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5 Wireless sensor node for non-invasive high precision electrocardiographic signal acquisition
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8 Wireless ECG acquisition with CRE

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23 **2. Abstract**

24 Concentric ring electrodes (CRE) have been proposed for sensing bioelectrical activity with
25 high spatial resolution. Computational studies have revealed that the CRE dimensions are
26 closely related to the electric dipole depth they can sense, but further experimental
27 confirmation is needed. We aimed to develop and test a wireless multichannel ECG recording
28 system based on a new flexible multi-ring electrode and to check the influence of CRE
29 dimensions on the acquired signals. The system provided high-precision ECG signals by a
30 simple procedure. The bipolar concentric ECG signal amplitude and SNR increase with the
31 CRE's outer ring dimension. Differences in the signal morphologies, associated with different
32 sensitivities to the location of the active dipoles, were also obtained in the case of diameters
33 smaller than 34mm. A system with several wireless sensor nodes developed could be easily
34 used by clinical staff for non-invasive cardiac monitoring and diagnosis with high spatial and
35 temporal resolution.

36 **Keywords:** flexible multi-ring electrode, wireless sensor node, concentric ring electrode.

37

38 **TEXT**

39 1. Introduction

40 Cardiovascular diseases are the main cause of mortality worldwide and are on the increase
41 with the current trend towards an ageing population [1]. Early detection is a key factor in
42 reducing the death rate from coronary diseases, as continuous and regular monitoring of the
43 heart can increase timely diagnoses [2]. The diagnosis of cardiovascular disease is typically
44 performed by using the standard 12-lead ECG with disc electrodes. Previous studies have
45 shown that this provides limited spatial information on the ventricle and even less on the atria,
46 i.e. it only provides general information on the direction and propagation of the heart's
47 electrical activity [3,4]. Nowadays other diagnostic techniques such as invasive
48 electrophysiology are used to detect and treat certain arrhythmias. New non-invasive
49 monitoring systems with high spatial resolution are needed to reduce the time and risks
50 associated with invasive electrophysiology exploration.

51 In this context, concentric ring electrodes (CRE) have been proposed to acquire more
52 localized electrical activity than conventional disc electrodes do [3,5-8]. By obtaining the
53 difference of potential between the rings and an inner concentric disc, these electrodes can
54 directly estimate the Laplacian potential providing further detail to differentiate between
55 multiple concurrent dipole sources [3,5-7,9]. In previous computational studies the size of the
56 CRE has been proven to be closely related to the electric dipole depth sensed by these
57 electrodes [10], but no experimental results have been reported to confirm this. In this respect,
58 the use of multi-ring electrodes could permit an evaluation of the influence of electrode size
59 on the bioelectrical signal sensed by a CRE. Despite the advantage of having high spatial
60 selectivity, the bioelectric signal amplitude sensed by CRE is much lower than those picked
61 up with disc electrodes (in the order of tens of microvolts) [11]. High precision
62 instrumentation systems that reduce electronic noise and interference are needed for properly

63 conditioning signals from CRE. Most research groups have used active sensors that consisted
64 of a reusable preamplifier circuit located as close as possible to the CRE (usually on the back
65 of the sensing electrode), and then transmit the captured signal by cable to an external
66 bioamplifier for further analogue processing [3,5-7,11]. In this context, the trend in ECG
67 monitoring is towards minimizing wiring and developing smart wearable or wireless systems
68 that provide greater patient comfort and simplify the recording system and protocol [2,12-14].
69 Therefore, the development of a high-precision wireless recording system to pick up the ECG
70 signals sensed by the CRE would allow to obtain high spatial information on cardiac activity
71 and would enhance its clinical applicability and patient comfort by eliminating the wiring.
72 The present work aims to walk some steps towards the clinical application of CRE for the
73 early detection of cardiac pathologies. Specifically, we developed a real-time high-precision
74 wireless recording system of bipolar concentric electrocardiographic (BC-ECG) signals. So as
75 to look for optimal CRE size, three simultaneous BC-ECG signals were picked up by a
76 flexible multi-ring electrode and the influence of ring dimensions on the signal amplitude and
77 morphology were studied. In the following sections it is described the electronic hardware and
78 CRE that were developed; as well as the details of the signal recording protocol and analysis.
79 Our results show that high quality BC-ECG signals can be obtained with the proposed system.
80 Regarding the effect of electrode dimensions, experimental results show that the BC-ECG
81 signal amplitude and SNR increase with the size of the CRE's outer ring. This is the main
82 effect for ring dimensions of 34 mm and 46 mm in diameter, but in the case of smaller rings
83 different signal morphologies can also be obtained. The differences in the spatial distribution
84 of sensitivity to active electric dipoles of the ring electrodes of different sizes were only
85 noticed for electrodes of 22 and 34 mm in diameter. A system composed of multiple sensor
86 wireless nodes such as the one developed in this work could be easily used by clinical staff

