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(57) **ABSTRACT**

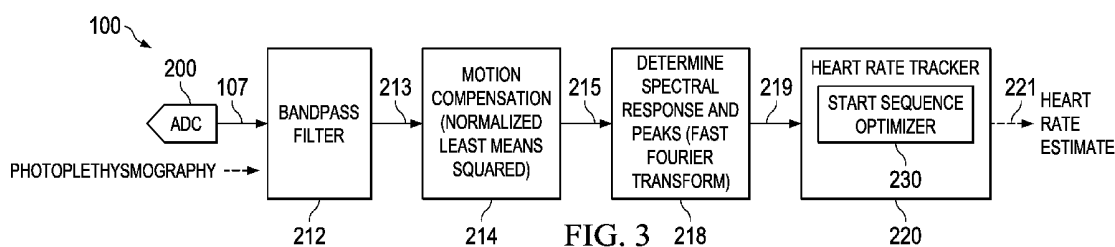
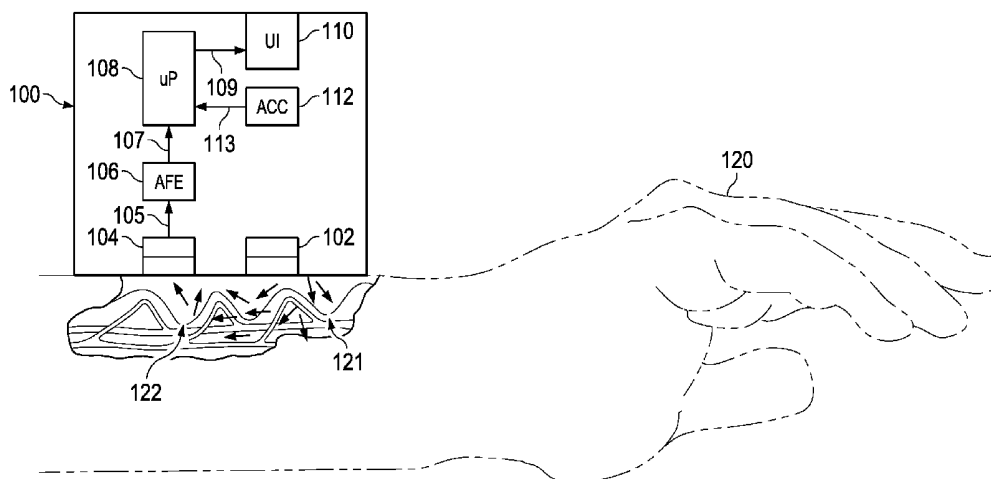
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Disclosed examples include heart rate monitor systems and methods to estimate a patient heart rate or rate of another pulsed signal, in which rate hypotheses or states, are identified for a current time window according to digital sample values of the pulsed signal for a current sample time window, and a rate change value is computed for potential rate transitions between states of the current and previous time windows. Transition pair branch metric values are computed as a function of the rate change value and a frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding rate hypothesis for the current time window, and the pulsed signal rate estimate is determined according to a maximum path metric computed according to the branch metric value and a corresponding path metric value for the previous time window.

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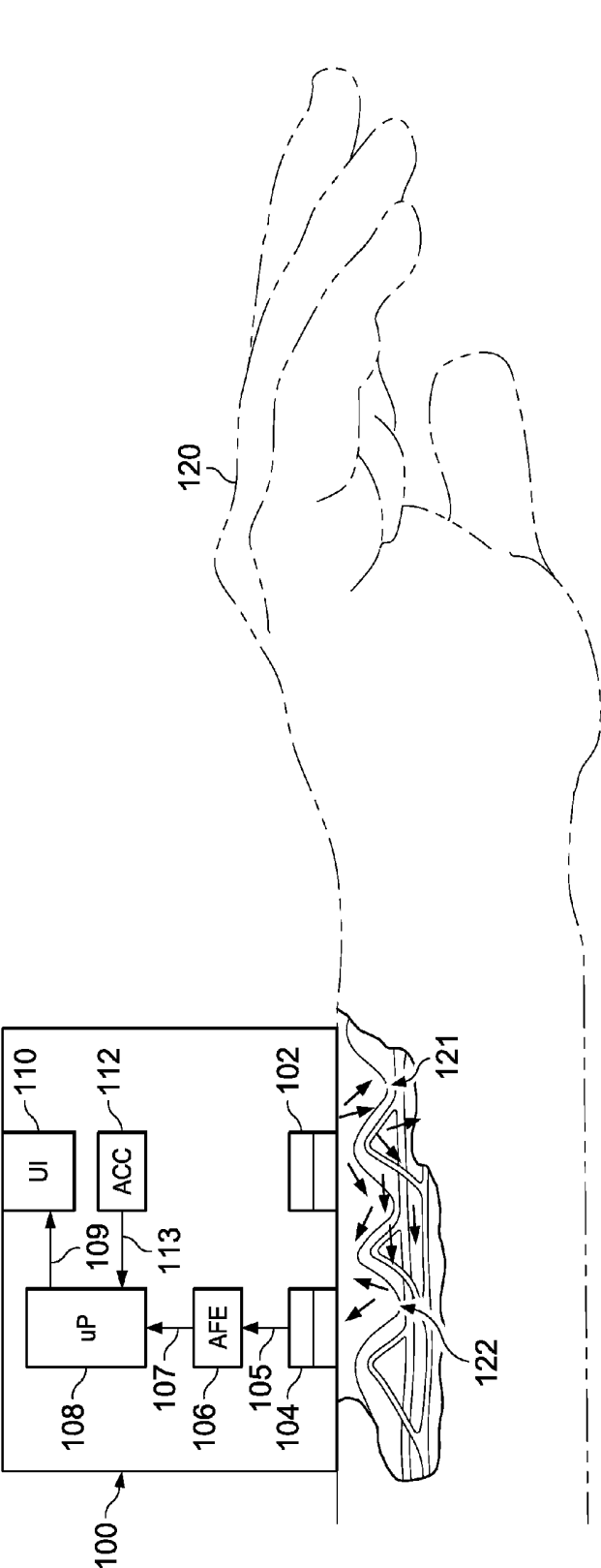


