

NEMA NU 1-2018

Standard for Performance Measurements of Gamma Cameras



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Performance Measurements of Gamma Cameras

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CONTENTS

SECTION 1 SCOPE	1
1.1 DEFINITIONS.....	1
1.2 REFERENCES.....	4
1.3 TEST EQUIPMENT, CONDITIONS, AND RESULTS.....	4
1.3.1 Source Holders and Test Fixtures.....	4
1.3.2 Radiation Sources.....	5
1.3.3 Test Conditions.....	5
1.3.4 Reporting.....	5
SECTION 2 TESTS OF INTRINSIC GAMMA CAMERA DETECTOR CHARACTERISTICS	6
2.1 INTRINSIC SPATIAL RESOLUTION.....	6
2.1.1 Test Conditions.....	6
2.1.2 Test Equipment.....	7
2.1.3 Measurement Procedure.....	7
2.1.4 Calculations and Analysis.....	8
2.1.5 Reporting.....	10
2.2 INTRINSIC SPATIAL LINEARITY.....	10
2.2.1 Test Conditions.....	10
2.2.2 Test Equipment.....	10
2.2.3 Measurement Procedure.....	10
2.2.4 Calculations and Analysis.....	11
2.2.5 Reporting.....	11
2.3 INTRINSIC ENERGY RESOLUTION.....	11
2.3.1 Test Conditions.....	11
2.3.2 Test Equipment.....	12
2.3.3 Measurement Procedure.....	12
2.3.4 Calculations and Analysis.....	12
2.3.5 Reporting.....	13
2.4 INTRINSIC FLOOD FIELD UNIFORMITY.....	13
2.4.1 Test Conditions.....	13
2.4.2 Test Equipment.....	13
2.4.3 Measurement Procedure.....	13
2.4.4 Calculations and Analysis.....	14
2.4.5 Reporting.....	16
2.5 MULTIPLE WINDOW SPATIAL REGISTRATION.....	16
2.5.1 Test Conditions.....	17
2.5.2 Test Equipment.....	17
2.5.3 Measurement Procedure.....	17
2.5.4 Calculations and Analysis.....	18
2.5.5 Reporting.....	18
2.6 INTRINSIC COUNT RATE PERFORMANCE IN AIR.....	18
2.6.1 Decaying Source Method.....	19
2.6.2 Intrinsic Count Rate Performance in Air—Copper Plates Method.....	22
2.7 INTRINSIC SPATIAL RESOLUTION AT 75,000 COUNTS PER SECOND.....	26
2.8 INTRINSIC FLOOD FIELD UNIFORMITY AT 75,000 COUNTS PER SECOND.....	27
SECTION 3 TESTS OF GAMMA CAMERA DETECTORS WITH COLLIMATORS	28
3.1 SYSTEM SPATIAL RESOLUTION WITHOUT SCATTER.....	28
3.1.1 Test Conditions.....	28
3.1.2 Test Equipment.....	28

