (PPG) signal and electrocardiogram (ECG) signals to calculate pulse transit time (PTT) and estimate blood pressure accordingly. However, frequent calibration is needed for PTT-based blood pressure estimation. Also, it is inconvenient to measure both PPG and ECG.

[0004] In view of demand for measuring health data, improvements that provide an accurate and compact electronic device for continual blood pressure measurement are desired.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] One example embodiment is an electronic device that measures physiological information of a living subject. The electronic device includes a sensor assembly, a first driving unit with an electromagnetic structure and a second driving unit. The first driving unit drives the sensor assembly to scan the living subject's skin along a scan path thereabove in a contactless way to determine a measuring position. The second driving unit drives the sensor assembly to move towards and contact the living subject's skin to measure the physiological information based on the measuring position. Other example embodiments are discussed herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] FIG. 1 illustrates a preferred location on a wrist of a user 100 for measuring the blood pressure according to one example embodiment.

[0007] FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of an electronic device 200 for healthcare, according to one example embodiment.

[0008] FIG. 3 illustrates a schematic drawing of an electronic device 300 for healthcare, according to one example embodiment.

[0009] FIG. 4 illustrates a schematic drawing of an electronic device 400 for detecting the blood pressure at an internal side of a user's wrist, according to one example embodiment.

[0010] FIG. 5 shows a top view of the sensor assembly 206 used in the electronic device 200, according to one example embodiment.

[0011] FIGS. 6A and 6B show an operating mechanism of the electronic device with the sensor assembly 206 on the user's wrist, according to one example embodiment.

[0012] FIG. 7A shows waveforms of a reflected optical signal and pressure pulse signal received by the sensor assembly 206 when it is in touch with the user's wrist as illustrated in FIG. 6A, according to one example embodiment.

[0013] FIG. 7B shows waveforms of a reflected optical signal and pressure pulse signal received by the sensor assembly 206 when it is pressed against the wrist surface as illustrated in FIG. 6B, according to one example embodiment.

[0014] FIG. 8A illustrates an exemplary schematic structure of the electronic device 200 with a membrane unit, according to one example embodiment.

[0015] FIG. 8B shows the new membrane section 873 of the membrane unit from a bottom view, according to one example embodiment.

[0016] FIG. 8C shows the electronic device 200 with the membrane unit contacting the user's skin, according to one example embodiment. FIG. 9A shows a top view of a sensor assembly 906 with a coating layer, according to one example embodiment.

[0017] FIG. 9B shows a cross section view (from AA' direction of FIG. 9A) of the sensor assembly 906 with the coating layer, according to one example embodiment.

[0018] FIG. 10A shows a movable frame being worn on a user's wrist via a wristband, according to one example embodiment.

[0019] FIG. 10B shows a portable device that disposes on the user's wrist and coupled to the movable frame for measuring the health information of the user, according to one example embodiment.

[0020] FIG. 11 illustrates a measurement relationship between the sensed signal, the scanning trace and the skin contour, according to one example embodiment.

[0021] FIG. 12 illustrates a flowchart of predicting the measuring position via a prediction algorithm, according to one example embodiment.

[0022] FIG. 13 illustrates a method of applying an electronic device to a user, in according to one example embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0023] Reference will now be made in detail to the embodiments of the present invention. While the invention will be described in conjunction with these embodiments, it will be understood that they are not intended to limit the invention to these embodiments. On the contrary, the invention is intended to cover alternatives, modifications and equivalents, which may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

[0024] Furthermore, in the following detailed description of the present invention, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be recognized by one of

ordinary skill in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well known methods, procedures, components, and circuits have not been described in detail as not to unnecessarily obscure aspects of the present invention. In the light of the foregoing background, it is an object of the present invention to provide an electronic device for monitoring health status of the user.

[0025] In one example embodiment, an electronic device for healthcare is, but not limited to, a wrist-worn device that measures the health data, e.g., heart rate, heart rate variability, blood pressure, blood oxygen saturation, and/or stress, of a user. In one embodiment, the electronic device is a wristband that is rigid or flexible to be worn on the wrist and can have various shapes and sizes without departing from the scope of example embodiments. Other example embodiments can be worn on an arm, neck, leg, ankle, or other part of the human body.

[0026] FIG. 1 illustrates a location on a wrist **100** for measuring the blood pressure, according to one example embodiment. The electronic device includes a pressure sensor (shown in FIG. 2), which is to be located near an artery of the wrist, for measuring the blood pressure. More specifically, the pressure sensor is located near a radial artery superficially above the distal end of the radial bone, as exemplarily specified by a dot line circle **101**. An enlarged image **102** of the radial artery within the circle **101** shows more details thereof, in which the pressure sensor is located within a neighboring region of the radial artery. When the radial artery is compressed against the radial bone by the pressure sensor, the pulse can be clearly sensed at the wrist where it is covered by thin skin and tissue. As such, a target neighboring region of the radial artery of the wrist, which is exemplarily specified as the circle area **101** to secure an accurate measurement, needs to be determined.

[0027] In some cases, a pressure sensor array is used to detect multiple pulse signals within a certain area, e.g., the circle area **101**, and to select a largest one of which the location is near the radial artery of the wrist for accurately measuring the health data, e.g., heart rate and blood pressure, of the user. However, the pressure sensor array is bulky and expensive. In some cases, a motor is used to move a pressure sensor along the wrist surface in a predetermined direction, e.g., a direction **104** perpendicular to the artery direction as shown in FIG. 1, to detect multiple pulse signals within the predetermined direction. Similarly, a largest detected signal is selected of which the corresponding location is determined for measuring the health data of the user. However, during the movement, since the pressure sensor is in touch with the skin surface, the motor with enough torque is needed to overcome the friction between the sensor and the skin surface. Step motors or DC motors are used for driving the pressure sensor to sweep along the wrist surface to obtain multiple pulse signals for identifying the optimal measuring position where an artery is predicted to lie thereunder. However, the step or DC motors are bulky which make the whole electronic device not compact and inconvenient for long-term use.

