

# Mental Stress Assessment of ECG Signal using Statistical Analysis of Bio-Orthogonal Wavelet Coefficients

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**Abstract:** It is observed that the stress level is function of various statistical parameters like standard deviation, entropy, energy, mean, Co-variance and power of the ECG signals of two states i.e. normal state of mind and stressed state of mind. Further, it is observed that the features extracted are directly from the ECG in frequency domain using db4 wavelet. However, db4 introduces some error on account of db4 wavelet shape. This error in turn amplifies while measuring the features as mentioned above. In order to reduce this error, we propose a Bior 3.9 wavelet family to decompose the ECG signal. The decomposed ECG signal is now analyzed statistically to extract the above feature. Further, in the existing work, all the ECGs are taken by using the 12 leads method. This factor also adds some undue stress to the person under scanner. And this is time consuming too. Therefore, to reduce this complexity, we propose to analyze all above features by using a two lead ECG. Further, a back propagation neural network is trained using the above features as input neurons in order to classify the stress level.

**Keywords:** ECG, Bior 3.9, Wavelet decomposition, Entropy.

## 1. Introduction

Stress can be defined as any uncomfortable emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological and behavioral changes. Reaction of a person from a normal state to an excited state in order to preserve his/her integrity can also be defined as stress. An extreme amount of stress can produce extreme health issues and it can affect the cardiovascular and central nervous system. If stress occur continuing for a long time a leading risk factor for heart diseases, diabetes, asthma and depression.

Today's increased use of computer-based systems in the medical domain requires computer processing of Biomedical signals such as, ECG, EEG (electroencephalography), EMG (electromyography), heart rate etc. Biomedical signals obtaining from sensors, transducers, etc. have an abundance of information about their underlying Biological systems, most of it well hidden in the signal.

The physiological signal approach is more successful than other methods. Since, this method is non Invasive and stress impact of the body can be easily analyzed using physiological signals. A number of physiological markers of stress have been identified, including electro dermal activity (EDA), heart rate (HR), various indices of heart rate variability (HRV), blood pressure (BP), muscle tension, and respiration.

Among the several physiological signals, the HRV signal is frequently used as an efficient measure to identify the stress because stress reflects the changes in heart rates under stressful situation. Most of the researchers have investigated about the characteristic changes of high frequency (HF) and Low frequency (LF) bands from HRV signals for stress identification and its level measurements. Only very few Researchers have discussed the effect of stress in the ECG signals for stress assessment. Interestingly, recent studies are

reported that ECG signal has been progressively used to identify the Autonomic Nervous Activity (ANS) of emotion and stress identification.

## 2. Related Works

The frequency variability of HRV and mental stress response are related. PTG also indicates changes in emotional response. PTG can easily be measured without body surface electrodes. This method is less invasive than ECG measurement. Wavelet analysis of the PTG is done to evaluate mental stress. PTG was measured in the resting and mental stress states, and wavelet transformed PTGs were compared. In nine out of ten subjects, the wavelet result for PTG revealed a decrease in the frequency band [1].

As we know ECG consists of various waveforms of electric signals of heart. Machine Learning methods such as the MLP classification have proven to perform well in ECG classification. In this paper, preprocessing was performed through wavelet transform, and in classification several characteristics were evaluated using BP algorithm that applied generalized delta rules to MLP. To evaluate the results above according to the learning method, learning iteration and learning rate of neural networks, various experiments were conducted and analyzed [2].

The artifacts of ECG signals include baseline wander (BW), muscle (EMG) artifact, electrode motion artifact and power line interference. In order to get the optimal and robust de-noising algorithm among the generally used de-noising methods based on stationary wavelet transform (SWT), they adjust the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) of the noisy signal from 1db to 10db, and evaluate the results by means of SNR and visual inspection, then concluded using Symlet4, decomposition at level 5, and Hard shrinkage function with empirical Bayesian (EBayes) threshold can get consistently superior de-noising performance [3].

Through the analysis of ECG signal which is measured with wearable patch-style HAMS, the parameter highly related with mental stress were extracted from frequency and time domain. These parameters were certified as the meaningful factor after correlation analysis on the results from questionnaire and stress hormone test. It is proved in this paper that the availability of wearable patch-style heart monitoring system is efficient as health monitoring system in any places and occasion [4].

In this paper mental stress is detected using unobtrusive wearable sensors. This method relies on estimating the state of the autonomic nervous system from an analysis of heart rate variability. When PDM and spectral features are combined, the system discriminates stressful events with a success rate of 83% within subjects (69% between subjects) [5].