3.1.3	Measurement Procedure	28
3.1.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	29
3.1.5	Reporting	29
3.2	SYSTEM SPATIAL RESOLUTION WITH SCATTER	29
3.2.1	Test Conditions.....	29
3.2.2	Test Equipment	29
3.2.3	Measurement Procedure	29
3.2.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	30
3.2.5	Reporting	30
3.3	SYSTEM PLANAR SENSITIVITY AND COLLIMATOR PENETRATION AND SCATTER.....	30
3.3.1	Test Conditions.....	30
3.3.2	Test Equipment	31
3.3.3	Measurement Procedure	31
3.3.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	31
3.3.5	Reporting	33
3.3.6	Referenced Documents	33
3.4	DETECTOR SHIELDING	33
3.4.1	Test Conditions.....	33
3.4.2	Test Equipment	34
3.4.3	Measurement Procedure	34
3.4.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	35
3.4.5	Reporting	36
3.5	SYSTEM COUNT RATE PERFORMANCE WITH SCATTER	36
3.5.1	Test Conditions.....	36
3.5.2	Test Equipment	36
3.5.3	Measurement Procedure	37
3.5.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	38
3.5.5	Reporting	38
SECTION 4 TESTS SPECIFIC TO TOMOGRAPHIC GAMMA CAMERA SYSTEMS		39
4.1	SYSTEM ALIGNMENT	39
4.1.1	Test Conditions.....	39
4.1.2	Test Equipment	39
4.1.3	Measurement Procedure	40
4.1.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	40
4.1.5	Reporting	42
4.2	SPECT RECONSTRUCTED SPATIAL RESOLUTION WITHOUT SCATTER.....	42
4.2.1	Test Conditions.....	42
4.2.2	Test Equipment	42
4.2.3	Measurement Procedure	42
4.2.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	42
4.2.5	Reporting	44
4.3	SPECT RECONSTRUCTED SPATIAL RESOLUTION WITH SCATTER	44
4.3.1	Test Conditions.....	44
4.3.2	Test Equipment	44
4.3.3	Measurement Procedure	45
4.3.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	46
4.3.5	Reporting	46
4.4	SYSTEM VOLUME SENSITIVITY.....	46
4.4.1	Test Conditions.....	47
4.4.2	Test Equipment	47
4.4.3	Measurement Procedure	47
4.4.4	Calculations and Analysis.....	48
4.4.4	Reporting	48

4.5	DETECTOR-DETECTOR SENSITIVITY VARIATION	48
4.5.1	Test Equipment	49
4.5.2	Measurement Procedure	49
4.5.3	Calculations and Analysis.....	49
4.5.4	Reporting	49
SECTION 5 TESTS SPECIFIC TO GAMMA CAMERA WHOLE-BODY SCANNING SYSTEMS		50
5.1	WHOLE-BODY SYSTEM SPATIAL RESOLUTION WITHOUT SCATTER.....	50
5.1.1	Test Conditions.....	50
5.1.2	Test Equipment	50
5.1.3	Measurement Procedure	51
5.1.4	Calculation and Analysis	51
5.1.5	Reporting	51
5.1.6	Rationale.....	52
SECTION 6 TOMOGRAPHIC CONTRAST AND ABSOLUTE QUANTIFICATION ACCURACY		53
6.1	Purpose	53
6.2	Method.....	53
6.2.1	Symbols	53
6.2.2	Radionuclide.....	53
6.2.3	Source Distribution	54
6.2.4	Data Collection	54
6.2.5	Data Processing	55
6.3	Analysis	55
6.3.1	Sphere Contrast and Background Variability	55
6.3.2	Contrast of Lung Insert	56
6.3.3	Report.....	56
6.3.4	Absolute Quantification Accuracy.....	57
6.3.5	Phantom Description	58
SECTION 7 SPECT/CT CO-REGISTRATION ACCURACY.....		61
7.1	General	61
7.2	Method.....	61
7.2.1	Test Conditions.....	61
7.2.2	Test Equipment	61
7.2.3	Measurement Procedure	62
7.2.4	Data Processing	63
7.2.5	Analysis of SPECT-CT co-registration	63
7.2.6	Report.....	64

FIGURES

Figure 2–1	Collimated Source Geometry.....	7
Figure 2–2	Lead Masks for Measurement of Spatial Resolution and Linearity	8
Figure 2–3	Determination of FWHM and FWTM	9
Figure 2–4	Cylindrical Source Holder for Multiple Window Spatial Registration Measurement Showing Liquid ⁶⁷ Ga Source Inside.....	17
Figure 2–5	Source Holder for Count Rate Measurements	20
Figure 2–6	Example Count Rate Curve	22
Figure 3–1	Source Positions for Shield Leakage Measurements.....	34
Figure 3–2	Phantom for Measuring Count Rate Performance in Scatter	37

