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# Impact of Acoustic Airflow Nebulization on Intranasal Drug Deposition of a Human Platinated Nasal Cast: New Insights into the Mechanisms involved

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1 **ABSTRACT**

2 *Purpose:* The impact of 100 Hertz (Hz) acoustic frequency airflow on sinus drug deposition  
3 of aerosols was investigated using a human plastinated nasal cast. The influence of drug  
4 concentration and endonasal anatomical features on the sinus deposition enhanced by the 100  
5 Hz acoustic airflow was also examined.

6 *Methods:* Plastinated models were anatomically, geometrically and aerodynamically validated  
7 (endoscopy, CT scans, acoustic rhinometry and rhinomanometry). Using the gentamicin as a  
8 marker, 286 experiments of aerosol deposition were performed. Changes of airborne particles  
9 metrology produced under different nebulization conditions (100 Hz acoustic airflow and  
10 gentamicin concentration) were also examined.

11 *Results:* Aerodynamic and geometric investigations highlighted a global behaviour of  
12 plastinated models in perfect accordance with a nasal decongested healthy subject. The results  
13 of intrasinus drug deposition clearly demonstrated that the aerosols can penetrate into the  
14 maxillary sinuses. The 100 Hz acoustic airflow led to increase the deposition of drug into the  
15 maxillary sinuses by a factor 2 to 3 depending on the nebulization conditions. A differential  
16 intrasinus deposition of active substance depending on maxillary ostium anatomical features  
17 and drug concentration was emphasized.

18 *Conclusion:* The existence of a specific transport mechanism of penetration of nebulized  
19 particles delivered with acoustic airflow was proposed.

20 **Keywords:** acoustic airflow, aerosol therapy, drug deposition, plastination, maxillary sinus.

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## 26        **1. Introduction**

27        Rhinosinusitis is a significant and increasing health problem which results in a large financial  
28        burden on society (Fokkens *et al.*, 2007). Due to the inflammation of the nasal mucosa or  
29        impaired mucociliary clearance, the blockage of sinus drainage leads to the creation of a  
30        favourable environment for sinusitis. Indeed, under these conditions bacteria and viruses  
31        cannot be removed by secretions drainage and may proliferate. Targeting delivery of  
32        nebulized antibiotics into the maxillary sinuses, the sites of infection, could improve clinical  
33        outcomes in patients with chronic rhinosinusitis. Thus, nasal drug delivery by nebulization is  
34        widely used in sinus disorders, because of its safety and convenience and due to its  
35        advantages as a painless therapy. Topical delivery of antimicrobial drugs for treatment of  
36        rhinosinusitis also brings intuitive advantages over systemic therapy. It minimizes the risk of  
37        systemic side effects, the development of antibiotic resistance in non targeted areas and  
38        allows a high topical drug concentration deposition with a minimal systemic adsorption.  
39        However the nebulization conditions to facilitate penetration of aerosols into the sinus cavities  
40        are not well-established. The practice of aerosol therapy to treat rhinosinusitis has not been  
41        studied thoroughly, despite few works have shown clinical benefit (Vaughan *et al.*, 2002).  
42        The main issue is that it remains very difficult to demonstrate an effective penetration of  
43        aerosolized drugs into paranasal sinuses which are poorly ventilated hollow cavities due to  
44        anatomical features. The maxillary sinuses communicate with the nasal fossa via narrow  
45        ducts: the maxillary ostia (about 1-5 mm in diameter; 10-15 mm in length) (Tarhan *et al.*,  
46        2005). However, some *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies have demonstrated that aerosolized  
47        particles can be deposited into paranasal sinuses but always at low concentrations (Hyo *et al.*,  
48        1989; Saijo *et al.*, 2004; Hilton *et al.*, 2008; Durand *et al.*, 2001). These studies highlighted  
49        that the three main factors affecting the aerosol deposition into the maxillary sinuses are: the  
50        diameter/length of the maxillary ostium, the pressure/rate of the aerosol, and finally the  
51        airborne particle size. All things considered, a better understanding of ventilation and drug

52 delivery to the maxillary sinuses is required to more accurately define the relevance of nasal  
53 drug delivery for treatment of rhinosinusitis despite the fact it is widely used by the clinicians.  
54 To enhance the penetration of nebulized particles into badly-ventilated areas (*i.e.* sinuses in  
55 healthy subject) or non-ventilated areas (*i.e.* sinuses in patients with sinus diseases), a  
56 pressure gradient generated by a acoustic airflow can be added to a usual jet nebulizer  
57 (Guillerm *et al.*, 1959). Few literature citations consider the possible increase in value when  
58 an acoustic pressure wave is added to aerosol. Vecellio *et al.* recently demonstrated that,  
59 using a nasal sonic jet nebulizer loaded with  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$ -DTPA in seven healthy male non-  
60 smoking volunteers, aerosol deposition in the nasal cavity was  $73 \pm 10\%$  (% of aerosol  
61 deposited into the airways) (Vecellio *et al.*, 2011). They also highlighted that  $5 \pm 2\%$  of the  
62 total activity deposited into the nasal cavity was deposited in the maxillary sinuses. Moeller *et*  
63 *al.* showed in healthy volunteers a significant increased of  $^{81m}\text{Kr}$  gas ventilation of the  
64 paranasal sinuses using pulsating airflow (Moeller *et al.*, 2008). These authors also showed  
65 that  $6 \pm 2\%$  of the total nose deposition reached the sinuses with pulsating aerosol delivery  
66 although less than 1% of this dose penetrated into the sinuses using a nasal pump spray  
67 (Moeller *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, Maniscalco *et al.* demonstrated that a acoustic airflow  
68 increased the delivery of an aerosolised drug into the paranasal sinuses (Maniscalco *et al.*,  
69 2006). But the gain of intrasinus drug deposition brought by the use of acoustic airflow is  
70 neither well-established nor well-understood. Moreover, the underlying particle transport  
71 mechanism into the sinuses remains misunderstood.

72 Three main families of human nasal casts can be distinguished to study aerosol deposition:  
73 “pipe models” (Moeller *et al.*, 2008; Maniscalco *et al.*, 2006; Cakmak *et al.*, 2003), plastic  
74 replicas (Schreck *et al.*, 1993; Kelly *et al.*, 2000) and models obtained from cadavers (Hilton  
75 *et al.*, 2008). Unfortunately, the usual experimental casts present some drawbacks or specific  
76 restrictions: “pipe models” may not adequately mimic the anatomy of the human cavity,  
77 plastic replicas can suffer from a lack of thin anatomical details (such as the maxillary ostium

78 morphology), and models from cadavers raise issues of time stability and biosecurity. Thus, a  
79 concept of human plastinated nasal cast without any tissue retraction phenomenon was  
80 proposed. Plastination permits the preservation of anatomical specimens in a physical state  
81 approaching that of the living condition. This technique was introduced by Dr. Gunther von  
82 Hagens in late 1970s (von Hagens, 1979). The plastination consists in replacing water and  
83 lipids in biological tissue by curable polymers. The advantages of plastinated nasal specimens  
84 are numerous: anatomical and aerodynamic behaviour close to *in vivo*, huge time-stability,  
85 water-washability, accessibility of the maxillary sinuses, easy handling, dry odourless,  
86 biologically safe and transportable without constraints.

87 This study aims at investigating the deposition of aerosols in the maxillary sinuses of a  
88 plastinated human nasal cast presenting dissimilar anatomical features of ostia, with and  
89 without acoustic airflow. The main purpose of this work was to highlight the influence of the  
90 100 Hz acoustic frequency on the sinus drug deposition. To improve our understanding of the  
91 mechanisms involved, the gain of efficiency brought by the 100 Hz acoustic frequency was  
92 also evaluated depending on the gentamicin concentration initially introduced into the  
93 nebulizer and the maxillary ostium anatomical features. Thus, we successively performed  
94 anatomical and aerodynamic characterisations of the plastinated nasal cast, and studied the  
95 metrology of the aerosol (particle size and aerosol output rate) and the acoustic  
96 characterization of the 100 Hz acoustic frequency. Then we conducted 286 experiments of  
97 drug deposition into the maxillary sinuses using various nebulization conditions.