[0028] In order to overcome the above problems, a non-contact sensor, e.g., a wireless wave sensor, is adopted to move along the wrist surface to sense the physiological information of the user at multiple positions, that is, to scan the wrist skin, without, at least partially, contacting the skin surface (in a contactless way) and determine a measuring

position based on the sensed physiological information, according to one example embodiment. In one example embodiment, the wireless wave sensor includes electromagnetic or mechanical wave sensor that is able to emit and detect electromagnetic or mechanical wave. In one example embodiment, the wireless wave sensor is an optical sensor. In one example embodiment, a non-contact scan region is around 15-20 mm. In one example embodiment, the measuring position is near to, at least within an acceptable neighboring range of, the target blood vessel under the wrist surface. In one example embodiment, the non-contact sensor emits a signal, e.g., an optical or ultrasound signal, toward the wrist surface and detects the signal reflected from the wrist during the movement. Based on the detected signal, the target measuring position is identified. A pressure sensor is then used to sense the physiological information based on the identified measuring position. In one embodiment, the accuracy of the measuring position identified by non-contact scanning is around 3 mm and then the pressure sensor needs to fine-tune the measuring position by sensing pressure pulse signals at multiple positions surround the identified measuring position and determine a more accurate position based on the sensed pressure pulse signals. In another embodiment, the accuracy of measuring position identified by non-contact scanning has been increased to within 1 mm according to a prediction algorithm. In this case, the pressure sensor can directly sense the blood pressure at the measuring position identified by the non-contact scanning process. In one embodiment, since during the scanning process, the non-contact sensor is above the skin surface without, at least partially, contacting the skin surface, the torque needed to drive the non-contact sensor to move along the wrist surface is significantly reduced, as comparing with the torque needed to drive the pressure sensor to contact and move along the skin surface. Under such condition, a more compact driving unit, e.g., Voice Coil Motor (VCM), can be used to move the non-contact sensor along the wrist surface. The dimension of the VCM is much smaller than that of the other mechanical/electrical motor, e.g., step or DC motors. Furthermore, the VCM can control the tilting angle of the sensors mounted on the motor so that more accurate measurement can be achieved.

[0029] FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of an electronic device **200** for healthcare, according to one example embodiment. As shown in FIG. 2, when the electronic device **200** is worn on a user's wrist **216**, it is mounted on the inner side **205** of the wrist **216** via the supporting unit **214**. The electronic device **200** includes a sensor assembly **206** that is used for sensing the physiological information, e.g., pulse rate, blood pressure and blood oxygen saturation information, of the living object; a first driving unit **212**, that drives the sensor assembly **206** to scan the wrist surface **205** within a predetermined region to detect the measuring position for measuring the health data of the user; and a second driving unit **213** that drives the sensor assembly **206** to move in a direction perpendicular or substantially perpendicular to the wrist surface **205** in order to keep a certain distance between the skin and the sensor assembly **206** when doing contactless scan and drives the sensor assembly **206** to contact and press against the wrist skin when sensing blood pressure pulsation and photoplethysmography waveform.

[0030] In one example embodiment, the sensor assembly **206** includes a first sensor **206a** and a second sensor **206b**, wherein the first sensor **206a** is an optical sensor that detects

the artery position of the wrist in a contactless way, and the second sensor **206b** is a pressure sensor which is driven by a hold-down force to contact and press against the wrist surface **205** for fine-tuning measurement location and measuring the pressure against the wall of the artery. In one embodiment, the first sensor **206a** emits light toward the wrist **216** and detects the light reflected from the wrist **216** while moving along a predetermined path, so as to determine the artery position based on the detected result. In one embodiment, the first sensor **206a** and the second sensor **206b** are integrated in the sensor assembly **206** and moved together in a first and second directions by the first driving unit **212** and the second driving unit **213**. In an alternative example embodiment, the first sensor **206a** and second sensor **206b** are separated units. Under such condition, the first sensor **206a** will be driven to contactlessly scan the wrist surface for determining the measuring position and the second sensor **206b** will be driven to press against the skin to sense the blood pressure at the measuring position. However, for easy illustration and understanding, the embodiment that the first and second sensors **206a** and **206b** move together with the sensor assembly **206** will be used for later description and it is understood by people having ordinary skill in the art that other embodiments, e.g., the first and second sensors **206a** and **206b** are separated and moved independently from each other, could be also applied to the following description with reasonable changes.

[0031] FIG. 3 illustrates a schematic drawing of an electronic device **300** for healthcare, in accordance with one example embodiment. FIG. 3 is described in combination with FIG. 2. Elements with the same or similar reference numerals have the same or similar structure/function as thereof in previous figures. In the electronic device **300** of FIG. 3, a guiding unit **314** couples to the sensor assembly **206** for guiding the sensor assembly **206** to scan the wrist surface **205** in a contactless way. In one example embodiment, the guiding unit **314** comprises at least one guiding rail **303** and at least one moving element **304** moving along the guiding rail **303**. In one example embodiment, the moving element **304** is a rolling or sliding element. As understood by one skilled in ordinary of the art, the guiding unit **314** is not limited to the structure as illustrated in FIG. 3 and could have alternative configurations. For example, the guiding rail **303** could guide the moving element **304** to move in a straight or curve orientation. The guiding rail **303** and the moving element **304** could be of any shape/structure as long as it satisfies the guiding function. Furthermore, the first driving unit **212** from FIG. 2 (not specified in FIG. 3) is an electromagnetic motor that includes at least one magnet **301a**, and at least one coil **302a** that interacts with the magnet **301a** for generating an electromagnetic force. The electromagnetic motor couples to the guiding unit **314** for driving the guiding unit **314** to guide the sensor along a predetermined scanning path above the skin surface. In one example embodiment, the first driving unit **212** is a VCM motor.

