



# Gas and surfactant delivery into the lung airway system



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## Covid-19 pandemic: about 7 million deaths worldwide





Normal posterior-anterior chest radiograph



severe covid-19 pneumonia BMJ 2020;370:m2426



#### **Gas transport**

- B. Sapoval, E. R. Weibel, D. Grebenkov, M. Felici (Ecole polytechnique)
- B. Mauroy, M. Florens (ENS Cachan)
- T. Similowski, C. Straus (Hôpital de la Pitié-Salpêtrière)

#### **Surfactant delivery**

- D. Isabey, B. Louis (Institut Mondor de Recherche Biomédicale)
- J. B. Grotberg, C.-F. Tai, S. Holcombe, K. Raghavendran (University of Michigan)
- D. F. Willson (Virginia Commonwealth University)
- R. H. Notter (University of Rochester)
- A. Kazemi (Ecole polytechnique)
- G. Nieman, L. Gatto (SUNY Upstate Medical University)
- C. Lenclud (Hôpital de Mantes-la-Jolie)

# The human respiratory tract



CIBA, Netter

## The structure of the pulmonary airway system



## At the end of each of the 30,000 bronchioles, one acinus







Section view



## The alveolar region



## Pulmonary alveoli (3-500 millions)



7<sub>7</sub>

**Red-blood cell** 

## The journey of oxygen into the lung











1 acinus ~ 8 generations 10-15,000 alveoli

## The bronchial tree feeds the alveolar exchange surface



## Total alveolar surface in the human lung: $\sim$ 100 m<sup>2</sup> !



# Mammalian lungs



Horse



Large dog

# Cat lung



Cat front



Cat back

# Pig lung



Pig front



Pig back



Pig zoom

## **Optimality of the pulmonary airway system?**



# What are the transport properties of this system?

Why this shape and these dimensions?

We observe the answer but...

what was the question?

## Our needs in oxygen and the alveolo-capillar membrane





- D = diffusion constant of O<sub>2</sub> in water,
- *E* = membrane thickness,
- $\beta$  = Henry's constant,
- $\Delta P$  = O<sub>2</sub> partial pressure difference



$$\Phi = \frac{3.10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}}{1 \mu \text{m}} \times 1,3.10^{-3} \text{ mol.1}^{-1} \text{ atm}^{-1} \times \left(\frac{150 - 80}{760}\right) \text{ atm}$$
$$= \frac{3.10^{-5} \times 1,3.10^{-6}}{10^{-4} \times 10} \text{ mol.cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \approx \frac{4.10^{-8} \text{ mol.cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}}{10^{-4} \times 10} \text{ mol.cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \approx \frac{4.10^{-8} \text{ mol.cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}}{\Phi \times 22,4.10^{3}} = \frac{40 \times 80}{60 \times 4.10^{-8} \times 22,4.10^{3}} \approx 60 \text{ m}^{2} \text{ H}^{-1}$$

#### Simple calculations

How to store 100 m<sup>2</sup> inside 10 L?



Air velocity of air from the trachea to the alveoli

Cross-section: from  $3 \text{ cm}^2$  to  $100 \text{ m}^2$ :  $\frac{100}{3(0.01)^2} \approx 300,000$ Air velocity: from  $1 \text{ m} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$  to  $3.10^{-6} \text{ m} \cdot \text{s}^{-1} = 3 \ \mu \text{m} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ 

#### Limited time $\Rightarrow$ diffusion of oxygen in air

## Oxygen transfer in the lung





#### The journey of oxygen into the lung airway system



alveolo-capillary membrane



```
— 10 μm
```

10 cm

#### Pulmonary edema: fluids in the air space





## Oxygen transfer in the lung: a Robin boundary condition problem



The journey of oxygen into the lung airway system

## Gen. 0 — 15, conduction





## Gen. 16 – 23, respiration



#### The bronchial geometry: a self-similar dichotomous tree



## The fractal dimension of the self-similar bronchial tree



$$L = \sum_{n=0}^{+\infty} 2^n \ell_n = \sum_{n=0}^{+\infty} 2^n h^n \ell_0 = \ell_0 \sum_{n=0}^{+\infty} (2h)^n$$
$$2 = \left(\frac{1}{h}\right)^D \qquad D = \frac{\ln(2)}{\ln(\frac{1}{h})}$$

$$D = \frac{\ln 2}{\ln \left(\frac{1}{2^{-\frac{1}{3}}}\right)} = 3$$

The bronchial tree is space-filling



#### From bronchi down to the terminal bronchioles



Benoit Mandelbrot 1977

Transport equations for incompressible flows

**Navier-Stokes equation** 

$$\rho \left\{ \frac{\partial \vec{u}}{\partial t} + \left( \vec{u} \cdot \vec{\nabla} \right) \vec{u} \right\} = -\vec{\nabla}P + \eta \Delta \vec{u} + \vec{f}$$

