



Acoustic parametrisation of gellan gum

Michiel Postema, Christine Gering, Nicole Anderton, Craig Stuart Carlson,
Minna Kellomäki

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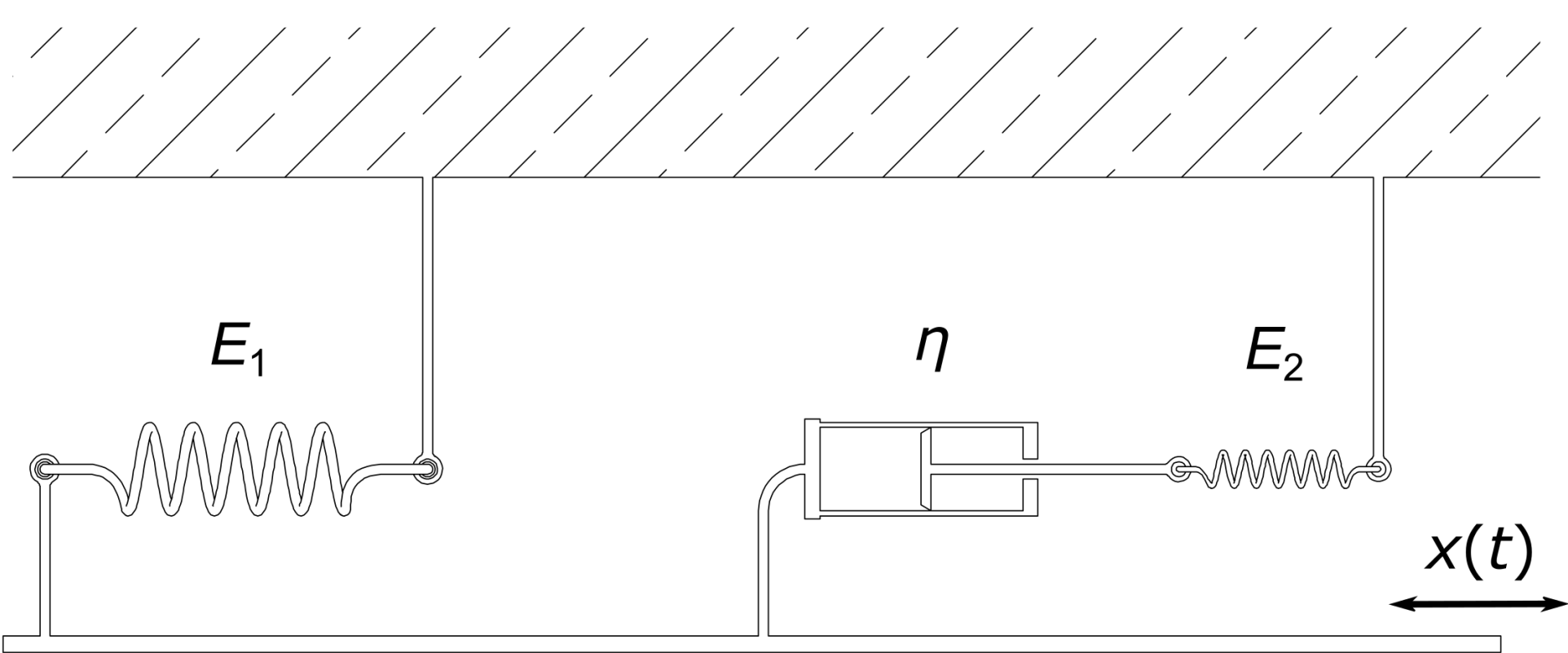
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Gellan gum is a hydrogel with several applications in ultrasonic imaging, novel drug delivery, and tissue regeneration. As hydrogels are dynamic entities, they are viscoelastic and therefore their acoustic properties change over time, which is of interest to monitor. To determine the speed of sound from brightness-mode images, however, rather large quantities of hydrogel are needed. In this study, we investigated torsion rheometry as a means to determine acoustic properties. Perceived speeds of sound were derived and computed from torsion rheometry measurements of gelating gellan gum mixed with spermidine trihydrochloride crosslinker. For comparison, brightness-mode ultrasonic images were recorded of the same material inside a phantom well. The rheometry data converged to a speed of sound within a standard deviation of the speed of sound measured from the brightness-mode images. We have shown that dynamic acoustic properties of gelating gellan gum can be simulated and experimentally determined using torsion rheometry.

Theory



Maxwell representation of a Zener model of an isotropic hydrogel, adapted for shear strain and subjected to a periodic displacement function $x(t)$.