98

## 99 **2. Materials and methods**

### 100 *2.1 Elaboration of plastinated nasal model*

101 A specific plastination technique of cephalic extremities was developed in our laboratory over  
102 the last 10 years in order to obtain nasal casts without any tissue retraction and dedicated to  
103 functional studies (e.g. aerodynamic and aerosol deposition studies) (Durand *et al.*, 2001;

104 Croce *et al.*, 2006). In this paper, we focus on a plastinated specimen (Figure 1) obtained from  
105 a deceased man who left his body to the Saint-Etienne Anatomy Laboratory. The plastination  
106 process consists in different successive steps: anatomical sampling, section, fixation,  
107 dissection, dehydration and degreasing, polymer forced impregnation in a vacuum, and then,  
108 curing and polymerization. All these steps were recently described in details in a form that a  
109 lab scientist could follow the procedure and generate an identical cast (Durand *et al.*, 2011).  
110 Last, a specific lateral-paramedian section of the plastinated head was performed to open an  
111 exterior free access to the maxillary sinuses via the cheekbone (Figure 1). Maxillary volumes  
112 and aerodynamic behaviour of the model were nevertheless kept normal. This original  
113 opening allowed the collection and so the quantification of the active drug deposited into  
114 maxillary sinuses during aerosol studies. Technically, two removable plexiglass plates were  
115 used to hermetically close (“closed position” shown in Figure 2 step1), or not (“open  
116 position” shown in figure1B) the maxillary exterior opening during nebulization experiments  
117 and aerodynamic measures.

118 Legal and ethical principles were strictly respected during the elaboration of plastinated nasal  
119 model. Body donation to science authorizes in France a university to use a cadaver for  
120 teaching and research activities. The different steps of body donation to science are not  
121 governed by the French laws of bioethics, but by several legal and administrative texts.  
122 Before to use a cadaver obtained by donation, an authorization was obtained in which is  
123 clearly defines the usages for research and teaching. The legal’s rules of anonymity were also  
124 complied and the donors were informed on the use of their donation. The respect of the  
125 donors and their families remains a key point of the administration ability to receive these  
126 donations. For all these reasons, the French Research Ethics committees do not have a legal’s  
127 rules to approve the individual research on a cadaver. However the respect of good practices  
128 is frequently checked and valued.

129

## 2.2 Anatomical and aerodynamic characterization of the plastinated nasal cast

The objective of the characterization work was to evaluate the reliability of nasal cavity geometry and airflow resistance of the plastinated specimen compared to *in vivo* data. The methodologies used to anatomically, geometrically and aerodynamically characterize the plastinated nasal cast were recently described in details (Durand et al., 2011). A clinical anatomy study was firstly carried out using CT scans and endoscopy observations. These techniques were performed on the plastinated model in order to evaluate the preservation of mucosa in the cast (especially in the middle turbinate area) as well as to precisely define the geometrical features of the maxillary ostia. The geometry of nasal cavities was also characterized using acoustic rhinometry. This method is frequently used to determine *in vivo* the nasal cross-sectional areas through acoustics reflexion. Each nasal fossa of the plastinated specimen was separately examined leading to the characterization of the first six centimetres corresponding to the longitudinal area from the tip of the nostril to the middle meatus region. As a matter of fact, beyond the sinus ostium region, the acoustic rhinometry overestimates cross-sectional area and provide no quantitative data for sinus volume or ostium size (Tarhan *et al.*, 2005).

Aerodynamic assessments were also performed using rhinomanometry providing an objective quantification of nasal airway resistance. Indeed, rhinomanometry is a well-established and reliable technique that measures nasal patency in terms of nasal airflow and resistance to airflow. The measured pressure–flow relationship reflects the functional status of the nasal airway. We examined separately the resistance of each nasal cavity (in “closed position”) while the opposite nostril was occluded. Moreover, and for the first time, the serial resistance of both nasal cavity and ostium was also measured. For example, to measure the airflow resistance of ostium and nasal cavity on the right side, both nostrils were occluded, and right sinus cavity was kept in “open position” while the left sinus cavity in “closed position”. These



155 original and novel data provide some very important information on the impact of the ostium  
156 morphology on airflow resistance to enter the maxillary sinus cavity.

157

### 158 *2.3 Nebulization system*

159 The nebulization system, including an Atomisor NL11SN jet nebulizer associated with an  
160 AOLH<sup>®</sup> air source compressor (Diffusion Technique Française, DTF Medical, Saint-Etienne,  
161 France), can produced a “sonic aerosol” by adding a 100 Hz acoustic frequency during  
162 aerosol production. The acoustic frequency was continuously emitted since a vibrating  
163 capsule in the compressor (AS<sup>®</sup> sonic generator, 110 Volts, DTF Medical, Saint-Etienne,  
164 France) and conducted through a 5 mm in width and 1-m in length tube (8.5 mm inside  
165 diameter) to the nebulizer outlet. Nebulizations were performed according to two options  
166 operating mode of the compressor/sonic generator: the classic mode without addition of the  
167 100 Hz acoustic frequency, and the sonic mode with addition of the 100 Hz acoustic  
168 frequency. The nebulizer NL11SN was equiped with a nasal plug (C28 medium size,  
169 Diffusion Technique Française, DTF Medical, Saint-Etienne, France) purchased by the  
170 manufacturer and usually used in clinical practice. This nasal plug ensured the interface  
171 connection between nebulizer and the plastinated model’s nostrils. Depending on the  
172 nebulization experiment, the NL11SN was filled either with 4 mL of a gentamicin solution, or  
173 with 4 mL of NaF 2.5% solution. The nebulizer operates at a flow rate of 8 L.min<sup>-1</sup>.

174

### 175 *2.4 Acoustic signal of the acoustic airflow*

176 The acoustic pressure waves added to the aerosol during its production by the sonic nebulizer  
177 NL11SN was characterized for a better understanding of its influence on aerosolized particles  
178 deposition in the maxillary sinuses. The acoustic signal coming out of the NL11SN has been  
179 characterized by a usual signal processing methodology, using a digital sound level meter (AZ  
180 Instrument) which measures the maximum acoustic pressure level. The measurements have

181 been performed in free field (the distance from the walls was high enough to not influence the  
182 signal's behaviour and its frequency content) at exactly 1 cm of the output pipe. Besides the  
183 determination of the frequency components of the signal (fundamental amplitude and  
184 potential harmonics) a spectral analysis using the Fourier transform was used.

185

## 186 2.5 Aerosol metrology

187 The aim of the metrology study was to determine the impact of the 100 Hz acoustic frequency  
188 on the aerosol output and the particle size. All metrology experiments are summarized in  
189 Table 1. The output of gentamicin aerosol was measured simulating respiration with a  
190 sinusoidal pump and collecting aerosol on a filter. An absolute filter (Inhalation Filter Pad,  
191 Pari GmbH, Germany) was interposed between the nebulizer system and the respiratory pump  
192 (Compas2, Pari GmbH, Germany) which was regulated according to standard NF EN 13544-  
193 1 (*i.e.* Sinus pattern - Tidal Volume of 500 mL - 15 breath/min - Inspiration:Expiration = 1:1).  
194 The equipments and fluids were stabilized at ambient conditions before use. The nebulizer  
195 system was connected to its associated compressor. Gentamicin was introduced into the  
196 nebulizer. The respiratory pump and compressor were turned on. Nebulization time was  
197 limited to 10 minutes. The amount of gentamicin collected by the filter was determined by a  
198 residual gravimetric method based on weighing dry filters (Vecellio *et al.*, 2004). The output  
199 fraction was obtained by calculating the ratio between the amount of gentamicin collected on  
200 the filter and the amount of gentamicin initially introduced into the nebulizer.

201 Aerosol particle sizing was defined in terms of Mass Median Aerodynamic Diameter  
202 (MMAD). The MMAD was assessed using cascade impaction according to two  
203 complementary approaches using the NGI (Next Generation pharmaceutical Impactor, Copley  
204 Scientific, USA) and the ELPI (Electrical Low Pressure Impactor, Dekati Ltd, Finland). In  
205 cascade impactors, the aerosolized particles are impacted on different stages depending on  
206 their inertia related to their aerodynamic diameter. These devices allow simultaneous measure

207 of the aerodynamic size and of the mass of active drug according to the different size ranges.  
208 The metrology was conducted either with sodium fluoride (NaF; 2.5% wt; 4 mL) a chemical  
209 tracer recommended by European standard procedure (NF EN 13544-1), but also with  
210 gentamicin (40 and 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup>; 4 mL). Unlike the ELPI which was originally designed for  
211 industrial and environmental aerosols, the NGI was specifically designed for pharmaceutical  
212 aerosols and has been included in the British Pharmacopoeia as a test method for the  
213 measurement of aerodynamic particle size distribution (Marple et al., 2004). Thus the NGI  
214 was preferentially used for metrology experiments using gentamicin, because this cascade  
215 impactor was specifically designed to meet the requirements of the US and European  
216 pharmacopeia. The ELPI was preferentially used for metrology experiments using NaF, for its  
217 ability to characterize particle size at a nanometric range, which could be helpful if the  
218 acoustic airflow decreases the aerosol particle size.