Physical Activity Monitoring is a device that can measure the human activity quantity quantitatively through Heart Rate detection in real time. R-Spike detection of ECG is required for this Heart Rate detection. Since Physical Activity Monitoring System is usually used during activity or exercise, however, signal measured in ECG System is contaminated by diverse noises. Diverse noises become the factors of failure in R-Spike detection. Such factors impede the exact HR detection. The sensitivity of R-Spike detection rate for noise was also additionally tested by gradually lowering SNR of NSTDB. Then, it was verified through ECG signal that was actually measured in physical activity monitoring [6].

This paper presents a signal pre-processing and feature extraction approach based on electrocardiogram (ECG) sensor signal. The extracted features are used to formulate cases in a case-based reasoning system to develop a personalized stress diagnosis system. The results obtained from the evaluation show a performance close to an expert in the domain in diagnosing stress using ECG sensor signal [7].

The activity of the autonomic nervous system is noninvasively studied by means of autoregressive (AR) frequency analysis of the heart-rate variability (HRV) signal. Spectral decomposition of the Heart Rate Variability during whole night recordings was obtained, in order to assess the characteristic fluctuations in the heart rate [8].

Advances in wireless communication technologies, such as wearable and implantable biosensors, along with recent developments in the embedded computing area are enabling the design, development, and implementation of body area networks [9].

The approach consists of 1) Recording the ECG signals, 2) Signal processing using wavelets, 3) Fuzzy evaluation techniques to provide robustness in ECG signal analysis, 4) Monitoring the function of ANS under different stress conditions. Our experiment involves 20 physically fit persons under different conditions. Fuzzy technique has been used to model the experimental data [10].

The Stroop color word test is used to induce stress and ECG signal was simultaneously acquired from the 10 female

subjects in the age range of (20 - 25) years in non invasive manner. An acquired ECG signals are preprocessed using 4th order elliptic band pass filter. The High Frequency (HF) and Low Frequency (LF) bands of ECG signals were considered to extract the stress related features through discrete wavelet Transform (DWT) using "db4" wavelet function. The extracted features are mapped into two states such as stress and relax using a K Nearest Neighbor (KNN). The experimental results show the maximum average classification accuracy of 96.41% on classifying the stress and relax states from the ECG signals [11].

Continuous existence of negative emotions (disgust, anger, fear and sad) over a longer period of time induces emotional stress. This emotional stress can be analyzed through physiological signal characteristics such as Electrocardiogram (ECG), Electromyogram (EMG), etc. In this paper, they have proposed a customized protocol experiment to induce emotional stress through audio-visual stimuli (video clips) and simultaneously acquired ECG signals. ECG signals are preprocessed using Elliptic filter and Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT). Heart Rate Variability (HRV) signals is derived from ECG signals through QRS detection algorithm [12].

Mental stress is one of the major risk factors for many diseases such as hypertension, coronary artery disease, heart attack, stroke, even sudden death. Conventionally, interviews, questionnaires or behavior observation are used to detect mental stress in an individual. The identification and prediction of stress levels using existing data processing methodologies are incompetent to predict the stress levels either in real time or laboratory based experiments. The main objectives of the this paper is to classify the stress levels using mental arithmetic task and appropriate signal processing methodology, (ii) to analyze the characteristics of Electrocardiogram (ECG) signal for different stress levels, and (iii) to derive the optimum features from a set of statistical features over different frequency bands [14].

The parameters like Heart rate, PR interval, QRS duration, QT interval and RR interval are compared. The result shows 99% accuracy in the data obtained by this method. The process of extraction of ECG data is also validated for Normal Sinus Rhythm/Arrhythmia from MIT-BIH database. The correlation obtained is nearly 98%. Thus the method is useful for automatic analysis of ECGs from ECG strips at rural areas also [15].

The variations in the feature signals with respect to the stress were expressed in terms of correlation coefficients and were tabulated. The analysis clearly showed the changes in the feature signals with respect to the stress of the driver. It showed a direct proportionate relation in the QRS power and the breathing rate with respect to the stress of the driver. The analysis also showed that QRS power signal is a better feature signal for analyzing the stress since it showed more correlation with the heart rate marker signal. The analysis points out the fact that the physiological signals can be used as a metric for monitoring the stress of a person [16].

Stress is a serious concern facing our world today, motivating the development of better objective

understanding using non-intrusive means for stress recognition. The aim for the work was to use thermal imaging of facial regions to detect stress automatically. The work uses facial regions captured in videos in thermal (TS) and visible (VS) spectra and introduces our database ANU Stress DB [17].

