

## Reduction of Metal Artifact around Titanium Alloy-based Pedicle Screws on CT Scan Images: An Approach using a Digital Image Enhancement Technique

Jin Sup Yeom, M.D., Moon Sang Chung, M.D.\*, Choon-Ki Lee, M.D.\*,  
Whoan Jeang Kim, M.D., Won Sik Choy, M.D., Jong Won Kang, M.D.,  
Yeong Ho Kim, Ph.D.\*\*\*, Nam Kug Kim, M.S.\*\*\*, Jae Bum Lee\*\*\*

*Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Eulji University, Daejeon, Korea*

*Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea\**

*Department of Industrial Engineering, College of Engineering, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea\*\**

*Cybermed Inc., Seoul, Korea\*\*\**

### – Abstract –

**Study Design :** A study on the development of an algorithm to enhance computed tomographic images

**Objectives :** The purpose of this study was to develop an approach to reduce the metal artifact that appears around pedicle screws, and thus to facilitate the evaluation of pedicle screw positions on CT scan images.

**Summary of Literature Review :** Metal artifact caused by pedicle screws significantly reduces the interpretability of computed tomography images.

**Materials and Methods :** We describe the development of an algorithm that processes CT scan images on a personal computer using a digital image enhancement technique. The algorithm improves CT images by transforming image pixel values using a proper transformation curve that takes into account the characteristic distribution pattern of metal artifact caused by pedicle screws made of titanium alloys. We implemented this algorithm in a program that reconstructs the resulting images in arbitrary planes and in axial, coronal, and sagittal planes. The software was tested with spiral CT scan images of 38 patients containing 190 pedicle screws.

**Results :** In all test cases, our algorithm generated images with less metal artifact, better soft tissue visualization and clearer screw outlines than conventional bone setting. In addition, images reconstructed in arbitrary planes increase the convenience

---

Address reprint requests to

**Nam Kug Kim, M.S.**

Research Center of Cybermed Inc.

#49-16, Nonhyeon-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul 135-814, Korea

Tel : 82-2-545-4282, Fax : 82-2-545-6042, E-mail : kimnamkug@hotmail.com

\* 2002

and confidence of localizing screw positions.

**Conclusions :** The algorithm effectively decreases metal artifact and improved pedicle screw localization.

**Key Words :** Computed tomography, Pedicle screw, Metal artifact, Digital image enhancement

phy)

CT

1A)<sup>8)</sup>.

ting)

CT(computed tomogra-

(metal artifact)

(Fig.

(bone set-

CT

(Fig. 1B).

(tissue contrast)가

CT

(personal comput-

(digital image

enhancement technique)

(display)

190

38

CT

, 4CIS(Solco,

Korea), Diapason(Stryker, USA), CD horizon(Sofamor-

Danek, USA), Compact Cotrel-Dubousset(Sofamor-Danek,

USA), Synergy(Cross medical products, USA),

TSRH(Sofamor-Danek, USA)가

CT

, CT

(slice thickness) 1~3 mm,

(table feed)

