gel, slime, and silken tofu samples used to obtain the results in Fig. 8. For the human skin gel [Fig. 9(a)] and slime [Fig. 9(b)], the creep and creep recovery compliances at all pressures lie on almost exactly the same curve. Therefore, the effect of loading on the measured viscoelastic properties in the examined loading range is negligible for the human skin gel and slime. For the silken tofu [Fig. 9(c)], however, the creep and creep recovery compliance curves are different at different pressures. To explain this, it is assumed that the manufacturing method and standards for industrial products such as human skin gel and slime are uniform, meaning that they exhibit the predetermined mechanical properties and thus give similar results for hardness and tensile strength. In contrast, processed foods such as tofu and kamaboko (a Japanese processed seafood product) have nonuniform properties such as elasticity, hardness, and pore density. This may explain the result in Fig. 9(c).

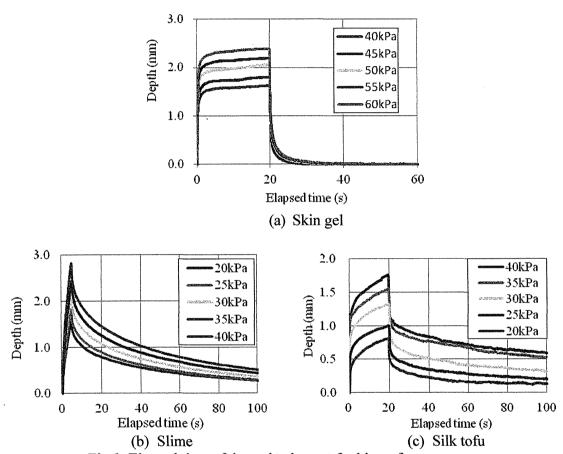


Fig.8 Elapsed time of dents depth on soft objects for pressure.

# 5.2 Equivalent dent depth in creep and creep recovery

In Fig. 8, the ratio of dent depth at an arbitrary time to the maximum depth at the end of creep or immediately before creep recovery is defined as the equivalent dent depth, which is a dimensionless value. Figure 10 shows the changes in equivalent dent depth with time for the human skin gel, slime, and silken tofu used to obtain the results in Fig. 8. For the human skin gel [Fig. 10(a)] and slime [Fig. 10(b)], the equivalent dent depths during creep and creep recovery at all the pressures lie on almost exactly the same curve, similar to the case of compliance shown in Fig. 9. For the silken tofu [Fig. 10(c)], however, the curves of equivalent dent depth do not fit on a single curve, similar to the compliance curves shown in Fig. 9(c). From the above, compliance or equivalent dent depth can be used to describe creep and creep recovery behaviors.

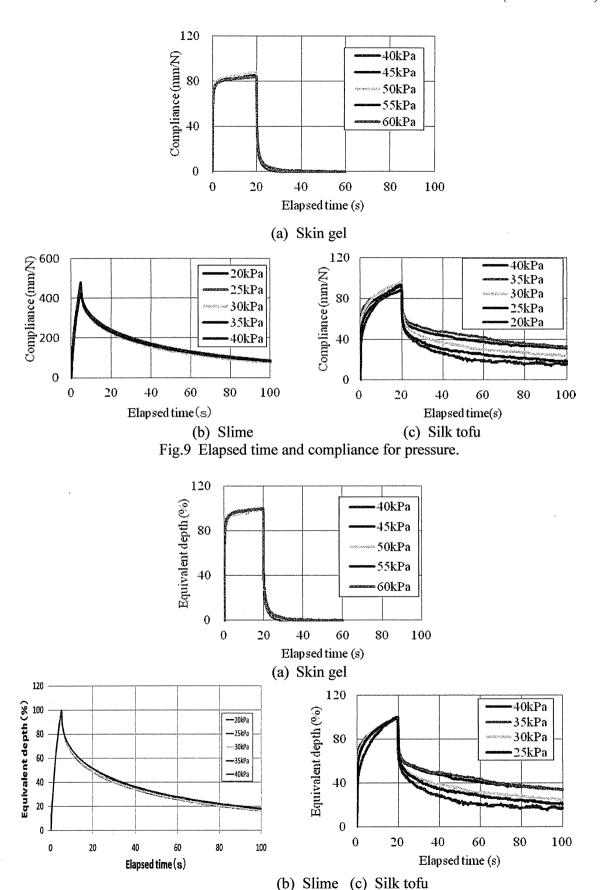


Fig.10 Elapsed time and equivalent depth for pressure.

### 6. Conclusions

In this study, using the developed equipment, we measured the shape of the dents formed on soft samples, measured the depth of the dents for various loading times, types of soft sample, and pressures, and evaluated the viscoelastic properties of the soft samples with respect to elastic compliance and equivalent dent depth. The results are reported below.

- (1) The creep and creep recovery curves of dent depths were shown for creep times of 5, 10, 15, and 20 seconds.
- (2) These curves of samples of industrial materials and processed food were measured the depth of the dent as the ordinate.
- (3) The creep and creep recovery compliances at all pressures lie on almost exactly the same curve.
- (4) The equivalent dent depths during creep and creep recovery at all the pressures lie on almost exactly the same curve, similar to the case of compliance.

### References

- [1] Brandt M.A., Skinner E.Z. and Coleman J.A.: Texture profile method, *J. Food Sci.*, 28, 404 (1963).
- [2] Szczesniak A.S., *Effect of storage on texture in food storage stability*, Eds., Taub I.A. and Singh R.P. (CRC Press), 191 (1997).
- [3] Seiji YOSHIKAWA and Motoh OKABE, Texture Profile Pattern of Foods by Profile Terms and Texturometer, *Rept. Natl. Food Res*, Inst., No. 33, 123-129 (1978).
- [4] Tsukasa NISHIMURA, Jyunzo SUZUKI, Takehiko FUKUDA: Application of table-top universal tester to food texture, *Shimadzu review* 65(1•2)55-59, 2008.
- [5] JIS Z 2244:2009 Vickers hardness test -- Test method
- [6] JIS Z 2243:2008 Brinell hardness test -- Test method
- [7] ISO 7619–1:2004, Rubber, vulcanized or thermoplastic -- Determination of indentation hardness -- Part 1:Durometer method (Shore hardness) (2004).
- [8] TANAKA M., Development of a Haptic Sensor for Monitoring skin conditions, *J. of JAPAN SOCIETY FOR DESIGN ENGINEERING*. 39-3(2004), pp. 134-137.
- [9] Roderic S.Lakes, VISCOELASTIC SOLIDS (1998), p.4, CRC Press.
- [10] NAGAO M., SAKAI Y. and YOKOTA O., Development of Non-contact Softness Tester, J. of JAPAN SOCIETY FOR DESIGN ENGINEERING. 41-5(2006),pp.267-272.
- [11] Yokota O., Softness Measuring Method and Softness Measuring Equipment., *Patent*, JP, P4247474(2009).
- [12] Grolman B.: A new tonometer system, *American J. Optom Arch Amer Acad Optom*, 49 (1972), pp.646.
- [13] UCHIDA K., Concerning Tonometry (The Development and the Newest Model of Noncontact Tonometry), J. of JAPAN SOCIETY FOR DESIGN ENGINEERING, 39-3(2004), 138-142.