## **Mass conservation**

 $\operatorname{div} \vec{u} = 0$ 

Reynolds number

$$\operatorname{Re} = \frac{\rho U L}{\eta}$$

## **Convective inertial flow**

Gen. 0 - 15, conduction



**Inertial flow** 



Gen. 16 - 23, respiration



## Non-inertial flow: the intermediate tree

Gen. 0 - 15, conduction



#### **Non-inertial flow**



#### Gen. 16 - 23, respiration



## Transport equations for incompressible flows

**Navier-Stokes equation** 

$$\rho \left\{ \frac{\partial \vec{u}}{\partial t} + \left( \vec{u} \cdot \vec{\nabla} \right) \vec{u} \right\} = -\vec{\nabla}P + \eta \Delta \vec{u} + \vec{f}$$

## **Mass conservation**

$$\operatorname{div} \vec{u} = 0$$
 Reynolds number  $\operatorname{Re} = rac{
ho UL}{\eta}$ 

Non-inertial flow: the Stokes equation

$$-\vec{\nabla}P + \eta\Delta\vec{u} = 0$$

## The Hagen-Poiseuille flow (steady-state, laminar)





Gotthilf Hagen (1797 – 1884)





$$Q = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{R_H} = \left(\frac{\pi}{128\eta} \frac{D^4}{L}\right) \left(P_1 - P_2\right)$$

$$-\vec{\nabla}P+\eta\Delta\vec{u}=0$$

Airway resistance:

$$R_{H} = \frac{128\eta}{\pi} \frac{L}{D^4}$$

Airway volume:

 $V = \frac{\pi D^2}{4}L$ 

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## The Murray-Hess law



Walter Rudolf Hess



Minimizing the energetic consumption  
for a given flow rate 
$$Q$$
 $= \alpha V + R_H Q^2 = \alpha L D^2 + \beta \frac{L}{D^4} Q^2$  $0 = 2\alpha L D - 4\beta \frac{L}{D^5} Q^2$  $D^3 \propto Q$  !!





One bifurcation

$$Q_0 = Q_1 + Q_2$$

Symmetrical

 ${arepsilon}$ 

$$D_1 = D_2$$

$$D_0^3 = D_1^3 + D_2^3$$

$$h_c = \frac{D_1}{D_0} = 2^{-\frac{1}{3}} \approx 0.79$$

W.R.Hess, 1917; C.D. Murray, 1927; T.F. Sherman, 1981

## Simplest model of the tracheobronchial tree



#### Weibel's symmetric model

- Cylindrical pipes
- Self-similarity: constant diameter ratio
- Dichotomous and symmetric branching





#### The volume of the tracheobronchial tree: dead space volume



## The total hydrodynamic resistance of the tree



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Fluidic distribution tree: a highly constrained system





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Mauroy, MF, Weibel, Sapoval, Nature (2004)



The fractal structure of the lung airway system is optimized for gas transport

What about liquids?

## Surfactant lining on the alveolar membrane

liquid

Alveoli



#### Surfactant is produced in Type II cells



air

9 00 O Ø

Surfactants at the interface **reduce surface tension** 

## **Neonatal Respiratory Distress Syndrome (NRDS)**



- Prematurely-born neonates have immature alveolar type II cells.
- These type II cells lack sufficient surfactant-producing capacity.
- Abnormally high surface tension reduces compliance.
- Develop **Respiratory Distress Syndrome** (hyaline membrane dis.)
- ~ 1% of all births ~ 40,000 cases annually in the US.

## Surfactant Replacement Therapy (SRT)

- Mortality dropped from 4,997 deaths (1980) to 861 (2005)
- SRT played **a major role** in this decrease of mortality
- Survivors have still high incidence of bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD)







## Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)





#### Adults with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome have impaired surfactant function from lung injury.