[0032] In one example embodiment, the magnet **301a** is fixed and the coil **302a** is movable and mounts to the moving element **304**. When a current flows through the coil **302a**, an electromagnetic force is generated between the magnet **301a** and the coil **302a** to enable the coil **302a**, together with the moving element **304**, to move toward or away from the magnet **301a** along the guiding rail **303**. In an alternative example embodiment, the coil **302a** is fixed and the magnet

301a is movable and attached to the moving element **304** in a similar structure. Furthermore, an elastic unit **307**, with one end being coupled to the moving element **304**, provides a restoring force to the moving element **304**. In one example embodiment, the elastic unit **307** is a spring. In one example embodiment, the elastic unit **307** has one end that is fixed to the magnet **301a** and the other end is coupled to the moving element **304**. Under a combined effect of the electromagnetic force and the restoring force, the guiding unit **314** could guide the sensor assembly **206** to move toward and stay steadily at a target position when the current flows through the coils **302a**. When no current flows through the coils **302a**, the restoring force of the elastic unit **307** will bring the sensor assembly **206** back to its initial position.

[0033] In one example embodiment, a friction force between the guiding rail **303** and the moving element **304** is predefined to reduce the shift and improve the stability of the sensor assembly **206** while staying at the targeted position. In another example embodiment, two or more sets of the magnet and coil **301a/302a** and **301b/302b** dispose at two sides of the moving element **304** in order to provide pushing/pulling force at the two sides of the moving element **304** for enhancing movement control and improving stability. One of ordinary skill in the art may appreciate that details of the electronic device as discussed therein are merely examples. Other embodiments and details can be provided by the electronic device without departing from the scope of this invention. For example, the elastic unit **307** could be configured in any format at any place as long as it satisfies the requirement of providing a restoring force that corresponds to an electromagnetic force to bring the sensor assembly **206** back to its initial position when the electromagnetic motor is turned off. In one example embodiment the elastic unit **307** could be configured in any format at any place along the guiding rail **303**.

[0034] In one example embodiment, the non-contact scanning process is performed by the first sensor **206a** in a cross-artery direction and the distance between the first sensor **206a** and the skin surface is controlled to be within 1-2 mm. In one embodiment, the first driving unit **212** will control the movement of the sensor assembly **206** to perform the scanning process of the first sensor **206a**. The signal reflected from the skin and received by the first sensor **206a** is used as a feedback for controlling the sensor-skin distance. During operation, the intensity of the sensed signal varies with the distance between the sensor **206a** and the skin surface, in which the stronger the sensed signal is, the closer the sensor **206a** is to the skin, while the weaker the sensed signal is, the farther the sensor **206a** is from the skin. In order to eliminate the effect on the measurement accuracy of the sensed signal caused by the varied distance between the sensor **206a** and the skin surface, a constant distance between the sensor **206a** and the skin is controlled. Moreover, when the sensor **206a** is close to the artery, for example, 1 mm-2 mm away from the skin surface, the arterial pulsation information could be detected from the sensed signal. By scanning the skin surface along a predetermined path while keeping a constant distance between the sensor **206a** and the skin surface within 1 mm-2 mm, a measuring position range that roughly indicates an artery position is identified according to the analysis of the sensed signal. Once the measuring position range is determined, a position fine-tuning procedure may be performed to determine an accurate location of the artery within the position

range for the blood pressure measurement. In one example embodiment, the fine-tuning procedure is carried out by driving the first driving unit **212** and the second driving unit **213**. During the position fine-tuning procedure, the second sensor **206b** collects a plurality of arterial pulsations under a certain hold-down force from multiple positions within the measuring position range to determine a more accurate measuring position.

[0035] In another example embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. **11**, **1100**, during the non-contact scanning process, the sensed signal **1101** and a scanning trace **1102** of the first sensor **206a** will be collected and stored. The scanning trace **1102** of the sensor **206a** is used as a representation of a skin contour **1103**, as the distance between the sensor **206a** and the skin surface is controlled as constant. Once the non-contact scanning process is finished, features of the sensed signal **1101** and the scanning trace **1102** of the sensor **206a** can be extracted as inputs for a pre-trained model. In one example embodiment, the pre-trained model is trained and built via machine learning process. The pre-trained model will analyze the sensed signal **1101** and the scanning trace **1102** that represent the skin contour **1103** to predict the artery position for measuring the blood pressure. Usually, the radial artery is under a convex surface of the wrist. However, it may be confused with some protruded front end of tendons. For example, both the skin surfaces **1103a** and **1103b** above a tendon **1104** and an artery **1105** slightly protrude from the surface. However, the signal with arterial pulsation information sensed within the tendon area is significantly smaller than that within the artery area, as shown in FIG. **11**. By training with data including the sensed signal, the scanning trace and the corresponding artery position from a number of people, the pre-trained model is developed and able to precisely predict the artery position, where the wrist surface is protruded and the sensed signal with arterial pulsation information is relatively great, based on the variation of the sensed signal **1101** and the scanning trace **1102**. In one example embodiment, the accuracy of the measuring position determined via the pre-trained model can be increased to within 1 mm from the artery. Therefore, in another embodiment, the position fine-tuning procedure could be omitted and the blood pressure measurement can be directly conducted within the predicted measuring position.

