3-D Vector Flow Using a Row-Column Addressed CMUT Array

This paper presents an in-house developed 2-D capacitive micromachined ultrasonic transducer (CMUT) applied for 3-D blood flow estimation. The probe breaks with conventional transducers in two ways; first, the ultrasonic pressure field is generated from thousands of small vibrating micromachined cells, and second, elements are accessed by row and/or column indices. The 62×62 2-D row-column addressed prototype CMUT probe was used for vector flow estimation by transmitting focused ultrasound into a flow-rig with a fully developed parabolic flow. The beam-to-flow angle was 90°. The received data was beamformed and processed offline. A transverse oscillation (TO) velocity estimator was used to estimate the 3-D vector flow along a line originating from the center of the transducer. The estimated velocities in the lateral and axial direction were close to zero as expected. In the transverse direction a characteristic parabolic velocity profile was estimated with a peak velocity of 0.48 m/s ± 0.02 m/s in reference to the expected 0.54 m/s. The results presented are the first 3-D vector flow estimates obtained with a row-column CMUT probe, which demonstrates that the CMUT technology is feasible for 3-D flow estimation.