- Direct: aspiration, pneumonia, toxic inhalants
- Indirect: trauma, shock, sepsis
- > 190,000 cases in US annually
- ➤ ~40% mortality or 75,000 deaths per year
- SRT is not working in adults, studies have been discontinued

Gregory *et al.*, Am J Respir Crit Care Med, **1997** Mortality: **18.8%** SRT (n=43) vs **43.8%** control (n=16) Molecular Dose: **50 mg/kg** -100 mg/kg Surfactant Concentration: 25 mg/ml Dose Volume: **2 ml/kg-4 ml/kg** ~ 140/280 ml for 70 kg patient

Spragg *et al.*, N Engl J Med, **2004** Mortality: no effect (n=224 SRT, n=224 control) Molecular Dose: **50 mg/kg** Surfactant Concentration: 50 mg/ml Dose Volume: **1ml/kg** ~ 70 ml for 70 kg patient

Spragg *et al.*, Am J Respir Crit Care Med, **2011** Mortality: no effect (n=419 SRT, n=424 control) Molecular Dose: **50 mg/kg** Surfactant Concentration: 50 mg/ml Dose Volume: **1ml/kg** ~ 70 ml for 70 kg patient







"Exogenous surfactant replacement in ARDS - One day, someday, or never?"

Baudouin SV, N. Engl. J. Med. 2004

Surfactant biochemistry is not working.

> The surfactant does not reach the acinus.

> The underlying ARDS injury is still active.

## **Modeling SRT**

Goal: To develop a **3D mathematical and numerical model of the lung predicting the final distribution of a liquid bolus** initially instilled into the trachea.



## Surfactant instillation – lung close-up

- The excised lung is suspended and ventilated from tracheal cannula.
- A small diameter tube, attached to a syringe, was inserted into the cannula (upper center of figure).
- A surfactant bolus was formed in the cannula by injecting 0.05 ml of surfactant through the small diameter tube.



(Courtesy of Robert Molthen, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI)

Cassidy et al., *J. Appl. Physiol*. (2001) Anderson et al., *J. Appl. Physiol*. (2004)



#### **Experimental Conditions**

- Excised Rat Lung
- Lung Suspended Vertically
- Normal Bolus Volume
- Surfactant = Survanta
- Ventilation Rate 60 br/min

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## Propagation of a liquid plug into the tree

When the plug is instilled, it follows a succession of propagations in straight tubes and splitting at bifurcations



## Liquid deposition onto the airway walls



Capilllary number

$$Ca = \frac{\mu U_P}{\sigma}$$

$$\frac{h}{a_1} = 0.36 \left( 1 - e^{-2Ca^{0.523}} \right)$$

Halpern and Grotberg, J. Fluid Mech. (1992) Halpern, Jensen, Grotberg, J. Appl. Physiol. (1998)

## Larger flow rate $\Rightarrow$ increased deposition

## Computing the plug splitting at each bifurcation



- a: tube radius
  σ: liquid surface tension
  μ: liquid viscosity
  Q: flow rate
  V: plug volume
  ρ: liquid density
  g: gravitational acceleration
  i: 1, parent tube
  i,j: 2,3, lower daughter and upper daughter tubes
- Pressure drop across the rear meniscus (Young-Laplace law).

$$P_1 - \pi_1 = \frac{2\sigma}{a_1 - h}$$

• Pressure drop in the parent and daughter branches: viscous (Poiseuille) drop + hydrostatic pressure + kinetic term.

$$\pi_0 - \pi_i = \frac{8\mu L_i}{\pi a_i^4} Q_i + \rho g \left[\sin\theta_i \sin\varphi - \cos\theta_i \sin\gamma\right] L_i + \frac{1}{2} \rho \left(\frac{Q_j}{\pi a_j^2}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{2} \rho \left(\frac{Q_i}{\pi a_i^2}\right)^2$$

2

• Pressure drops across the front meniscus in daughters 2 and 3.

$$\pi_2 - P_2 = -\frac{2\sigma}{a_2}, \quad \pi_3 - P_3 = -\frac{2\sigma}{a_3}$$

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### **Reducing the complexity**