87 for non-invasive cardiac monitoring and diagnosis with high spatial and temporal resolution
88 and without discomfort to patients.

89 2. Materials and methods

90 2.1. System Architecture

91 The conceptual diagram of the developed wireless ECG sensor node is shown in Figure 1. A
92 disposable flexible multi-ring electrode is used for sensing non-invasively the bioelectrical
93 signals. The differential biopotentials are then amplified and bandpass filtered within 0.3 Hz
94 and 150 Hz. The conditioned signals are then digitalized by means of a precision 24-bit A/D
95 converter (ADC), and then they are wirelessly transferred to the receiver node via a
96 microcontroller (MCU). This latter also handles communications with the micro SD card for
97 local data storage, so that the developed system can operate as a standalone module. In
98 addition, analog circuitry is isolated from the digital circuitry so as to break the ground loop
99 and thereby reduce digital noises coupled to the sensed bioelectrical signals, which is a
100 critical issue for acquiring ultra-low amplitude biosignals of the order of ten microvolts. The
101 receiver node consisted of a Bluetooth-USB adapter connected to a PC in which a custom-
102 made software developed in LabView ® platform runs for managing the user interface and
103 data storage. Further details on the implementation of the system are provided in the next
104 subsections.

105  Insert Figure 1 here (2-column fitting image)

106 2.2. Multi-ring sensing electrode design & development

107 The sensing electrode consists of a bilayer multi-ring electrode. The sensing elements are
108 implemented onto a first layer and consist of four hook-shaped electrodes and an inner disc
109 made of silver (Gwent C2020522D1). The hook design avoids the use of vias for their
110 connection and that of the inner disc to the electronic circuit. Open spaces of the hooks are
111 very small (see Fig. 2), with opening angles that range from 4.26° for internal hook to 4.64°

112 for external hook. So that the hook electrodes present very similar spatial sensitivity to that of
113 closed rings [15]. A second layer made of a dielectric material (DuPont LuxPrint 8153) was
114 implemented on top of the connecting paths of the hooks and disc electrodes so as to avoid
115 possible shortcuts when the electrodes are in contact with the body surface.

116 Regarding to the electrode dimension, it has been shown that the optimal diameter for the
117 outer ring of the CRE is related to the depth of the target signal [7]. So as to check the
118 influence of CRE dimension on the BC-ECG signals and taken into account that there is a 30-
119 50mm distance between the heart wall and the sensor, in the present work the outer diameters
120 of the sensing hooks ranged from 21.6 to 45.6 mm. In addition, equal inter-electrode distance
121 (D) between hooks, and between the inner disc and internal hook was considered in the
122 design, i.e. $D=R2a-R1=R3a-R2b=R4a-R3b=R5a-R4b=4.8mm$.

123 Insert Figure 2 here (1-column fitting image)

124 Flexible substrates were preferred to conventional rigid substrates to implement the multi-ring
125 electrode, since the former has been proven to present lower skin-electrode contact impedance
126 and also to provide more stable baseline drift for ECG recording [11]. They are more
127 comfortable for the patient and less affected by motion artifacts and interference [11]. A
128 flexible polyester film was used as the CRE substrate. Further details on the screen printing
129 technique and equipment used can be found in a previous work [16].