[0036] In yet another example embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. **12**, during the non-contact scanning process, the sensed signal and the scanning trace of the sensor **206a** are continuously collected, stored and processed. After the movement of the sensor **206a** to a current scanning position as well as the following measurement in step **1201**, attributes of the sensed signal and the scanning position are extracted and stored into a data memory for further process in step **1202**. In one embodiment, after the movement of the sensor **206a** to a current scanning position as well as the following measurement in step **1201**, the skin contour is determined based on a series of scanning positions. Thereafter, in step **1203**, the sensed data that include the data measured during the current and the prior movements, and the scanning trace that is represented by the current and prior scanning positions of the sensor **206a** are sent into a pre-trained model. The pre-trained model will then predict an artery position region based on the current and historical sensed data and the sensing trace in step **1203**. If the predicted artery position region satisfies a predetermined condition in step **1204**, the predicted artery position region will be output as the iden-

tified measuring position for further process. Otherwise, the movement of the sensor **206a** to a next scanning position will be controlled based on the predicted artery position range in step **1205**, and thereafter, the non-contact scanning process will return back to the step **1201**. By adopting this scanning method, it may not be needed to scan the whole predetermined range of wrist surface for identifying the artery position as the scanning process will be completed immediately once the artery position is identified by the pre-trained model. Furthermore, by controlling the movement of the sensor **206a** based on the predicted artery position range in real-time, it is not needed to move the sensor **206a** step by step along the scanning path, but the sensor **206a** can be moved in a varied speed to approach the target artery position more quickly. In one example embodiment, speed and efficiency of identifying the artery location will be significantly increased by using this scanning method.

[0037] In one example embodiment, the measuring position is predicted via a machine learning process based on the scanned data and the scan path.

[0038] In one embodiment, the pre-trained model will predict the artery position and its confidence range, according to which the next movement of the sensor **206a** will be controlled. In one example embodiment, the rate of the movement of the sensor **206a** depends on a distance between a current position of the sensor **206a** and a possible artery range. For example, when the distance between the current position and the possible artery range is greater than a predetermined threshold (i.e. the sensor **206a** is far away from the possible artery range), the sensor will move relatively fast as compared to a case where the distance between the current position and the possible artery range is smaller than a predetermined threshold. Therefore, the efficiency of the non-contact scanning process can be increased. The non-contact scanning process will be terminated as long as the confidence range of the predicted artery position meets an accuracy requirement of the measuring position. In one embodiment, the accuracy requirement is that the confidence range of predict position of artery is smaller than 1-2 mm.

[0039] In one example embodiment, the pre-trained model predicting artery position is trained and built based on a large amount of prior non-contact scanning data and correspondingly known artery positions. Attributes extracted from the non-contact scanning data are used as model input X and the known artery position is used as model output Y. The model input X and the model output Y are divided into three sets: a training set that includes X_training and Y_training; a validation set that includes X_validation and Y_validation; and a test set that includes X_test and Y_test. The training and validation sets are used for building model and the test set is used for model performance test. The algorithm of pre-trained model can be, but not limited to, support vector machine, linear regression, or artificial neural network.

[0040] Referring back to FIG. **3**, according to one example embodiment, when the measuring position for the blood pressure measurement on the wrist is identified, the second driving unit **213** (not shown in FIG. **3**) will control the sensor assembly **206** to move towards and press the wrist surface **205** at the measuring position for measuring the blood pressure of the user. In one example embodiment, the second driving unit **213** includes a controller **308** for controlling the rotation of a gear (not shown in FIG. **3**) or a gear series **310a**

and **310b** to rotate towards or away from the wrist surface **205**, so as to enable the sensor assembly **206**, which couples to the gear or gear series **310a** and **310b**, to move towards and press the wrist surface **205**, as shown in FIG. 3. In one embodiment, the gear or gear series **310a** and **310b** are coupled between two guide walls **311** and **312** to prevent the sensor assembly **206** from tilting while pressing the sensor assembly **206** to the wrist surface. In one example embodiment, the guide wall **312** is combined with the controller **308**. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that these embodiments are merely examples. For example, the second driving unit **213** could be a mechanical motor such as a pneumatic motor, or an electrical motor such as a step motor or a DC motor, in any configuration with the sensor assembly **206** while satisfying the requirement of driving the sensor assembly **206** to move towards and press the wrist surface for sensing the blood pressure against the wall of the blood vessel. Additionally, the second driving unit **213** could directly or indirectly couples with the sensor assembly **206** for driving the sensor assembly **206** to move towards the wrist surface **205**.

[0041] FIG. 4 illustrates another schematic drawing of an electronic device **400** for detecting the blood pressure at the internal side of a user's wrist, according to an example embodiment. FIG. 4 is described in combination with FIGS. 2 and 3. Elements with the same or similar reference numerals have the same or similar structure/function as thereof in previous figures. In the electronic device **400** of FIG. 4, an electromagnetic motor includes a coil **402** positioned between two magnets **401a** and **401b**. In one example embodiment, the magnets **401a** and **401b** are fixed and the coil **402** is movable and connects with a moving unit **404** for driving the moving unit **404** to move along a guiding rail **403** by enabling and adjusting a current flowing through the coil **402**. In one embodiment, the moving element **404** is a rolling or sliding element. The moving unit **404** couples with the sensor assembly **206** to bring the sensor assembly **206** to scan the wrist surface **205** in a predetermined path. When the current flows through the coil **402**, an electromagnetic force will be generated between the magnets **401a/401b** and the coil **402** to enable the coil **402** to move along a direction parallel or substantially parallel to the wrist surface **205**. Accordingly, the moving unit **404**, which connects to the coil **402**, will be driven to move along the guiding rail **403** so as to bring the sensor assembly **206** to scan the wrist surface **205**. In an alternative example embodiment, the magnets **401a** and **401b** are movable and coupled to the moving unit **404** while the coil **402** is fixed. Furthermore, an elastic unit **407** couples with the coil **402** and provides a restoring force to the coil **402**. It is understood by one skilled in the art that in addition to the electromagnetic motor as illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4, the electromagnetic motor could have other alternative configuration to drive the sensor assembly **206** to scan the wrist surface **205**. In one example embodiment, the electromagnetic motor is a VCM motor.