#### Navier-Stokes equation + mass conservation



## Plug splitting at a bifurcation



Zheng et al., J Biomech Eng 2005



## The plug tends to follow gravity Larger flow rate ⇒ more homogeneous splitting

Schematic of the model

The entire airway system is described as an assembly of straight tubes connected by bifurcations



## Geometrical model of the tracheobronchial tree



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## Characterizing the performance of the delivery



## **Test geometry**

#### 2 lb Neonate

#### Adult

#### Surfactant properties

 $\rho = 1 \text{ g/cc}, \sigma = 30 \text{ dynes/cm},$  $\eta = 30 \text{ cP}$  (Infasurf, Survanta, Curosurf),  $\eta = 3 \text{ cP}$  (Exosurf)





Weibel symmetric tree, branching angle = 90°, planar rotation angle = 90°,trachea diameter = 0.4 cm, terminal bronchiole diameter = 0.05 cm  $\rightarrow$  511 branches, 256 leaves, 8 generations

Weibel symmetric tree, branching angle = 90°, planar rotation angle = 90°, trachea diameter = 2 cm, terminal bronchiole diameter = 0.1 cm  $\rightarrow$  8191 branches, 4096 leaves, 12 generations

## SRT in a 1 kg neonate





1 kg neonate in LLD, viscosity  $\mu$ =30 cP, dose 1 ml, flow rate 6 ml/sec.  $\eta$ =52.8% (a) front view (b) top view of the 3D model with color coded amounts percentages in the acini (c) normalized delivery plotted vs i=1 to 256 acini (d) histogram showing 1/SD=4.9.

## SRT in a 70 kg adult





Grotberg *et al., AJRCCM* (2017)

70 kg adult in LLD position, dose 40 ml, flow rate 240 ml/s,  $\mu$ =30 cP,  $\eta$ =13.0%, (a) front view (b) top view (c) vs i=1 to 4096 (d) histogram showing 1/SD=0.41.

Gregory *et al.*, Am J Respir Crit Care Med, **1997** Mortality: 18.8% SRT (n=43) vs 43.8% control (n=16) Molecular Dose: **50 mg/kg** -100 mg/kg Surfactant Concentration: 25 mg/ml Dose Volume: **2 ml/kg-4 ml/kg** ~ 140/280 ml for 70 kg patient

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#### Molecular dose (mg/kg) = Concentration (mg/ml) × Dose volume (ml/kg)

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## Addressing the medical community



Grotberg et al., Am. J. Respir. Crit. Care Med. (2017)

### Parameter ranges of Ca, Re, and Bo

Neonates and adults vs. airway generation n



Ca, Re, similar order of magnitude for adults and neonates

**Order of magnitude difference** for Bo between adults and neonates

## Scaling in nature

## Surface tension, gravity effects, and velocity do not scale identically!



- Common concept in drug delivery assumes a "well mixed compartment".
- Double the concentration and halve the volume... should result in the same clinical result.
- The neonate lung is **well mixed**, very high homogeneity.
- The adult lung is **poorly mixed**, low homogeneity.
  - The absolute volume is "critical"
  - Fixed cost of airway coating

## Physics and fluid mechanics send a new message

## **Efficiency vs. homogeneity**

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> dose LLD, <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> dose RLD



- Larger flow rate  $\Rightarrow$  less efficient (more surfactant left onto the airway walls)
- Larger flow rate ⇒ more homogeneous
- Homogeneity is one order of magnitude larger in the neonate

#### 70 ml was the worst choice!!

## Rat conducting airway model



Kazemi *et al.,* PLoS Comput Biol, 2019

## Testing the model on rats







Kazemi et al., PLoS Comput Biol 2019

Comparisons with surfactant delivery on rats



Nieman et al., SUNY Upstate Medical University



Kazemi et al., PLoS Comput Biol 2019

## Patient-specific SRT simulations: biomedical engineering

Dose : 40 ml , Flow rate : 240 ml/s

Dose: 40 ml, Flow rate: 240 ml/s



#### Numerical simulation of surfactant delivery in an airway tree based on

- (a) 67 y.o. female patient data with tracheal diameter **1.4 cm**.
- (b) Raabe data (1976) with tracheal diameter **2** cm and similar planar rotation angles from (a).

## The Covid-19 pandemic: clinical trial of surfactant delivery



What is the structure of the final distribution of surfactant? Can it be optimized? Targeted?