FIG. 1

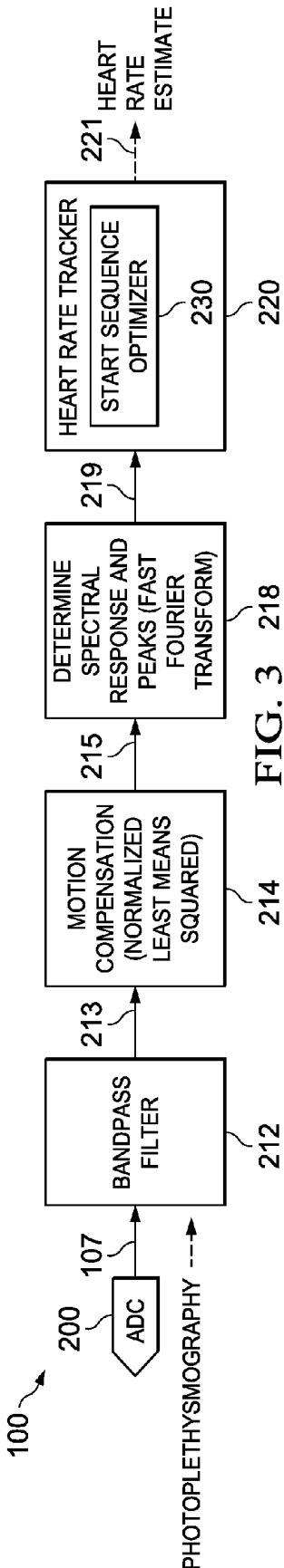


FIG. 3

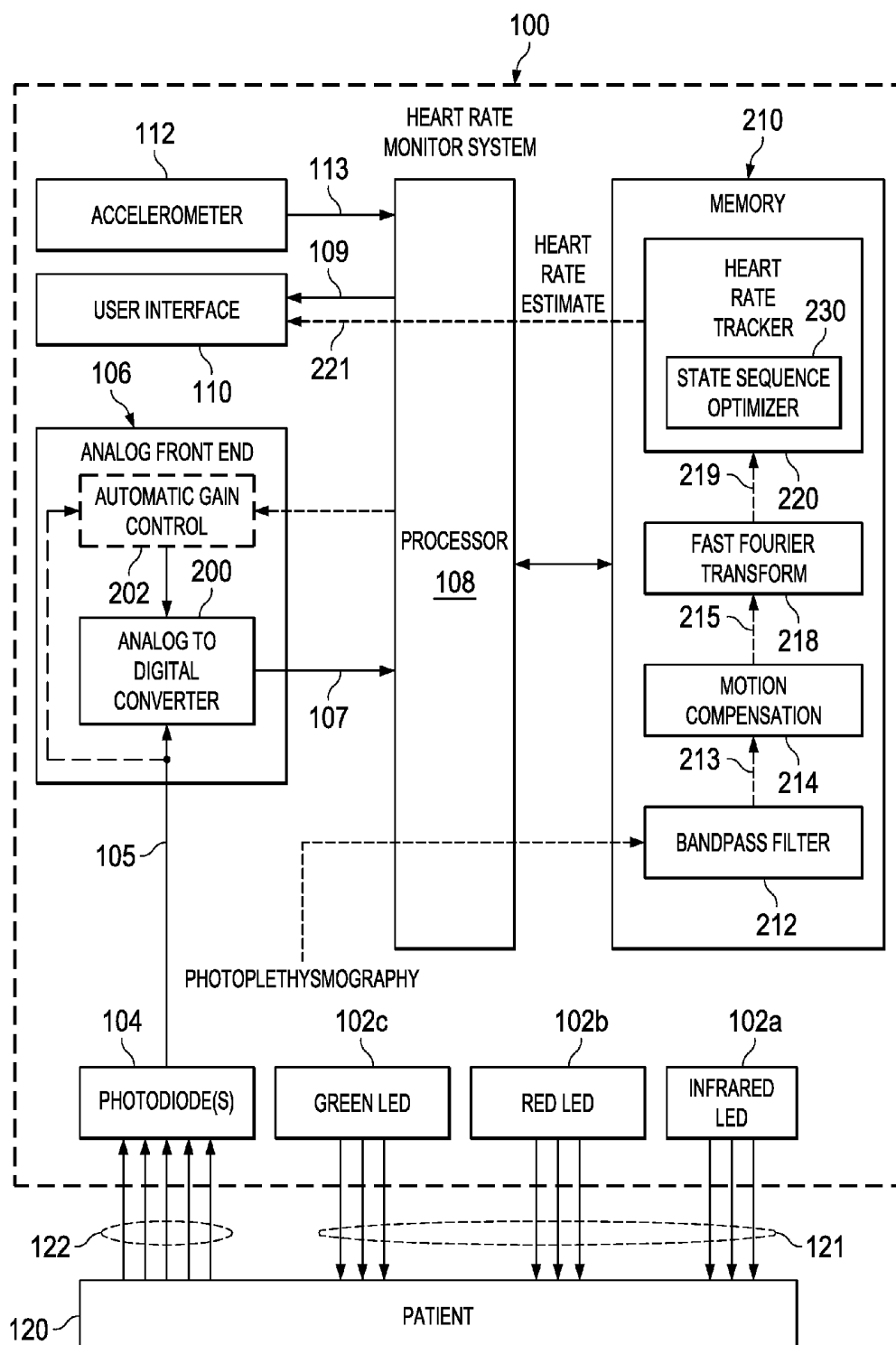


FIG. 2

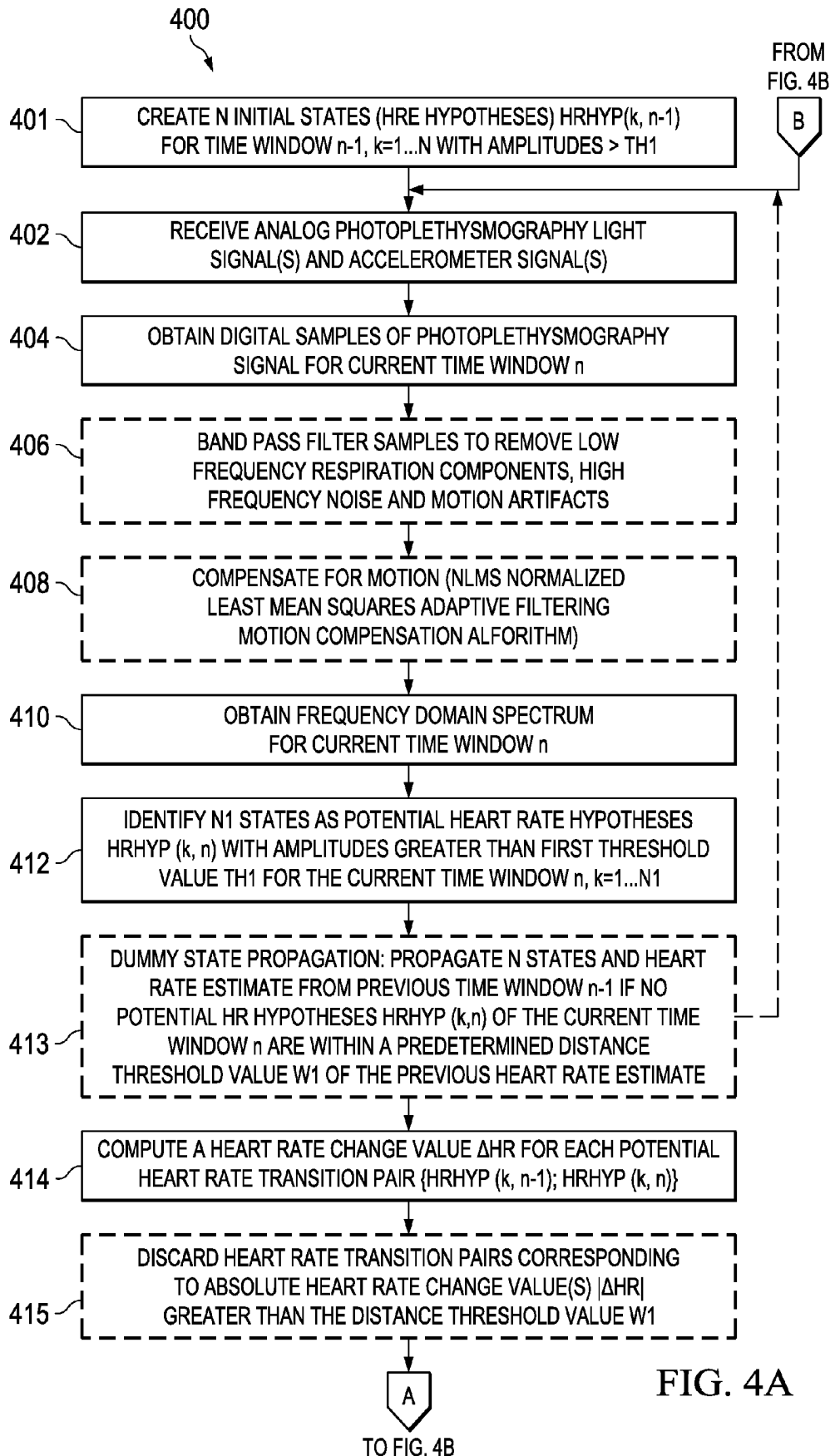


FIG. 4A

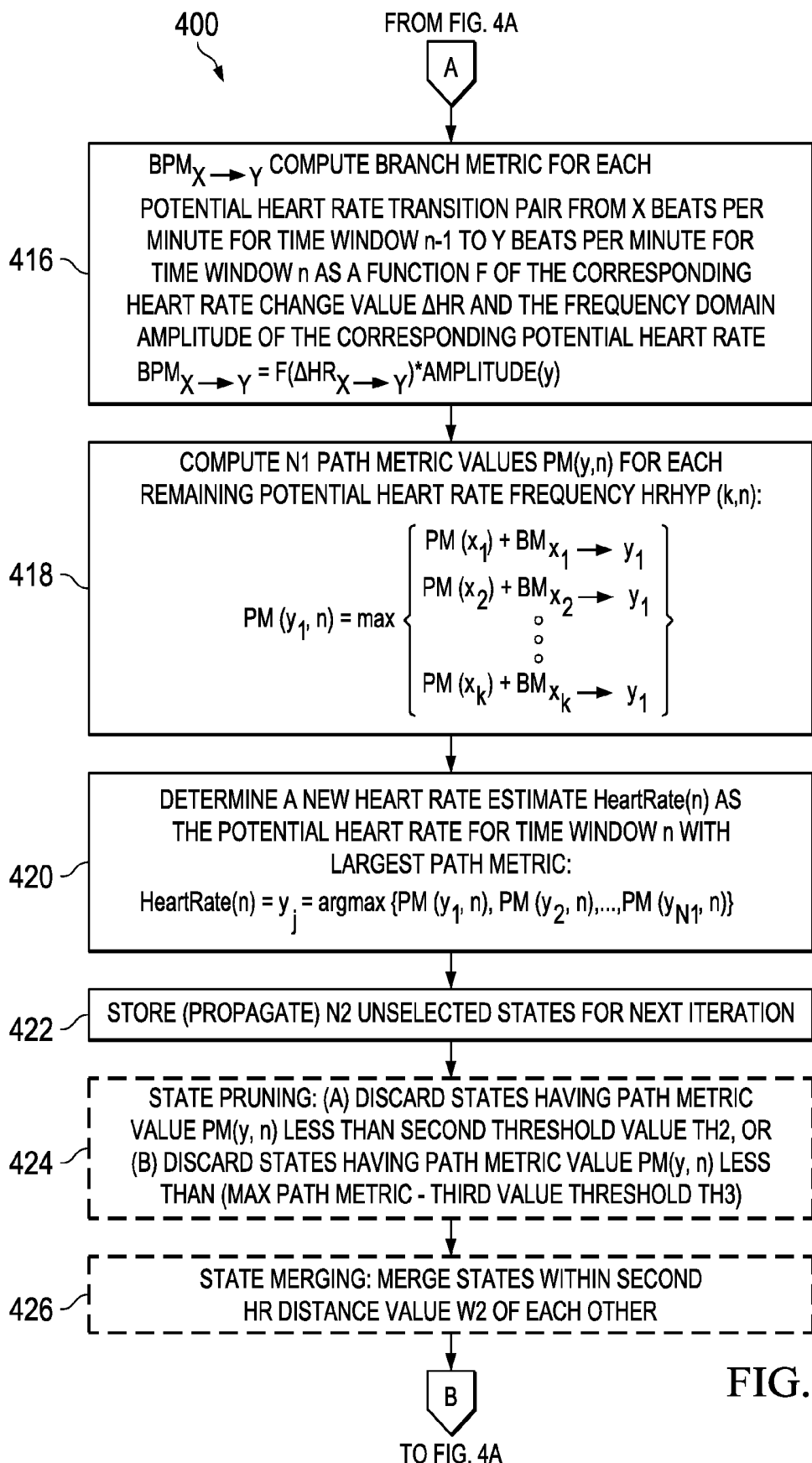
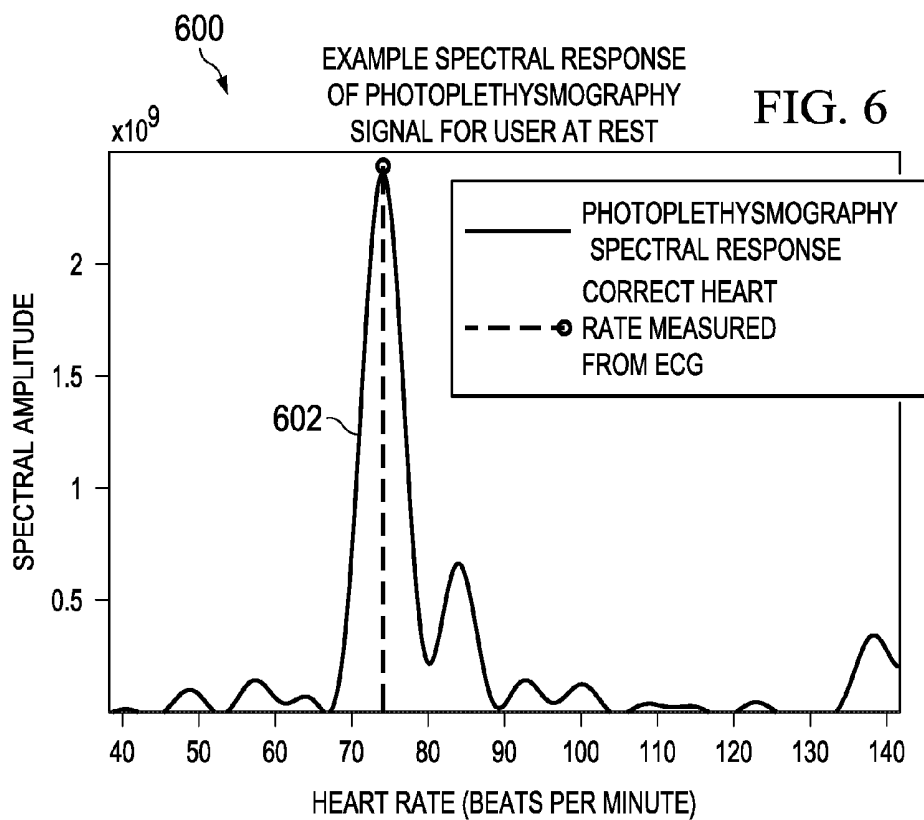