[0042] FIG. 5 shows a top view of the sensor assembly **206** used in the electronic device **200** (FIG. 2), in accordance with an example embodiment. FIG. 5 is described in combination with FIG. 2. As shown in FIG. 5, the sensor assembly **206** is a hybrid sensor assembly that includes two sensors **506a** and **506b**. The first sensor **506a** searches a measuring position by scanning the wrist surface **205** without contacting it. The second sensor **506b** measures a blood pressure against a blood vessel wall when blood flows

through the blood vessel at the measuring position. In one example embodiment, the blood vessel is an artery. The first sensor **506a** and the second sensor **506b** dispose on the same side of the sensor assembly **206** that faces the wrist surface **205**. A distance between the two sensors **506a** and **506b** is designed within a predetermined threshold range such that a measurement deviation caused by an offset of the two sensors **506a** and **506b** is acceptable while the two sensors **506a** and **506b** are isolated from each other. Furthermore, the first driving unit **212** will adjust a position of the sensor assembly **206** on the wrist surface **205** when the measuring position is identified by the first sensor **506a**, so as to locate the second sensor **506b** at the measuring position for further process.

[0043] During the operation, firstly, the sensor assembly **206** is above the wrist surface **205** and driven to scan the wrist surface **205** along a scanning path to determine a position of a target blood vessel by the first sensor **506a**. In one example embodiment, the target blood vessel is a radial artery. When the position of the target blood vessel is identified, the sensor assembly **206** stops moving and stays above the position of the target blood vessel. Then, the sensor assembly **206** is driven to move towards the wrist surface **205** and further press against the wrist surface **205** at the position of the target blood vessel so as to measure the blood pressure by the second sensor **506b**.

[0044] In one example embodiment, absolute pressure readings can be measured by the second sensor **506b**, which is calibrated by a reference force gauge. The blood pressure can be derived or estimated from the measured absolute pressure readings.

[0045] In another example embodiment, arterial wall activities can be sensed by the second sensor **506b** to generate an arterial pressure pulse waveform, which includes information or attributes of a blood pressure propagation velocity/time along an arterial wall, an arterial pulse reflection velocity/time, and a reflection augmentation index of an arterial pulse, etc. The blood pressure can be derived or estimated from the aforesaid information or attributes extracted from the arterial pressure pulse waveform.

[0046] In another example embodiment, blood flow activities can be sensed by the first sensor **506a** to generate a blood volume pulse waveform, which includes information or attributes of a blood flow velocity, a blood flow reflection velocity/time, and a reflection augmentation index of the blood flow, etc. In one embodiment, the first sensor **506a** emits light toward the wrist surface **205** above the artery and detects the light reflected from the wrist, so as to sense the blood flow activities based on the reflected light that carries the blood information within the blood vessel. The blood pressure can be derived or estimated from the aforesaid information or attributes extracted from the blood volume pulse waveform.

[0047] Furthermore, according to an example embodiment, the absolute pressure readings, the information or attributes extracted from the arterial pressure pulse waveform, and/or the information or attributes extracted from the blood volume pulse waveform can be used together to derive or estimate the blood pressure. During the measurements of the absolute pressure readings, the arterial pressure pulse waveform and the blood volume pulse waveform, a hold-down force applied to the sensor assembly **206** for pressing against the skin surface is controlled based on the measured pulse waveforms of the first and second sensors **506a** and

506b. In one embodiment, the first sensor **506a** is an optical sensor and the second sensor **506b** is a pressure sensor.

[0048] Moreover, as there are much less blood capillaries under the skin surface of the wrist, it is more difficult to measure blood oxygen saturation via the blood capillaries at the wrist as compared to measuring at a finger. Under such conditions, to measure the blood oxygen saturation via the radial artery is a solution as the radial artery is near the wrist surface with increased blood flow. Unfortunately, at the skin surface above radial artery, the mechanical pulsation is so strong that it will affect the reflected pulsations of red and infra-red light and affect the measurement accuracy of pulse oximetry. In one example embodiment, the sensor assembly **206** integrated with the optical sensor and the pressure sensor can be used to accurately measure the blood oxygen saturation at the radial artery.

[0049] FIGS. **6A** and **6B** show an operating mechanism of the electronic device **200** with the sensor assembly **206**, according to one example embodiment. FIGS. **6A** and **6B** are described in combination with FIGS. **2** and **5**. The cross-sectional view of the sensor assembly **206** in FIGS. **6A** and **6B** is derived from the line A-A' of FIG. **5**. The sensor assembly **206** is controlled by the first driving unit **212** and second driving unit **213** as described in FIG. **2**.