Storage modulus

$$G'(t) = E_1 \left(1 - e^{-\frac{E_2}{\eta} t}\right)$$

Loss modulus

$$G''(t) = \eta \omega \left(1 - e^{-\frac{E_2}{\eta} t}\right)$$

where

- E_1 – elasticity of the storage component
- E_2 – elasticity of the loss component
- η – dynamic viscosity of the loss component
- ω – angular displacement frequency

Dynamic modulus

$$|G^*(t)| = \sqrt{G'(t)^2 + G''(t)^2}$$

Perceived speed of sound

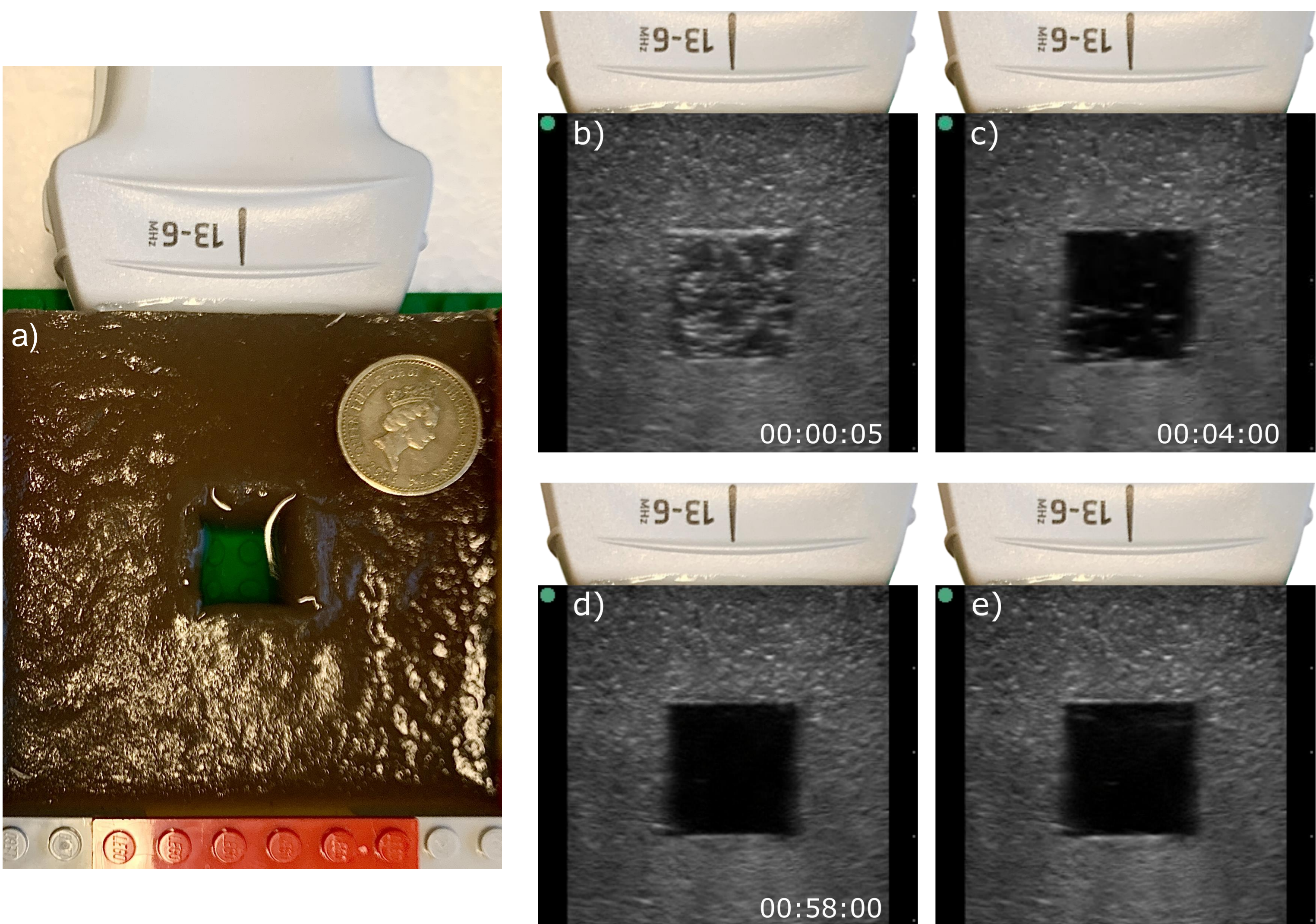
$$\varphi(t) = \sqrt{\frac{3 |G^*(t)|}{\rho}}$$

Speed of sound

$$c(t) = \sqrt{\frac{2 G(t) (1 + \nu)}{\rho}} \approx \sqrt{\frac{3 G(t)}{\rho}}$$