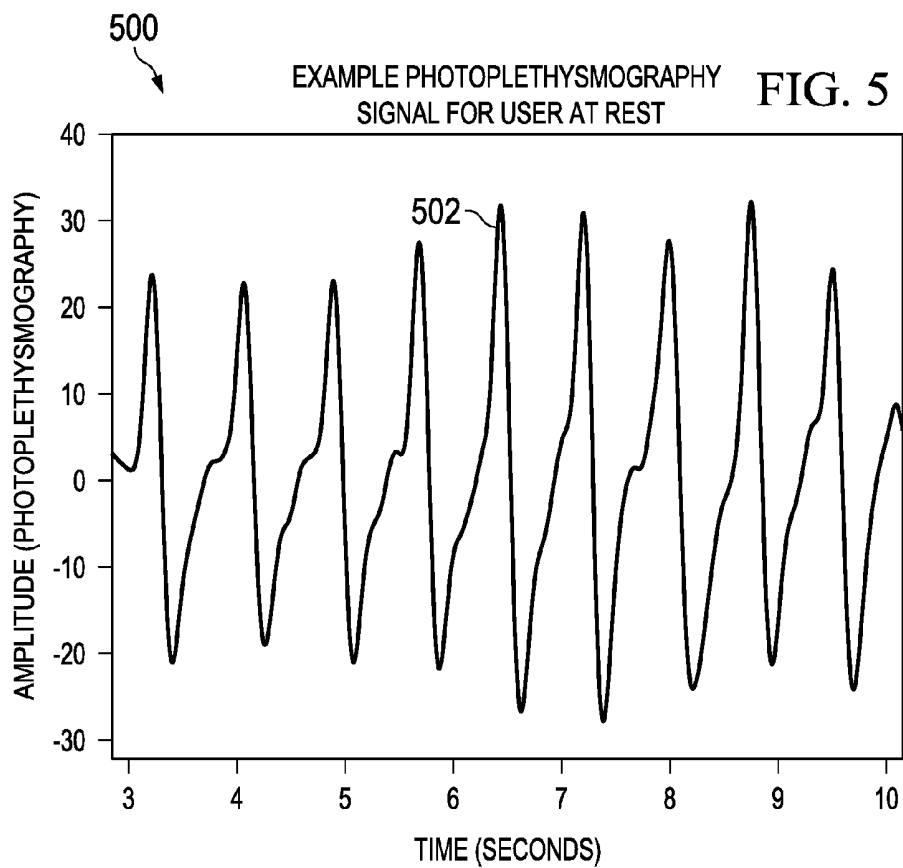
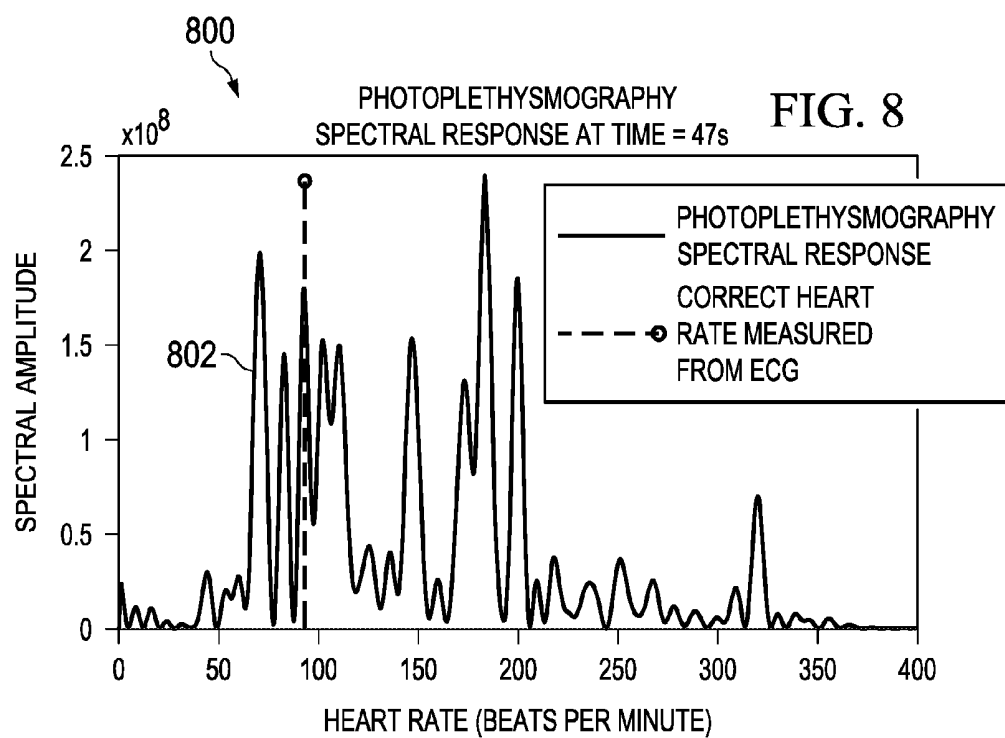
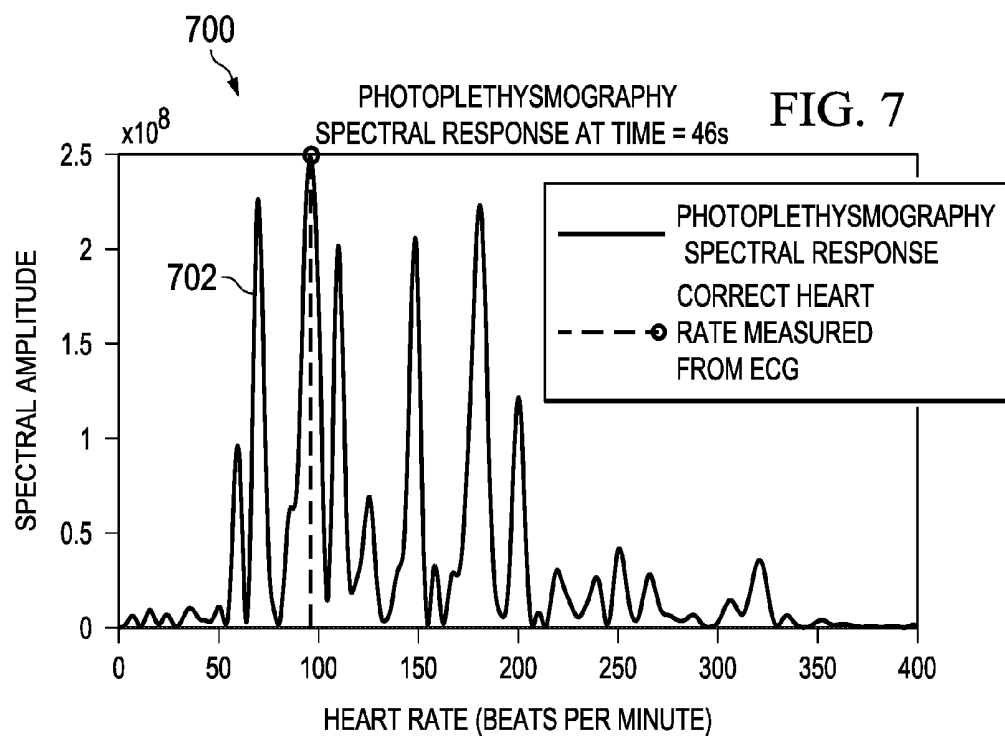
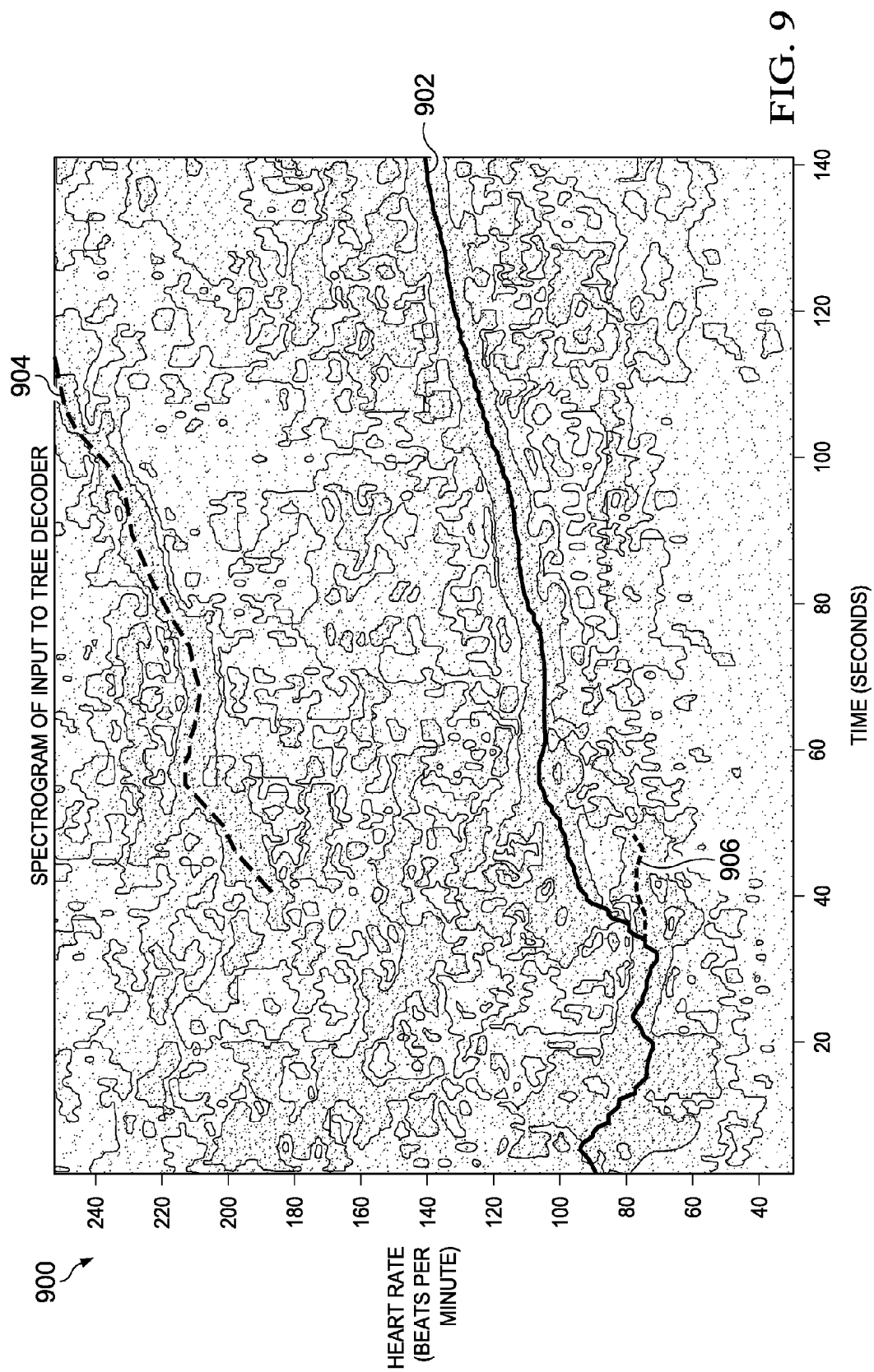
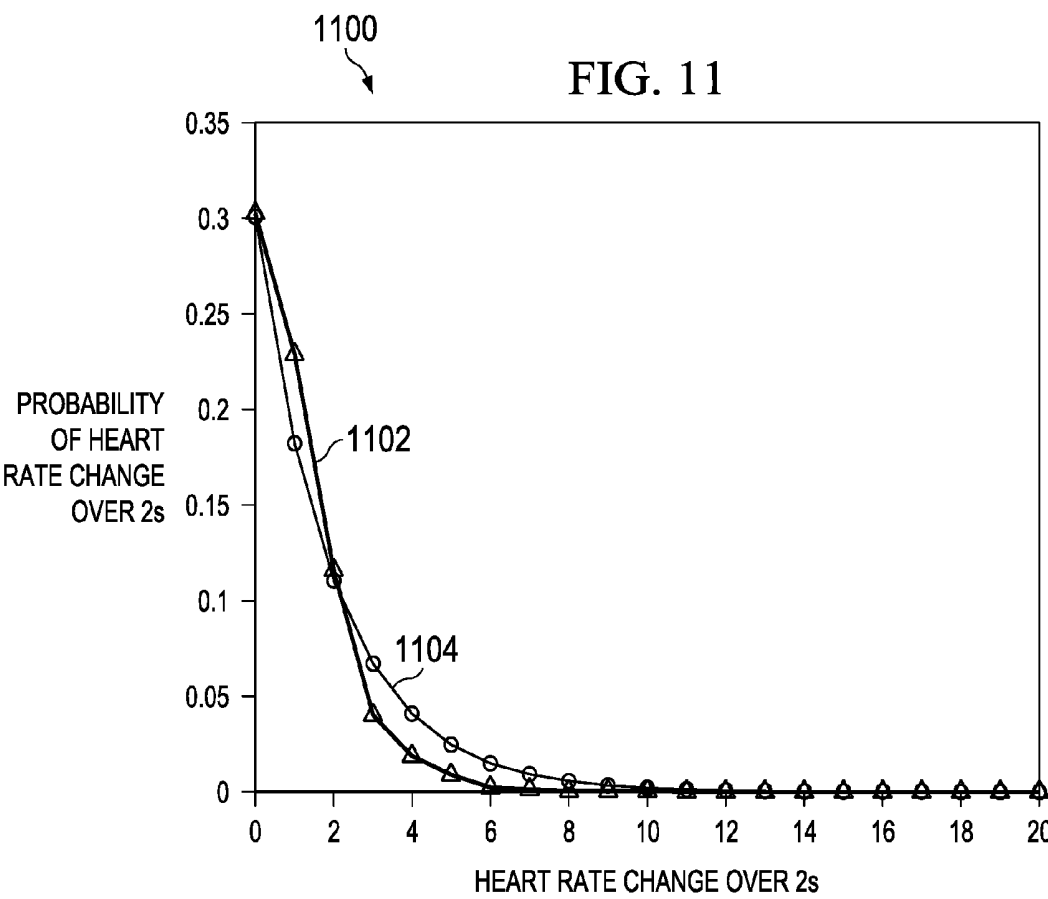
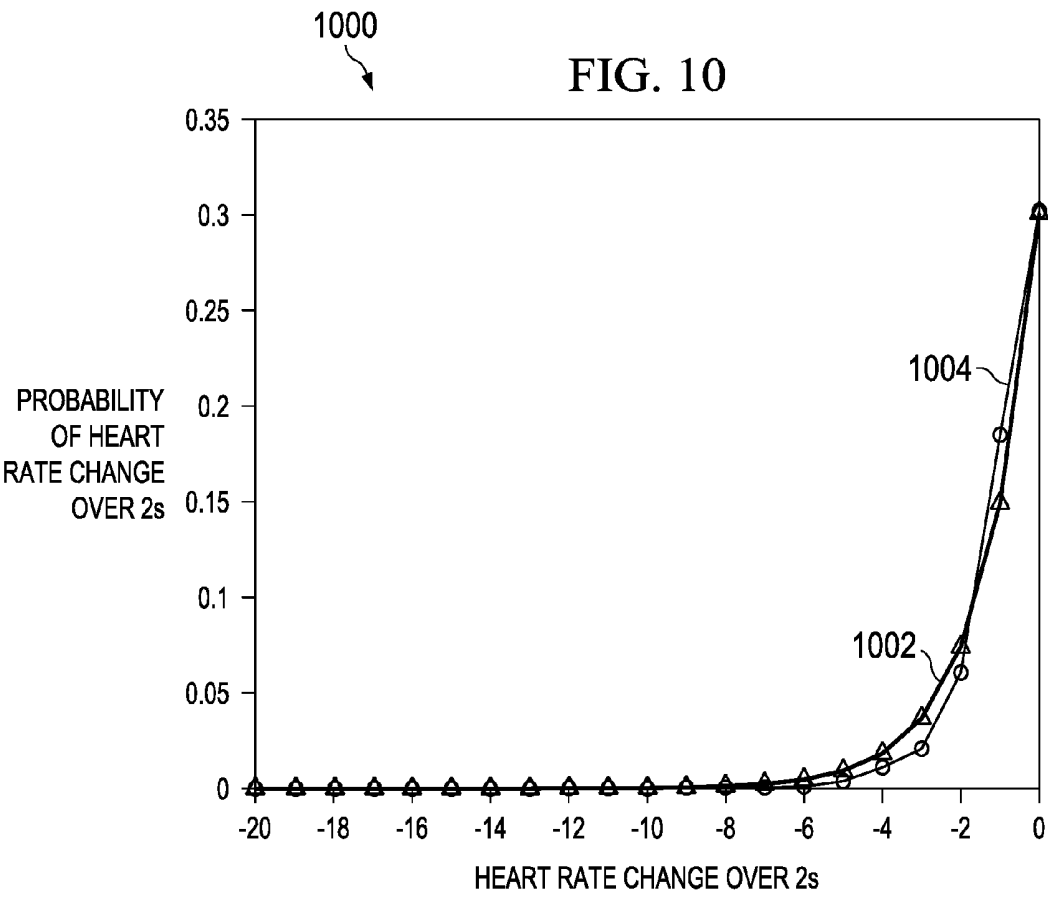