# DEVELOPMENT OF A MUSCLE HARDNESS TESTER AND ITS MEASUREMENT CASES

# Mitsuo NAGAO

Department of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Nihon University. 1 Nakakawahara Tokusada Tamura-machi, Koriyama-shi, Fukushima, 963-8642, Japan E-mail: nagao@mech.ce.nihon-u.ac.jp

### Shin-ichi KONNO

Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Fukushima Medical University. 1 Hikariga-oka, Fukushima-shi, Fukushima, 960-1295, Japan

### Tokuo ENDO

Endo-Osteopathic Clinic, Director. 3-2 Kajimen Motomiya Motomiya-shi, Fukushima, 969-1129, Japan

### **Kotaro YATABE**

Doctor's Course, Mechanical Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, Nihon University. 1 Nakakawahara Tokusada Tamura-machi, Koriyama-shi, Fukushima, 963-8642, Japan

# Osamu YOKOTA

Department of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Nihon University. 1 Nakakawahara Tokusada Tamura-machi, Koriyama-shi, Fukushima, 963-8642, Japan

Abstract: As the background of our study, we requested that practitioners use muscle hardness testers to conduct a digital assessment of the muscle hardness layers that they can feel by palpation. We developed muscle hardness testers to assess muscle hardness digitally from the reaction force and the depth in pushing a finger-shaped indenter, thereby simulating palpation. As described in this paper, we confirmed the effectiveness of digital assessment using foam rubber consisting of an upper layer and a lower layer, respectively simulating the cortical and muscle layers of a human body. Additionally, we digitally assessed the change of hardness of the trapezius muscle by changing the position of the upper extremity. Next, we were able to measure the change of hardness before and after treatment for subjects with shoulder stiffness. Results show that the proposed tester contributes to digital assessment of muscle hardness and palpation hardness.

Keywords: trapezius muscle, palpation, muscle hardness tester, finger-shaped, foam rubber, shoulder stiffness

### 1. Introduction

This study was undertaken to develop a muscle hardness tester to assess muscle hardness digitally when a finger-shape indenter, simulating palpation, is pushed into a muscle [1]. Commercially available testers and those described in the literature [2-10] present benefits and shortcomings, but the practitioners who actually conduct medical treatment have never actually evaluated such testers. Moreover, because subjects have idiosyncratic differences in body shape, constitution, and object sites, existing testers are not adjusted to these conditions. Additionally, such testers offer little quantifiable operability and reliability. The proposed tester was designed to assess muscle hardness digitally, free of the influence of various conditions. The tester can recognize small differences of hardness, hardness of deep muscle layers, and the effects of treatment and follow-up care. This report describes the outline and digitalization mode of the proposed equipment and confirms its effectiveness and validity through the following experiments: first, the hardness of the lower layer of the double-layer foam rubber is assessed digitally; second, hardness is measured when the trapezius muscle is constricted; third, hardness is assessed digitally before and after treatment for shoulder stiffness. Hereinafter, we describe details of how we reached our conclusions.

# 2. Muscle hardness test equipment

# 2.1. Composition of the muscle hardness tester

Figure 1 shows the process of manual palpation (by fingers) of a muscle induration (a stiff muscle site). As Figure 2 show, this proposed device can simulate the movement of a finger pushing the induration. Figure 3 depicts the relation of the reaction force W and depth x, when the intender, representing a finger, is pushed into the skin. By holding the upper part of it by hand, the pushing is conducted at 9 mm of stroke for five seconds. The reaction force and the depth are obtained respectively from the load cell and the displacement. Then those data are sent to the PC for digital processing. With the PC, digital processing in Figure 3 and that described hereinafter are conducted. The results are shown on the display. Consequently, because the thickness of the upper layer and the middle layer shown in Figure 1 has individual differences and site differences, the experimenter must manipulate it by adjusting the pushing force of the finger searching for the hardness. The pushing force  $W_0$  is equivalent to the load adjustment shown in the upper part of Figure 2.

The main specifications are described in the following: The indenter diameter is 8 [mm]. Its material is POM; at the tip is a ball with 4 [mm] radius. The keep plate diameter is 40 [mm]. Its material is also POM. Pushing is conducted at a stroke of 9 [mm] for 5 [s]. The range of pushing force is  $W_0=2-40$  [N]. The range of displacement is x=0-15 [mm].

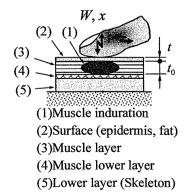


Figure 1 Palpation of the muscle induration by the finger

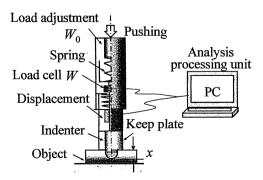
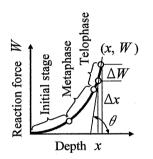


Figure 2 Outline of muscle hardness test equipment

The total height is 155 [mm] and the mass is 650 [g]. The body casing is made from stainless steel. It is possible to change the indenter and the keep plate depending of the figure of an object site. Additionally,  $W_0$  is the value when the tester on the steel plate 10 [mm] thickness is pushed into at pushing stroke of 9 [mm].

### 2.2. Methods of quantification

According to the range of x shown in Figure 3, the initial stage, the metaphase, and the telophase of pushing represent the hardness of the cortical layer including the fat layer, the fat layer to muscle layer, and the object site, respectively, by the correlation of W-x. The hardness is obtained from the pushing reaction force W [N], the pushing depth x [mm], the elastic constant  $\kappa = W/x$  [N/cm], and differential elastic modulus  $\tan\theta = \Delta W/\Delta x$  [deg] [1]. Although the representation with W or x might resemble the methods used by existing mechanical hardness testers [2-4], this method is useful when the difference of hardness of objects is large. When it is difficult to judge the difference using this method,  $\kappa$  is added for judgment. Even so, when it is difficult, one must conduct multiple judgments adding the gradient at the end of pushing  $\tan\theta$ . Furthermore, because it is possible to adjust the pushing force depending on the conditions such as the cortical layer thickness or the object site hardness as shown in Figure 2, it is also possible to make measurements that approximate the hardness felt by palpation.