219 The ELPI allows the collection of nebulized particles from 7 nm to 10 µm into 12 size  
220 fractions and operated with an air flow of 10 L.min<sup>-1</sup>. Prior to each measurement, the 13 ELPI  
221 impaction stages were cleaned. The corona charger was removed. The electrometer range was  
222 set at 400,000 fA, and the baseline was zeroed. The nebulizer was connected to a USP throat  
223 via a PTFE mouthpiece adaptor. The USP throat a 90° bend metal pipe with uniform cross  
224 section slight contractions at the inlet and a small diffuser at the outlet. Nebulizer aerosolized  
225 NaF during 10 minutes, while ELPI V4.0 software recorded current vs. time data for stages 1  
226 to 12. Afterwards, the USP throat, corona charger frame, and each stage were rinsed with 5  
227 mL of deionized water into appropriate volumetric flasks. Liquids were then assayed for  
228 sodium fluoride concentration by electrochemical method indicated by the NF EN 13544-1  
229 procedure (perfectION™ combined F<sup>-</sup> electrode SevenGo pro™, Mettler Toledo, France).  
230 The MMAD of nebulized particles was calculated according to the standard NF EN 13544-1  
231 using electrochemical measurements of sodium fluoride. The MMAD was interpolated from  
232 the particle size distribution curve by noting the particle size at which the line crosses the 50

233 % mark. The geometric standard deviation (GSD) should only be calculated if the particle  
234 size distribution curve was reasonably straight between 10 % and 90 %, showing that the  
235 aerosol was log-normally distributed. Where a straight line is a good fit to the data, the  
236 calculation of GSD was performed by noting the particle size X at which the line crosses the  
237 84.13 % mark, and the particle size Y at which the line crosses the 15.87 % mark. Then the  
238 Geometric Standard Deviation GSD was calculated from the equation  $X/Y^{0.5}$ .

239 The NGI allows the collection of nebulized particles from 0.98  $\mu\text{m}$ -14.1  $\mu\text{m}$  into 8 size  
240 fractions and operated with an air flow of 15  $\text{L}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$ . The amount of gentamicin impacted at  
241 each stage was determined by a residual gravimetric method based on weighing dry filters  
242 (Vecellio *et al.*, 2004). The nebulizer was connected to cascade impactor via the nasal plug in  
243 order to make the measurements in the same nebulization conditions that performed with the  
244 plastinated model. The NGI was cleaned before each experiment. Known weight filters  
245 (Gelman, Type A/E, VWR international, France) were placed into the plates of the impactor.  
246 The nebulizer equipped with its nasal plug was connected to NGI via the USP. Nasal plug  
247 was used in order to make the measurements in the same nebulization conditions that  
248 performed with the plastinated model. Solution of gentamicin (4 mL, 80 mg/mL or 4 mL, 40  
249 mg/mL) was introduced into the nebulizer and then, vacuum pump and compressor of  
250 nebulizer were turned on. Nebulization time was limited to 10 minutes. After, filters were  
251 collected and placed at ambient temperature for drying. The USP throat was rinsed with 5 mL  
252 of water. Liquid was then placed on a new known weight filter, itself placed with others for  
253 drying step. 24h later all filters were again weighted. The amount of gentamicin impacted on  
254 filters at each stage in correspondence with each cut-off diameters of the NGI was calculated  
255 according to the referred method (Vecellio *et al.*, 2004). Then, MMAD was determined since  
256 the cumulative curve mass vs. size according to European standard method NF EN 13544-1.

257

258 *2.6 Drug deposition into the maxillary sinuses*

259 This study assessed the deposition of an active substance on the walls of the maxillary sinuses  
260 in a plastinated nasal cast. The main objective was to examine the role of the 100 Hz acoustic  
261 frequency on the intrasinus deposition of nebulized drugs. In addition, we wanted to examine  
262 the impact of anatomical features (mainly ostium size) and of initial drug concentration  
263 introduced into the nebulizer on aerosol deposition. To reach these objectives the gentamicin,  
264 an aminoglycoside antibiotic, was used as a marker. We tested both concentrations of  
265 gentamicin (*i.e.* 40 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> and 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup>), to determine the impact of the active substance  
266 concentration on the aerosol deposition in sinuses. A constant volume of 4 mL of gentamicin  
267 solution was nebulized using the NL11SN jet nebulizer. Nebulizations lasted 10 minutes.  
268 Experiments were performed either with or without acoustic pressure waves at 100 Hz, and  
269 using alternatively a 40 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> or a 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> gentamicin solution.

270 After the nebulization, gentamicin was collected from the maxillary sinuses by flushing with  
271 physiological serum using a syringe containing 1 mL for the right sinus, and 1 mL for the left  
272 sinus (Figure 2). Each sinus was flushed 4 times using the same physiological serum. To  
273 avoid overestimation of the amount of gentamicin deposited into the maxillary sinuses, the  
274 region close to the maxillary ostium was never flushed. Finally, the gentamicin was quantified  
275 in the liquid collected from each maxillary sinus using a fluorescence polarization  
276 immunoassay (FPIA) with TDxFLx<sup>®</sup> analyzer (Abbott Diagnostics Division, USA). The  
277 detection level of the gentamicin dosage was 0.27 mg.L<sup>-1</sup>. Each sample was assayed 3 times  
278 for each series of measurements and results are expressed as the mean of these 3 values. After  
279 recovery, the plastinated nasal cast was washed copiously with tap water during 10 minutes to  
280 remove all traces of residual gentamicin. Control nebulizations with physiological saline were  
281 randomly performed to verify that the gentamicin content of the flushing liquid collected was  
282 lower than the detection level (and therefore to confirm that the plastinated nasal cast washing  
283 was efficient). Globally, we have analyzed 286 collected liquid for gentamicin concentration  
284 (Table 2).

285 The assay reliability is very important in this work as the main conclusions are based around  
286 the deposition of a drug that is quantified. Control nebulizations with physiological saline  
287 emphasize the absence in flushing fluid of any extracts from the cast. Thus all traces of  
288 residual gentamicin were removed after nebulization experiments. Besides, the impact of  
289 matrix effects on overall analytical performance and the potential usability of the data were  
290 determined using a spiked matrix sample. Hence, we used a representative environmental  
291 sample that has known concentration of gentamicin prior to being taken through the entire  
292 analytical process in order to evaluate bias. 1 mL of solution at 2.35 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> of gentamicin was  
293 introduced into the maxillary sinuses to simulate an intrasinus drug deposition after  
294 nebulization. The drug recovery efficiency of the methodology used was always in the 85-  
295 93% range (*i.e* we measure a gentamicin concentration between 2 and 2.15 mg.L<sup>-1</sup> in the  
296 flushing fluid). These results confirm a good accuracy of the methodology of drug deposition  
297 quantification into the maxillary sinuses.

298

### 299 *2.7 Statistical analysis*

300 Metrologic data obtained from cascade impactors (MMAD) and from output measurements  
301 were analyzed using non-parametric tests. Theses statistical test are adapted to small samples  
302 size and were performed with StatXact<sup>®</sup> software (Cytel, France). Significance was  
303 established with permutation test (p<0.05).

304 The influence of using sonic mode during nebulization and the influence of gentamicin  
305 concentration on the gentamicin deposition into maxillary sinuses, data obtained from  
306 experiments performed with the plastinated head model were analyzed with t-test (on  
307 XLSTAT<sup>®</sup> software, Addinsoft, USA). A p<0.05 was considered significantly.