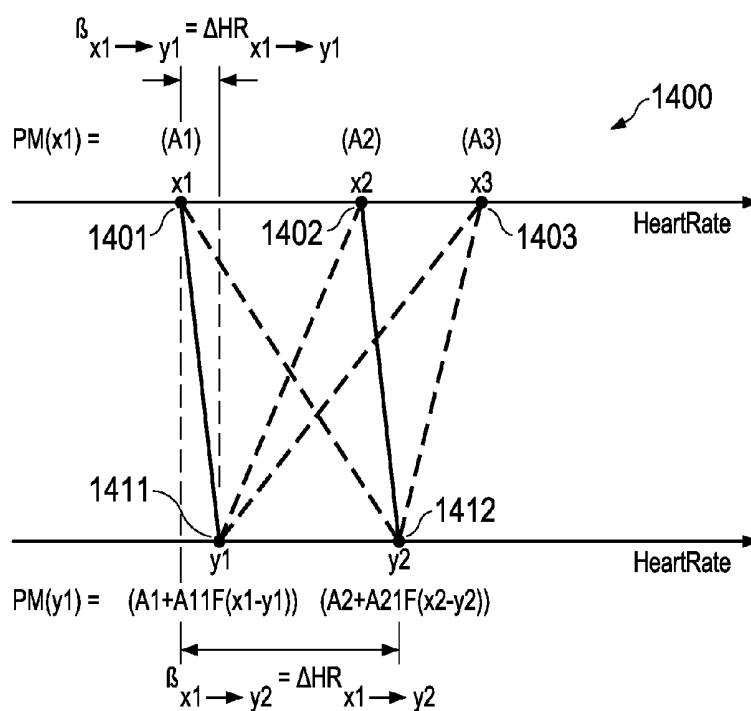
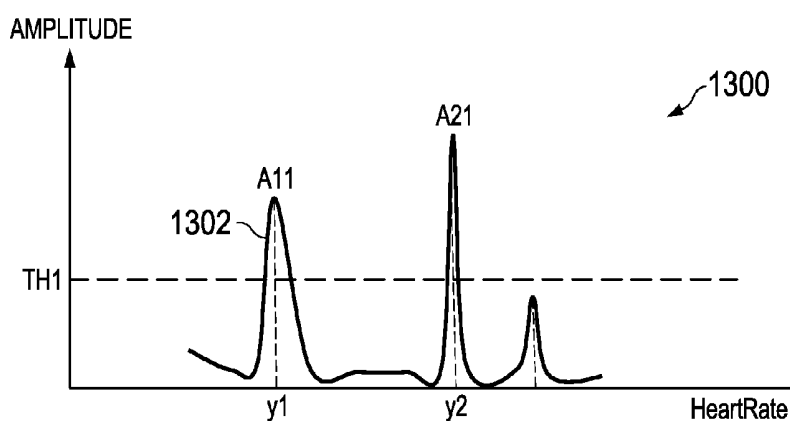
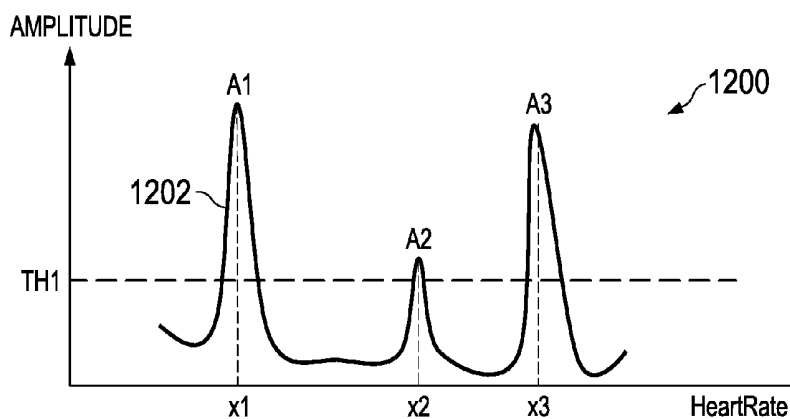
FIG. 4B











HEART RATE ESTIMATION APPARATUS WITH STATE SEQUENCE OPTIMIZATION

[0001] Under 35 U.S.C. §119, this application claims priority to, and the benefit of, U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 62/260,029 that was filed on Nov. 25, 2015 and is entitled “HEART RATE ESTIMATION WITH STATE SEQUENCE OPTIMIZATION”, the entirety of which is incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

[0002] A photoplethysmogram (“PPG”) is an optically obtained volumetric measurement of an organ (an optical plethysmogram). Photoplethysmography can be used in wearable activity monitors, medical equipment or other systems to optically detect blood volume changes in blood vessels to monitor blood flow, blood content, respiration rate and other circulatory conditions, where the intensity of back scattered light correlates to the amount of blood volume. PPG signals can be obtained in a number of different ways, including assessing absorption of light transmitted through, or reflected from, a patient’s skin. A light source at a particular wavelength (typically, red, infrared or green) directs light toward the patient’s skin. A photodiode or other optical sensor generates the PPG signal indicating the measured light transmission or reflection, and changes in the PPG signal can be used to detect the pulse rate of the patient’s heart. PPG based heart rate estimation during motion is difficult, as motion artifacts show up in the PPG signal. The motion artifacts are caused by hemodynamic effects, tissue deformation, and sensor movement relative to the skin. Motion compensation techniques have been proposed to remove the motion component in the PPG signal using information from an external sensor reference, such as an accelerometer. Some approaches use spectrum subtraction to first remove the spectrum of the acceleration data from that of the PPG signal prior to heart rate estimation. Another motion compensation approach uses compressed sensing techniques combined with signal decomposition for de-noising and spectral tracking. The PPG signal fidelity can be further improved using normalized least mean squares (NLMS) and non-coherent combination in the frequency domain. A patient heart rate can be estimated from PPG signals using time-domain analysis, for example, band-pass filtering with a zero crossing detection, but this approach is largely unsuitable in the presence of motion artifacts. Frequency domain analysis generally involves choosing a highest peak in a frequency spectrum as the estimated patient heart rate. However, the PPG frequency spectrum typically includes multiple peaks within a range of realistic patient heart rates, and the dominant frequency domain peak does not always correspond to the actual patient heart rate, particularly in the presence of motion artifacts.