130 2.3. Hardware Development

131 The biosignal analog processing stage for obtaining one of the three BC-ECG signals out of
132 the potential differences sensed by the three middle hooks and the inner disc ($U2-U1$, $U3-U1$
133 and $U4-U1$) is shown in figure 3. The outer hook was connected to the circuit analog ground
134 to reduce common mode noises, using the three-electrode technique for biosignal acquisition.
135 In this way no additional external reference electrode is required. The signal conditioning is
136 made up of two stages with the minimum number of components without compromising the

137 conditioned signal performance. The first stage consists of an ultra-high input impedance,
138 differential input, and quasi high-pass instrumentation amplifier that provides unity gain for
139 the DC component generated from the half-cell potentials between the skin and electrode
140 while amplifying the AC component of the differential potential [6]. The preamplifier gain
141 was set to 42.7, being the cut-off frequency of the quasi high pass filter 0.3 Hz. The second
142 stage consists of a bandpass filter in the frequency range within 0.3 Hz and 150 Hz
143 implemented with a single operational amplifier. The gain at medium frequencies of this stage
144 was 98.07 V/V. Three identical biosignal analog conditioning circuits were implemented for
145 simultaneously recording the three BC-ECG signals captured by the multi-ring electrode.

$$146 \quad BC_1 = U_2 - U_1 \quad (1)$$

$$147 \quad BC_2 = U_3 - U_1 \quad (2)$$

$$148 \quad BC_3 = U_4 - U_1 \quad (3)$$

149 Where U_1 , U_2 , U_3 and U_4 are the biopotentials sensed by the inner disc and the three middle
150 hooks (from the inside out) of the multi-ring electrode, respectively.

151 Insert Figure 3 here (2-column fitting image)

152 The conditioned signals were then routed for their digitalization. In this work the analog
153 front-end ADS1294 (Texas Instruments, Texas, USA) with programmable gain from 1 to 12
154 that incorporates four 24-bits sigma delta analog digital converters was chosen for data
155 digitalization. The digitalized ECG data were then transmitted to the MCU through a digital
156 isolator ADum7642 (Analog Devices Inc., Massachusetts, USA) by the standard serial
157 peripheral interface. Taken into account the data rate needed (72 kbits/s being sampling
158 frequency at 1 kHz), the nBlue Br-le-4.0-D2A module (Blue Radios, Colorado, USA) that
159 incorporates: an ultra-low power MSP430F5438A MCU (Texas Instruments Texas, USA), a
160 CC2564 Bluetooth and Dual-Mode Controller (Texas Instruments) and an antenna, was used

161 to transfer in real-time the ECG signals to a host device. A micro SD card (2 GB) was
162 connected to the MCU via serial peripheral interface to provide additional memory for data
163 storage. A rechargeable 1000 mAh Lithium Polymer battery (measuring 53x33 mm and
164 weighing 20 g), was used for providing power supply of the wireless ECG sensor node. The
165 recharge circuitry for the battery was also integrated into the system. The power supply of the
166 analog circuitry was isolated from the digital circuit to break the ground loop.

167 2.4. Firmware Development

168 In order to achieve maximum power saving the MCU is configured in a low-power mode and
169 the analog circuitry is powered off until the user triggers data acquisition and transmission or
170 local storage. The sensor node starts real-time wireless transmission when it receives the data
171 request command from the host device via Bluetooth. The MCU is then programmed to read the
172 three channels of digitalized ECG data and to send them to a host device using the standard
173 Bluetooth 2.0+EDR communication protocol. The receiver node consists of a standard
174 Bluetooth dual mode USB Micro Adapter (IOGEAR GBU521W6, USA) connected via a
175 serial port to a PC. The PC runs a custom-made software developed in LabView ® platform
176 for receiving, displaying and storing data. Local data storage is available by inserting a micro
177 SD in the slot of the sensor node, which triggers the reading of the digitalized ECG data from
178 the ADS1294 and then writing it on the micro SD card. This enables the system to operate
179 without the need for any external unit.