308

## 309 **3. Results**

### 310 *3.1 Anatomical features of the plastinated human nasal cast*

311 The clinical anatomy study by nasofiberoscopy showed that the plastinated nasal specimen  
312 was very similar to living anatomical conditions observed daily by ENT physicians. All  
313 anatomical details were well-preserved. CT scans confirmed the high preservation of the nasal  
314 airway anatomy as well as that of the mucosa of the turbinates (Figure 3). Interestingly, the  
315 plastinated specimen exhibited very dissimilar maxillary ostium morphologies. Indeed, while  
316 the right maxillary sinus ostium appeared as anatomically usual, the left maxillary ostium was  
317 doubtless abnormally short and broad. In particular, the diameter of the left maxillary sinus  
318 ostium was three times higher than that of the right maxillary sinus ostium. However, the  
319 acoustic rhinometry reasonably resolved the airways geometry of the plastinated cast. We  
320 found a perfect symmetry between the left and right nasal cavities with a minimal cross-  
321 sectional area around  $0.5 \text{ cm}^2$  and a cross-sectional area higher than  $1.5 \text{ cm}^2$  from the middle  
322 meatus region (Figure 4) (Durand et al., 2011).

323

### 324 *3.2 Aerodynamic behaviour of the plastinated human nasal cast*

325 We also measured by rhinomanometry the resistance of each nasal cavity separately while the  
326 opposite nostril was occluded. From the pressure vs. flow curves, the unilateral airflow  
327 resistances found, for left and right nasal cavities, were perfectly similar at  $0.18 \text{ Pa.s.cm}^{-3}$  (*i.e.*  
328  $1.8 \text{ cmH}_2\text{O.s.L}^{-1}$ ). The bilateral airflow resistance was, logically, lower than unilateral  
329 resistances, around  $0.13 \text{ Pa.s.cm}^{-3}$ . Finally, very original data were obtained by examining the  
330 airflow serial resistance of both the maxillary ostium and the nasal cavity. Results emphasized  
331 very disparate airflow resistances:  $0.73 \text{ Pa.s.cm}^{-3}$  for the left nasal cavity in serial with the left  
332 maxillary ostium, and  $1.21 \text{ Pa.s.cm}^{-3}$  for the right nasal cavity in serial with the right  
333 maxillary ostium. Because the uninasal airflow resistances of the left and right nasal cavities  
334 are rigorously identical ( $0.18 \text{ Pa.s.cm}^{-3}$ ), this result suggests that morphology changes of the  
335 maxillary ostium could have a huge impact on sinus ventilation. Indeed, the low airflow  
336 resistance put in evidence for the left nasal cavity in serial with the left maxillary ostium is in

337 good agreement with the abnormally short and broad ostium of the left maxillary sinus as  
338 determined from CT scans (Figure 3) (Durand et al., 2011).

339

### 340 *3.3 Signal processing of the acoustic airflow*

341 The maximum acoustic pressure level generated at 100 Hz from the NL11SN was equal to  
342 107 dB at 1 cm of the output pipe. The distance of measurement has been empirically chosen  
343 but it allowed relative measurements. Theoretically the signal must be a 100 Hz sinusoidal  
344 signal, but our results highlight that it is not exactly sinusoidal, as shown in Figure 5A. Then,  
345 a spectral analysis using the Fourier transform was performed in order to have a better  
346 understanding of the frequency components of the signal (Figure 5B). The main component of  
347 the signal is 100 Hz as expected, but there are three other harmonic components at 200, 300  
348 and 400 Hz respectively. The fundamental amplitude is about ten times higher than the  
349 harmonics amplitudes. The harmonics are certainly due to the resonance of the pipe which  
350 behaves like a wind instrument.

351

### 352 *3.4 Aerosol metrology*

353 ELPI results using NaF as a marker emphasize a significant decrease of MMAD in presence  
354 of the 100 Hz acoustic airflow of about 35 % ( $3.45 \pm 0.25 \mu\text{m}$  vs  $5.40 \pm 0.15 \mu\text{m}$ ). NGI results  
355 using gentamicin as a marker indicate that MMAD significantly increased when the  
356 gentamicin concentration rises (Figure 6). In accordance with ELPI measurements, NGI  
357 results show also that adding the 100 Hz acoustic frequency during nebulization led to  
358 decrease the MMAD for a given gentamicin concentration (Figure 6).

359 The aerosol output measurements emphasize a huge impact of 100 Hz acoustic frequency. A  
360 significant decrease, about 60%, of the amount of gentamicin aerosolized in presence of 100  
361 Hz acoustic frequency was highlighted (Table 2). Without acoustic pressure waves 17-20 %



362 of the volume of gentamicin initially introduced was nebulized, although only 7-8 % was  
363 nebulized in presence of 100 Hz acoustic airflow.

364

### 365 *3.5 Drug deposition into the maxillary sinuses*

366 We sequentially studied the influence of three parameters: the 100 Hz acoustic airflow, the  
367 gentamicin concentration, and the maxillary ostium anatomical features. Results obtained  
368 clearly show that:

369 ➤ At 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup>, the drug deposition is higher in the left maxillary sinus cavity than in the  
370 right one, either in presence or in absence of acoustic airflow (Figure 7 – Table 3). As a result  
371 the endonasal anatomical features seem to play a major role on aerosol deposition.

372 ➤ Whatever the initial gentamicin concentration used, the drug deposition in left and right  
373 sinus cavities is higher in presence of 100 Hz acoustic frequency than without acoustic  
374 airflow. We emphasized that the 100 Hz acoustic airflow led to increase at least 2 fold the  
375 drug deposition in the maxillary sinuses for a given maxillary ostium anatomical feature  
376 (Figure 7 – Table 3).

377 ➤ Both in presence and in absence of acoustic airflow, an increased gentamicin concentration  
378 induced an increased drug deposition in the right as well as in the left maxillary sinuses  
379 (Figure 7 – Table 3).

380

## 381 **4. Discussion**

### 382 *4.1 Influence of 100 Hz acoustic airflow on intrasinus drug deposition*

383 Measurements made using the plastinated nasal cast doubtless highlight that the addition of a  
384 100 Hz acoustic airflow to the gentamicin aerosol leads to a 2 to 3 fold increase drug  
385 deposition into the maxillary sinuses depending on nebulization conditions (Figure 7).  
386 Moreover, it is interesting to examine the gain of drug deposition by the 100 Hz acoustic  
387 airflow comparing the results with and without a 100 Hz acoustic frequency, all other factors

388 being exactly the same (*i.e.* on the same sinus and gentamicin concentration). The gain in  
389 drug deposition brought about by the addition of a 100 Hz acoustic frequency to the aerosol  
390 production is identical, whatever the anatomic and aerodynamic endonasal features, and in  
391 particular, whatever the characteristics of the maxillary ostium (Figure 8). However, this drug  
392 deposition gain is even more important when the initial concentration of gentamicin decreases  
393 (deposition gain of about 100 % at 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> vs. a deposition gain of about 220 % at 40  
394 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup>). As a result, the gain of sinus drug deposition brought by the 100 Hz acoustic  
395 frequency strongly depends on the gentamicin concentration initially introduced into the  
396 nebulizer.

397 The metrology study indicated that the 100 Hz acoustic frequency significantly reduced the  
398 MMAD of the particles produced by the NL11SN and the aerosol output (Figure 6, Table 2).  
399 The decrease of MMAD varies from 10 % to 27 % depending on the initial gentamicin  
400 concentration. In the same time, the decrease of aerosol output is about 60 % whatever the  
401 initial gentamicin concentration. Doubtless, the amount of gentamicin inhaled, for a same  
402 nebulization time, is less important in presence of acoustic airflow since the MMAD and the  
403 aerosol output decrease. However, as the gentamicin concentration collected into maxillary  
404 sinus is greater when nebulization is performed with a 100 Hz acoustic frequency, we suggest  
405 that the amount of particles penetrating into the maxillary sinus is more important in presence  
406 of a 100 Hz acoustic frequency.

407 Overall, the mechanism underlying the augmentation of drug deposition in presence of 100  
408 Hz acoustic frequency was probably due to a balance between a decrease of particle size and  
409 aerosol output, and an increase of the number of the airborne particles reaching the maxillary  
410 sinuses.