SUMMARY

[0003] Disclosed examples include heart rate monitor systems and methods to estimate a patient’s heart rate or a rate of another pulsed signal using state sequence tracking. Heart rate hypotheses, or states, are identified for a current time window according to digital sample values of the pulsed signal for a current sample time window, and a rate change value is computed for potential rate transitions between states of the current and previous time windows. Transition pair branch metric values are computed as a function of the

rate change value and a frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding rate hypothesis for the current time window, and the pulsed signal rate estimate is determined according to a maximum path metric computed according to the branch metric value and a corresponding path metric value for the previous time window.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] FIG. 1 is a partial schematic diagram of a system to measure reflected light from a patient’s skin for estimating the patient heart rate.

[0005] FIG. 2 is a detailed schematic diagram of an example heart rate estimation system using state sequence optimization.

[0006] FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram of a heart rate estimation example for processing a single light signal in the system of FIGS. 1 and 2.

[0007] FIGS. 4A and 4B show a flow diagram of a method to estimate the heart rate of a patient.

[0008] FIG. 5 is a signal diagram of a time domain filtered PPG signal.

[0009] FIG. 6 is a signal diagram of a frequency domain filtered PPG signal corresponding to the time domain signal of FIG. 5 showing a single dominant peak corresponding to an actual patient heart rate.

[0010] FIG. 7 is a signal diagram of a frequency domain PPG signal spectrum at a first time when a dominant frequency domain peak corresponds to the correct patient heart rate.

[0011] FIG. 8 is a signal diagram of a frequency domain PPG signal spectrum at a second time when the dominant frequency domain peak does not correspond to the correct patient heart rate.

[0012] FIG. 9 is a short-term spectrogram showing frequency domain intensity for different heart rates over time, including a true patient heart rate tracking curve as well as alternate heart rate state tracks.

[0013] FIG. 10 is a graph of actual and modeled probability density function curves for decreasing or negative heart rate changes.

[0014] FIG. 11 is a graph of actual and modeled probability density function curves for increasing or positive heart rate changes.

[0015] FIG. 12 is a signal diagram of a frequency domain PPG signal spectrum at a first time including three frequency domain peaks above a threshold.

[0016] FIG. 13 is a signal diagram of a frequency domain PPG signal spectrum at a second time including two frequency domain peaks above the threshold.

[0017] FIG. 14 is a heart rate transition diagram showing possible transitions from the three states at the first time in FIG. 12 to the two states at the second time in FIG. 13.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0018] In the drawings, like reference numerals refer to like elements throughout, and the various features are not necessarily drawn to scale. In the following discussion and in the claims, the terms “including”, “includes”, “having”, “has”, “with”, or variants thereof are intended to be inclusive in a manner similar to the term “comprising”, and thus should be interpreted to mean “including, but not limited to . . .”

[0019] Referring initially to FIGS. 1 and 2, FIG. 1 shows a wearable heart rate monitor system 100 to measure reflected light from the skin of a patient 120 to determine a heart rate estimate (HRE) value. FIG. 2 shows further details of the heart rate estimation system 100, including a processor implemented heart rate tracker 220 with a state sequence optimizer (SSO) 230. The system 100 estimates the patient heart rate by identifying heart rate hypotheses, or states, for a current time window according to digital sample values of a PPG signal or other pulsed signal for the current sample time window. The system 100 computes a rate change value for potential rate transitions between states of the current time window and the previous time window. The system 100 computes branch metric values for state transition pairs as a function of the rate change value and a frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding rate hypothesis for the current time window n , and determines the pulsed signal rate estimate according to a maximum path metric computed according to the branch metric value and a corresponding path metric value for the previous time window.

[0020] In one non-limiting pulsed signal rate estimation application, the system 100 is shown in FIG. 1 adjacent to a patient wrist for reflective PPG monitoring. In this example, the system 100 uses reflected light measurement techniques via one or more light sources (e.g., LED(s)) 102 and one or more optical sensors (e.g., photo diode(s)) 104. The light source 102 and the optical sensor 104 are disposed along a common plane in this example. Coplanarity of the light source 102 and the sensor 104 is not required in all implementations. In other examples, transmission configurations are possible, with a light source and a light sensor disposed on opposite sides of a patient's finger or other portions of a patient's body to assess light transmission and/or absorption for determining patient heart rate. The light source 102 in FIG. 1 directs a first light signal 121 toward the skin of the patient 120. The first light signal 121 in this example is reflected in the patient 120 with some measure of absorption, and a reflected second light signal 122 is generated. The optical sensor 104 detects the second light signal 122 from the patient 120. In this example, the sensor 104 generates an analog PPG signal 105 that represents reflection of the first light signal 121 in the patient 120. In other examples (not shown) where the sensor 104 and the source 102 are on opposite sides of the patient's finger, the sensor 104 provides a PPG signal 105 that represents transmission or absorption of light through the patient. In one example, a single light source 102 and a single optical sensor 104 are used. The example of FIG. 2 includes multiple LED light sources 102a-102c that provide corresponding first light signals 121 at different wavelengths. The first light source 102a in this example provides infrared (IR) light 121, the second source 102b provides red light 121, and the third optical source 102c provides green light 121.

[0021] The system 100 further includes an analog front end (AFE) circuit 106. One or more optical sensors 104 receive the second light signal 122, and provide one or PPG signals 105 to the AFE circuit 106. The AFE circuit 106 includes suitable analog signal conditioning circuitry (not shown) to receive and condition the PPG signal or signals 105, as well as an analog to digital converter (ADC) 200. The ADC 200 samples the PPG signal 105 and generates a plurality of digital PPG sample values 107 in a first time window for use in estimating the patient heart rate corresponding to the time window. The system 100 in one

example operates in continuous fashion to continually monitor received PPG signals 105 and to estimate the patient heart rate based on an integer number of samples in individual ones of a series of multiple time windows to yield a heart rate estimate (HRE) value for each corresponding time window.

[0022] The ADC 200 operates at a fixed or adjustable sample rate, and the time windows in certain examples include a sufficient number of samples to characterize the PPG signal 105 over multiple heartbeats of the patient 120. For example, the length of the time windows W in one example is on the order of 8-10 seconds. The time windows in one example are of equal length, but other embodiments can have time windows of different lengths. The AFE circuit 106 in FIG. 2 also includes an analog automatic gain control (AGC) circuit 202 to adjust the gain of the signal 105 converted by the ADC circuit 200. In certain examples, the AGC circuit 202 receives the signal or signals 105 and dynamically adjusts an input buffer amplifier gain to provide a signal for conversion by the ADC circuit 200. In some examples, the analog AGC circuit 202 may also receive an external control signal or value from a processor 108 to set the gain for conversion of the PPG signal or signals 105 based on digital automatic gain control (DAGC) operation in the digital domain on previously received samples. In addition, the system 100 may include an accelerometer 112 providing a signal 113 to the processor 108.

[0023] The ADC 200 provides digital sample values 107 of the PPG signal to the processor 108 and an associated electronic memory 210 for digital processing to estimate the patient heart rate. The processor circuit 108 can be any suitable digital logic circuit, programmable or pre-programmed, such as an ASIC, microprocessor, microcontroller, FPGA, etc. that operates to execute program instructions stored in the electronic memory 210 to implement the features and functions described herein as well as other associated tasks to implement a monitor system 100. In certain examples, moreover, the memory circuit 210 can be included within the processor circuit 108. The processor 108 in the examples of FIGS. 1 and 2 includes an interface connection 109 to a user interface (UI) 110, such as a display (not shown). In certain examples, the memory 103 constitutes a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium that stores computer-executable instructions that, when executed by the processor 108, perform the various features and functions detailed herein.

[0024] In the example of FIG. 2, the processor 108 implements instructions corresponding to various functions or components 212-220 in the memory 210, including a filter component (bandpass filter or BPF) 212, a motion compensation component 214, a Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) component 218 and a heart rate tracker (HRT) component 220 with a state sequence optimizer 230. In operation, the processor 108 implements the functional components 212-230 to operate on the received PPG samples 107 to provide a heart rate estimate value (HRE) 221, which can then be provided to the user interface (UI) 110, such as a display to render the HRE value 221 to a patient 120.

[0025] The processor 108 implements the filter component 212 to filter 706 the digital PPG sample values 107 to generate a plurality of filtered values 213 corresponding to the first time window W_1 . The processor 108 implements low pass filtering by the filter component 212 to remove certain motion artifacts or other low frequency components

not related to the patient heart rate. In the illustrated example, the processor 108 executes the instructions of the component 212 to implement bandpass filtering to also remove high-frequency noise components. As previously discussed, the methods and systems of the present disclosure can be used for estimating a rate of any pulsed signal. Although described herein in the context of a pulsed PPG signal 105 heart rate estimation, the various concepts can be employed with any pulsed signal. The processor 108 in the illustrated example performs motion compensation processing on the filtered values 213 to generate a plurality of motion compensated values 215 corresponding to the first time window n . In one example, the motion compensation component 214 implements any suitable motion compensation algorithms or processing, including spectrum subtraction, compressed sensing with signal decomposition, and/or normalized least means squared or NLMS processing.

[0026] Following motion compensation, the processor 108 provides implements the FFT component 218 and the HRT component 220 in order to determine the heart rate estimate HRE value 221 representing the heart rate of the patient 120 for the current time window n according to the frequency content of the motion compensated values 215. In one example, the processor computes the frequency content of the motion compensated values 215 using a Fast Fourier Transform FFT algorithm via the instructions of the component 218 in order to generate a frequency spectrum including frequency component values 219. The processor 108 implements the heart rate tracking component 220 in this example to determine the HRE value 221 according to discernible peaks in the frequency spectrum data 219 via the state sequence optimizer component 230.

[0027] FIG. 3 illustrates the digital domain processing for a single PPG light signal 105 in the system 100 of FIGS. 1 and 2 as described above. In other examples, multiple light signals 105 can be processed using the components 212-220, for example, based on first light signals 121 generated by light sources 102 of different wavelengths (e.g., infrared or IR, red, green, etc.). The system 100 in this example may include a corresponding set of multiple optical sensors (e.g., photodiodes) 104, each receiving a corresponding light signal 122 and generating a corresponding second analog PPG signal 105 representing transmission or reflection in the patient 120. For example, the first optical sensor 104 detects the second light signal 122 representing transmission or reflection of the first light signal 121 from the first light source 102a, and the processor 108 operates on sampled values in a first signal processing chain associated with the first wavelength. For an additional light source 102b and an associated second optical sensor 104, the analog PPG signal 105 corresponds to a detected fourth light signal 122 representing transmission or reflection of a third light signal from the second source 102b, and the processor 108 forms filtering and motion compensation (and possibly gain adjustment) in a second digital signal processing chain.

