

Transcardiopulmonary Thermodilution-Calibrated Arterial Waveform Analysis: A Primer for Anesthesiologists and Intensivists

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USE OF THE pulmonary artery catheter, the current clinical gold standard for cardiac output (CO) measurement,^{1–4} is declining rapidly particularly outside cardiothoracic surgery.^{5,6} One frequently quoted reason for this decline – that the device is too invasive – has coincided with the development of “less invasive” CO measurement techniques for monitoring of early goal-directed hemodynamic therapy (EGDT).^{3,7–9} One of these less invasive techniques is transpulmonary (or transcardiopulmonary) thermodilution-calibrated arterial waveform analysis (CO_{TPTD-AWA}).^{10–13} CO_{TPTD-AWA} devices contain 2 separate technologies: (1) transcardiopulmonary thermodilution (CO_{TPTD}) for calibration, which is linked to (2) mathematical analysis of the arterial pressure-time waveform for continuous CO estimation (CO_{AWA}) (Fig 1).

The numerous publications describing use of this technology indicate that it is gaining rapid acceptance as a physiologic monitor^{9,13–37} and as a reference standard in research.^{38–41} Its scientific applications have included monitoring of lung water and fluid therapy in acute lung injury^{36,42–62}; physiologic monitoring in adult^{18,19,63–67} and pediatric^{68–71} cardiac surgery and hepatic surgery^{72–75}; and monitoring of critically ill pediatric^{76–81} and adult patients with burns,^{82–84} sepsis,^{85–88} and intracranial pathology.^{89–93}

CO_{TPTD-AWA} and the derived additional hemodynamic parameters employ elusive processes to derive CO.^{8,10–13,94} To appreciate the possible uses, advantages, limitations, and potential inaccuracies of research incorporating this emerging technology, the practitioner requires an understanding of the principles underlying CO_{TPTD-AWA}.⁹⁵

The principles underlying CO_{TPTD} are similar to CO estimation using a thermodilution pulmonary artery catheter (CO_{PAC}) (Fig 2).^{10,11,96,97} In both techniques, a bolus of saline colder than body temperature is administered via a central venous catheter. A downstream thermistor-tipped catheter, located in the pulmonary artery with CO_{PAC} and in close proximity to the aorta with CO_{TPTD}, detects the consequent temperature change.

Performing CO_{TPTD} requires insertion of a central venous catheter and a thermistor-tipped arterial catheter; the latter is inserted close to or in the aorta. Iced saline boluses (usually 10–20 mL in adults) are injected via the central venous catheter. The consequent arterial temperature decrease is detected by the arterial thermistor. The “thermodilution” curve is used to estimate CO. Typically, 3 thermodilution CO determinations are averaged to provide a reference CO estimation. A separate but linked system mathematically uses this reference CO and mathematical analysis of the arterial pressure-time waveform to calculate CO continuously (Fig 1).

CO_{TPTD-AWA} frequently is called PiCCO (pulse index continuous cardiac output), which refers to specific commercially available technology (PULSION Medical Systems SE, Feldkirchen, Germany) that is available either as a stand-alone or a modular device; the latter is compatible with physiologic monitors from various manufacturers (Philips, Andover, MA; GE Healthcare, Chalfont St. Giles, United Kingdom; Drägerwerk AG, Lübeck, Germany; Shenzhen Mindray Bio-Medical Electronics, Shenzhen, China; Maquet, Rastatt, Germany). PiCCO technology has been available for more than a decade, and similar technology (VolumeView and EV1000; Edwards Lifesciences, Irvine, CA) has become available more recently for clinical use. For the sake of impartiality, the authors refer to the techniques as CO_{TPTD-AWA} wherever possible.

ARTERIAL WAVEFORM ANALYSIS: COMPUTING FLOW FROM PRESSURE

More than 100 years ago, physiologists Frank and Erlanger independently stated that pulse pressure was related to stroke volume.⁹⁸ Frank developed the Windkessel model of the circulation with the explicit purpose of deriving blood flow from arterial pressure; this method is still the basis of arterial CO_{AWA}.⁹⁴ However, the long history attests to the difficulties encountered while translating the physiologist's principles into the recently developed, accurate measurement of CO.^{99,100}

The original pulse contour method attempted to derive stroke volume by dividing the area under the systolic aortic pressure-time relationship by (a pressure- and heart rate-corrected value of) aortic impedance.^{21,100–105} This method contained a major flaw in that aortic compliance was assumed to be a constant and independent of aortic pressure.^{94,106} Wesseling's group identified this flaw. They studied 45 excised