### 3. Proposed Methodology

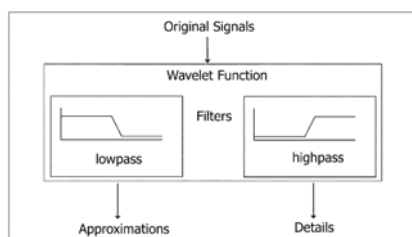
The proposed methodology is divided into following stages:

- Extraction of ECG using two leads method (including H/W and S/W – embedded system)
- Decomposition of ECG using (bio-orthogonal) bior 3,9 wavelet family
- Extraction of SD, mean, power, entropy, energy, covariance and homogeneity
- Analysis of the above features to measure the stress level
- Stress Level = f(SD, mean, power, entropy, energy, and covariance)

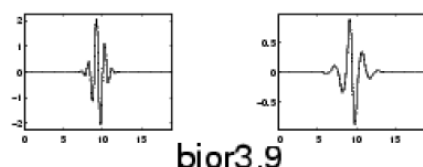
Further, a back propagation neural network is trained using the above features as input neurons in order to classify the stress level.

### 4. Decomposition of ECG Signal using BIOR3.9

The first step of wavelet decomposition is to select an appropriate wavelet for the signal to be analyzed. Appropriate wavelets should have a wave shape, which is close to the signal to be analyzed or filtered. Convolving the wavelet function with the original signal produces the equivalent of a high-pass filter (or a low-pass filter), resulting in the details (or the approximation) of the signal as shown in figure.

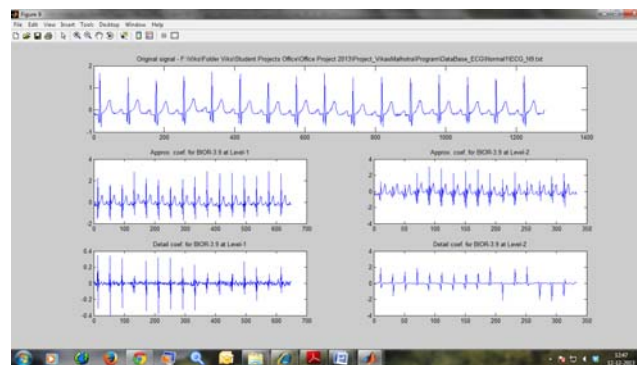


The wavelet ‘bior3.9’ was selected because of the similarity of its wave-form to ECG signals. This is shown in below fig.



This family of wavelets exhibits the property of linear phase, which is needed for signal and image reconstruction. By using two wavelets, one for decomposition (on the left side) and the other for reconstruction (on the right side) instead of the same single one, interesting properties are derived. The start of the QRS complex is defined as the beginning of the each beat.

Following fig. shows the decomposed ECG at different decomposition levels.



### 5. ECG Parameters Extraction

Following parameters from ECG signals are extracted using the MATLAB software.

#### 5.1 Entropy (Ent)

The entropy of a signal is a measure of the randomness of the signal. In other words, it can be viewed as a measure of uncertainty. Entropy has been shown to be effective in dealing with complex biological signals. The entropy (Ent) is given by:

$$Entropy (Ent) = - \sum_{i=1}^n p(x_i) \cdot \log_{10} p(x_i)$$

Where,  $x = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$  is a set of random phenomena of wavelet co-efficient, and  $p$  is a probability of random phenomenon of wavelet co-efficient.

#### 5.2 Power (P)

Power is given by average square sum of wavelet coefficients and given by the following equation:

$$Power (P) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i^2$$

Where  $x_i$  is the wavelet coefficient and  $n$  is the total no of wavelet coefficients

#### 5.3 Energy (E)

Power is given by square sum of wavelet coefficients and given by the following equation:

$$Energy (E) = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i^2$$

Where  $x_i$  is the wavelet coefficient and  $n$  is the total no of wavelet coefficients

5.4 Mean ( $\mu$ )

Mean is given by average sum of wavelet coefficients and given by the following equation:

$$\text{Mean } (\mu) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i$$

Where  $x_i$  is the wavelet coefficient and  $n$  is the total no of wavelet coefficients

5.5 Standard Deviation (SD)

Standard Deviation is given by:

$$SD = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu)^2$$

Where  $x_i$ ,  $\mu$  and  $n$  are the wavelet coefficients, mean total no of wavelet coefficients respectively.