[0028] FIGS. 4A and 4B provide a flow diagram of a method 400 to estimate a rate of a pulsed signal. In the general case, the method 400 can be implemented in any suitable processing system. In one example, the processor 108 of the heart rate monitor system 100 is programmed by instructions in the memory 210 in order to implement the method 400 to estimate a patient heart rate based on a pulsed PPG signal 105, and the method 400 as described below in the context of this example application. In other implemen-

tations, the process 400 can be implemented in a general purpose computer (not shown), in a medical equipment processor, or other processing circuit or system. The processor 108 of the heart rate monitor system 100 generally implements the method 400 in continuous fashion, providing a heart rate estimate at each of a series of sample time windows.

[0029] As shown in FIG. 4A, the processor 108 begins executing the state sequence optimizer (SSO) component 230 (e.g., at power up) to characterize an initial frequency domain spectrum of the PPG signal input by creating an integer number N initial states corresponding to a time window $n-1$. In this initial or training phase, the SSO 230 may be initialized to a maximum of N heart rate hypotheses or states, that have amplitudes in the frequency domain greater than a first threshold value for the time window $n-1$. In some embodiments, the initial heart rate hypotheses may correspond to the largest N distinct spectral peaks whose amplitude is above a first threshold TH1A. For each heart rate hypothesis, a corresponding path metric is assigned and the metric may simply be the spectral amplitude. In one example, the processor 108 sets the initial path metric to the spectral amplitude normalized by a scaling factor. Since the heart rate typically includes second and third harmonics, in an alternative embodiment an initial search window may first be defined e.g., [30 BPM-250 BPM], and the initial N heart rate hypotheses correspond to the N largest distinct peaks in the search window that have second and third harmonics above a threshold TH1B. Alternatively, the N hypotheses may correspond to the N heart rates hypotheses in the initial search window with the largest metric, where the metric is the sum of fundamental spectral peak, second harmonic peak and third harmonic peak.

[0030] At 402 in FIG. 4A, the iterative heart rate estimation processing starts with the analog front end circuit 106 receiving one or more analog PPG light signals. In certain examples, accelerometer signals are also received at 402. At 404, digital samples are obtained of the analog PPG signal over a corresponding current time window n , for example, using an ADC circuit 200 as described above. At 406, the digital PPG samples of the current time window n are filtered, for example, by execution of digital filtering program instructions 212 by the processor 108 described above. At 408, the filtered samples are motion compensated. In one example, the motion compensation at 408 is implemented using NLMS adaptive filtering or other suitable algorithm by processor execution of the compensation component instructions 214 above to provide motion compensated values 215. As discussed above, the method 400 can be used for other pulsed signals, and the filtering and motion compensation steps at 406 and 408 can optionally be omitted.

[0031] Referring briefly to FIGS. 5-8, a signal diagram 500 and FIG. 5 shows a pulsed or oscillating time domain filtered PPG signal 502, and the diagram 600 and FIG. 6 shows a corresponding frequency domain filtered PPG signal 602 with a single dominant peak (e.g., at approximately 73 bpm) corresponding to an actual patient heart rate. PPG based heart rate estimation during motion is sometimes difficult due to motion artifacts in the PPG signal. This problem can be addressed, to a certain extent, using one or more motion compensation algorithms (e.g., at 408 in FIG. 4A) and/or use of a heuristic based tracker to track the spectral peak. However, heuristic based trackers require multiple FFTs, and thus are undesirable for low complexity

implementations. In addition, heuristics for tracking the spectral peak do not provide a structured approach for candidate tracking. The state sequence optimizer **230** in the system **100** advantageously provides heart rate tracking that makes prior use of how the heart rate evolves over time, and inherently tracks potential solutions by associating a metric with the heart rate estimate that depends on the current time window n as well as history from one or more prior time windows $n-1$. In this regard, and a patient is at rest and there are no motion artifacts, the heart rate can be easily inferred from the PPG signal through either counting the zero-crossings or keeping track of the peaks and valleys. Thus, at rest, the dominant spectral component also corresponds to the heart rate as shown in FIG. 6. However, the PPG signal typically includes motion artifacts when the patient is not at rest. For example, if a watch containing the optical heart rate system **100** is not tied tightly to the patient's wrist, the watch moves when the user is in motion. In this case, the motion artifact effect is multiplicative. The additive components result in new peaks in the spectral signature while the multiplicative effect results in a spectral spreading (multiplication in time is convolution in frequency) of the heart rate signature i.e., presence of new peaks.

[0032] Referring also to FIGS. 7 and 8, absent perfect motion compensation and a perfect deconvolution of the multiplicative artifacts, it is difficult to minimize the motion induced spectral peaks. Importantly, the maximum peak may not always correspond to the correct heart rate even after motion compensation processing. In addition, as the patient motion changes over time, this inaccuracy in peak tracking also changes over time. A signal diagram **700** and FIG. 7 illustrates a frequency domain PPG signal spectrum **702** at a first time when a dominant frequency domain peak corresponds to the correct patient heart rate. At a subsequent sample time window, a signal diagram **800** in FIG. 8 shows the frequency domain PPG signal **802** when the dominant frequency domain peak does not correspond to the correct patient heart rate. As seen in FIG. 8, at any given time window, there may also be several spectral peaks that have similar amplitude to the spectral peak that corresponds to the correct heart rate. However, as the motion component in the PPG signal is typically a non-stationary process, there is a higher likelihood of the dominant spectral peak or a set of the dominant spectral peaks to correspond to the correct heart rate. Furthermore, the heart rate change from one time instant to the next cannot arbitrarily jump by a large amount i.e., it follows a certain distribution.

[0033] Returning to FIG. 4A, the heart rate monitor system processor **108** implements the state sequence optimization component **230** in which each candidate heart rate is considered as a possible state and is assigned a probability or a path metric. The path metric preferably captures the history of the previous heart rate estimate(s), and captures the rate of change of the heart rate from the previous heart rate estimate. Processor execution of the SSO component **230** in the illustrated example uses the spectral response of the motion compensated PPG signal as an input. In general, the processor execution of the SSO component **230** creates the initial heart rate hypothesis based on the spectral amplitudes and assigns a metric to each hypothesis, and at each time step or sample time window, computes branch metrics (**416** in FIG. 4B) from the heart rate hypothesis for time window $n-1$ to those for time window n . The process **400** also includes computing or updating a path metric at **418** for

the heart rate hypothesis, and determines a new heart rate estimate for the current time window n at **420** representing the patient heart rate as the heart rate hypothesis having a maximum candidate path metric value. The SSO component **230** in certain examples also selectively provides dummy state propagation at **413** to carry a previous set of states forward where a subset of the most probable heart rate hypothesis for time window $n-1$ have no valid heart state to jump to in time window n , and may also optionally implement state pruning and state merging at **424** and **426** in FIG. 4B as discussed further below.

[0034] Referring also to FIGS. 9-14, operation of the state sequence optimizer component **230** is illustrated and described with respect to a simplified example using PPG signals for heart rate estimation. FIG. 9 shows a short-term spectrogram diagram **900** that includes frequency domain intensity for different heart rates (in beats per minute or bpm) over time, including a true patient heart rate tracking curve **902** as well as alternate heart rate state tracks **904** and **906**. FIG. 10 shows a graph **1000** of actual and modeled probability density function curves **1002** and **1004**, respectively for decreasing or negative heart rate changes. A graph **1100** in FIG. 11 shows curves **1102** and **1104** respectively representing actual and modeled probability density function curves for increasing or positive heart rate changes. FIGS. 10 and 11 illustrate monotonically decreasing probability density functions (PDFs) representing the decreasing probability that a patient heart rate will change by large amount within a given timeframe (e.g., two seconds in the illustrated examples). FIG. 12 illustrates a frequency domain PPG signal spectrum **1200** as a curve **1202** at a first time including three frequency domain peaks of amplitude A_1 , A_2 and A_3 at corresponding heart rates or frequencies x_1 , x_2 and x_3 above a first threshold value TH_1 . In one example, the spectrum **1200** of FIG. 12 represents PPG sample data from a previous sample time window $n-1$. FIG. 13 illustrates a subsequent frequency domain PPG signal spectrum as a curve **1302** at a current time window n including two frequency domain peaks at heart rates y_1 and y_2 having corresponding amplitudes A_{11} and A_{21} above the threshold TH_1 . The state sequence optimizer component **230** and the process **400** are described hereinafter with respect to the examples of FIGS. 12 and 13 for updating state transition path metrics to estimate a current patient heart rate, where FIG. 14 provides a heart rate transition diagram **1400** showing possible transitions from the three states **1401**, **1402** and **1403** at the time window $n-1$ in FIG. 12 to the two states **1411** and **1412** at the current time window n in FIG. 13.

[0035] The state sequence optimization processing begins at **410** in FIG. 4A. At **410**, the processor **108** obtains a frequency domain spectrum for the current time window n . In one example, the processor computes the frequency content of the motion compensated values **215** using a Fast Fourier Transform FFT algorithm at **410** to generate **410** a frequency domain spectrum for the current time window n according to the digital PPG sample values **107**. At **412**, the processor **108** identifies a plurality N_1 of states for the current time window n as heart rate hypotheses $HRHYP(k, n)$ having amplitudes in the frequency domain spectrum greater than a first threshold value TH_1 for the current time window n . A k th two-tuple ($HRHYP(k, n-1)$, $PM(k, n-1)$) k denote the k th heart rate hypothesis ($HRHYP(k, n-1)$) at time window $n-1$ with a path metric equal to $PM(k, n-1)$. At

the current time window n , the spectral response of the motion compensated PPG signal is determined at **410**.

[0036] At **412**, the set of $N1$ heart rate hypotheses are identified from the spectral response whose amplitudes are largest and are distinct peaks i.e., $[(HR(1,n), Amp(1,n)), (HR(12,n), Amp(2,n)), \dots, (HR(N1,n), Amp(N1,n))]$. In one example, the spectral input is computed by an FFT on the motion compensated PPG signal, and the distinct peaks of amplitudes **A11** and **A12** in FIG. **13** are found by looking for all local maxima that are above the threshold **TH1**. The spectral input may be normalized in various ways prior to comparing against a threshold. Several non-limiting examples include normalizing with respect to the maximum peak, normalizing with respect to the total power in the input signal, and normalizing with respect to a predefined constant. As noted at **412** in FIG. **4A**, the SSO component **230** in certain examples provides an efficient implementation after an initial set of heart rate hypothesis are identified. For each heart rate hypothesis or state, the search space is within a distance threshold value $\pm W1$ heart beats from the previous HRE estimate value. In this example, the processor **108** only computes only the spectral response around those frequencies. In one embodiment, the processor **108** implements this approach by the Goertzel algorithm. In another embodiment, this computation may be done by using the DFT itself.