180 2.5. ECG signal acquisition

181 Fifteen records were conducted on 15 healthy volunteers (5 females and 10 males) with an
182 age (mean±SD) 33.7±11.9 years (ranging from 23-64 years) and body mass index
183 23.6±3.8 kg/m² (ranging from 19.1 to 32.7 kg/m²). The study was approved by the ethics
184 committee of the University Polytechnic of Valencia. The volunteers were informed about the

185 study and protocols, and they provided their written consent. The subjects were in a relaxed
186 resting period lying on a stretcher during the whole recording session.

187 So as to minimize skin electrode impedance, the skin area under the electrodes was previously
188 minimally exfoliated (Nuprep, Weaver and Company, USA) and was also shaved if needed.
189 Since the body surface ECG is highly dependent on electrode position and the activity of the
190 atria is considerably weaker than that of the ventricle, the dry multi-ring electrode was placed
191 on the left infraclavicular fossa medial to the deltoid insertions to facilitate picking up
192 electrical signals from both atria and ventricle. Five minutes of 3-channel BC-ECG signals
193 were simultaneously recorded using the wireless sensor node described in the previous
194 section.

195 2.6. Data processing

196 ECG can be corrupted by background noise and different types of interference, such as
197 baseline drift, power line and abdominal muscle interference. The acquired signals were high
198 pass filtered (0.3 Hz, a fifth-order Butterworth) for reducing remaining baseline drifts. ECG
199 fiducial points were obtained by detecting the R-wave of filtered signals [17]. Then, it was
200 computed the average beat (\overline{ECG}) in a 60s window, extending from 250 ms prior to, and 375
201 ms after the R-wave. The average values of the following parameters were then obtained for
202 each recording session in order to value BC-ECG amplitude and signal quality:

- 203 • Amplitude of the different waves of the average beat (\overline{ECG}): P wave, QRS complex and T
204 wave.
- 205 • Signal-to-noise ratio (SNR): ratio of the root mean square (rms) value of the average beat (\overline{ECG})
206 and that of the noise during the isoelectric period between beats. Being this latter
207 calculated as the rms value of the total isoelectric periods over the 60 s window.

208
$$SNR (dB) = 20 \cdot \log_{10} \left[\frac{V_{rms}(ECG)}{V_{rms}(noise)} \right] \quad (4)$$

209 Given that a normal distribution of the data cannot be considered and being the data from
 210 different channels matched for the same recording, all these parameters obtained from the
 211 three BC-EHG signals were statistically compared using Wilcoxon rank sum test ($\alpha=0.05$).

212 So as to study the influence of ring dimensions on the captured signals, the ratio of amplitudes
 213 for each cardiac wave between each pair of BC-ECG signals was computed for each subject.
 214 To quantify the morphological similarity between the signals it was calculated the correlation
 215 coefficient of the waveform of average beat identified in the three BC-ECGs signals.

216 **3. Results**

217 The developed wireless ECG sensor node is shown on the left of photograph of Fig. 4. It can
 218 be seen the disposable flexible multi-ring electrode that is directly connected to the reusable
 219 circuitry without any additional wiring. Table 1 shows the main features of the wireless
 220 sensor node circuitry which were experimentally obtained. The module presents high CMRR
 221 and low input-referred noise which suggests its feasibility for picking up very low amplitude
 222 biosignals. On the other hand, the mean consumption is 10.4 mA in standby mode, 59.1 mA
 223 when performing real-time wireless transmission, with the effective data rate of 72 kbit/s, and
 224 34.7 mA when storing local data.

225 *Insert Figure 4 here (2-column fitting image)*

226 *Insert table 1 here*

227 The whole BC-ECG recording system running can be seen on the right of Fig. 4. As observed
 228 no additional wiring is necessary to pick up and record the ECG signals. Figure 5 shows 10s
 229 of simultaneous recordings of raw BC-ECG signals acquired by the flexible multi-ring
 230 electrode and the proposed wireless recording system. The quality of the three BC-ECG
 231 signals is good being the ECG fiducial points clearly identifiable and the background noise is

232 negligible. The raw ECG signals were free of power-line interference without having included
233 a notch filter in the analog circuitry. It can also be observed that the larger the size of the outer
234 hook, the higher the signal amplitude of the BC-ECG, ranging from tens of microvolts in
235 BC₁-ECG to hundreds of microvolts in BC₃-ECG.