Figure 4–1 Positions of the Three Co-Planar Point Sources for Measuring SPECT Head Alignment and Reconstructed System Resolution without Scatter	40
Figure 4–2 SPECT Reconstructed Spatial Resolution with Scatter	45
Figure 4–3 Calculating Reconstructed System Spatial Resolution with Scatter.....	46
Figure 4–4 Volume Sensitivity Cylindrical Phantom	47
Figure 5–1 Source Position for Whole Body Resolution Measurements.....	51
Figure 6–1 Cross-section of body phantom.....	58
Figure 6–2 Phantom Insert with Hollow Spheres.....	59
Figure 6–3 Example of Background ROI Placement for Image Quality Analysis.....	60
Figure 7–1 Positions of six point sources for measuring SPECT/CT co-registration accuracy.....	62

WORKSHEETS

Worksheet 4-1 Measurements of FWHM from the Central Point	43
Worksheet 4-2 Measurements of FWHM from the Peripheral Points.....	43

Foreword

Reason for Changes

NEMA NU 1 was developed by the Molecular Imaging Section of the Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance (MITA) of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA). Regulations regarding the maintenance of standards by NEMA require that standards be reviewed and, if necessary, updated every five years. Section approval of a standard does not necessarily imply that all section members voted for its approval or participated in its development. At the time of approval, the NEMA NU 1 task force was composed of the following members:

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In the preparation of NEMA NU 1, the input of users and other interested parties has been sought and evaluated. Inquiries, comments and proposed or recommended revisions should be submitted to the relevant MITA product section at the following address:

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Changes to the Standard

The categorization of tests by section as either “Primary” or “Secondary” tests of system performance remain absent in this revision (consistent with the 2012 version). The relative importance of individual tests to the characterization of Gamma camera systems is left to the manufacturers and user community to determine. The use of “appropriate clinical mode” is also retained, which might affect energy windows and variable count rate operation with respect to the 2001 standard.

As originally scripted, the NEMA NU 1 standard was intended to apply to standard gamma cameras that utilize large-area-crystal detectors with multi-channel collimators. Standard gamma cameras were developed to deliver planar images from a parallel or non-parallel projection.

The NEMA NU 1 task force version recognizes the emergence of clinically deployed novel SPECT systems using discrete pixel detectors, such as pixelated NaI(Tl) and CsI(Tl) detectors, and direct conversion detectors, such as CdTe and CdZnTe (CZT) detectors, as well as image formation using other than multi-channel collimators. Many of the tests within the previous NEMA NU 1 standard define setup or imaging conditions that may not be relevant to describing the delivered quality or performance of non-standard SPECT systems.

Notes regarding the applicability of each test procedure to discrete pixel detectors that were placed near the beginning of each test in the 2012 version are retained in this version.

Standard Gamma cameras were designed using PMT optics. The prescribed image setup and processing steps for uniformity were chosen to preserve spatial variations with a scale length of a PMT and may not be appropriate for SPECT systems that employ non-standard detection methods. In the 2018 version, we have introduced suggestions in order to better adapt the previous procedure to non-standard detection methods.

The prescribed image evaluation steps for uniformity were chosen to describe the standard gamma camera design and may not be appropriate for novel SPECT systems that employ advanced reconstruction techniques and algorithms and for which a large-area uniform projection image is not expected.

The prescribed image evaluation steps for reconstructed resolution, which dictate filtered back-projection, were chosen as appropriate to the standard Gamma camera design. This technique may not be appropriate for novel SPECT systems that employ advanced reconstruction algorithms and where filtered back-projection is not the preferred or appropriate reconstruction technique.

Standard Gamma cameras deliver a relatively low count rate per unit detector area that limits the total counts and statistical significance in realistic acquisition scenarios. The prescribed image setup and processing steps in NEMA NU 1 were often chosen to minimize the impact of low image count density while preserving relevant performance metrics.