411 But a key question remains: why does the number of airborne particles reaching the maxillary  
412 sinuses rise in presence of 100 Hz acoustic frequency? A first explanation could be the  
413 smaller particle size induced by the acoustic pressure waves, despite the simultaneous

414 decrease of the aerosol output. But in fact, for specific experimental conditions, the rise of  
415 gentamicin concentration can balance the influence of the 100 Hz acoustic frequency on  
416 particle size and on aerosol output. As an example, the MMAD of particles produced by the  
417 NL11SN is almost the same when the 40 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> gentamicin solution is nebulized without  
418 100 Hz acoustic frequency or when the 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> gentamicin solution is nebulized with an  
419 acoustic airflow (2.21 ± 0.14 μm and 2.54 ± 0.04 μm respectively). Therefore, if the transport  
420 mechanism for a same particle size was similar in presence or in absence of 100 Hz acoustic  
421 frequency, the amount of gentamicin deposited into the maxillary sinuses when nebulized at  
422 40 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> without a 100 Hz acoustic frequency should be expected to be 1.5-fold higher  
423 (because of the gentamicin concentration is twice while the aerosol output is about 3 times  
424 lower) than the amount deposited during sonic nebulization of 80 mg.mL<sup>-1</sup> of gentamicin.  
425 However, the drug deposition rose by a factor 6 to 8. Consequently, for the same particle size,  
426 the presence of acoustic frequency increases by approximately a factor 5 the number of  
427 particles deposited into the maxillary sinuses independently of the acoustic frequency effect  
428 on particle size and aerosol output.

429 Thus, our results strongly support the existence of a specific transport mechanism of  
430 particles through ostium in the presence of 100 Hz acoustic frequency. Recently, Maniscalco  
431 *et al.* showed that an oscillating airflow produced by phonation (nasal humming) caused a  
432 large increase in the gas exchange between the nose and the paranasal sinuses (Maniscalco *et*  
433 *al.*, 2006). Moreover, these authors also demonstrated that the gas ventilation between the  
434 nose and sinuses was even more important when the frequency of the acoustic airflow used  
435 was closed to the resonant frequency of the sinus cavity (Maniscalco *et al.*, 2006-2). In fact, a  
436 cavity of air with an opening will resonate at a natural frequency when the air is excited, as  
437 the well-known principle of the Helmholtz resonator (Kinsler *et al.*, 1962). Indeed, when air is  
438 forced into a cavity, the pressure inside increases. When the external force pushing the air into  
439 the cavity is removed, the higher-pressure air inside will flow out. However, this surge of air

440 flowing out will tend to over-compensate, due to the inertia of the air in the neck, and the  
441 cavity will be left at a pressure slightly lower than outside, causing air to be drawn back in.  
442 This process repeats with the magnitude of the pressure changes decreasing each time. All  
443 things considered, we support the conclusion that the sinus cavity could be compared in a first  
444 approximation to a Helmholtz resonator. In this sense, the maxillary sinus can be comparable  
445 to a resonator system that exhibits resonant behaviour in presence of 100 Hz acoustic  
446 frequency. This assumption is in perfect accordance with previous work which estimated the  
447 fundamental resonant frequencies of paranasal sinuses in the range 110-350 Hz using the  
448 Helmholtz resonator theory (Tarhan *et al.*, 2005).

449

#### 450 *4.2 Impact of maxillary ostium anatomical and aerodynamical characteristics on drug* 451 *deposition*

452 We demonstrated that the aerosols can penetrate into the maxillary sinuses even if we  
453 observed a differential deposition of active substance as a function of maxillary ostium  
454 anatomical features. As a matter of fact the amount of nebulized active substance collected  
455 into the sinus is higher in the left sinus of our plastinated nasal cast. This left sinus was  
456 characterized by a short and broad maxillary ostium inducing a weak airflow resistance to  
457 sinus ventilation. As a result the endonasal anatomic conditions (and the airflow resistance  
458 associated) have certainly a huge impact on drug deposition into maxillary sinuses.

459 Nevertheless, we also emphasized a significant drug deposition for long and quite narrow  
460 maxillary ostium (right nasal cavity of the plastinated nasal cast). The fact that a small size of  
461 the ostium allows an effective drug deposition is quite encouraging to extrapolate results to  
462 diseased subject. It is obvious that nasal airway obstruction in patients with rhinosinusitis as  
463 well as complete closure of the maxillary ostia prevent any drug deposition into the sinuses.  
464 However, we have the demonstration that aerosols can penetrate into the maxillary sinuses in  
465 the case of quite unfavorable anatomic and aerodynamic endonasal conditions. This result

466 seems to be a major value of proving that nebulized drug can reach the middle meatus, which  
467 is considered to be the most common area for sinusitis disorders. In this sense our results  
468 show that the use of 100 Hz acoustic frequency during nebulization may provide sufficient  
469 drug delivery for a topical aerosol therapy in sinonasal disorders. Nevertheless clinical trials  
470 are required to definitively conclude on the clinically efficiency because of the nasal cast  
471 differed from *in vivo* mainly due to the absence of mucus or breathing with the plastinated  
472 cast.

473

## 474 **5. Conclusion**

475 The plastinated nasal cast appeared useful for *in vitro* characterization of drug deposition into  
476 maxillary sinuses. We demonstrated that antibiotic aerosol can penetrate into the maxillary  
477 sinuses. We also emphasized a great efficiency of the 100 Hz acoustic airflow to enhance  
478 drug deposition into maxillary sinuses. A significant increase (2 to 3-fold) of intrasinus drug  
479 deposition was obtained in presence of 100 Hz acoustic frequency, despite the decrease of  
480 60% of the aerosol output induced by the acoustic pressure waves. Thus, the acoustic effect  
481 allows the improvement of targeting of nebulized antibiotics to the maxillary sinuses, and  
482 even with the lower concentration of antibiotics nebulized (a great advantage to limit side-  
483 effect and to prevent potential antiobiotic resistance). We also established that the addition of  
484 the 100 Hz acoustic frequency reduces the aerodynamic particle size (MMAD). Moreover, the  
485 gain of drug deposition observed in presence of acoustic airflow was independent of the  
486 anatomical and aerodynamical characteristics of the maxillary ostium. These results suggest  
487 that a specific transport mechanism of airborne particle occurs during an acoustic airflow  
488 nebulization. The mechanisms seem to induce a significant rise of the number of particles  
489 penetrating into the maxillary sinus independently of changes on particle size and aerosol  
490 output. The comparison of the sinus cavity to a Helmholtz resonator could, at least partially,  
491 explain the phenomenon observed. Finally, we demonstrated that the gain of drug deposition

492 observed with 100 Hz acoustic frequency depends on the gentamicin concentration initially  
493 introduced into the nebulizer. Therefore, this result indicates that specific drug and/or specific  
494 dosages should be selected to fully benefit from the deposition enhancement brought by the  
495 100 Hz acoustic airflow nebulizer.

496

#### 497 **Conflict of interest**

498 S. Le Guellec is an employee of Diffusion Technique Française (DTF Medical, Saint Etienne,  
499 France).

500

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# Impact of Acoustic Airflow Nebulization on Intranasal Drug Deposition of a Human Platinated Nasal Cast: New Insights into the Mechanisms involved

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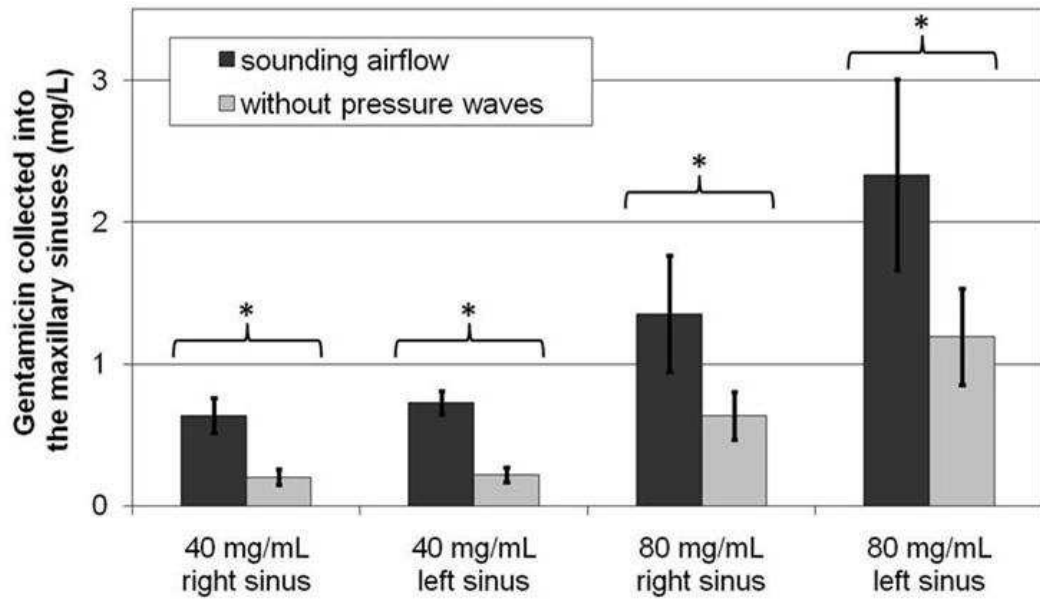
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Graphical abstract