[0050] During operation, when the optical sensor **506a** identifies the measuring position of the radial artery **641** at the wrist, the sensor assembly **206** will be moved towards the wrist surface **205** at the identified measuring location. Referring to FIG. **6A**, when the sensor assembly **206** is driven to move towards the wrist surface **205** at the identified measuring location and touches on the wrist surface **205**, an optical signal reflected from the wrist surface **205**, so called photoplethysmography (PPG), as shown in FIG. **7A** that carries information of blood volume changes can be detected by the optical sensor **506a** for the calculation of blood oxygen saturation. In one embodiment, the optical sensor **506a** emits light towards the wrist and detects the PPG signal from the wrist. Referring to FIG. **6B**, after touching on the wrist surface **205**, the sensor assembly **206** will continue to move towards and press against the wrist surface **205** over the location of the radial artery **641** by a predetermined hold-down force until the sensor assembly **206** reaches a predetermined depth for blood pressure measurement.

[0051] FIG. **7A** shows waveforms of a reflected optical signal and pressure pulse signal detected by the sensor assembly **206** when it is in touch with the wrist surface **205** as illustrated in FIG. **6A**, according to one example embodiment. FIG. **7B** shows waveforms of the reflected optical signal and pressure pulse signal detected by the sensor assembly **206** when it presses against the wrist surface **205** as illustrated in FIG. **6B**, according to one example embodiment. During the operation, the blood oxygen saturation of the user is calculated based on the optical signal reflected from the wrist surface **205** and detected by the sensor assembly **206**. More specifically, the blood oxygen saturation is calculated based on a ratio of the AC part to DC part of the optical signal. The AC part of the optical signal is a variable part containing changes caused by both mechanical variation and blood flow. In order to obtain an accurate measurement result of the blood oxygen saturation, it is important to eliminate the effect of the mechanical variation applied to the AC part of the optical signal.

[0052] By comparing FIG. **7B** with FIG. **7A**, although the AC part of optical signal in FIG. **7B** is stronger than in FIG. **7A**, the increase of AC intensity is mainly induced by mechanical pulsation, as the skin tissue resonance with arterial pulsation is gradually increased when the sensor assembly **206** is pressed towards the radial artery **641**, according to an example embodiment. Hence, the measurement accuracy of blood oxygen saturation is affected accordingly. In order to eliminate the influence of mechanical pulsation of the radial artery, it is preferred to avoid deeply pressing the sensor assembly **206** against the radial artery. In another aspect, since the light leakage caused by the gap between the sensor assembly **206** and the wrist surface may also affect the measurement accuracy, the sensor assembly **206** is close to the skin surface to avoid light leakage during the measurement of the blood oxygen saturation. Therefore, on controlling the pressing of the sensor assembly **206** against the wrist surface **205**, an optimal contact depth of the sensor assembly **206** upon the wrist surface is determined to balance the impact on the measurement accuracy of the blood oxygen saturation caused by the mechanical pulsation of the radial artery and the light leakage.

[0053] Furthermore, as shown in FIGS. **7A** and **7B**, according to one example embodiment, the pressure pulse signal increases with the increment of a pressed depth of the sensor assembly **206** against the wrist surface **205**. In other words, the pressure pulse signal varies with the pressed depth of the sensor assembly **206** against the wrist surface **205**. Therefore, the contact depth of the sensor assembly **206** upon the wrist surface could be controlled based on the detected pressure pulse signal to maintain the sensor assembly **206** at the optimal contact depth.

[0054] In one example embodiment, when the sensor assembly **206** presses against the wrist surface **205**, the pressure pulse between the sensor assembly **206** and the wrist is monitored by the pressure sensor **506b** (FIG. **5**) to control the hold-down force applied on the sensor assembly **206**. To minimize the impact on the measurement accuracy of the blood oxygen saturation caused by the mechanical pulsation and avoid light leakage, the optical sensor **506a** will measure the blood oxygen saturation when the pressure pulse is between 0-40 mmHg. In other words, the optimal situation to measure the blood oxygen saturation is when the sensor assembly **206** just touches or slightly press the wrist surface **205**. By monitoring the pressure pulse sensed by the pressure sensor **506b**, the optimal situation could be identified and maintained by adjusting the hold-down force applied on the sensor assembly **206**.

[0055] In one example embodiment, to avoid the sensor assembly **206** from contacting the skin surface directly, a membrane is covered on the measuring surface of the sensor assembly **206** to isolate the sensor assembly **206** from the skin surface. FIG. **8A** illustrates an exemplary schematic structure of the electronic device **200** with a membrane unit, in accordance with one example embodiment of the presented invention. Referring to FIG. **8A**, a section of membrane is added to cover a measuring surface **871** of the electronic device in order to isolate the measuring surface **871** from the user's skin surface **205**. To facilitate the user, at least one rolling element that rolls multiple membrane sections one by one is disposed inside the electronic device. In one example embodiment as illustrated in FIG. **8A**, the electronic device includes two rolling elements **872a** and **872b**. In a further example embodiment, the rolling elements

872a and **872b** for rolling the membrane sections are controlled manually by the user or automatically by an individual motor controller. In another example embodiment, the rolling elements **872a** and **872b** are integrated with the first driving unit **212** or the second driving unit **213** (FIG. 2) for rolling the membrane sections. In one example embodiment, the rolling elements **872a** and **872b** are controlled by the first driving unit **212** and/or the second driving unit **213** for rolling the membrane sections.

[0056] In each new measurement, a new membrane section **873** of the membrane unit will be rolled out to cover the measuring surface **871** and a used section **874** will be rolled into the device for withdrawn as specified in FIG. 8A. In one embodiment, the new membrane sections **873** of the membrane unit are stored at one side of the electronic device **200** and the used membrane sections **874** are withdrawn and stored at another side of the electronic device **200**.