**Figure 3** Digitization of the muscle hardness (*W-x* curve)

Table 1 Composition of the samples of two layers

Composition	Ty	pe of the	Pushing force		
Symbol	AA	AB	AC	AD	$W_0$ [N]
Upper layer	A	sponge,	4 9 12 20		
Lower layer $t_0$ =10 [mm]	A	В	С	D	4, 8, 12, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36
Durometer Type E [hardness]	E21 ±2/5	E23 ±2/5	E38 ±2/5	E47 ±2/5	

<sup>\*</sup> Foam rubber dimensions;  $t \times W \times \ell = t \times 50 \times 100$  [mm]

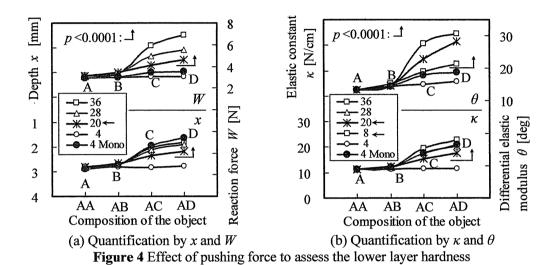
### 3. Experiments and results

# 3.1. Pushing force assessing the lower layer hardness

We confirmed the effectiveness of our proposed digitalization method by the pushing force, which can assess the change of the lower layer hardness, by maintaining the upper layer thickness constant for two layers consisting of the upper layer of the surface layer (2) and the lower layer of the muscle layer (3) presented in Figure 1. Conditions of the two layers are shown in Table 1. The upper layer is made of foam rubber A ( $t \times W \times \ell = 5 \times 100 \times 50$  [mm], E21). The lower layers with different hardness are made of four kinds of foam rubber A–D ( $t_0 \times W \times \ell = 10 \times 100 \times 50$  [mm]). The combinations of composition are symbolized by AA, AB, AC and AD. The foam rubber hardness is represented by the values of Durometer Type E. The pushing forces are divided into eight levels of 4 [N] to 36 [N].

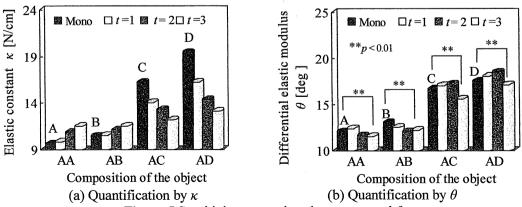
Results of the experiments show that the correlation between pushing reaction force W and pushing depth x are as portrayed in Figure 4(a). The elastic constant  $\kappa$  and the differential elastic modulus  $\theta$  are in Figure 4(b). All results are mean values obtained from 10 pushing repetitions. The "4 Mono" shown in Figure 4 means the values in directly pushing it into the samples A–D with pushing force of 4 [N]. To clarify the differences before and after the sample, the symbols are connected with a line. The amount of  $W_0$  by which the differences between AA and AB, between AB and AC, and AC and AD can be judged, was obtained

using *t*-tests. Assuming that the two samples are homoscedastic, the conditions were obtained with two-sided *t* boundary values, significance level of p=0.0001, and degrees of freedom of  $\varphi$ =18. The result was  $t(\varphi, p)$ =t(18, 0.0001)=4.97. In terms of  $W_0$ , with the test statistic of  $t_0 > t$ , x, W and  $\kappa$  had  $W_0 > 20$  [N] and  $\theta$  had  $W_0 > 8$  [N]. Consequently, if each pushing force equivalent to the thickness of the upper layer is appropriate, then it is possible to assess the different hardness of the lower layers digitally. It can be applied directly to the thickness of (1) and (2) in Figure 1. In the digitalization of  $\theta$ , even if  $W_0$  is smaller than the others, the differences can be discriminated as the advantage of this equipment.



# 3.2. Comparison between $\kappa$ and $\theta$ by the upper layer thickness

We confirmed the effect of the upper layer thickness on the sensitive reference in digitalization of  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$  when foam rubber A with thickness of t=1, 2, or 3 [mm] was put on the lower layer shown in Table 1. The results are shown in Figure 5. Indications "Mono" are values of A–D. In digitalization of elastic constant, as the upper layer becomes thicker, the difference between objects becomes indistinct. Therefore, with t=3 [mm], it becomes more difficult to determine it than with t=1 [mm]. On the other hand, in digitalization of  $\theta$ , unlike in  $\kappa$ , without difference of an upper layer, we conducted an ANOVA (p<0.01, one-way analysis, level of factor 4, and repetition number of times 10) for every different composition of the objects (e.g., in the case of AA, four kinds of  $\theta$  including single layer A, and layers with t=1, 2, and 3 [mm]). The discriminant standard is that shown below.



**Figure 5** Sensitivity comparison between  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$ 

$$F_0(\varphi_A, \varphi_E; 0.01) = F_0(3, 36; 0.01) = 4.38$$

The values F of the objects were the following: AA(1.69), AB(1.02), AC(2.64), AD(1.57). Consequently, because  $F < F_0 = 4.38$  in all the objects, it turned out to be difficult to assess the change of the upper layer thickness digitally. In Figure 5, we described it as \*\*p < 0.01. In digitalization of  $\theta$ , even if  $W_0$  is small, as shown in Figure 4, its sensitivity is so higher than in  $\kappa$  as to show the difference of the lower layer hardness.

# 3.3. Contraction hardness of trapezius muscle by eversion of the arm

This experiment confirms the possibility of digitally assessing the hardness before and after a trapezius muscle contracts. The contents are shown in Table 2. Examinees were six university students with different body shape and features of physical constitution: they were designated as A1–A6 in order of increasing Body Mass Index (*BMI*) values. The hardness of contracting muscle was obtained from the posture in which the position of upper extremity was different at two sites. First, the muscle was not tense and soft when the upper extremity was put on the armrest. Second, the muscle contracts and becomes tight when the first position of the upper extremity turns outward by 90 deg. The site on which the intender is placed is midway between the seventh cervical spine and the acrominon, where the hardness can be felt by fingers.

<b>Table 2</b> Features and	measurement	condition of	six examinees:	university stu	dents, age 21–22
	· IIIOOOO OII OIIIOIIO	COLLEGE OF A			

Examinees No.	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	
BMI value	19	21	21	22	24	24	
Features of the body	Thinness type Thin muscle layer	Normal type Thick muscle layer	Normal type	Normal type Tennis player	Small fatness type	Small fatness type Thick muscle layer	
Object position	Trapezius muscle of the right shoulder, the position which guesses the indenter is a midpoint of cervical spine C7 and acromial process.						
Contraction action of the arm	It sits in the armchair, and armrest position and 90-deg turning outward position.						
Measurement condition	Indentation set load $W_0$ =9.8[N], keep plate diameter 40[mm], indentation setting hour 5[sec], the tip is a globe on the indenter diameter at 8[mm] and pushing frequency 5 [times].						
	BMI value [kg/m <sup>2</sup> ]: Thinness type $\leq$ 19, 19 < Normal type < 24, 24 $\leq$ Small fatness type < 28, 28 $\leq$ Obesity type						