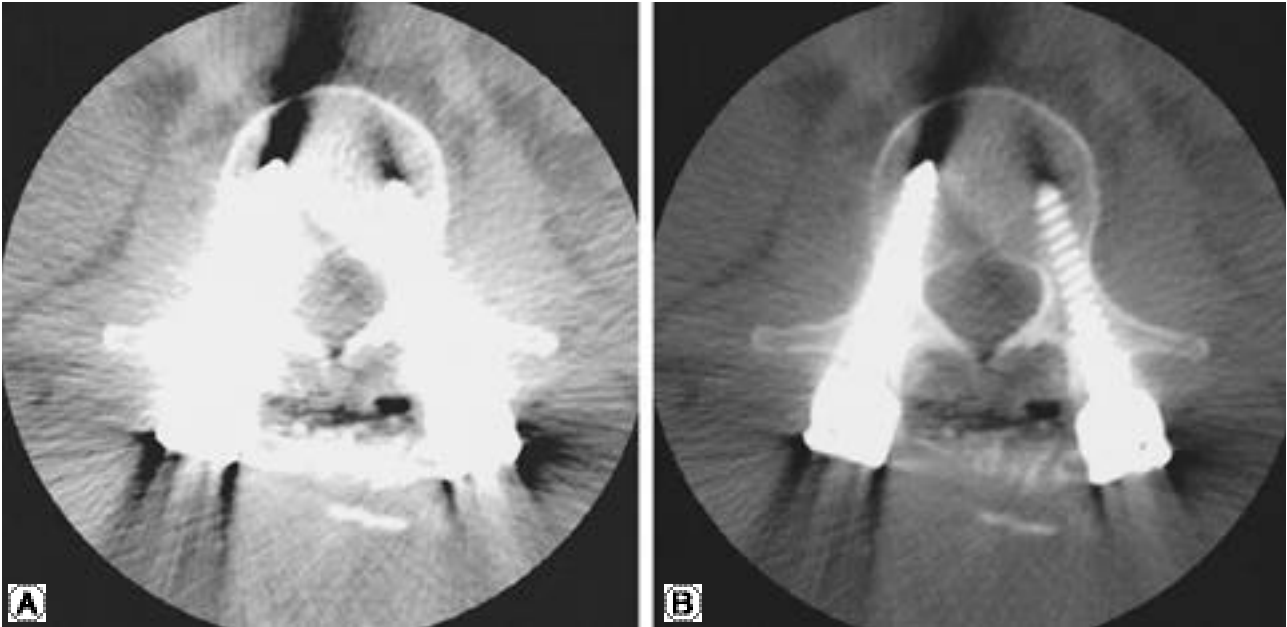
2~4 mm/ , (rotation time) 0.75~1.5 ,

(reconstruction incremental) 1~1.5 mm

CT

DICOM(digital imag-

ing and communication in medicine) 3.0



**Fig. 1.** Postoperative CT scan images in soft tissue setting (A) and bone setting (B) show metal artifact appearing around the pedicle screws.

1. (thresholding) Hounsfield 가  
3  
CT 3 , 2000 , 가  
3 , Fig. 2A  
(pixel) ,  
(gray scale) (gray level)  
(pixel value) , CT (1000 )  
Hounsfield Hounsfield  
DICOM 3.0 12 bit (-1024 3071 가 2500 , Fig. 2B  
) . Hounsfield 가 , Fig. 2A Fig. 2B  
가 . CT 3 가

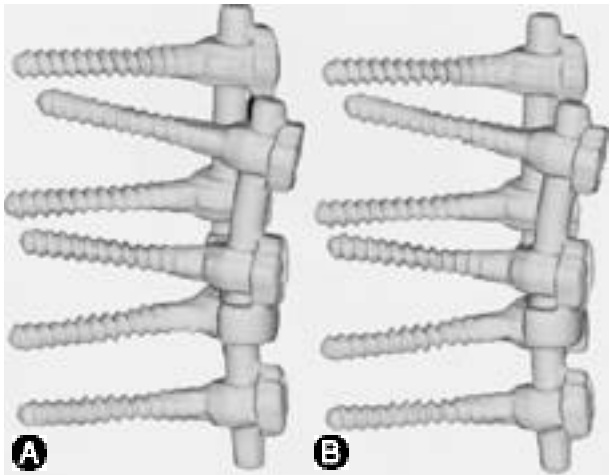


Fig. 2. Two reconstructed three-dimensional images of a screw system demonstrate difference in thickness of screws according to difference in threshold values (A. 2000, B. 2500).