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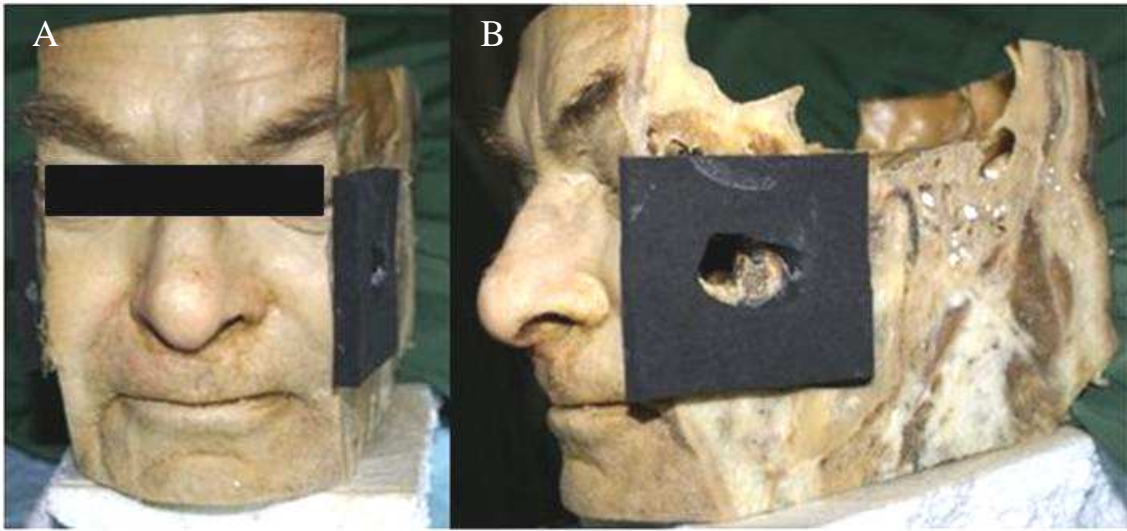
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Figure 1



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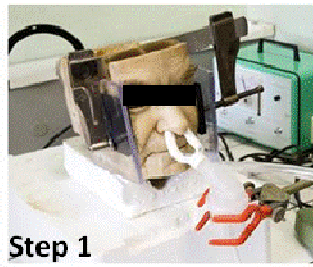
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4 Figure 1: Plastinated head model elaborated by a specific plastination procedure and used as a  
5 nasal cast to assess the deposition of drug into the maxillary sinuses. (A) represents the  
6 anterior view and (B) represents the lateral view showing the exterior free access to the left  
7 maxillary sinuses.

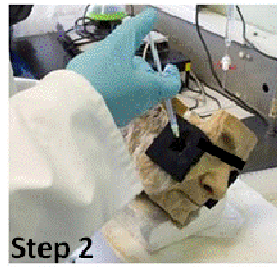
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Figure 2



**Step 1**  
Nebulization of gentamicin solution during 10 minutes



**Step 2**  
Collection of Gentamicin from the maxillary sinuses by flushing the cavity with physiological serum



Quantification of the gentamicin collected thanks to a fluorescence polarization immunoassay

**Step 3**

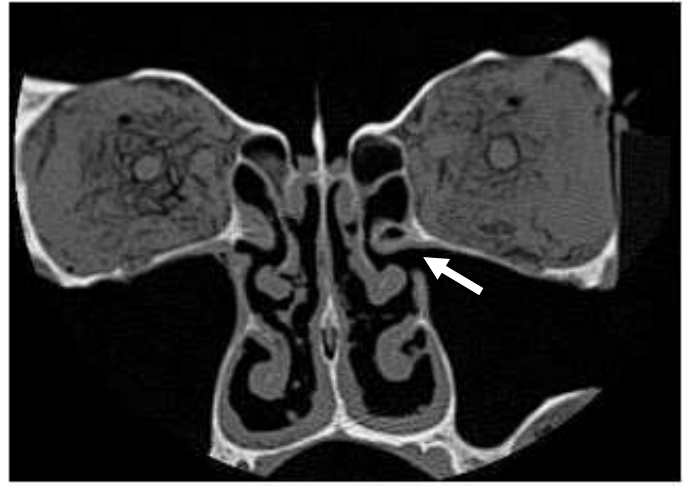
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Figure 2: Overall description of the drug deposition assessment procedure on the plastinated nasal cast.

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Figure 3



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Figure 3: CT scans performed on the plastinated specimen. Observation of the high

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preservation of the mucosa and of the different morphology of the maxillary ostia on both

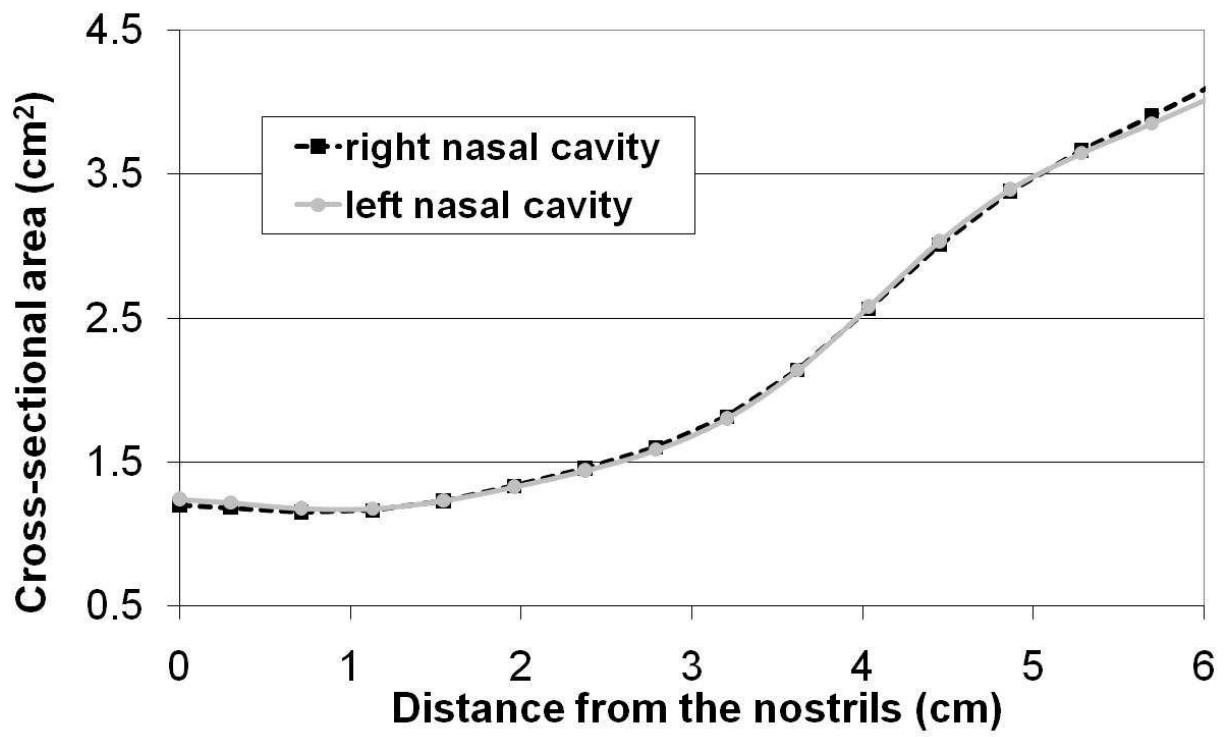
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side (white arrows indicate maxillary ostia).