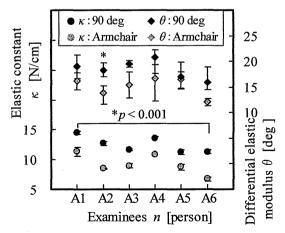


Figure 6 Comparison of muscle hardness by muscle contraction of trapezius muscle

In Figure 6, examinees A1-A6 are on the X axis; the hardness of armrest position and 90-deg turning outward position in terms of  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$  are shown on the Y axis. Along with the mean value, the range of the maximum value and the minimum value is also shown. According to  $\kappa = W/x$ , the difference between conditions before and after muscle contraction is evident, so it is possible to assess the muscle hardness digitally. Although the experiment did not assess the thickness of fat layer and muscle layer digitally, to assume the correlation between BMI and the thickness of those layers, it is reasonable to expect that the value should be smaller. Examinee A4, a tennis player, has hard and thick neck and shoulder muscles, which is represented by the value. A1, who is thin, has a large value when his upper extremity was put on the armrest. To assume that his muscle is also proportionally thin, it should be because the value also represented the bone layer hardness as well as muscle layer or the pushing force was strong. On the other hand, even though the tendency in digitalization by  $\theta$ is like that shown by  $\kappa$ , results show that the variation of values is greater than that by  $\kappa$ . That tendency might be attributed to the high sensitivity shown in Figure 5. Showing the effectiveness of our proposed digitalization, when the difference in, for example, A5 is evident by  $\kappa$ , but difficult to discriminate by  $\theta$ , one can discriminate it with  $\kappa = W/x$ .

Next, using the *t*-test, we confirmed that the muscle hardness in turning outward position can be discriminated to be higher than that in armrest position. As the test conditions to find the values, two samples are assumed to be homoscedastic. The *t* boundary value is one-way. The significance standard is p=0.001. Degrees of freedom are  $\varphi=8$ . In digitalization by  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$ ,  $t(\varphi, 2p)=t(8, 0.001)=4.50$  was found. In digitalization by  $\kappa$ , the test statistic  $t_0$  was  $t_0>t$  in all examiners. Digitalization by  $\theta$  it was so in only A2, which is shown as "\*p<0.001" in Figure 6.

The experiment demonstrated the following. It is important to assess the hardness of each rather than the differences of hardness among individuals because human bodies have individual differences related to thickness and hardness of the object sites, as shown in Figure 1 and Table 2. Furthermore, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 4, because the thickness is a factor holding the key to the sensitivity of the hardness, for measurement with good sensitivity, it is necessary to imitate the movement of strong pushing when the object site is thick. When the thickness is slight, even small change can grasp if one lightly pushes the indenter as in palpation.

# 3.4. Muscle hardness around the operation of shoulder stiffness

The examinees were 21 male university students aged 21-4 (B1-B21), for whom we had conducted a survey in the form of a questionnaire. We obtained their consent for the experiment in advance. The object sites were the site of shoulder stiffness which we located by palpation and near which the indenter was pushed, with the same measurement conditions as those in Table 2. Before and after a practitioner gave an examinee a massage, we measured the hardness with our muscle hardness tester five times, with the mean considered as the measured value. The practitioner gave a massage by hand and used an ultrasonic therapy apparatus for about four minutes. For the amount of change before and after the treatment practice, we conducted a t-test, assuming that two samples should be homoscedastic. With a two-sided t-boundary value (p < 0.05), we obtained  $t(\varphi, p) = t(8, 0.05) = 2.31$ . The examinees were divided into three groups based on this test: a group of the examinees whose muscle softened (13 by  $\kappa$  and 9 by  $\theta$  among 21), a group showing no difference (5 by  $\kappa$  and 11 by  $\theta$ among 21), and a group of examinees whose muscle became harder (3 by  $\kappa$  and 1 by  $\theta$  among 21). In Figure 7, with κ represented on the left vertical axis, the three groups are shown from right to left (represented by two bar charts). They are arranged in ascending order of muscle hardness. The horizontal axis represents the values of examinee numbers and their BMI.

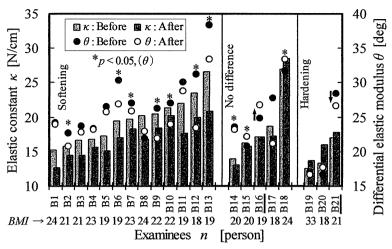


Figure 7 Muscle hardness of shoulder stiffness

On the other hand, with  $\theta$  represented on the right vertical axis (by signs of circle), each  $\theta$  of the examinees, divided into three groups by t-test, is marked by a reference mark [\*] (\*p<0.05).

They were divided into three groups because the practitioner explains that physical stimulus was given to a stiff muscle for which the tissues' blood circulation was facilitated, thereby softening it. Others showed no difference. Other muscles showed increasing inner pressure of the muscle, thereby hardening it. B16 (no difference by  $\kappa$ , hardening by  $\theta$ ; ) and B21 (hardening by  $\kappa$ , softening by  $\theta$ ; ) showed different judgment by  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$ . With the boundary value of p < 0.01, they have the same judgment by  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$ . Therefore, it is possible to assess the muscle hardness digitally based on changes that occur during physical treatment for patients with complaints of shoulder stiffness. Results show the capability of digital assessment of the effects of practical treatment and palpation.

In Figure 8, the BMI, shown on the horizontal axis, is arranged in ascending order, different from Figure 7, and a regression line is added. The BMI-33 [kg/m²] of B19 indicates the obesity-type according to Table 2. From both regression lines, the line after practice is located below because muscles of many examinees softened considerably. The gradient is on the downside, presenting the possibility that the surface layer thickness shown in Figure 1 is correlated with the BMI.

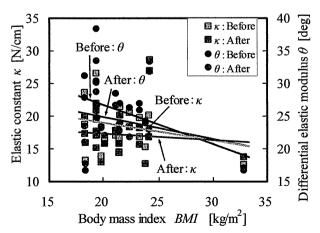


Figure 8 Correlation of muscle hardness and BMI

### 4. Conclusions

Proposing an outline of the muscle hardness tester that can imitate hardness assessments done by palpation and presenting a mode of to digital assessment, we were able to confirm their effectiveness and validity by conducting several experiments. The obtained results are summarized as follows:

- (1) We proposed four methods to assess muscle hardness digitally. Using them singly or multiply, the tester presents high reliability.  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$  are used in typical methods.
- (2) Discriminating the lower layer hardness for different surface thickness is possible if the pushing force is appropriate to thickness.
- (3) For a thin surface layer, such as a few millimeters,  $\theta$  has less effect on the lower layer hardness than  $\kappa$  does, and is therefore validated. Furthermore,  $\theta$  is more sensitive than  $\kappa$ .
- (4) The muscle hardness before and after practical treatment for shoulder stiffness can be categorized into three groups: softening, no difference, or hardening. They are highly correlated to  $\kappa$  and  $\theta$ , with some exceptions.
- (5) In future studies, we will aim at improving the process for practical application by examining the possibilities of digitally assessing effects according to practices, substitution of palpation or self-palpation, and follow-up.

### Acknowledgement

Part of this study is conducted with assistance provided by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research C (No. 22560225). We express our gratitude for that support.