[0057] FIG. 8B shows the new membrane section **873** of the membrane unit from a bottom view, in accordance with one example embodiment. During operation, before each new measurement is made, the used membrane section **874** is rolled back into the electronic device and the new membrane section **873** is consequently rolled out to cover the measuring surface **871**. When the electronic device **200** is worn on the user's wrist, the new membrane section **873** will be adhered to the skin surface **205** to prevent the measuring surface **871** of the electronic device **200** from directly contacting the skins of different users while improving the stability of the electronic device **200** as shown in FIG. 8C, so as to avoid cross-contamination between different users.

[0058] Additionally, FIG. 9A shows a top view of a sensor assembly **906** with a coating layer, according to one example embodiment. FIG. 9B shows a cross-sectional view (from an A-A' direction of FIG. 9A) of the sensor assembly **906** with the coating layer, in accordance with an example embodiment. FIGS. 9A and 9B are described in combination with FIG. 5. As shown in FIG. 9A, the first sensor **506a** and the second sensor **506b** are respectively disposed in a first sensor cavity **981a** and a second sensor cavity **981b**, which are embedded in a substrate **982** of the sensor assembly **906**. More specifically, as referring to FIGS. 9A and 9B, the first sensor **506a** disposes at a bottom of the first sensor cavity **981a**. A transparent material is filled in the first sensor cavity **981a** to encapsulate the first sensor **506a** so as to protect and prevent the first sensor **506a** from directly contacting the outside. In one example embodiment, the transparent material forms an encapsulate layer **983** for the first sensor **506a**. Furthermore, a protecting layer **984** is coated on a surface of the sensor assembly **906** in order to not only reduce the friction between the wrist surface **205** and the sensor assembly **906**, but also minimize diffusion of moisture into the encapsulate layers of the respective sensors, for example, the encapsulate layer **983** of the first sensor **506a**, so as to enhance the reliability of the whole sensor assembly **906**. In one example embodiment, the protecting layer **984** is sprayed on to the whole surface of the sensor assembly **906**. Configuration of the second sensor **506b** within the second sensor cavity **981b** could have similar structure as that of the first sensor **506a** within the first sensor cavity **981a**, as illustrated by FIG. 9b.

[0059] FIG. 10A shows a movable frame **1000** being worn on a user's wrist via a wristband, according to one example embodiment. FIG. 10B shows a portable device that couples to the movable frame **1000** for measuring the health infor-

mation of the user, according to an alternative example embodiment of the present invention. In the example embodiment shown in FIG. 10A, in order to reduce the burden of the users, a movable frame **1000** is worn on the wrist of a user for receiving the sensor assembly **206**, wherein the sensor assembly could be attached to and detached from the movable frame **1000**. In one example embodiment, the movable frame **1000** is worn on the wrist via a wristband **1001**, as shown in FIG. 10A. In another example embodiment, the movable frame **1000** could be worn on the wrist via gloves, mittens or in other wearable styles. For measuring the health information of the user, as shown in FIG. 10B, a portable device **1003** that includes the sensor assembly **206**, the first driving unit **212** and the second driving unit **213** (not shown on FIG. 10B) is disposed on the wrist and the sensor assembly **206** is coupled to the movable frame **1000** manually or automatically. In one example embodiment, the first driving unit **212**, the second driving unit **213** and the sensor assembly **206** are detachable from the portable device **1003**. In another embodiment, the second driving unit **213** integrates with the sensor assembly **206** and the first driving unit **212** is detachable from the portable device **1003**. In yet another embodiment, the first driving unit **212**, the second driving unit **213** and the sensor assembly **206** are integrated together with the portable device **1003**.

[0060] During operation, the first driving unit **212** drives the sensor assembly **206**, which couples with the frame **1000**, to scan the wrist's skin surface to determine a suitable position for measurement. Then, the first driving unit **212** is detached from the portable device **1003** for load release and the second driving unit **213** will drive the sensor assembly **206** along with the frame **1000** to move towards the wrist skin at the suitable position in order to perform pulse oximetry and blood pressure measurements, in one example embodiment. In another example embodiment, when the suitable position is identified, the second driving unit **213** will start to control the movement of the sensor assembly **206** with the frame **1000** towards the wrist surface without detaching the first driving unit **212** from the portable device **1003**. Additionally, when the suitable position is identified, the movable frame **1000** could be locked at the identified position to prevent the displacement/offset of the sensor assembly **206** along the wrist surface during measurement.

[0061] After measurement, the portable device **1003** is detached from the wrist to release the load on the user's wrist. In another example embodiment, the sensor assembly **206** is always fixed with the movable frame **1000** to be carried by the user. For measuring the health information, the portable device **1003** with the two driving units **212** and **213** is coupled to the sensor assembly **206** to control the movement of the sensor assembly **206** so as to achieve the measurement as described above.

[0062] In one example embodiment, FIG. 13 shows a flowchart of an electronic device being applied to a living subject for healthcare measurement. FIG. 13 is described in combination with FIG. 2. A sensor assembly **206** is disposed above a living subject's skin in box **1300**. The sensor assembly **206** is driven by a first driving unit **212** with an electromagnetic structure to scan the living subject's skin along a scanning path there above in a contactless way to determine a measuring position in box **1302**. The sensor assembly **206** is driven by a second driving unit **213** to move

towards and contact the living subject's skin to measure physiological information based on the measuring position in box 1304.

[0063] In one example embodiment, a magnet interacts with a coil of the first driving unit to generate an electromagnetic force for driving the sensor assembly.

[0064] In another example embodiment, a moving element is moved along a guiding rail due to the action of electromagnetic force. In yet another embodiment, a friction force is generated between the guiding rail and the moving element during the movement to reduce the shift and improve the stability of the sensor assembly.