236 Insert Figure 5 here (1-column fitting image)

237 Mean and standard deviation of the ECG parameters obtained from all the subjects are shown
238 in table 2. As expected, the BC-ECG signal amplitude showed large variations between
239 subjects, which caused high SD values. The smallest signal amplitude was obtained in the
240 BC₁-ECG channel and the highest in the BC₃-ECG channel. These differences in amplitude
241 among signals from the rings of different dimensions proved to be statistically significant
242 ($\alpha=0.05$), except for the amplitude of P wave and T wave in which no statistically significant
243 differences were found between BC₂ and BC₃. Figure 6 shows the distribution of the
244 amplitude ratio of the ECG waves obtained from the different pairs of BC-ECG signals. In
245 general, the ratio of amplitude for BC_3/BC_1 ranges from 2 to 8, with small variations for the
246 different ECG waves and larger variations between individuals. It can also be seen that in the
247 case of BC_3/BC_2 this ratio is not only practically the same for the different ECG waves of any
248 given subject but is also similar between the different subjects. This would indicate that
249 increasing the distance from the second to the third ring, would only result in an almost
250 constant scaling factor on the cardiac signals acquired. Concerning signal quality, the SNR
251 mean value was 14.8 ± 5.6 dB, 20.1 ± 4.4 dB and 22.0 ± 4.2 dB for BC₁-ECG, BC₂-ECG and
252 BC₃-ECG respectively, again increasing with the ring size, being statistically significantly
253 difference found between BC₁-ECG and BC₂-ECG, and between BC₁-ECG and BC₃-ECG
254 ($\alpha=0.05$).

255 Insert Table 2 here

256 Insert Figure 6 here (1-column fitting image)

257 In general, the signal morphology of the three BC-ECGs was very similar. This is reflected in
258 the values of the correlation coefficients shown in Figure 7, which were close to 1 in most
259 cases. Nonetheless, there are some other cases (3 out of 15) in which signal morphology in the
260 three signals from the multi-ring electrode was clearly different, presenting lower correlation
261 coefficient values. It is noticeable that signal morphology showed greater variations between
262 *BC1-BC2* and *BC1-BC3*, whereas *BC2* and *BC3* signals remained morphologically more
263 similar for almost all the subjects. Figure 8 shows an example of both these situations. Figure
264 8a depicts the normalized average beats obtained from a 1-min recording from one patient in
265 which signal morphology was very similar between the channels. In contrast, different signal
266 morphology can be seen in the three BC-ECGs signals recorded by the sensor node in the case
267 shown in Figure 8b.

268 

269 

270 4. Discussion

271 A wireless sensor node with a flexible multi-ring electrode has been developed for the
272 simultaneous recording of three BC-ECG signals. This system combines ease-of-use for
273 extensive clinical application (since it does not need any wires) with the enhanced
274 performance of concentric ring electrodes for locating active dipoles. Even though the size
275 and power consumption of the wireless sensor node circuitry are slightly larger than those
276 described in other studies [13,14], the performance of the wireless system is superior in many
277 respects. Firstly, 3 independent high-precision 24-bit resolution ADCs were used for data
278 digitalization, i.e. the ADCs were not multiplexed for different input channels, thus allowing
279 the simultaneous recording of various bioelectrical signals. In addition, our wireless system
280 can store and transmit the signals at a sampling frequency of 1000 Hz. These two factors are
281 of special importance when high temporal resolution is required, e.g. when detecting the