[0037] At **413**, the processor **108** optionally implements dummy state propagation, for example, for iterations of the process **400** in which no spectral peak is identified for time window n which is within the distance threshold $W1$ of the heart rate estimate for time window $n-1$. In this case, the processor **108** determines the HRE value **221** representing the heart rate of the patient **120** for the current time window n as the previous heart rate estimate HRE for the previous time window $n-1$. In addition, the processor **108** carries at least some of the heart rate hypotheses $HRHYP(k, n-1)$ from the previous time window $n-1$ forward to the current time window n . In this regard, the number of hypotheses N from the previous time window $n-1$ may, but need not be, the same as the number of hypotheses $N1$ determined for the current time window n . In certain examples, where none of the spectral peaks are within the distance threshold $W1$, the heart rate estimate value **221** for time window $n-1$ is carried forward along with its path metric to time window n , and the top $N2$ candidates for time window $n-1$ with the largest path metric are carried forward.

[0038] At **414**, the processor **108** computes a heart rate change value ΔHR for each of a plurality of potential heart rate transition pairs. As shown in FIG. **14**, for example, arrowed lines represent individual heart rate transition pairs corresponding to a heart rate transition to one of the heart rate hypotheses $HRHYP(k, n)$ for the current time window n from one of a plurality of heart rate hypotheses $HRHYP(k, n-1)$ for a previous time window $n-1$. FIG. **14** illustrates two example heart rate change values $\Delta HR_{x1 \rightarrow y1} = \beta_{x1 \rightarrow y1}$ and $\Delta HR_{x1 \rightarrow y2} = \beta_{x1 \rightarrow y2}$ for potential transitions from the point $x1$ at the previous time window $n-1$ to the points $y1$ and $y2$ at the current time window n . In one implementation, the processor **108** selectively discards heart rate transition pairs at **415** which correspond to heart rate change values ΔHR that are greater than the predetermined distance threshold value $W1$. In this example, for each heart rate hypothesis at the current time window n , the processor **108** computes the heart rate change values ΔHR for all the heart rate

hypotheses for time window $n-1$, and only retains the heart rate change values ΔHR that are less than a distance threshold $W1$ are considered as valid transitions according to the following formulas:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta HR_{1 \rightarrow 1} &= HRHYP(1, n-1) - HR(1, n); \\ &1 \rightarrow 1 \text{ transition valid if } \text{abs}(\Delta HR_{1 \rightarrow 1}) < W1 \\ \Delta HR_{k \rightarrow 1} &= HRHYP(k, n-1) - HR(1, n); \\ &k \rightarrow 1 \text{ transition valid if } \text{abs}(\Delta HR_{k \rightarrow 1}) < W1 \\ &\vdots \\ \Delta HR_{k \rightarrow N1} &= HRHYP(k, n-1) - HR(N1, n); \\ &k \rightarrow N1 \text{ transition valid if } \text{abs}(\Delta HR_{k \rightarrow N1}) < W1 \end{aligned}$$

[0039] As an example, if a heart rate hypothesis for time window n is 70 BPM, and the distance threshold value $W1$ is set to 20 BPM, the processor **108** only considers the heart rate hypothesis at the previous time window $n-1$ which are between 50 BPM and 90 BPM as valid transitions to the heart rate hypothesis of 70 BPM at the current time window n .

[0040] Returning to **416** in FIG. **4B**, the processor **108** computes branch metric values $BM_{x \rightarrow y}$ for each of the remaining plurality of potential heart rate transition pairs as a function F of the corresponding heart rate change value ΔHR and the frequency domain amplitude $AMPLITUDE(y)$ of the corresponding heart rate hypotheses $HRHYP(k, n)$ for the current time window n . In one example, the processor **108** computes the branch metric $BM_{x \rightarrow y}$ at **416** for each of the potential heart rate transition pairs as a product of the function F of the corresponding heart rate change value ΔHR and the frequency domain amplitude $AMPLITUDE(y)$ of the corresponding heart rate hypotheses $HRHYP(k, n)$ for the current time window n . In one implementation, for potential heart rate transition $\Delta HR_{x \rightarrow y}$, a heart rate hypothesis x at the previous time window $n-1$ is represented as $HRHYP(x, n-1)$ to a heart rate hypothesis y for time window n $HRHYP(y, n)$, the branch metric $BM_{x \rightarrow y}$ is defined as $F(\Delta HR_{x \rightarrow y}) * AMP(y)$. In this example, the weighting function $F(\cdot)$ assigns a probability weighting to the change in heart rate from x to y .

[0041] In one example, the weighting function F is a monotonically decreasing function of an absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value $|\Delta HR|$. One example is shown in FIGS. **10** and **11**, in which the weighting function F is a monotonically decreasing exponential function of the absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value $|\Delta HR|$. An example is the weighting function $F(X) = \alpha * e^{(-\beta X)}$ for positive constants (α, β) . In this regard, when a patient **120** is in motion, the change in heart rate on a second by second basis can be modelled as an exponentially distributed random variable $\Delta HR_{n-1 \rightarrow n}$ of the form $\text{Prob}(\Delta HR_{n-1 \rightarrow n} = X) = \alpha * e^{(-\beta X)}$, where X is the heart rate change between the previous time window $n-1$ and the current time window n and (α, β) are constants. In some instances, the constants (α, β) further depend on whether X is positive or negative as shown in FIGS. **10** and **11**. In this regard, the function may not be bilaterally symmetrical with respect to 0 bpm. In addition, α and β may also be a function

of the heart rate, water content in an individual, external temperature or other factors, and the system processor **108** can adapt these parameters or be programmed with different parameters for the weighting function. In some examples, the weighting function constants may also depend on the type of activity being performed. The processor is configured in certain examples to adapt the bandwidth of a heart rate search space according to patient activity, such as by selectively decreasing β if the patient is transitioning between low and high activity states and by selectively increasing β if the patient's activity state is constant. For instance, if an individual is transitioning from a stationary activity such as sitting down or standing to a higher intensity activity state such as running, the value of β may be smaller allowing for a larger probability weighting for a larger heart rate change. Alternatively, if the person is performing a similar activity for a longer duration of time, then the value of β may be made larger allowing a lower probability of heart change. Activity classification may be done with accelerometer in certain implementations. Note that β in the above example, is a variable that controls the bandwidth of the heart rate change search space, and can be adapted by the processor **108** for intelligent heart rate estimation according to the patient activity.

[0042] In some examples, the processor **108** implements a weighting function F of the form $F(X)=mX+c$, where c is a positive constant and m is a negative constant. In other examples $F(X)$ may take the form of a multi-step indicator function according to the following form:

$$F(X) = \begin{cases} 1 & |X| < W11 \\ \beta_1 & W11 \leq |X| < W22 \\ \beta_2 & W22 \leq |X| \end{cases}$$

[0043] where β_2 is less than β_1 . At **418** in FIG. 4B, the processor **108** computes an updated path metric for each hypothesis at the current time window n by choosing the transition among all the heart rate hypotheses at the previous time window $n-1$ whose path metric+branch metric is largest. For example, the set $\{x1, x2, \dots, xk\}$ denotes heart rate states from the previous time window $n-1$ which are within the distance threshold $W1$ from a potential heart rate state $y1$ of the current time window n . In this case, the processor **108** selects the potential path metric for the current time window state $y1$ according to the following formula:

$$PM(y_1, n) = \max \begin{cases} PM(x_1) + BM_{x_1 \rightarrow y_1} \\ PM(x_2) + BM_{x_2 \rightarrow y_1} \\ \vdots \\ PM(x_k) + BM_{x_k \rightarrow y_1} \end{cases}$$

[0044] In this manner, for each heart rate hypothesis $HRHYP(k, n)$ for the current time window n , the processor **108** computes multiple individual candidate path metric values $PM(xk, n)$ as a sum of a corresponding branch metric value $BM_{x \rightarrow y}$ and the corresponding path metric value $PM(xk, n)$ for the corresponding heart rate hypothesis $HRHYP(k, n-1)$ for the previous time window $n-1$. Moreover, for each heart rate hypothesis $HRHYP(k, n)$ for the

current time window n , the processor **108** selects the maximum one of the plurality of individual candidate path metric values $PM(xk, n)$.

[0045] At **420** in FIG. 4B, with the path metrics updated, the processor **108** then determines the heart rate estimate value **221** as the estimate or representation the heart rate of the patient **120** for the current time window n as the heart rate hypothesis $HRHYP(k, n)$ having a maximum candidate path metric value $PM(xk, n)$, for example, according to the following formula: $HRE(n)=y_j=\arg \max\{PM(y_1, n), PM(y_2, n), \dots, PM(y_{N1}, n)\}$. In some embodiments, if the heart rate estimate is significantly different from the previous estimates it may be incorporated on an extra smoothing filter whose inputs are the current heart rate estimate and previous heart rate estimates. The smoothing filter may be a low-pass filter or a median filter.

[0046] At **422**, the processor **108** stores (e.g., probably gates) an integer number N of the unselected states for the next iteration, and thus preserves the state of the monitored signal rate in the memory **210** (FIG. 2) for use in the next iteration time window.

[0047] At **424** in FIG. 4B, the processor **108** in one example selectively discards one or more states for the current time window n having a low path metric value $PM(xk, n)$, e.g., below a second predetermined threshold value $TH2$. In this manner, the processor **108** keeps only the top k candidates (with respect to path metric) and other states are discarded. In another example, states may also be removed at **424** for the current sample time window if their path metric is less than the maximum path metric minus a third predetermined threshold value $TH3$.

[0048] At **426**, the processor **108** may also implement selective state merging. For example, where two heart rate states are within a predetermined distance threshold value $W2$ of each other for the current time window n , the processor **108** selectively merges two or more states for the current time window n . Thereafter, the process **400** returns to **402** in FIG. 4A for the next time window iteration. Thus, the system **100** provides a heart rate estimate value **221** in each time window based on the current measured frequency domain peaks as well as the history of more than one peak from the previous time window or windows as maintained by the state of the path metric values PM .

[0049] Returning to FIG. 9, the system **100** at approximately 40 seconds interprets the relatively similar heart rate frequency domain peaks of approximately 73, 91 and 184 beats per minute according to the path metric that takes the history of the PPG signal into account, and preferentially selects the illustrated true patient heart rate tracking curve **902**, even if the much higher heart rate peak is significantly higher than that of the true estimate, since this estimate aligns more closely with the prior history of the patient's heart rate based on the path metric values from the previous time window. As described above, the system **100** constructs the path metric as a function of the dominant spectral amplitudes and the rate with which they change over time. The method **400** and the system **100** in certain examples can also take into account the human dynamics of heart rate change based on activity type, for example, by allowing programming and/or adaptive modification of the weighting function coefficients and constants. The system **100** in certain examples also provides a low complexity solution, e.g., for consumer products to provide a heart rate estimate to a user (e.g., sports watches, wearable health indicator

devices, etc.) for a reduced complexity implementation where the spectral response for only a discrete set of frequencies needs be computed.