[0065] While the foregoing description and drawings represent example embodiments of the present invention, it will be understood that various additions, modifications and substitutions may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the principles of the present invention as defined in the accompanying claims. One skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may be used with many modifications of form, structure, arrangement, proportions, materials, elements, and components and otherwise, used in the practice of the invention, which are particularly adapted to specific environments and operative requirements without departing from the principles of the present invention. The presently disclosed embodiments are therefore to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the appended claims and their legal equivalents, and not limited to the foregoing description.

1-54. (canceled)

55. An electronic device that measures physiological information of a living subject, the electronic device comprising:

- a sensor assembly,
- a first driving unit with an electromagnetic structure that drives the sensor assembly to scan the living subject's skin along a scan path thereabove in a contactless way to determine a measuring position; and
- a second driving unit that drives the sensor assembly to move towards and contact the living subject's skin to measure the physiological information based on the measuring position.

56. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the measuring position is determined such that a blood vessel is predicted to lie below a neighboring area of the measuring position.

57. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the first driving unit comprises:

- a magnet; and
 - a coil;
- wherein the magnet and the coil interact to generate an electromagnetic force through interaction to drive the sensor assembly.

58. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the first driving unit comprises:

- a magnet;
- a coil; and
- a moving element that couples to the sensor assembly and a guiding rail for guiding the moving element to move along the guiding rail.

59. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the second driving unit comprises:

- a controller; and
- at least one gear that couples to the sensor assembly,

wherein the controller controls rotation of the gear to rotate towards or away from the living subject's skin, so as to enable the sensor assembly that couples to the gear to move towards or away from the living subject's skin for the measurement.

60. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the second driving unit comprises:

- two guide walls; and
- two gears,

wherein the two gears are coupled side by side between the two guide walls to press the sensor assembly towards the living subject's skin and prevent the sensor assembly from tilting.

61. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the sensor assembly comprises:

- a first sensor that scans the living subject's skin by emitting and detecting one or more kinds of waves to determine the measuring position, and;
- a second sensor that senses the physiological information by pressing the second sensor on the living subject.

62. The electronic device of claim 61, wherein the second sensor is operable to fine tune the measuring position by measuring pressure pulse signals at multiple positions nearby the measuring position and determine an optimal position based on the measured pressure pulse signals.

63. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the sensor assembly is operable to detect a blood oxygen saturation of the living subject at the measuring position, and a contact depth of the sensor assembly upon the living subject's skin during the detection of the blood oxygen saturation is controlled based on the measured physiological information.

64. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the measuring position is predicted via a prediction algorithm based on variations of the scan path and scanned signals sensed along the scan path.

65. The electronic device of claim 55, wherein the first driving unit drives the sensor assembly to scan the living subject's skin in the contactless way to determine the measuring position by:

- generating a predicted measuring position based on the sensed signals measured at a current and prior scanning positions of the sensor assembly by a pre-trained model; and

outputting the predicted measuring position for further process if the predicted measuring position satisfies a predetermined condition; and

controlling movement of the sensor assembly to a next scanning position based on the predicted measuring position if the predicted measuring position does not satisfy the predetermined condition, and returning to the first step of generating a next predicted measuring position.

66. A healthcare system, comprising:

- the electronic device of claim 55; and
- a movable frame that is worn on the living subject, wherein the sensor assembly couples to the movable frame to measure the physiological information of the living subject, and detaches from the movable frame once the measurement is finished.

67. A method that applies an electronic device to a living subject, the method comprising:

- disposing a sensor assembly above the living subject's skin;

driving the sensor assembly, by a first driving unit with an electromagnetic structure, to scan the living subject's skin along a scan path there-above in a contactless way to determine a measuring position; and

driving the sensor assembly, by a second driving unit, to move towards and contact the living subject's skin to measure physiological information of the living subject based on the measuring position.

68. The method of claim **67**, further comprising:

generating an electromagnetic force by an interaction between a magnet and a coil of the first driving unit to drive the sensor assembly.

69. The method of claim **67**, further comprising guiding a moving element that couples to the sensor assembly to move along a guiding rail.

70. The method of claim **67**, further comprising:

fine-tuning the measuring position by measuring pressure pulse signals by the sensor assembly at multiple positions nearby the measuring position and determining an optimal position based on the measured pressure pulse signals.

71. The method of claim **67**, further comprising:

detecting a blood oxygen saturation of the living subject at the measuring position by the sensor assembly, and

controlling a contact depth of the sensor assembly upon the living subject's skin during the detection of the blood oxygen saturation based on the measured physiological information.

72. The method of claim **67**, further comprising predicting the measuring position by a prediction algorithm based on variations of the scanned path and scanned signals sensed along the scan path.

73. The method of claim **67**, wherein the measuring position is determined by:

generating a predicted measuring position based on the sensed signals measured at a current and prior scanning positions of the sensor assembly by a pre-trained model; outputting the predicted measuring position for further process if the predicted measuring position satisfies a predetermined condition; and

controlling movement of the sensor assembly to a next scanning position based on the predicted measuring position if the predicted measuring position does not satisfy a predetermined condition, and returning to the first step of generating a next predicted measuring position.

74. The electronic device of claim **73**, wherein the predetermined condition is satisfied if a confidence range of the predicted measuring position meets an accuracy requirement of the measuring position.

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专利名称(译)	一种用于测量生理信息的电子设备及其方法		
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摘要(译)

一个示例实施例是测量活体的生理信息的电子设备。该电子设备包括传感器组件，具有电磁结构的第一驱动单元和第二驱动单元。第一驱动单元驱动传感器组件以非接触方式沿着其上方的扫描路径扫描活体的皮肤以确定测量位置。第二驱动单元驱动传感器组件朝向并接触生物对象的皮肤以基于测量位置测量生理信息。