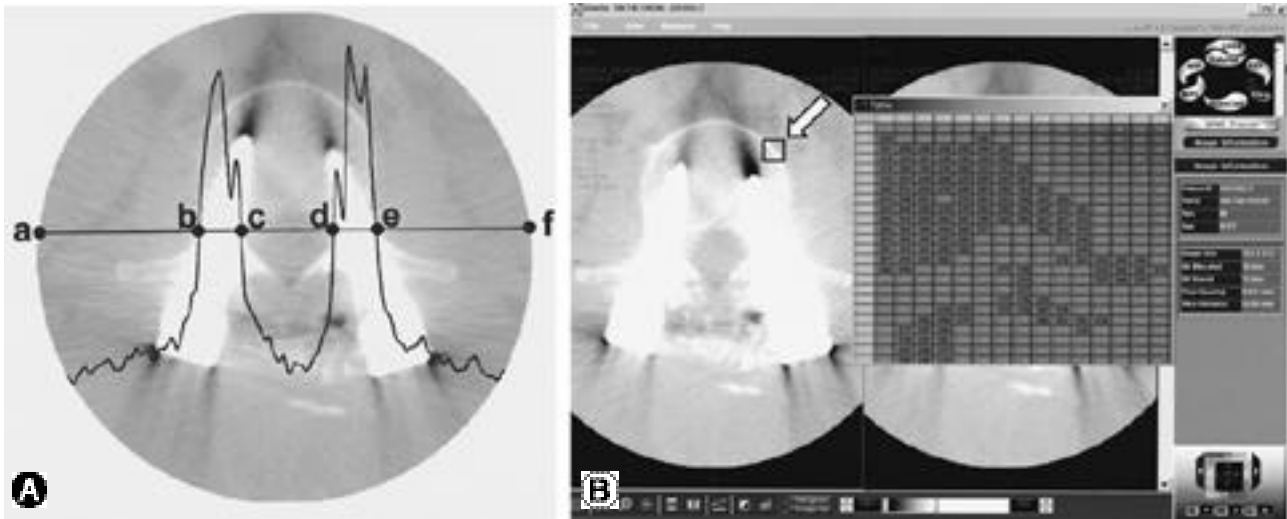
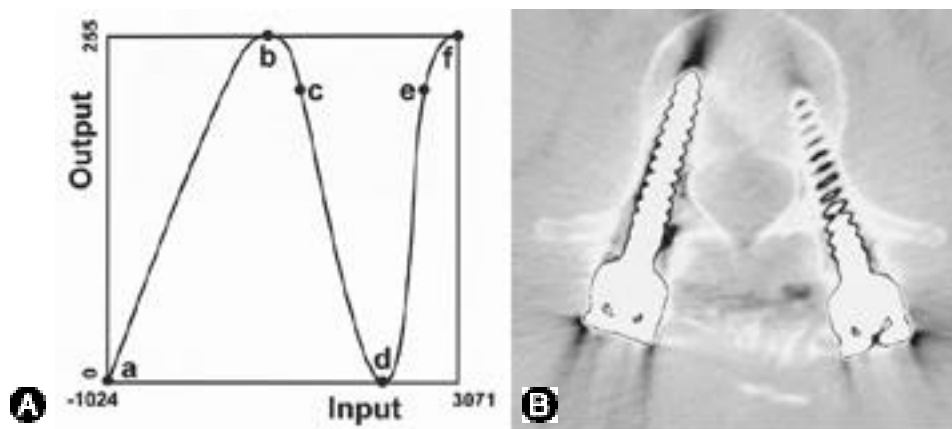
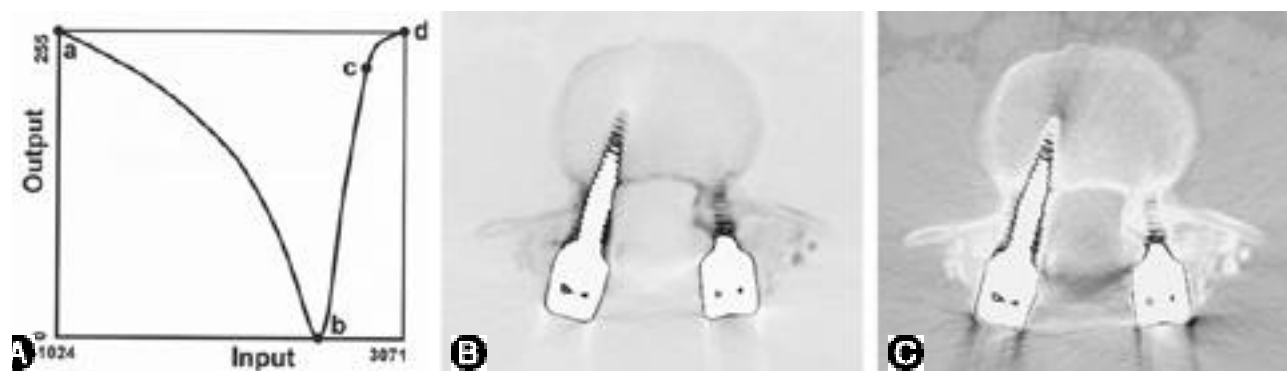