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1053-0770/2601-0001\$36.00/0

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/j.jvca.2015.03.013>

Key words: cardiac output, transcardiopulmonary thermodilution, hemodynamic monitoring, arterial waveform analysis, Modelflow technique, PiCCO, Edwards EV-1000

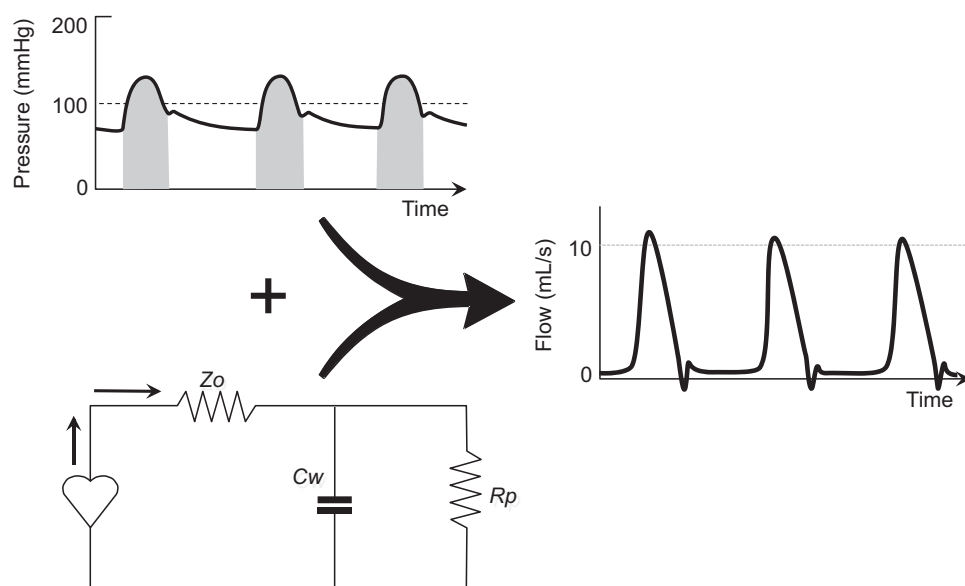


Fig 1. The principles underlying the Modelflow method. The arterial pressure versus time waveform is transformed into a flow versus time relationship with input from the Windkessel model of the circulation.

cadaver thoracic aortas and derived a mathematical formula that accurately described the relationship among aortic pressure, aortic diameter, and aortic compliance.^{94,107–109} This formula permitted the development of the Modelflow technique,⁹⁴ the technology underpinning the PiCCO and EV1000 devices and certain other present-day CO_{AWA} techniques.¹⁰⁵ The Modelflow technique is more accurate than the pulse

contour CO_{AWA} method, the accuracy (mean $\pm$ SD) of the 2 techniques being $2 \pm 8\%$ (Modelflow) and $6 \pm 12\%$ (pulse contour CO_{AWA}).

Understanding the complexity of the Modelflow CO_{AWA} method allows appreciation of the associated potential pitfalls and solutions. The Modelflow CO_{AWA} technique comprises 2 steps (Fig 1). The first step involves transforming the arterial