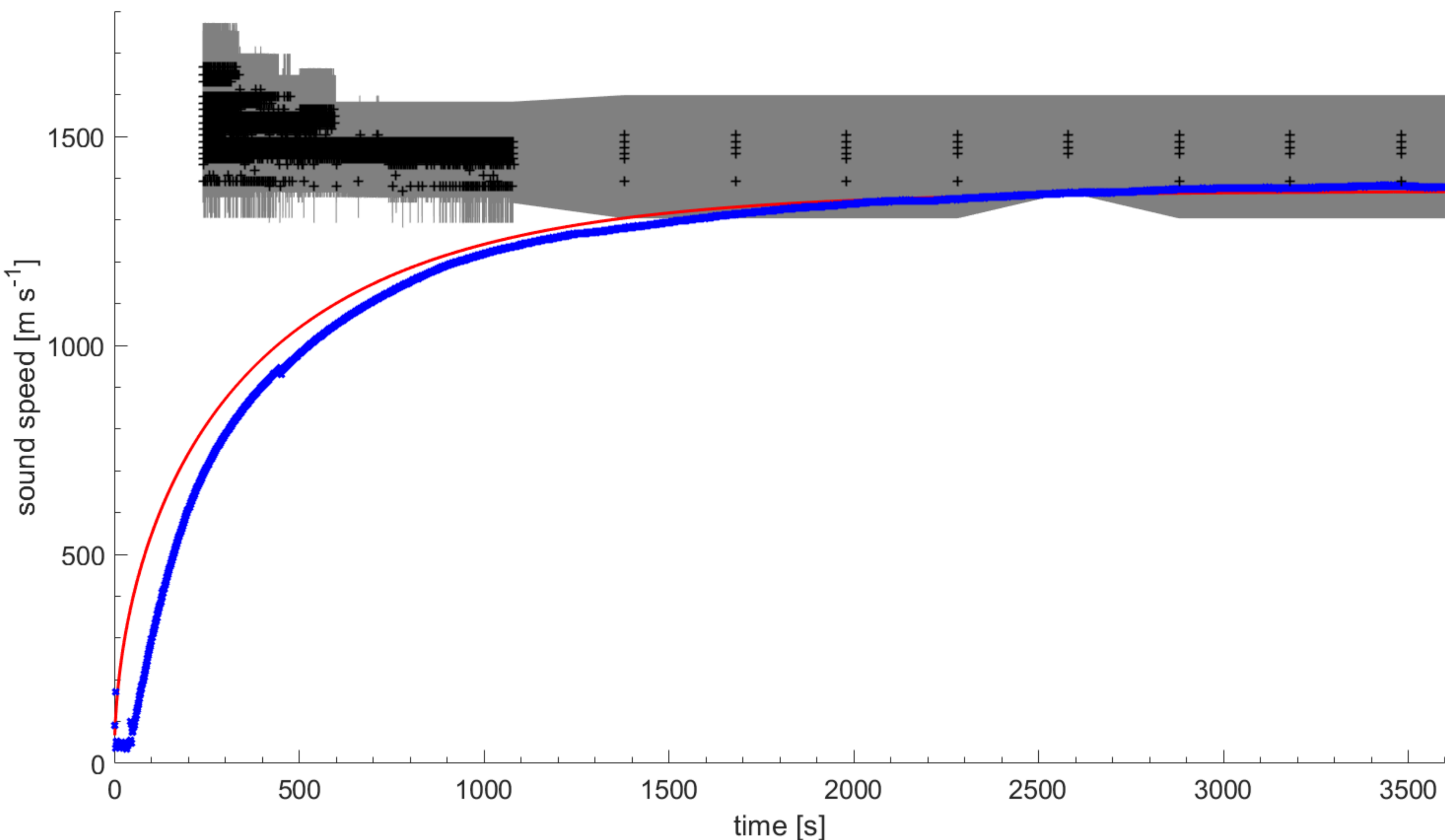
$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \varphi(t) = \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} c(t)$$

Results



Top view of the position of the ultrasound probe with respect to the phantom and the cuboid well filled with optically transparent hydrogel (a). A £1 coin has been added for scale.

Brightness-mode images of the cross-section of a cuboid well filled with gelating gellan gum at selected times (b–d) and a control with prepared water (e).



Perceived speed of sound of gellan gum as a function of gelation time, measured from brightness-mode ultrasonic images (black with grey error bars), perceived from torsion rheometry (blue), and simulated from rheometry input (red).

Conclusions

Feasibility of using rheometry input for modelling and estimating the speed of sound during the gelation of gellan gum demonstrated.

Perceived speed of sound of gellan gum after an hour was 7.5% less than the mean speed of sound measured from brightness-mode images, but within a standard deviation.

Author statement

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