Fig. 3. Two methods for analysis of Hounsfield numbers of CT scan images are shown. A. Pixel values are presented by a line profile. B. Pixel values are tabulated.



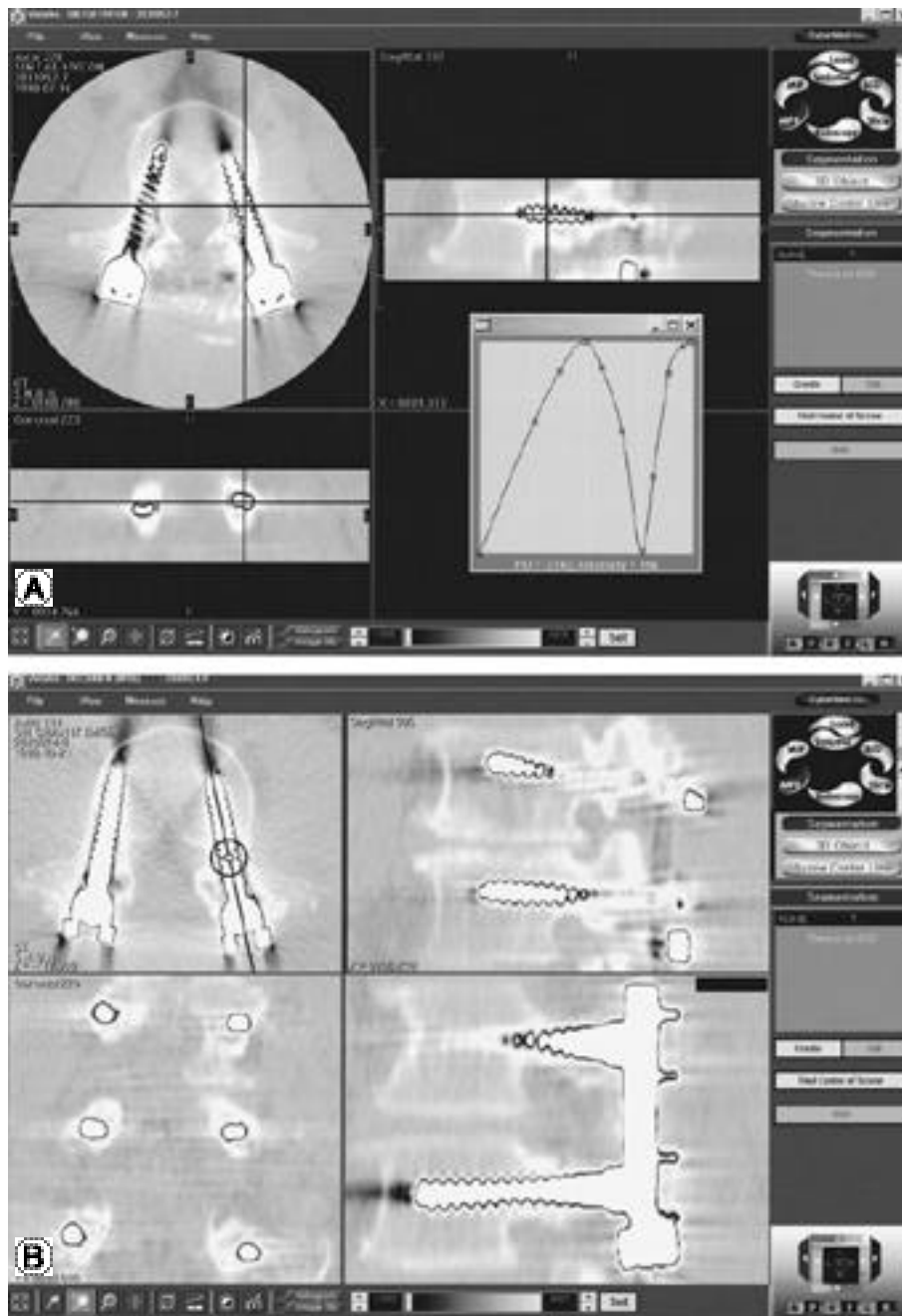
**Fig. 4.** Pixel value remapping using the first curve is shown. The pixel values are converted to some other values according to the curve (A). On the resulting image, metal artifact is reduced, and the screw outlines are displayed (B). It also provides better visualization of soft tissue than the bone setting.