A. Pulmonary artery thermodilution. B. Transcardiopulmonary thermodilution.

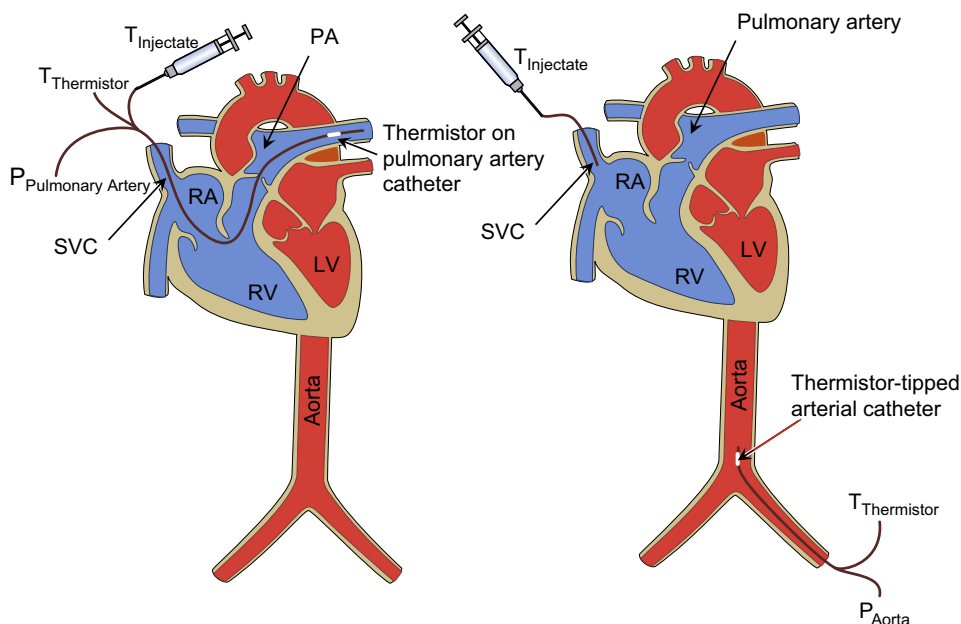


Fig 2. Comparison of pulmonary artery (A) and transcardiopulmonary (B) thermodilution techniques. $T_{\text{INJECTATE}}$ and $T_{\text{THERMISTOR}}$ represent the measurement of injectate temperature at the sites of injection and at the pulmonary and aortic thermistors, respectively; $P_{\text{PULMONARY ARTERY}}$ and P_{AORTA} represent pulmonary artery and aortic pressures, respectively. LV, left ventricle; RA, right atrium; RV, right ventricle; SVC, superior vena cava.

pressure-time waveform into a flow-time waveform; the second step involves integration of the area under the derived flow-time waveform to derive stroke volume.^{21,100,110–112}

The arterial pressure-time information is transformed into a flow-time relationship using the Windkessel equation (Equation 1).⁹⁴ This step essentially represents the quotient of instantaneous arterial pressure and aortic input impedance.^{94,111,113}

$$i_t = \frac{P_t}{R_{Total}} + C_w \frac{dP_t}{dt} \quad (1)$$

where i_t is aortic flow, P_t is systolic aortic blood pressure, dP_t/dt is the rate of change in pressure, R_{Total} is total peripheral resistance, and C_w is arterial compliance.

The Windkessel equation incorporates multiple parameters representing opposition to flow, including the following:^{105,110,111,114,115}

1. Aortic characteristic impedance (Z_0), defined as the opposition to pulsatile left ventricular ejection presented by the aorta, a relatively small force comprising 5% to 7% of systemic vascular resistance (SVR);
2. Arterial compliance (C_w), the elastic forces opposing left ventricular ejection;
3. Systemic peripheral resistance (R_p), the Poiseuille resistance of all vascular beds at constant laminar flows; and
4. Total peripheral resistance (R_{TOTAL}), the sum of aortic characteristic impedance (Z_0) and systemic peripheral resistance (R_p).

It is straightforward to acquire the pressure-related parameters from the aortic pressure trace; however, each impedance parameter needs to be determined to compute flow from pressure successfully using Equation 1. Despite aortic characteristic impedance being an elusive parameter, Langewouters et al¹⁰⁷ successfully described its derivation from a complex relationship among blood density, aortic compliance, and aortic area (Equation 2).

$$Z_0 = \sqrt{\frac{\rho}{AC_w l}} \quad (2)$$

where A is aortic area, $C_w l$ is aortic compliance per unit length of the aorta, and ρ is blood density.

The mathematical relationship established by Wesseling's group reveals aortic compliance to be a nonlinear, pressure-dependent parameter that decreases rapidly with increases in pressure.^{94,107,108} Age and gender significantly influence aortic compliance; weight and height affect this parameter only slightly. A decrease in aortic compliance related to atherosclerosis possibly would compromise the accuracy of the Windkessel mathematical relationship to transform pressure to flow; such an expected decrease in compliance is negated by the accompanying, consistently larger aortic diameter accompanying atherosclerosis.¹⁰⁷

Newer, more accurate PiCCO₂ software^{105,115} uses a different method of calculating aortic compliance. The principle is that the time constant (τ) of the exponential pressure decline after the dicrotic notch can be computed from the product of aortic compliance and SVR.¹¹⁶ The time constant is computed easily from the rate of decline (dP_t/dt) in diastolic pressure,

whereas SVR is calculated using the quotient of mean arterial pressure and the reference method of determining CO (see later). This refinement of calculating compliance continuously apparently improves CO_{AWA} performance and reduces the need for recalibration, particularly when hemodynamics are rapidly changing.¹¹⁷ Despite this refinement, the method of Langewouters et al of deriving aortic diameter that incorporates a 30% SD (see later) still is required.