### References

- [1] Nihon Univ., Hardness test method, hardness test equipment and hardness measuring device, Patent No.2009-052912, JP, (2009).
- [2] Imoto machinery Co. Ltd., The muscle hardness tester, Patent No.3951257, JP, (2007).
- [3] S. Hiwatari, et. al., The muscle hardness tester, Patent No.4352022, JP, (2009).
- [4] Ito Co., Ltd., The muscular tissue hardness tester, Patent No.4922056, JP, (2012).
- [5] N. Motooka, et.al., Development of New Instrument to Assess Visco-Elasticity of Skin and Muscle, Technical Digest of the 15<sup>th</sup> Sensor Symp., pp.87-92, (1997).
- [6] A. Takanashi, et. al., Reliability of Measurement of Elastomer Samples by Soft Tissue Stiffness Meter, Rigakuryoho Kagaku, 24(1), pp.31-34, (2009).
- [7] H. Andersen, et. al., *Pressure Pain Sensitivity and Hardness Along Human Normal and Sensitized Muscle*, Somatosensory and Motor Research, 23(3), pp.97-109, (2006).
- [8] Y. Arima, *Objectification of Hardness Information of Palpation*, The bulletin of Meiji University of Oriental Medicine, No.25, pp.25-49, (1997).
- [9] Y. Tsuda, et. al., An Examination for Measuring the Softness of Human Shoulders (1), J. Intl. Soc. Life Info. Sci., 23(2), pp.332-334, (2005).
- [10] F. Ito, et. al., *The Effects of Electric Field Therapeutic Device (Healthtron) on the Stiffness in the Neck and Shoulder Area*, J. Jpn. Soc. Balneol. Climatol. Phys. Med., **68**(2), pp.110-121, (2005).

# 透明レプリカ法による加工表面の粗さ測定方法の提案\*

横田 理\*1, 谷田部幸太郎\*2, 長尾光雄\*1, 神馬洋司\*3, 齋藤明徳\*1

# The Proposal of Measuring Method of Machined Surface Roughness Using Transparent Replica

Osamu YOKOTA\*1, Kotaro YATABE, Mitsuo NAGAO, Yoji JIMBA and Akinori SAITO

\*1 Department of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Nihon University 1 Nakakawahara, Tokusada, Tamura-machi, Koriyama-shi, Fukushima, 963-8642, Japan

In this study, the replica of the metal processing surface was produced using the transparent silicone. The new measuring method which examined the transmission image was proposed with a scattering of the spot light in the replica. The result was summarized in the following. It was able to be classified to four patterns of the transmission image from the replica reflection plane, that is to say, point pattern, circular pattern, elliptic pattern, diffraction pattern. It is possible that these patterns estimate the shape of the reflection plane, namely shape and processing method of the machined surface. The surface roughness by the diffraction was equal to the maximum height roughness by the tracer. In circular pattern and elliptic pattern, the empirical formula which showed the relationship between maximum height roughness and radius of gyration was obtained. In the point pattern, it was not possible to show surface roughness in the measuring range of this experiment.

Key Words: Surface Roughness, Arithmetic Mean Roughness, Shape Measurement, Laser Measurement, Electrical Discharge Machining, Chaos and Fractal, Image Processing

### 1. 緒 言

素材や部品は切削、研削、研磨などの加工により所望の寸法に仕上げられるが、それらの加工表面は、完成した機械の性能や外観に影響を及ぼすので、ますます高い加工精度が要求される(1). 現在の測定技術の多くは、凹凸の規模を粗さとして測定するものであり、主な測定方法(2)(3)としては、加工表面への触針による接触式粗さ測定法、光干渉や光切断を利用した非接触式粗さ測定法がある。触針による接触式粗さ測定法は、針が加工表面にかける圧力によって測定精度が変化し、比較的高い圧力をかけた場合には測定精度が高まる傾向にある. しかし、圧力によっては表面が傷つき、正確な粗さを測定できないおそれがあり、また複数回の計測を必要とするので、計測時間がかかるという欠点がある. 光切断を利用した粗さ測定法は、照射するスリット光の投影方法によってはマイクロメートル程度まで表面粗さを測定することが可能である. しかし、この測定方法は、スリット光の投影角度によって測定精度が変化するため、十分な信頼性のある測定値が得られない場合がある. さらに、光干渉を利用した粗さ測定法は、測定の対象となる表面粗さが1マイクロメートル以下でも計測できるが、反射率は比較的高い部材であることが望ましい.

一方,加工表面に直接照射された光線の反射光強度は表面粗さが大きくなるほど広がるので,その散乱光の広がりから表面粗さを評価する光散乱法<sup>(4)~(8)</sup>がある.これに関する報告は数多くある.粗さ測定にあたっては,加工表面を直接測定するのではなく,加工表面の凹凸を再現したレプリカを利用することがある.この方法はレプ

E-mail: yokota@mech.ce.nihon-u.ac.jp

<sup>\*</sup> 原稿受付 2011年11月2日

<sup>\*1</sup> 正員,日本大学工学部機械工学科(〒963-8642 福島県郡山市田村町徳定字中河原1番地)

<sup>\*2</sup> 日本大学大学院工学研究科機械工学専攻

<sup>\*3</sup> 日本大学工学部総合教育

リカ測定法<sup>(9),(10)</sup>と呼ばれ、構造物や大型部品の表面のレプリカを採取して、そのレプリカ表面に光を照射、反射させたときの光量を測定して粗さを表示する。しかし、光を透明レプリカに照射させ、その反映面からの透過光の状態を粗さ測定に用いた報告は見当たらない。従来のレプリカ測定法は、反射光を利用しているために反射像の歪みによる補正が必要になること、また複数の反射ミラーを用いるので計測部品が数点多くなることなどが挙げられる。一方、透明レプリカ法は、レプリカ反映面の背面は平坦であるので透過光の歪みは現れにくく、装置もコンパクトになる利点がある。

本研究では、透明レプリカによる粗さ測定方法<sup>(11)</sup>を提案する。本測定法は、透明シリコーンを用いて様々な凹凸のある加工表面のレプリカを作製し、レプリカの凹凸面を反映面とし、反映面と反対に位置する面を背面とする。背面は凸凹のない面である。レプリカの背面から反映面に向けてスポット光を透過させた透過像を直接デジタルカメラで撮影、あるいはスクリーン上に映し出させる。透過光の広がりを計測して、その広がりから加工表面の粗さを推定する方法である。すなわち、(1)回折法を利用した粗さ測定、(2)散乱法を利用した粗さ測定について報告する。また、加工面形状により透過像のパターンが異なるので、その透過像パターンから加工面形状が推定できることも示す。

### 2. 測定原理

### 2・1 回折光を利用した表面粗さの測定

透明体に入射した光は、その反映面で反射、屈折が起こり、さまざまな方向に散乱する。図1には、反映面の凹凸ピッチとその高さが一定の場合の光の屈折を模式的に示した。透明体の反映面に入射角  $\alpha$ で入射した光は、空気中に屈折角  $\beta$  で透過するとする。透過光は、透明体表面から距離 L のところにあるスクリーン上に回折スポットとして現れるので、スポット間の距離 2S を計測することができる。

材料表面に生じた凹凸のピッチをP, そのときの粗さをRとすると

$$\tan(\pi/2 - \alpha) = R \cdot P/2 \tag{1}$$

ここで、 $\lambda$ をレーザの波長とし、 $P = \lambda \cdot L/S$ であり、 $L \gg R$ より、式(2)が得られる.

$$\tan(\beta - \alpha) \approx S/L \tag{2}$$

また、透明体の屈折率をnとしたときのスネルの法則、 $\sin\beta = n\sin\alpha$ より

$$\beta = \sin^{-1}(n\sin\alpha) \tag{3}$$

式(2)と式(3)より、 $\alpha$  と  $\beta$  を求め、これらの結果を式(1)に代入することにより、表面粗さ R が求められる.