[0050] The above examples are merely illustrative of several possible embodiments of various aspects of the present disclosure, wherein equivalent alterations and/or modifications will occur to others skilled in the art upon reading and understanding this specification and the annexed drawings. Modifications are possible in the described embodiments, and other embodiments are possible, within the scope of the claims.

The following is claimed:

1. A heart rate monitor system to estimate a heart rate of a patient, comprising:

a light source to direct a first light signal toward a patient;
an optical sensor to detect a second light signal from the patient, and to generate an analog photoplethysmogram (PPG) signal representing transmission or reflection of the first light signal in the patient;

an analog to digital converter to sample the PPG signal, and to generate a plurality of digital PPG sample values corresponding to a current time window; and

a processor configured to:

obtain a frequency domain spectrum for the current time window according to the digital PPG sample values,

identify a plurality of states for the current time window as heart rate hypotheses having amplitudes in the frequency domain spectrum greater than a first threshold value for the current time window,

compute a heart rate change value for each of a plurality of potential heart rate transition pairs, the individual heart rate transition pairs representing a heart rate transition to one of the heart rate hypotheses for the current time window from one of a plurality of heart rate hypotheses for a previous time window,

compute a branch metric value for each of a plurality of potential heart rate transition pairs as a function of the corresponding heart rate change value and a frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding heart rate hypothesis for the current time window,

for each heart rate hypothesis for the current time window, compute a plurality of individual candidate path metric values as a sum of a corresponding branch metric value and a corresponding path metric value for the corresponding heart rate hypothesis for the previous time window,

for each heart rate hypothesis for the current time window, select a maximum one of the plurality of individual candidate path metric values, and

determine a heart rate estimate value representing the heart rate of the patient for the current time window as the heart rate hypothesis having a maximum candidate path metric value.

2. The heart rate monitor system of claim 1, wherein the processor is configured to compute the branch metric for each of the potential heart rate transition pairs as a product of the function of the corresponding heart rate change value and the frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding heart rate hypothesis for the current time window, and wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing function of an absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value.

3. The heart rate monitor system of claim 2, wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing exponential function of the absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value.

4. The heart rate monitor system of claim 3, wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing exponential function of the form $\alpha * e^{(-\beta X)}$, where X is the heart rate change between the previous time window and the current time window, α is a constant, and wherein the processor is configured to adapt a bandwidth of a heart rate search space by selectively decreasing β if the patient is transitioning between low and high activity states and by selectively increasing β if the patient's activity state is constant.

5. The heart rate monitor system of claim 1, wherein the processor is further configured to:

filter the digital PPG sample values to generate a plurality of filtered values corresponding to the current time window;

perform motion compensation processing on the filtered values to generate a plurality of motion compensated values corresponding to the current time window; and
compute frequency content of the motion compensated values using a Fast Fourier Transform algorithm to generate the frequency domain spectrum for the current time window.

6. The heart rate monitor system of claim 1, wherein the processor is further configured to:

if no heart rate hypotheses for the current time window are within a predetermined distance threshold value of a previous heart rate estimate for the previous time window:

determine the heart rate estimate value representing the heart rate of the patient for the current time window as the previous heart rate estimate for the previous time window, and

propagate at least some of the plurality of heart rate hypotheses from the previous time window as the heart rate hypotheses for the current time window.

7. The heart rate monitor system of claim 1, wherein the processor is further configured to:

selectively discard heart rate transition pairs corresponding to heart rate change values that are greater than a predetermined distance threshold value; and

compute the branch metric values for each of the remaining plurality of potential heart rate transition pairs.

8. The heart rate monitor system of claim 1, wherein the processor is further configured to selectively discard one or more states for the current time window having a low path metric value.

9. The heart rate monitor system of claim 8, wherein the processor is further configured to:

selectively discard one or more states for the current time window having a path metric value less than a second predetermined threshold value; and

selectively discard one or more states for the current time window having a path metric value less than a difference between a maximum one of the path metric values and a third predetermined threshold value.

10. The heart rate monitor system of claim 1, wherein the processor is further configured to selectively merge two or more states for the current time window that are within a predetermined distance threshold value of each other.

11. A method to estimate a rate of a pulsed signal, the method comprising:

obtaining a frequency domain spectrum for a current time window according to a plurality of digital sample values of the pulsed signal;

identifying a plurality of states for the current time window as rate hypotheses having amplitudes in the frequency domain spectrum greater than a first threshold value for the current time window;

computing a rate change value for each of a plurality of potential rate transition pairs, the individual rate transition pairs representing a rate transition to one of the rate hypotheses for the current time window from one of a plurality of rate hypotheses for a previous time window;

computing a branch metric value for each of a plurality of potential rate transition pairs as a function of the corresponding rate change value and a frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding rate hypothesis for the current time window;

for each rate hypothesis for the current time window, computing a plurality of individual candidate path metric values as a sum of a corresponding branch metric value and a corresponding path metric value for the corresponding rate hypothesis for the previous time window;

for each rate hypothesis for the current time window, selecting a maximum one of the plurality of individual candidate path metric values; and

determining a rate estimate value representing the rate of the pulsed signal for the current time window as the rate hypothesis having a maximum candidate path metric value.

12. The method of claim **11**, wherein the pulsed signal is a photoplethysmogram (PPG) signal representing transmission or reflection of a light signal in a patient; wherein the digital sample values are digital PPG sample values of the PPG signal; wherein the states for the current time window are heart rate hypotheses associated with the patient; wherein the rate change values are heart rate change values; wherein the potential rate transition pairs are potential heart rate transition pairs; and wherein the rate estimate value is a heart rate estimate value representing the heart rate of the patient for the current time window.

13. The method of claim **12**, comprising computing the branch metric for each of the potential heart rate transition pairs as a product of the function of the corresponding heart rate change value and the frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding heart rate hypothesis for the current time window, and wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing function of an absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value.

14. The method of claim **13**, wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing exponential function of the absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value.

15. The method of claim **12**, further comprising:

filtering the digital PPG sample values to generate a plurality of filtered values corresponding to the current time window;

performing motion compensation processing on the filtered values to generate a plurality of motion compensated values corresponding to the current time window; and

computing frequency content of the motion compensated values using a Fast Fourier Transform algorithm to generate the frequency domain spectrum for the current time window.

16. The method of claim **12**, further comprising:

if no heart rate hypotheses for the current time window are within a predetermined distance threshold value of a previous heart rate estimate for the previous time window:

determining the heart rate estimate value representing the heart rate of the patient for the current time window as the previous heart rate estimate for the previous time window, and

propagating at least some of the plurality of heart rate hypotheses from the previous time window as the heart rate hypotheses for the current time window.

17. The method of claim **12**, further comprising:

selectively discarding heart rate transition pairs corresponding to heart rate change values that are greater than a predetermined distance threshold value; and

computing the branch metric values for each of the remaining plurality of potential heart rate transition pairs.

18. The method of claim **12**, further comprising selectively discarding one or more states for the current time window having a low path metric value.

19. The method of claim **18**, further comprising:

selectively discarding one or more states for the current time window having a path metric value less than a second predetermined threshold value; and

selectively discarding one or more states for the current time window having a path metric value less than a difference between a maximum one of the path metric values and a third predetermined threshold value.

20. The method of claim **12**, further comprising selectively merging two or more states for the current time window that are within a predetermined distance threshold value of each other.

21. A non-transitory computer readable medium, comprising executable instructions for estimating a heart rate of a patient, that when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

obtain a frequency domain spectrum for a current time window according to a plurality of digital sample values of the pulsed signal;

identify a plurality of states for the current time window as rate hypotheses having amplitudes in the frequency domain spectrum greater than a first threshold value for the current time window;

compute a rate change value for each of a plurality of potential rate transition pairs, the individual rate transition pairs representing a rate transition to one of the rate hypotheses for the current time window from one of a plurality of rate hypotheses for a previous time window;

compute a branch metric value for each of a plurality of potential rate transition pairs as a function of the corresponding rate change value and a frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding rate hypothesis for the current time window;

for each rate hypothesis for the current time window, compute a plurality of individual candidate path metric values as a sum of a corresponding branch metric value

and a corresponding path metric value for the corresponding rate hypothesis for the previous time window; for each rate hypothesis for the current time window, select a maximum one of the plurality of individual candidate path metric values; and determine a rate estimate value representing the rate of the pulsed signal for the current time window as the rate hypothesis having a maximum candidate path metric value.

22. The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim **21**, wherein the pulsed signal is a photoplethysmogram (PPG) signal representing transmission or reflection of a light signal in a patient; wherein the digital sample values are digital PPG sample values of the PPG signal; wherein the states for the current time window are heart rate hypotheses associated with the patient; wherein the rate change values are heart rate change values; wherein the potential rate transition pairs are potential heart rate transition pairs; and wherein the rate estimate value is a heart rate estimate value representing the heart rate of the patient for the current time window.

23. The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim **22**, comprising further executable instructions, that when executed by the processor, cause the processor to compute the branch metric for each of the potential heart rate

transition pairs as a product of the function of the corresponding heart rate change value and the frequency domain amplitude of the corresponding heart rate hypothesis for the current time window, and wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing function of an absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value.

24. The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim **23**, wherein the function is a monotonically decreasing exponential function of the absolute value of the corresponding heart rate change value.

25. The non-transitory computer readable medium of claim of claim **22**, comprising further executable instructions, that when executed by the processor, cause the processor to:

filter the digital PPG sample values to generate a plurality of filtered values corresponding to the current time window;

perform motion compensation processing on the filtered values to generate a plurality of motion compensated values corresponding to the current time window; and compute frequency content of the motion compensated values using a Fast Fourier Transform algorithm to generate the frequency domain spectrum for the current time window.

* * * * *

专利名称(译)	具有状态序列优化的心率估计装置		
公开(公告)号	US20170143218A1	公开(公告)日	2017-05-25
申请号	US15/237941	申请日	2016-08-16
[标]申请(专利权)人(译)	德州仪器公司		
申请(专利权)人(译)	得克萨斯仪器公司		
当前申请(专利权)人(译)	得克萨斯仪器公司		
[标]发明人	PANDE TARKESH MAGEE DAVID PATRICK NARASIMHA RAJAN		
发明人	PANDE, TARKESH MAGEE, DAVID PATRICK NARASIMHA, RAJAN		
IPC分类号	A61B5/024 A61B5/00		
CPC分类号	A61B5/02427 A61B5/7225 A61B5/7278		
优先权	62/260029 2015-11-25 US		
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摘要(译)

所公开的示例包括心率监测系统和估计患者心率或另一脉冲信号的速率的方法，其中根据当前采样时间的脉冲信号的数字样本值，针对当前时间窗口识别速率假设或状态。窗口和速率变化值是针对当前时间窗口和先前时间窗口的状态之间的潜在速率转换而计算的。根据速率变化值和当前时间窗口的相应速率假设的频域幅度来计算转换对分支度量值，并且根据根据分支计算的最大路径度量值来确定脉冲信号速率估计。度量值和前一时间窗口的相应路径度量值。