282 activation time of atrial or ventricle depolarization in a body surface potential mapping study.
283 Unlike previous studies focused on acquiring ECG signals sensed by standard wet Ag/AgCl
284 electrodes in which the signal amplitude is of the order of millivolts [13,14], the system
285 proposed here is one of the few wireless transmission systems that acquires bioelectric signals
286 in microvolts and could therefore be easily adapted for surface monitoring of other weak
287 bioelectrical signals, such as the electrohysterogram, electromyogram, electrogastrogram,
288 electroenterogram, fetal ECG or the electroencephalogram. The proposed sensor node can
289 also be easily adapted for acquiring BC-ECG signals from an array of bipolar concentric ring
290 electrodes. Together with the ability to create a wireless sensor network, this would allow
291 simultaneous recording of BC-ECG from different positions for body surface potential
292 mapping without any wire. We therefore consider that our wireless sensor node has adequate
293 potential for clinical monitoring and diagnostic applications due to its ease-of-use in the
294 recording protocol. Finally, it can also store local data, which means that the system can work
295 as a standalone module for a wider range of applications.

296 We also quantitatively evaluated the BC-ECG signal amplitude and quality sensed by the
297 flexible multi-ring electrode to check the influence of the ring dimensions. Firstly, the
298 acquired BC-ECG signal amplitude ranged from a few microvolts to a hundred microvolts,
299 which is within the range of values reported in the literature [7,11]. The experimental results
300 showed that as the CRE's outer hook size increases, the BC-ECG signal amplitude rises,
301 which agrees with the findings of other groups, who reported that the signal amplitude
302 depends on the radius of the central ring and its gap with the inner disc [10]. Furthermore, the
303 size of the electrode seems to affect only the signal amplitude of the BC2 and BC3 channels,
304 but no noticeable differences were found in the signal morphology of these two channels.
305 This was responsible for the high correlation coefficient of the average beats, and the small
306 variation of the amplitude ratio for different ECG waves. Nevertheless, changes in signal

307 morphologies and greater variability of amplitude ratios for the different cardiac waves were
308 found with the smaller rings of the multi-ring electrode (BC1 and BC2). This could mean that
309 the effect of increasing the distance between the second (≈ 34 mm diameter) and third ring
310 (≈ 46 mm diameter) could give an almost constant scaling factor on the acquired cardiac
311 signals. Rings of these dimensions pick up more general information and other dimensions in
312 this range do not affect the way the cardiac vectors are sensed, so that the external ring may
313 be redundant. In contrast, the smaller ring (≈ 22 mm diameter) senses the electrical activity of
314 different cardiac regions with a different distribution of the sensitivity to electrical dipoles,
315 resulting in signals with possible morphological differences to those sensed by the outer rings.
316 However, this latter phenomenon was not observed in all the subjects. This could be related to
317 differences in the physiological constitution of individual subjects and the relative position
318 and orientation of the heart with respect to the multi-ring electrode. Due to the specific
319 characteristics of each patient, the different rings of the electrode may not have been in
320 exactly the same plane with all test subjects, which can cause differences in signal
321 morphology between BC1, BC2 and BC3 records. In this respect, further analysis should be
322 carried out to consider the specific conditions of individual patients, by making slight changes
323 to the position of the electrode or by using an array of multi-ring electrodes. This would allow
324 to perform a body surface potential map and to check that the activity of specific areas of the
325 heart could give different results according to different electrode rings and positions.

326 Finally, although the proposed wireless recording system has provided promising results, this
327 study is not exempt from certain limitations. First, the number of subjects involved was
328 limited and all were in good health. Further studies should be carried out on patients with
329 cardiovascular diseases to determine the performance of BC-ECG recording in clinical
330 diagnosis. Secondly, skin preparation was necessary for obtaining high-quality BC-ECG
331 recording since dry CRE was used, this could be an important drawback for clinical

332 application. In this sense, pre-gelled CRE could be a solution for obtaining high-quality BC-
333 ECG recording without any special skin preparation. Although the CRE has been proven to
334 provide more detailed information on localized electrical activity, so far no standard position
335 has been proposed for extracting significant clinical data for diagnosis with this type of
336 electrode. This could be due to the fact that the signal morphology is highly dependent on
337 electrode position and also on the physiological constitution of individual subjects. A
338 comparison of body surface potential mapping by multiple sensor nodes like the one
339 developed in this work and simultaneously recorded 12-lead ECG would be helpful in
340 determining the best CRE locations for registering the activity of different areas of the heart
341 and would improve the clinical performance of this CRE.