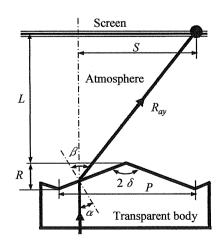


Fig.1 Diffraction of light

# 2・2 散乱光を利用した表面粗さの測定

反映面の凹凸ピッチがランダムで、その高低が異なるとき、反映面からの散乱光は広がるので、その面積や範囲は大きくなる。その広がりを、図 2 に示すような 2 次元平面上の閉曲線の周長 L で囲まれたパターンの面積 A を考え、面積と特徴的な長さ  $L_c$  との間には式(4)の関係<sup>(12)</sup>が生じる.

$$A \propto L_c^2$$
 (4)

一つのパターンが成長する場合や、同じ要素から成る多くのパターンが共存している場合、フラクタル次元に関連する回転半径法はそれらのパターンの平均的な広がり度合いを算出することができる。N 個の構成要素からなるパターンについて、i 番目の構成要素の位置を  $r_i(I=1,2,\cdots,N)$  とすると、このパターンでスケーリングされる特徴的な長さ、すなわち回転半径  $R_g$  は

$$R_g = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} (r_i - \bar{r})^2}$$
 (5)

ただし、 $\bar{r}$ はパターンの重心とし、式(6)に示される.

$$\overline{r} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} r_i \tag{6}$$

ここで、パターンの重心を原点とすると、 $\bar{r}=0$ となる.

回転半径  $R_{\alpha}$  に含まれるパターンの構成要素のフラクタル次元 D は

$$N \cong R_g^{D} \tag{7}$$

の関係が成立する。スクリーン上に写し出される輝点の総和は面積 A になるので,D=2 である。したがって,求める回転半径  $R_s$  は

$$R_{g} = \sqrt{A/\pi} \tag{8}$$

一方, 散乱分布が長径 a, 短径 b をもつ楕円形状の場合, 幾何平均としての回転半径 R は

$$R_g = \sqrt{a \cdot b} \tag{9}$$

スクリーン上に照射される透過光が円形でも、楕円形でも、回転半径として表される。表面粗さが大きくなるほど、透過像の濃淡は変わり、その散乱分布の裾野も広がるので、式(8)、あるいは式(9)の回転半径  $R_g$ と粗さ  $R_z$ 

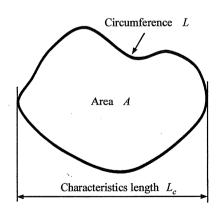


Fig.2 Characteristic length of patterns

との関係を式(10)のように示すことができる.

$$R_z = a \cdot R_g^2 + b \cdot R_g + c \tag{10}$$

ここで、定数a, b, およびcは、実験式より得られる.

### 3. 実験方法

### 3・1 レプリカ試験片の作製

ラップ仕上げ、放電加工、研削、形削りなどの加工法で製作された比較用表面粗さ標準片は、粗さが異なる数種類の凹凸面から作られている。それらの加工面が転写できるように、2 液混合の透明液状シリコーンゴム(透過率 97%、屈折率 n=1.4)を加工表面に流し込み、真空チャンバーで脱泡処理して固化させ、レプリカを作製する。透明シリコーンゴムのレプリカは、厚さ 20 mm の平板形状であり、平板の加工面を転写した面が反映面、反映面と反対に位置する面が背面となる。比較用表面粗さ標準片と作製したレプリカを図 3 に示す。また、研削加工面(最大高さ粗さ  $R_z=3.2\mu$ m)とそのレプリカの反映面の写真を図 4 示す。図 4(a)の加工面には、規則正しい縦方向の研削痕が見られる。(b)に示すレプリカ反映面の凹凸や形状は、(a)の研削面のそれらとは左右対称の位置にあり、複製を再現している。なお、使用したシリコーンゴムは、流動性に優れ、常圧・常温でも微細な隙間に容易に流れ込み、かつ内部歪が生じ難い部材でもあるので、金属の加工表面の凹凸を正確に再現できる。

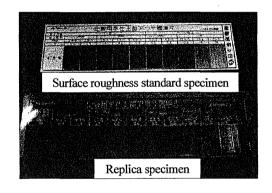
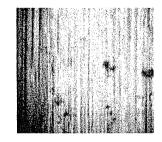
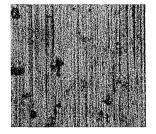


Fig.3 Surface roughness standard specimen for the comparison and the replica specimen





(a) Surface roughness standard specimen (b) Replica specimen

Fig.4 Surface roughness standard specimen for the comparison and the replica specimen

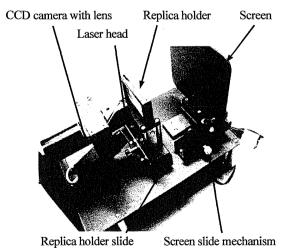


Fig.5 Roughness equipment of worked surface

### 3・2 実験方法および実験装置

本実験に用いた試作装置を図5に示す.装置は、加工表面の状態を反映する反映面を有するレプリカに対し、反映面とは反対の面にあたる背面から反映面に向けて垂直にHe-Ne レーザ光源(波長:635nm)を照射する光源、レプリカを透過した透過光を受光面で受光するスクリーン、受光面において透過光の広がり範囲を撮影するCCDカメラより構成されている.なお、本装置には外蓋があり、周囲からの外乱光が遮断できるので、いかなる環境下でも測定が可能である.反映面とスクリーン間距離Lは300mmとし、カメラの位置やシャッタースピード、倍率を固定して撮影した.ここで、レプリカ反映面は、その反映面とほぼ同じ表面粗さを示す5箇所を選定した.また、透過像は代表的な像を表示した.なお、表面粗さは、触針式表面粗さ測定器(ミツトヨ製サーフテスト)を用いて、加工表面の切削方向あるいは研削方向に対して直角方向に触針を移動させて測定した.

### 4. 実験結果

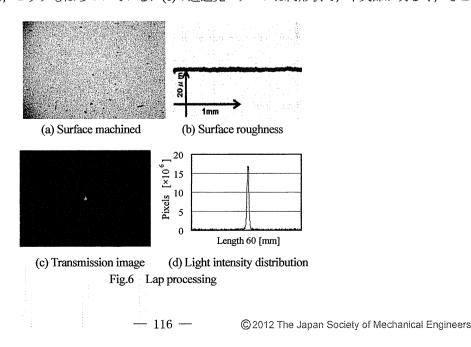
均一なスポット光を有するレーザ光は、レプリカ反映面で拡散あるいは一部が散乱する透過光を生成し、それらの光が重ね合わされてスクリーン上で結像する.この像を4つのパターンに分類した.