6. Results

The different features of normal state at three decomposition level of 10 subjects as given below

Sr. No.	Level-1					Level-2					Level-3							
	Power	Energy	Mean	Std	Entropy	Coef	Power	Energy	Mean	Std	Entropy	Coef	Power	Energy	Mean	Std	Entropy	Coef
1	0.412	13287.206	0.619	0.080	5.885	0.054	0.825	13288.811	0.804	0.088	5.742	0.077	1.693	13308.475	0.276	0.131	0.040	0.017
2	0.418	13079.200	0.642	0.082	6.186	0.071	0.836	13089.876	0.807	0.118	5.628	0.054	1.675	13119.018	0.282	0.176	0.071	0.031
3	0.415	14285.905	0.619	0.076	5.889	0.056	0.830	14287.371	0.804	0.110	5.707	0.052	1.686	14296.490	0.276	0.178	0.080	0.031
4	0.424	14052.451	0.647	0.074	5.881	0.055	0.848	14059.341	0.818	0.108	5.876	0.051	1.687	14077.704	0.281	0.154	0.030	0.014
5	0.421	13461.502	0.642	0.088	6.228	0.050	0.841	13502.445	0.806	0.142	5.876	0.050	1.688	13589.878	0.282	0.213	0.085	0.048
6	0.417	13183.711	0.642	0.079	5.940	0.056	0.834	13185.991	0.806	0.113	5.842	0.051	1.674	13205.952	0.281	0.175	0.082	0.031
7	0.414	8733.591	0.640	0.089	6.094	0.050	0.828	8739.253	0.805	0.100	5.790	0.050	1.681	8794.022	0.280	0.158	0.072	0.028
8	0.418	13395.462	0.640	0.085	5.816	0.058	0.838	13317.891	0.806	0.118	5.447	0.053	1.681	13340.858	0.281	0.207	0.118	0.040
9	0.416	13387.469	0.640	0.088	6.036	0.055	0.828	13398.854	0.805	0.088	5.788	0.050	1.682	13439.089	0.280	0.182	0.104	0.028
10	0.412	13358.052	0.630	0.089	5.881	0.050	0.888	13364.141	0.818	0.142	5.112	0.050	1.703	13413.448	0.280	0.218	0.088	0.046

The different features of stressed state at three decomposition level of 10 subjects as given below;

Sr. No.	Level-1					Level-2					Level-3							
	Power	Energy	Mean	Std	Entropy	Coef	Power	Energy	Mean	Std	Entropy	Coef	Power	Energy	Mean	Std	Entropy	Coef
1	0.417	17045.253	0.642	0.073	5.990	0.005	0.835	17054.022	0.908	0.104	5.663	0.011	1.671	17088.407	0.284	0.154	0.134	0.024
2	0.415	37247.076	0.640	0.070	6.015	0.005	0.830	37262.499	0.905	0.099	5.796	0.010	1.661	37315.767	0.281	0.147	0.143	0.022
3	0.423	16581.890	0.643	0.096	5.837	0.009	0.847	16606.774	0.910	0.139	5.736	0.019	1.701	16697.779	0.286	0.216	0.140	0.046
4	0.422	17392.886	0.643	0.092	6.183	0.008	0.844	17401.155	0.909	0.130	5.620	0.017	1.691	17445.895	0.286	0.190	0.277	0.036
5	0.421	40059.545	0.643	0.086	6.207	0.007	0.845	40078.066	0.910	0.122	5.662	0.015	1.688	40158.818	0.287	0.180	0.206	0.035
6	0.411	38002.149	0.639	0.050	5.504	0.003	0.822	38019.611	0.904	0.073	5.612	0.005	1.646	38071.807	0.278	0.110	0.071	0.012
7	0.417	47804.951	0.641	0.083	6.202	0.007	0.835	47859.894	0.906	0.121	5.787	0.015	1.676	48039.846	0.281	0.187	0.134	0.035
8	0.432	18952.745	0.649	0.101	6.147	0.010	0.864	18978.916	0.918	0.146	5.481	0.021	1.733	19036.983	0.298	0.217	0.452	0.047
9	0.417	15740.239	0.641	0.072	6.035	0.005	0.833	15750.721	0.907	0.102	5.790	0.010	1.670	15801.320	0.283	0.157	0.158	0.025
10	0.431	16672.874	0.649	0.097	5.875	0.009	0.862	16682.866	0.918	0.138	5.153	0.019	1.730	16750.110	0.299	0.208	0.560	0.043

7. Conclusion

Accurate discrimination between stressed and normal person was made possible by analyzing the different features extracted using the bior3.9 wavelet function. The presented work shows a fair accuracy in analyzing the stress and normal person based on ECG signal. Further, we have

analyzed the results in order to increase the resolution between stressed levels. That is, stress levels may be further divided into level-1, level-2 and level-3. Analysis of signals from a database of 20 subjects with two different states (stressed and relaxed) shows that the proposed method is very well-suited for characterizing based on their stress level. More generally, the presented work analysis framework may be of valuable importance for the field of cardiovascular research, as it provides an innovative monitoring tool for the patients in coma, where they cannot respond visually; however their state of health or response could be monitored by using the proposed system.

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