**Fig. 5.** Pixel value remapping using the second curve (A) results in an image with clear outlines of both the screws and bony structures (B), which is more useful in determining screw position than the image produced by the first curve (C).

-500 ~ +1400, (window range) ,  
+1,300 ~ ,  
+3,000, +2,300 ~ +3,071 . bcde  
가 , 가 ,  
Hounsfield , . ef  
. Hounsfield ,  
, 가 . Fig. 4B Fig. 1  
가 ,  
Fig. 4 , Fig. 4A  
(pixel value) . X-  
CT 가 가 (Hounsfield ) ,  
Y- 8 bit 0~255 . , 1~2 mm  
가 ,  
, CT . 가  
ab X- CT 가





**Fig. 6.** User interface of the final program is shown. **A.** Images in axial, coronal, and sagittal windows are displayed simultaneously, and ' line indicators ' on each window interrelate the image contents. **B.** Once the arbitrary plane reconstruction function is turned on, and a user places a line on any of the three multi-planar reconstruction images, then an image perpendicular to the plane and including the line is displayed on the right lower window.

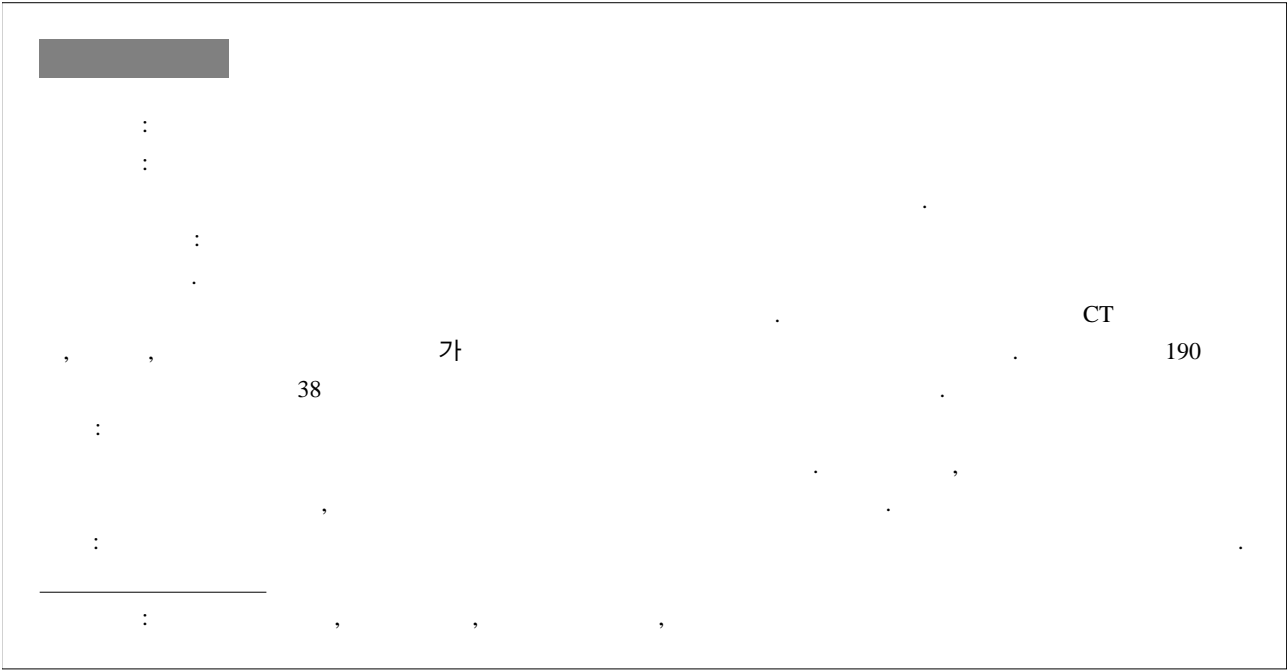
(soft tissue setting) 1 , 가  
2 , 가  
가 ,  
 ,  
 ,  
 CT  
 , 가 CT 가  
가  
가  
CT X- (Pentium III, IV )  
Pentium II 400 MHz 128 MB 가  
(attenuation) Windows 98(Microsoft, USA) , 40  
가 CT ( 512 × 512 )  
2,4-6,9),  
CT 20 ,  
CT (real time) CT  
CT ,  
가 CT 가 CT ( )  
 , CT  
(personal computer) CT, MRI, X-ray  
 ,  
 , DICOM CT  
(point opera- ,  
tion), (spatial operation), (transform 3.0 CT  
operation) <sup>3)</sup> , 가  
CT  
가  
 ,  
 ,  
 (clipping & PACS(picture  
stretching), (gamma correction), archiving and communication system) ,  
(histogram modification), , (sharpen- (Zip , record-  
ing filter) able CD )  
 ,  
 ,  
 ,  
가 가

CT