### 4・1 ポイントパターン

ラップ仕上げによる加工表面の写真, 粗さ曲線, その加工面のレプリカ反映面に光線を照射してスクリーンに映し出された透過像, および濃度物体画素数を図 6 に示す. 図 6(a)に示す加工面はほぼ平坦で, 粗さのある凸凹が見られない. (b)に示す加工面の表面粗さ曲線はほぼ一定である. (c)のレプリカよりスクリーンに映し出された透過像はその中心が明るく, その透過像と輝度は, レプリカのないポイント光のそれらとほとんど変わらないポイントパターンであった. これは, 加工面の表面粗さの値が小さいので, レプリカ反映面を透過した後のポイント光はほとんど散乱が起こらずに, スクリーンに出射されたと考えられる. (d)の濃度物体画素数の分布図の縦軸は濃度物体の画素数を示し, 横軸は図(c)の光点を含む水平方向の長さで全長 60mm とした. なお, その分布図における中央部の飽和は, デジタル画像の白黒の濃淡を 256 階調に起き換えたときの白部分の画素数を示し, 波形の底辺は黒色を示す. (d)の濃度物体画素数は, 中央部がパルス状に現われる収差のない点像の光量分布になっている.

### 4・2 円形パターン

図7には、放電加工による加工表面の写真、粗さ曲線、レプリカ反映面からの透過光パターン、濃度物体画素数分布を示す。放電加工は加工材料を溶融して、その部分を除去する加工方法であるので、(a)に示す加工面は、高低のある凹凸で、山部や谷部がなだらかで、輪郭が不規則である放電痕が見られる。(b)に示す粗さ曲線では、大小の山部と谷部が現われ、ピッチもばらついている。(c)の透過光パターンは円形状で、中央部が明るく、そこ



から離れるにしたがって暗くなる. 受光パターンは縦方向あるいは横方向の一方向に延びることはなく, (d)のような放射状に散乱されていて, ガウス分布に近い濃度物体画素数を示す. また, 加工表面が粗くなるにしたがって, 受光部の中央部の高さは低くなり, 裾野が広がる傾向がある. なお, レーザ光は干渉性が非常に強いために, 反映面からの透過光はランダムな干渉により粒状性を帯びた斑点模様のスペックルパターンが現れている.

#### 4・3 楕円形パターン

図8には、研削による測定結果を示す。(a)に示す加工表面は切削方向が一方向のスジ状の溝がランダムに切削されている。(b)に示す粗さ曲線は、大小の凹凸、角の立つ山部と谷部、不規則な輪郭が示されているので、(c)の透過像は水平方向に長く伸び、垂直方向にわずかに広がる楕円形パターンになっている。この原因としては、レプリカ反映面の凹凸は切削方向あるいは研削方向に対して垂直方向に転写されていて、その山部と谷部の高低が異なり、ピッチや輪郭も不規則であることにより、透過像は主に水平方向に広がる。山部と谷部の加工方向がわずかにずれるため、透過像が垂直方向にも広がる。また、加工面の表面粗さが粗くなるにつれて、透過像が広がることも確認できた。なお、透過光の濃度物体画素数(d)は、中央部の濃度分布が高く、水平方向になだらかに低くなっている。

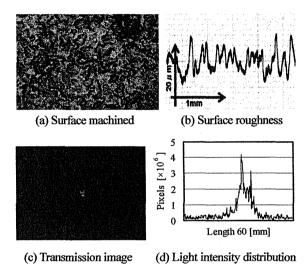
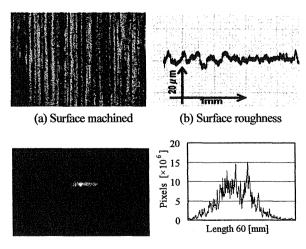


Fig.7 Electric discharge machining



(c) Transmission image (d) Light intensity distribution Fig.8 Grinding

#### 4・4 回折パターン

形削り加工は工具の直線切削運動と工作物の直線送り運動との組合せによる加工方法のため,図 9(a)に示す切削加工面,および(b)の粗さ曲線は,輪郭は規則正しく,山の高さとピッチもそろっている断面形状をもつ。(c)の透過光は,回折現象が現われていて,形削り方向に対して直角方向に伸びているのが分かる.特に両端の輝点が最も明るく,その間に小さな輝点が数箇所に一列に並んでいる.これは,規則正しく加工されている加工斜面で光の回折が起き,その透過光がスクリーン上に現れたためである.また,溝の間隔が狭いと輝点の間隔は広くなる.一方,溝間隔が長くなると,輝点は間隔が狭くなり,連続性を帯び,一つの光の固まりになる.(d)に示す濃度物体画素数は両端部で0次光を示し,中央部に進むにつれて光強度が弱くなっている.反映面からの光は光路差による回折と干渉によって,スクリーン上に0次,1次,2次, $\cdots$ ,n次の明暗の縞を作り,光源からの直接光は0次光で最も明るく,続いて1次光、2次光の順に暗くなる.なお,明るさの異なる点の規則正しい並びは,凹凸の長短周期に依存すると考える.

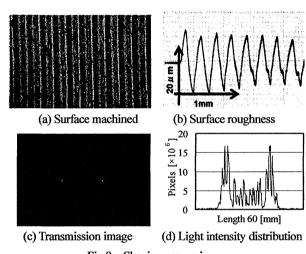


Fig.9 Shaping processing.

### 5. 考 察

### 5・1 回折光による加工面粗さの測定

図9に示したように、形削り加工面が縦方向に溝を有する場合、そのレプリカ反映面を透過する光は、反映面の溝の方向と直交する方向に回折光が生成される。このことは、反映面を透過した光の受光面において輝点の間隔の大小に基づいて、加工表面の粗さの判定ができることを意味する。

形削り加工のレプリカ反映面からの回折光は、式(1)~(3)を用いて計算された表面粗さの測定結果と触針式粗さ測定装置によって求めた最大高さ粗さとの関係を図 10 に示した。計測データは 5 回行い、それらの測定値は縦線の範囲で示した。回折光による表面粗さと最大高さ粗さには比例関係があり、高い精度で表面粗さが求められている。なお、凹凸のピッチ P は、試験片表面より求めた。また、形削り加工面は規則的な三角形状の凹凸をもつので、形削り面のレプリカ反映面における光の回折は、その山頂や谷間で現われるのでなく、その斜面で発生する。このため、反映面の斜面が粗さに関連する表示法は、算術平均粗さよりも最大高さ粗さが適していると考え、最大高さ粗さを採用した。なお、本実験で用いた加工面は三角形であるので、最大高さ粗さの約 1/4 が算術平均粗さである。