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Figure 4



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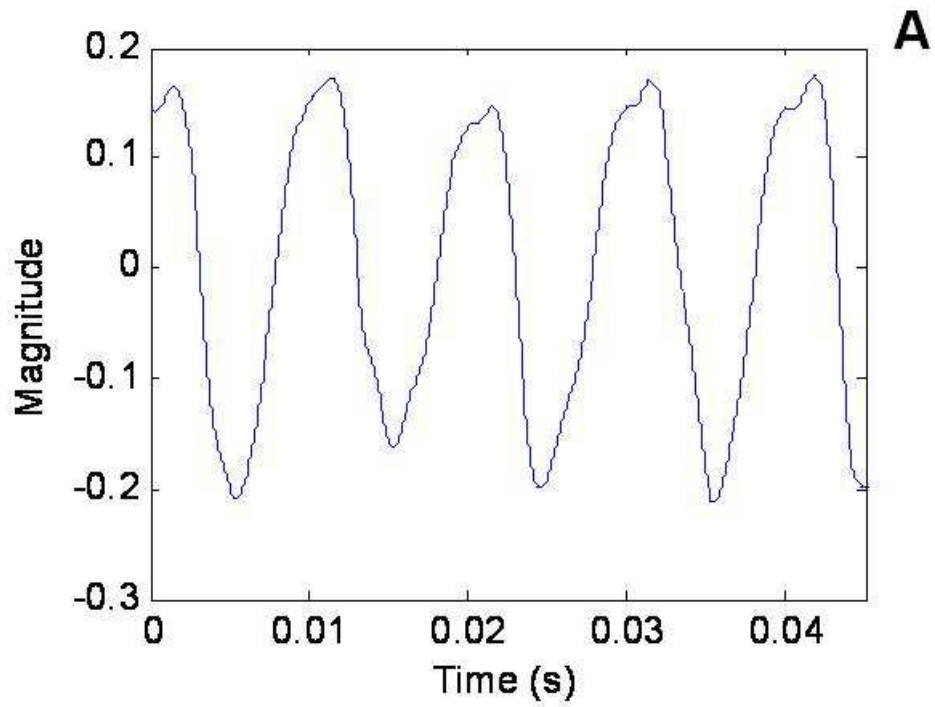
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Figure 4: Acoustic rhinometry results obtained on the plastinated nasal cast.

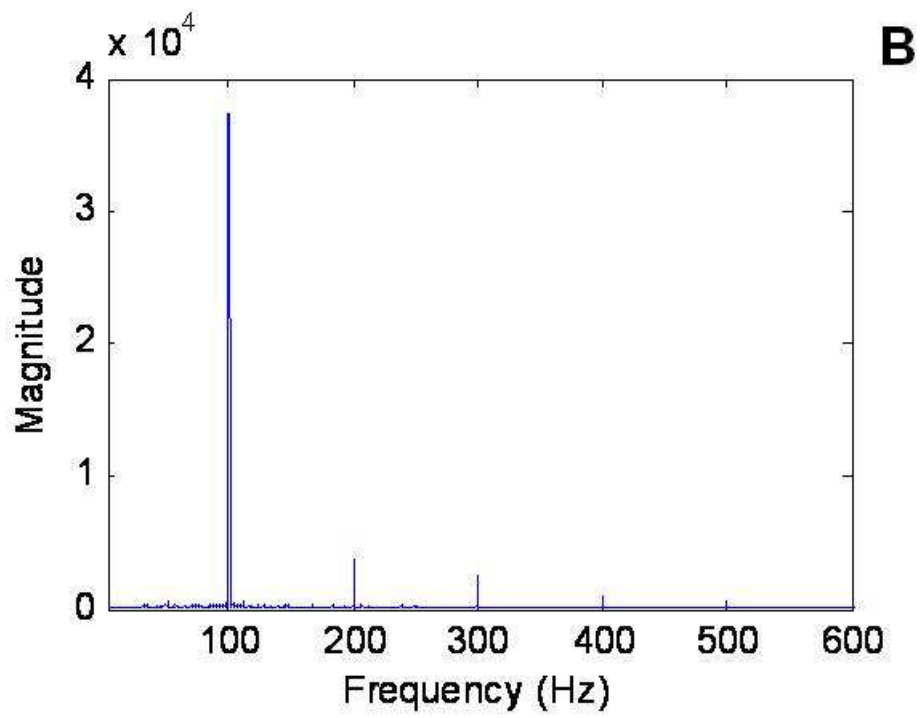
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Figure 5



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37 Figure 5: Signal processing of the 100 Hz sound added to the aerosol during its production by

38 the NL11SN nebulizer / AOLH<sup>®</sup> compressor / AS<sup>®</sup> sonic generator: shape of the acoustic

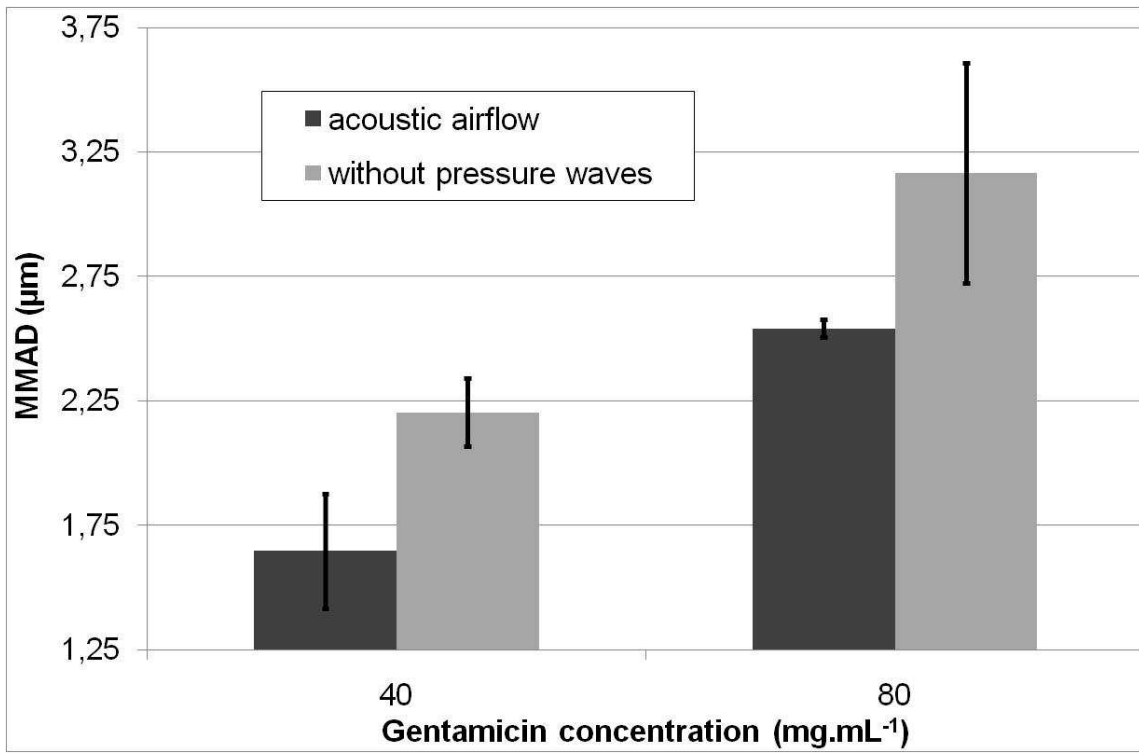
39 signal (A) and spectral analysis using the Fourier transform (B).

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Figure 6



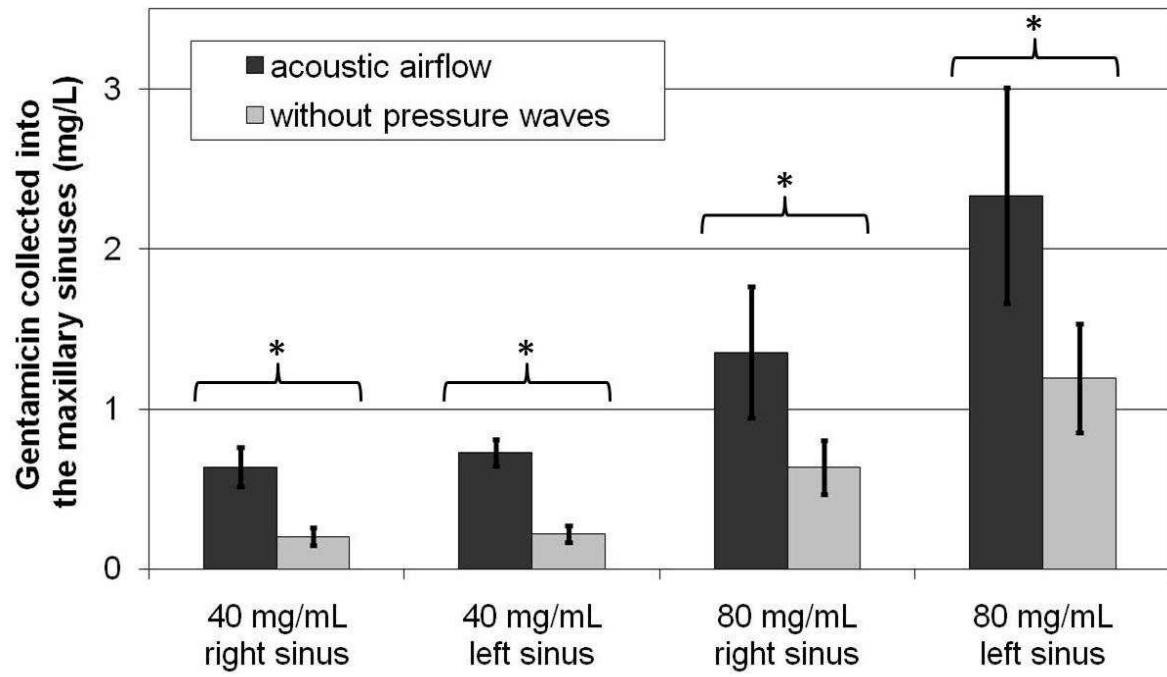
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Figure 6: Impact of nebulization conditions (100 Hz acoustic airflow and gentamicin concentration) on the metrology of airborne particle measured using the NGI impactor (Permutation test: MMAD without sound pressure waves *vs.* MMAD with acoustic airflow:  $p = 0.0007$ ; MMAD at  $40 \text{ mg.mL}^{-1}$  *vs.* MMAD at  $80 \text{ mg.mL}^{-1}$ :  $p = 0.005$ ).