The Windkessel equation (Equation 1) requires SVR data to convert pressure-time to flow data. Modelflow CO_{AWA} techniques calculate SVR, assume it, or both. Calibrated Modelflow CO_{TPTD-AWA} techniques initially calculate SVR from the quotient of mean arterial pressure and mean flow (CO), the latter obtained from the initial CO_{TPTD}. However, uncalibrated Modelflow CO_{AWA} techniques assume an initial "reasonable value" of SVR based on patient demographics.⁹⁴

After initial calculation or assumption of SVR, calibrated and uncalibrated Modelflow CO_{AWA} techniques assume that SVR changes relatively slowly, with a time constant approximating 10 seconds.^{94,101} This assumption sanctions a technique whereby SVR is updated continuously. This technique uses the SVR calculated initially in the Windkessel CO_{AWA} analysis of the first beat. During the Windkessel CO_{AWA} analysis of the second beat, the pressure-flow relationship (SVR) data of the first beat are used, and so forth.¹⁰¹ This iterative method supposedly represents a "self-correcting" or "self-adapting" system in which SVR converges to the correct value within a few heartbeats even without initial accurate reference measurements of flow and pressure.^{101,118}

SVR can change very rapidly in current anesthesia, surgery, and intensive care practice. Assuming that SVR is constant and that the value from the previous beat can be used safely in the next beat has the potential to become (progressively more) inaccurate.^{119–122} The solution is simply to recalibrate using CO_{TPTD}. This recalibration permits calculation of an updated, accurate SVR. With uncalibrated Modelflow techniques, the initial "reasonable value" is subject to major assumptions, particularly in ill patients.

For computing CO continuously, aortic pressure typically is sampled at 100 Hz, and a flow-time relationship is created using instantaneous aortic characteristic impedance and compliance values (Figure 1).^{101,105} After derivation of the flow-time relationship, the second essential step in CO_{AWA} is to calculate stroke volume using mathematical integration of the area under the systolic part of the flow-time relationship. CO is then calculated as the product of stroke volume and heart rate (Equation 3).^{21,100,110}

$$\text{Cardiac output} = [\text{calibration factor}] \times [\text{heart rate}]$$

$$\times \int \left(\frac{P(t)}{SVR + C_w} + \frac{dP}{dt} \right) dt \quad (3)$$

The details of CO_{AWA} computation differ between the VolumeView/EV1000 and the newer PiCCO₂ devices. The VolumeView/EV1000 device relies on both of the conventional processes described earlier but also incorporates "advanced" wave-shape parameters to calculate CO_{AWA}.^{123,124} These advanced parameters analyze waveform skewness and kurtosis.¹³

Skewness is a mathematical measure of arterial waveform asymmetry used to indicate changes in vascular resistance.¹²⁴ Kurtosis mathematically describes the shape (how peaked or flat) of a sample distribution compared with a normal distribution.¹²⁴ Arterial waveforms with high kurtosis peak rapidly and have heavy tails and are typical of higher vascular resistance states. In uncalibrated CO_{AWA} , it is used to compensate for the differences in compliance between arterial measurement sites. The exact relationship between the conventional and “advanced” parameters is corporate, guarded information.^{13,124}

VolumeView/EV1000 and PiCCO₂ technologies have similar accuracy; 1 study suggested that VolumeView/EV1000 has slightly (20%) greater precision than PiCCO₂.¹³ This greater precision is attributed to the incorporation of advanced waveform analysis, which compensates for difficulties in automatic identification of the dicotic notch.¹³ Further detail regarding “advanced” techniques is beyond the scope of this article; the interested reader is referred to Benjelid et al.¹² and Pratt et al.¹²⁴

DETERMINING A CALIBRATION FACTOR USING INTERMITTENT CO_{TPTD}

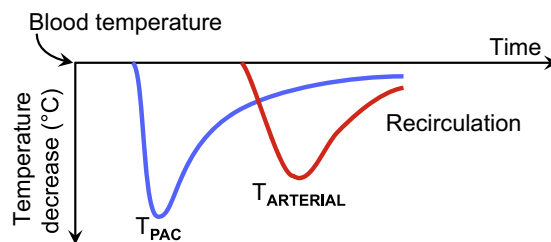
Maximizing accuracy for pulse contour and Modelflow CO_{AWA} always has necessitated initial calibration using an independent method of estimating CO.^{101,117} CO_{PAC} was used previously with pulse contour analysis techniques¹¹⁷; at the

present time, lithium dilution and transpulmonary thermodilution more commonly are used to estimate initial reference CO. Knowledge of a reference CO allows computation of a calibration factor specific to a patient and hemodynamic state (Equation 3) for CO_{AWA} .^{11,12,96,104,123,125}