### 5・2 散乱光による加工面粗さの測定

反射光強度分布を二次元ガウス関数の直交する標準偏差を用いて表面粗さを表示する方法<sup>60</sup>がある.ここでは,直交2方向の評価ではなく、360°方向の粗さを測定できる方法について提案する.図11には、デジタル画像(a)とモノクロ画像(b)を示す.モノクロ画像は、デジタル画像をモノクロ化、シェーディングの補正、ノイズを除去した後に、5つの基準値、すなわち閾値を設けて、6階調の濃淡画像に分割した.これらの画像における濃度物体

画素数の分布は、散乱が小さいとパターンの中心部の周りに集中するが、散乱が大きくなるとその中心部が減少して裾広がりになる。したがって、透過光がどの範囲にどのように分布しているかは、モノクロ画像を階調化することにより明らかにできる。なお、デジタル画像にはスペックルパターンが現れているが、6階調のモノクロ画像に変換するとスペックルパターンは除去できる。

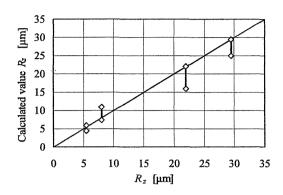


Fig. 10 Relationship between calculated value and  $R_z$ 

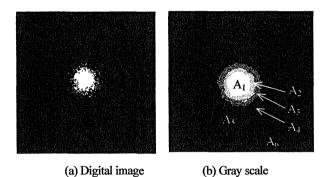


Fig.11 Digital image obtained from electric discharge machining

図 12 には、放電加工による円形パターンの回転半径  $R_g$  と最大高さ粗さ  $R_z$  との関係を示す。 階調  $A_1$  と  $A_2$  において, $R_z$ =10 $\mu$ m までは  $R_g$  は  $R_z$  とともに増加しているが, $R_z$ がさらに大きくなると  $R_g$  は逆に小さくなる. 階調  $A_3$  と  $A_4$  では, $R_a$ =18 $\mu$ m までは  $R_g$  は増加するが,その後  $R_z$  は増加しても  $R_g$  は一定である. 階調  $A_5$  において, $R_g$  は粗さが 5~30 $\mu$ m までは  $R_z$  の増加とともに増加しているので,階調  $A_5$  を用いると,広範囲の粗さを求めることができる. 回転半径 55~92 $\mu$ m の範囲において,回転半径と表面粗さとの実験式を求めると,次式が得られた.

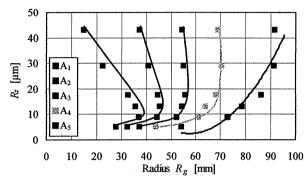
$$R_z = 0.0265 \cdot R_g^2 - 3.0483 \cdot R_g + 90 \tag{11}$$

式(11)を用いれば、円形パターンの回転半径 Rgから表面粗さ Rgが得られる.

次に、図 13 には、研削加工による楕円形パターンの回転半径  $R_g$  と最大高さ粗さ  $R_z$  との関係を示す。階調  $A_1$  ~ $A_5$  において、 $R_z$ =4~13 $\mu$ m の範囲では  $R_g$  は  $R_z$ の増加とともに緩やかに増加していて、その傾きは階調が大きくなるほど小さくなっている。これは、表面粗さが大きくなると、散乱光は広がるためである。回転半径  $R_g$  と粗さ  $R_z$  の関係は比例関係が望ましいので、ここでは、広範囲の粗さを求めることができる階調  $A_5$  を採用する。この結果、階調  $A_5$  による楕円形パターンの回転半径と表面粗さ  $R_z$  との実験式を求めると、回転半径 28~48 $\mu$ m の範囲では、式(12)が得られた。式(12)の実験式を用いれば、楕円形パターンの幾何平均の  $R_g$  から表面粗さが得られる。

$$R_z = 0.0113R_g^2 - 0.8233R_g + 6 (12)$$

以上のことから、本解析法は、レプリカ反映面の凹凸をスクリーン平面上での透過光の広がりや強弱を有する 円形パターンと楕円形パターンで示し、それらを回転半径に置き換えて回転半径と粗さとの実験式を求めた.これは、加工方向に影響を受けない360°方向の平均粗さを求める評価方法である.しかし、ポイントパターンでは、散乱光が現われないので、表面粗さが求められない.



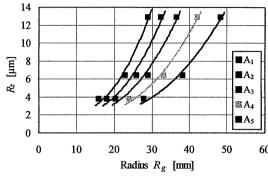


Fig. 12 Relationship between radius of revolution  $R_g$  and maximum height roughness  $R_z$  for electric discharge machining.

Fig.13 Relationship between radius of revolution  $R_g$  and maximum height roughness  $R_z$  for grinding

本測定法の粗さの範囲は、ミクロンから数百ミクロンの表面凹凸の評価が可能であり、測定面積をもつ表面形態に敏感であるので、新たな表面粗さパラメータの創出の可能性があり、従来の触針や光測定法を補完する第三の粗さ評価法と考える。測定対象物は金属のような硬い物質を含め、皮膚や食品等の柔軟物表面<sup>(13)</sup>への適用も可能であり、さらには装置は簡易に組み立てられ、かつ安価であり、レプリカもデスポーザルに利用できる簡便・安全な部品である。

### 6. 結 言

透明シリコーンを用いて金属加工表面のレプリカを作製し、スポット光をレプリカ反映面に透過させ、透過像を調べる新しい測定法を提案した。得られた結果を以下に要約する.

- (1) レプリカ反映面から透過像は、ポイント、円形、楕円形、回折の4つのパターンに分類できる.
- (2) これらのパターンは反映面の表面状態, すなわち加工面の表面形状や加工方法を推定することができる.
- (3) 回折パターンは、計算値より最大高さ粗さを表すことができる。円形パターンと楕円形パターンでは、回転半径と最大高さ粗さの関係を示す実験式が得られた。
- (4) ポイントパターンは、本実験の測定範囲では表面粗さを表すことができなかった.
- (5) 本測定法は、 $R_z=5\mu m\sim 40\mu m$  の表面凹凸の評価が可能であり、測定面積をもつ表面形態に敏感である.
- (6) 本装置は簡易に組み立てられ、かつ安価であり、レプリカもデスポーザルに利用できる簡便・安全な部品である。

#### 文 献

- (1) 齋藤明徳, 堤 正臣, 黄 錦鐘, "仕上げ面の断面曲線による工作機械の性能評価", 日本機械学会論文集 C 編, Vol.58, No.545(1992), pp.277-282.
- (2) ISO25178-601, "Geometrical Product Specifications(GPS)-Surface Texture: Areal-Part601: Norminal Characteristics of Contact(Stylus) Instrument".
- (3) Tanner, L.H., "The use of laser light in the study of metal surfaces", Optics and Laser Technology, Vol.8, No.3(1976), pp.113-116.
- (4) 栗田正則, 佐藤 誠, 中島一馬, "レーザによる表面粗さの迅速な測定法", 日本機械学会論文集 A 編, Vol.56, No.532(1990), pp.2588-2592.