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Figure 7



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55 Figure 7: Influence of a 100 Hz acoustic airflow on the amount of nebulized gentamicin

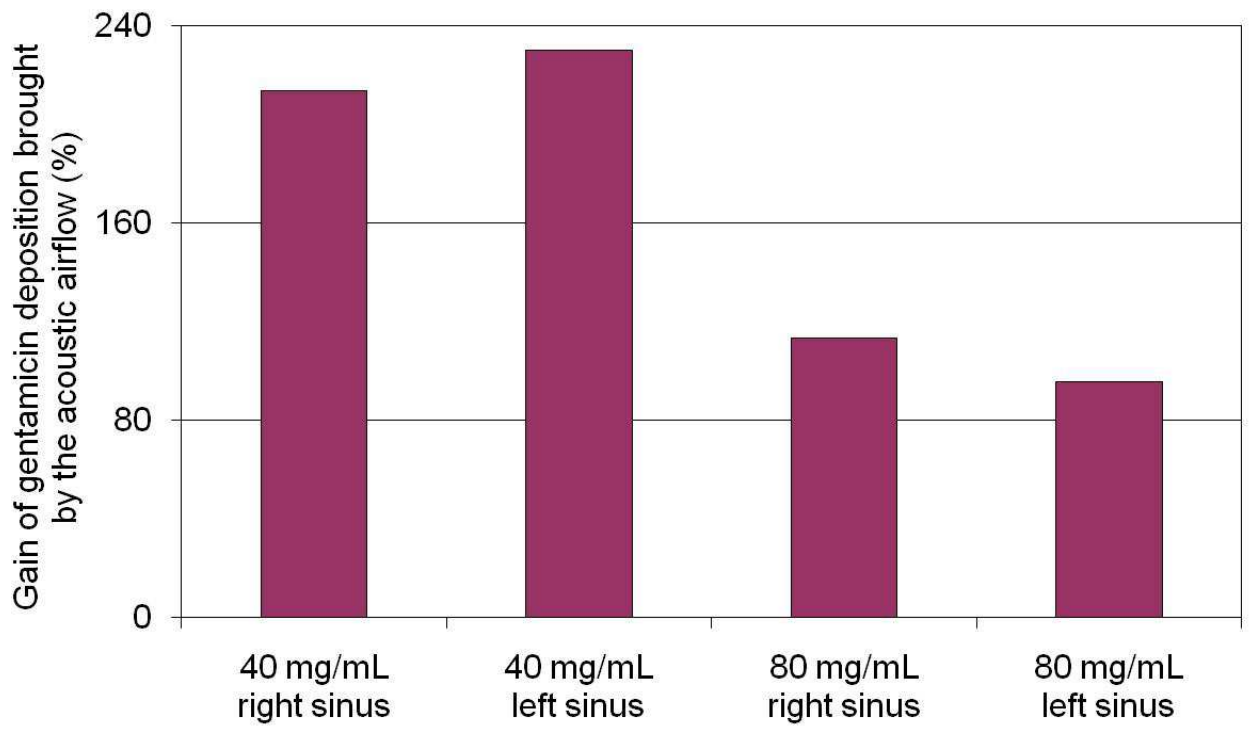
56 collected into the maxillary sinuses of the plastinated nasal cast (\* : comparisons are

57 statistically significant).

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Figure 8



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Figure 8: Influence of the endonasal anatomical features and the initial gentamicin concentration introduced into the nebulizer on the sinus deposition gain brought by the 100 Hz acoustic airflow (in comparison with experiments without sound pressure waves).

# Impact of Acoustic Airflow Nebulization on Intranasal Drug Deposition of a Human Plastinated Nasal Cast: New Insights into the Mechanisms involved

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Table 1

Nebulization conditions			Metrology experiments		
<i>Type of marker</i>	<i>Volume and concentration</i>	<i>With (w) or without (wo) acoustic airflow</i>	<i>ELPI</i>	<i>NGI</i>	<i>Output</i>
NaF	4 mL 2.5% wt	w	n=3		
NaF	4 mL 2.5% wt	wo	n=3		
Gentamicin	4 mL 40 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup>	w		n = 3	n=3
Gentamicin	4 mL 40 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup>	wo		n = 3	n=3
Gentamicin	4 mL 80 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup>	w		n = 3	n=3
Gentamicin	4 mL 80 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup>	wo		n = 3	n=3

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Table 1: Design of the metrology experiments conducted during the study.

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Table 2

<b>Nebulization conditions</b>	<b>Type of nebulization</b>	<b>Number of experiments (gentamicin dosage)</b>	<b>Aerosol output results</b>
Control nebulization with physiological saline solution (4 mL without gentamicin)	10 minutes nebulization	66	-
Gentamicin solution (4 mL at 40 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup> )	10 minutes nebulization "classic" operating mode	62	0.83 ± 0.05 mL
Gentamicin solution (4 mL at 40 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup> )	10 minutes nebulization "sonic" operating mode	54	0.32 ± 0.02 mL
Gentamicin solution (4 mL at 80 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup> )	10 minutes nebulization "classic" operating mode	68	0.68 ± 0.04 mL
Gentamicin solution (4 mL at 80 mg.mL <sup>-1</sup> )	10 minutes nebulization "sonic" operating mode	36	0.30 ± 0.02 mL

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11 Table 2: Design of the drug deposition experiments conducted on the plastinated nasal cast  
12 and results of the aerosol output measurements. “sonic” operating mode corresponds to  
13 nebulization with 100 Hz acoustic airflow. “classic” operating mode corresponds to  
14 nebulization without acoustic pressure waves.  
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Table 3

	40 mg/mL left sinus	40 mg/mL right sinus	80 mg/mL left sinus	80 mg/mL right sinus	40 mg/mL left sinus acoustic airflow	40 mg/mL right sinus acoustic airflow	80 mg/mL left sinus acoustic airflow
40 mg/mL - right sinus	<b>p = 0.679</b>						
80 mg/mL - left sinus	<b>*</b> <b>p &lt; 0.0001</b>						
80 mg/mL - right sinus		<b>*</b> <b>p &lt; 0.0001</b>	<b>*</b> <b>p = 0.005</b>				
40 mg/mL - left sinus acoustic airflow	<b>*</b> <b>p &lt; 0.0001</b>						
40 mg/mL - right sinus acoustic airflow		<b>*</b> <b>p &lt; 0.0001</b>			<b>p = 0.242</b>		
80 mg/mL - left sinus acoustic airflow			<b>*</b> <b>p = 0.0005</b>		<b>*</b> <b>p &lt; 0.0001</b>		
80 mg/mL - right sinus acoustic airflow				<b>*</b> <b>p = 0.002</b>		<b>*</b> <b>p = 0.001</b>	<b>*</b> <b>p = 0.019</b>

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Table 3: Statistical analysis of gentamicin aerosol deposition into the maxillary sinuses of the plastinated nasal cast. Light grey: impact of a 100 Hz acoustic airflow; grey: impact of the initial gentamicin concentration introduced into the nebulizer, dark grey: impact of endonasal anatomical features (disparate size and morphology of left and right ostia).