In order to answer the transition to 3D imaging and to novel SPECT and SPECT/CT 3D only system needs, we introduce in this 2018 version, two additional sections:

- a. section 6: Tomographic Contrast and Absolute Quantification Accuracy
- b. section 7: SPECT/CT co-registration accuracy

Changes to Definition and Test Procedures:

- a. Section 2.1: The pixel pitch will be reported instead of the intrinsic resolution for pixelated gamma cameras with a non-removable collimator.
- b. Section 2.3.2: Minimal energy bin definition for energy resolution measurement was updated to be 1/10 the FWHM of the energy distribution, to be consistent with spatial resolution definition
- c. Section 2.4.4.4: Defective pixels and cluster definition
- d. Section 6: Tomographic Contrast and Absolute Quantification Accuracy
- e. Section 7: SPECT/CT co-registration Accuracy

CAUTION—Persons using this measurement standard must be in compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations (Ref: NRC Regulatory Guide 10.8, *Guide for the Preparation of Applications for Medical Programs*) for the use, handling, and possession of radioactive material.

The purpose of NEMA NU 1 is to provide uniform criteria for the measurement and reporting of Gamma camera performance parameters by which a manufacturer may specify his device and, when doing so, reference “NEMA Standards Publication NU 1-2017, Performance Measurements of Gamma Cameras.” NEMA NU 1 does not establish minimum performance levels.

Specific measurement equipment, as set forth herein, is required in order to accomplish the purpose of this standard: the uniform and accurate specification of performance characteristics. Without this equipment, the measurements performed would be limited, inaccurate, non-quantitative, or too time-consuming.

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Section 1 Scope

This Standards Publication establishes definitions, quantitative measurements of performance characteristics, and reporting techniques for the specification of the following Gamma camera parameters:

- a. Intrinsic Spatial Resolution
- b. Intrinsic Spatial Linearity
- c. Intrinsic Energy Resolution
- d. Intrinsic Flood Field Uniformity
- e. Multiple Window Spatial Registration
- f. Intrinsic Count Rate Performance in Air
- g. Intrinsic Spatial Resolution at 75 kcps
- h. Intrinsic Flood Field Uniformity at 75 kcps
- i. System Spatial Resolution without Scatter
- j. System Spatial Resolution with Scatter
- k. System Planar Sensitivity and Collimator Penetration and Scatter
- l. Detector Shielding
- m. System Count Rate Performance with Scatter
- n. System Alignment
- o. SPECT Reconstructed Spatial Resolution without Scatter
- p. SPECT Reconstructed Spatial Resolution with Scatter
- q. System Volume Sensitivity
- r. Detector-Detector Sensitivity Variation
- s. Whole-body System Spatial Resolution without Scatter
- t. Tomographic Contrast and Absolute Quantification Accuracy
- u. SPECT/CT co-registration Accuracy

The following types of medical radionuclide imaging instruments are included in this standard:

- a. Single detector, single crystal planar Gamma cameras
- b. Single detector, single crystal tomographic Gamma cameras
- c. Multiple detector planar and tomographic Gamma cameras
- d. Whole-body Gamma camera devices
- e. Discrete pixel detector planar and tomographic Gamma cameras

The following types of medical radionuclide imaging instruments are not included in this standard:

- a. Coincidence imaging Gamma cameras or systems (these are covered by NEMA NU 2-2012, "Performance Measurements of Positron Emission Tomographs").
- b. All medical radionuclide imaging devices are not included above.

1.1 Definitions

absolute linearity: The maximum distortion or displacement of the X and Y image location with respect to the actual source location over the Gamma camera field of view (FOV).

appropriate clinical mode: All tests shall be performed in a clinically consistent mode of operation with appropriate energy, linearity and uniformity corrections, pixel size, and photopeak window being employed. The count rate mode employed during tests shall be the same mode as used clinically under the same count rate conditions.