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# Experiments and modeling of smart silicone elastomer membranes reinforced with shaped NiTi textiles.

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#### ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, thin NiTi wires textiles have received increasing attention. The opportunity to create new kind of composites using NiTi textiles inserted in elastomer matrixes has emerged. *Villa et al.* [1] introduced thin NiTi wires into Lycra/PA textiles to obtain high rigidity and recovering strain textiles. Prototype of small diameter vascular prosthesis made of a fibre reinforcement silicone material were proposed by Zidi and Cheref [2]. Coupling NiTi shape memory alloy textiles and silicone elastomer would allow a wide variety of mechanical behavior and controlled anisotropy, to reproduce, for example, mechanical behavior of softer tissues like oesophageal tissues [3]. Different studies have already been performed, for example including a unique thin NiTi wire into silicone elastomer matrix [4]. Yet, single wires inserted in polymer matrix were subjected to slip during loadings. Using textile rather than single wires could limit the textile slip inside the polymer thanks to interaction between the wires. For example, *Heller et al.* [5] molded a NiTi textile tube into a polymer matrix and analyzed the mechanical behavior of this composite.

Two main research fields can be devised: using those composites as actuator or/and to mimic real biomaterials. A first goal in using those composites as actuators would be to increase its maximal strain. To increase the maximal strain, one might think about increasing length of NiTi wires. Therefore, the idea to use a preformed to snake-like shape NiTi textile has been introduced [6]. Yet,



Figure 1: Snake-like NiTi textile molded in silicone elastomer matrix

few studies deal about inclusion of a preformed NiTi textile into a silicone matrix. This study is a preliminary work to understand and model such a composite mechanical behavior.

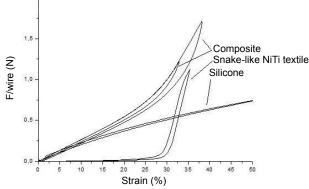
A NiTi textile is preformed in a specially designed device and heated at 450°C to print the parent shape to the textile. The

textile is then molded into a membrane-like silicone matrix in a specially designed mold. The silicone is reticulated at room temperature (*Figure 1*).

As the membrane is composed of NiTi textile and silicone elastomer matrix, both components have first been tested separately in tensile loading (*Figure 2*). These results have been used to better understand the behavior of composite samples. The influence of different parameters have been studied such as: the NiTi wires diameter, the snake-like shape winding diameter, temperature, *etc*.

Simulations using finite element software and superelastic model (ABAQUS software / Auricchio mechanical model) have been developed. The mechanical behavior in tensile loading of the snake-like thin NiTi wires textile, the silicone elastomer matrix and the combination of both NiTi textile and silicone matrix has been analyzed (*Figure 3*).

Further studies will be performed with different silicone matrixes, and with knitted NiTi textiles.



2.0

Figure 2: Tensile behavior of snake-like NiTi textile, silicone elastomer, and snake-like NiTi textile molded into silicone matrix

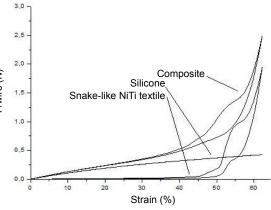


Figure 3: Results of simulation of the tensile behavior of snake-like NiTi textile, silicone elastomer, and snake-like NiTi textile molded into silicone matrix

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