## REFERENCES

- 1) **Crane R** : *A simplified approach to image processing : classical and modern techniques in C*. New Jersey, Prentice Hall PTR: 110-143, 1997.
- 2) **Kalender WA, Hebel R and Ebersberger J** : *Reduction of CT artifacts caused by metallic implants*. Radiol, 164:576-577, 1987.
- 3) **Pratt WK** : *Digital Image Processing, 2nd ed*. New York, Wiley-Interscience: 263-322, 1991.
- 4) **Robertson DD, Weiss PJ, Fishman EK, Magid D and Walker PS** : *Evaluation of CT techniques for reducing artifacts in the presence of metallic orthopedic implants*. J Comput Assist Tomogr, 12:236-241, 1988.
- 5) **Robertson DD, Yuan J, Wang G and Vannier MW** : *Total hip prosthesis metal artifact suppression using iterative deblurring reconstruction*. J Comput Assist Tomogr, 21:293-298, 1997.
- 6) **Wang G, Frei T and Vannier MW** : *Fast iterative algorithm for metal artifact reduction in X-ray CT*. Acad Radiol, 7:607-614, 2000.
- 7) **Yeom JS, Choy WS, Kim WJ, Kim HY, Kang JW, Kim YH, Kim NK and Lee JB** : *A patient-specific surgical simulation system for spinal screw insertion composed of virtual roentgenogram, virtual C-arm, and rapid prototyping*. J of Korean Orthop Assoc, 36:161-166, 2001.
- 8) **Yoo JU, Ghanayem A, Petersilge C and Lewin J** : *Accuracy of using computed tomography to identify pedicle screw placement in cadaveric human lumbar spine*. Spine, 22:2668-2671, 1997.
- 9) **Zhao S, Robertson DD, Wang G, Whiting B and Bae KT** : *X-ray CT metal artifact reduction using wavelets: an application for imaging total hip prostheses*. IEEE Trans Med Imaging, 19:1238-1247, 2000.





49-16  
( )  
Tel : 82-2-545-4282, Fax : 82-2-545-6042, E-mail : kimnamkug@hotmail.com