342 5. Conclusions

343 It was developed and tested a wireless recording system for acquiring in real-time high
344 precision electrocardiographic signal using a flexible multi-ring electrode. The experimental
345 results show that the BC-ECG signal amplitude and SNR increase with the size of the CRE's
346 outer ring. It was also shown that the electrode dimensions do not only affect the signal
347 amplitude, but in certain cases can also affect morphology, putting different emphasis on the
348 electrical activity of different cardiac vectors in the signals picked up by the multi-ring
349 electrode. A system composed of multiple sensor wireless nodes such as the one developed in
350 this work could be used in a simple procedure by clinical staff for non-invasive cardiac
351 monitoring and diagnosis with high spatial and temporal resolution and without discomfort to
352 patients.

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411 Figure Caption:

412 Fig. 1. Conceptual diagram of the wireless ECG sensor node.

413 Fig. 2. Bilayer design of the multi-ring concentric electrode; electrodes and connecting paths
414 are shown in black (first layer), and the dielectric paste layer is shaded in gray (second layer).
415 U_1 , U_2 , U_3 , U_4 and U_5 are the biopotentials sensed by the inner disc and the subsequent four
416 hooks from the inside out, respectively.

417 Fig.3. Analog signal conditioning circuit for one of the three BC-ECG channels (U_2 - U_1 in
418 this case), where U_1 , U_2 , U_3 , U_4 , U_5 are the biopotentials picked up by the flexible multi-
419 ring electrode, corresponding to the inner disc and the four hooks from the inside out,
420 respectively.

421 Fig. 4. Left: Wireless sensor node for the recording of three BC-ECG signals; Right: whole
422 recording system running.

423 Fig. 5. Example of 3 BC-ECG signals from subject #3 using the flexible multi-ring electrode.
424 (a) BC_1 -ECG (b) BC_2 -ECG (c) BC_3 -ECG.

425 Fig. 6. ECG wave amplitude ratio identified in the three BC-ECG signals (BC_3/BC_1 : black;
426 BC_3/BC_2 : dark red).

427 Fig. 7. Correlation coefficient of the average number of beats from a 1 min record of chest
428 surface signals.

429 Fig. 8. Normalized average beats from a 1 min record of the BC-ECG signals. (a) subject #8.
430 (b) subject #4.

431

432 Tables and table caption:

433 Table 1. Wireless sensor node circuitry main features.

Feature

N° Channels	3
Bandwidth	0.35-155 Hz
Average differential gain at mid-band frequencies	4084 V/V
Average CMRR at mid-band frequencies	129 dB
Input referred noise	0.28 μ Vrms
Mean current consumption (real-time wireless transmission)	59.1 mA@Rx; 10.4 mA@inquiry mode
Mean current consumption (local data storage)	34.7 mA
Sampling rate	1000 Hz/channel
Physical size	80x42x10mm ³
Weight (g)	17.9g

434

435

436 Table 2. BC-ECG parameters obtained from 15 subjects (mean±SD). *^o□ Indicates a statistically significant
 437 difference in this parameter between BC1 and BC2, BC1 and BC3 , BC2 and BC3 respectively ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Channel	Amp-Pwave (μV_{p-p})	Amp-QRS (μV_{p-p})	Amp-Twave (μV_{p-p})	SNR (dB)
BC ₁ -ECG	4.2±2.0* ^o	41.6±22.2* ^o	15.5±10.0* ^o	14.8±5.6* ^o
BC ₂ -ECG	10.3±5.2*	105.8±56.0* [□]	38.5±19.7*	20.1±4.4*
BC ₃ -ECG	14.1±7.3 ^o	157.8±79.2 ^o □	52.6±31.1 ^o	22.0±4.2 ^o

438