A reference CO and a calibration factor are needed because the aortic pressure-compliance, pressure-diameter, and pressure-impedance relationships described by Wesseling and Langewouters are “population averages”, with standard deviations and 95% confidence intervals approximating 20% and 30%, respectively.^{96,100,101,110,126} Wesseling et al stated, “Given the 20% scatter ..., Modelflow cannot be computed with an accuracy better than this percentage.”⁹⁴ It is not surprising that compared with CO_{PAC} or calibrated CO_{AWA} , uncalibrated Modelflow and other CO_{AWA} devices still have significant issues related to accuracy.^{13,19,28,29,32,127–144}

The principles underlying CO_{TCTD} are based on Fick’s principle and use the modified Stewart-Hamilton equation.^{10,11,96,97} A thermistor, similar to that located near the tip of a thermodilution pulmonary artery catheter used to determine CO_{PAC} , is built into a customized arterial catheter to register accurately blood temperature changes after intravenous injection of an iced saline bolus (Fig 2). For accurate CO_{TPTD} , this thermistor needs to be in or very close to the aorta. The resultant plot of temperature versus time (“thermodilution” curve) (Fig 3) is input into the computer, and CO is computed

A. Thermodilution curves from pulmonary artery and arterial-aortic thermistors after bolus iced saline injection.



B. Logarithmic transformation of transcardiopulmonary arterial thermodilution curve to obtain MTt + Edt.

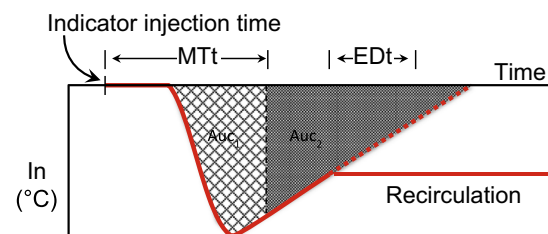


Fig 3. (A) Thermodilution curves from pulmonary artery and arterial-aortic thermistors after bolus iced saline injection. (B) Logarithmic transformation of a transcardiopulmonary arterial thermodilution curve to obtain MTt (mean transit time) and exponential decay time. Mean transit time is when the area under the thermodilution curve (AUC) is divided into two equal areas (AUC_1 and AUC_2). Exponential decay time is the initial rate of decay of the thermodilution curve. Assuming a monoexponential decay, the rate of decay can be measured at any time point after the peak. It usually is measured as the slope between two set-points in the thermodilution curve (eg, 80% and 40%). The monitor observes central venous pressure: The precise time of iced saline bolus administration is determined by the rapid supraphysiologic increase in pressure.

using the modified Stewart-Hamilton equation. Typically, 2 to 5 thermodilution CO determinations randomly dispersed throughout the respiratory cycle are averaged and used to calibrate the continuous CO_{AWA} device, albeit adequate precision can be obtained with only 2 determinations.¹⁴⁵

Following simultaneous indicator injection, comparison of pulmonary artery- and transcardiopulmonary-derived thermodilution curves (Fig 3) revealed the latter to have a delayed, smaller trough temperature decrease and a slower return to baseline. These differences between techniques have disparate effects on accuracy. On the one hand, CO_{TCTD} slightly but consistently underestimates CO_{PAC} by 3%.^{116,146–149} This discrepancy is due to greater dissipation of indicator (heat) to adjacent tissues along the longer pathway^{11,97,104,150} and the greater decrease in cardiac temperature, which deleteriously affect heart rate and cardiac performance.^{32,151–154} On the other hand, compared with CO_{PAC}, the greater transcardiopulmonary mixing time minimizes CO_{TCTD} errors provoked by respiratory-induced temperature changes.^{32,96,125} Greater CO_{TCTD} accuracy can be achieved through using ice-cold ($\leq 8^{\circ}\text{C}$), larger volume (20 mL) boluses of saline indicator. Although it has been suggested that room-temperature injectate may provide acceptable results,¹⁵⁵ this causes CO to be overestimated by 21.9%.¹⁵⁶ The effects of a bigger, colder indicator bolus include increased magnitude of downstream temperature changes, accentuation of the thermodilution curve downslope, and maximization of the area under the curve.¹⁵⁰

CLINICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING CO_{TPTD-AWA}

Hemodynamic monitoring aims to manipulate oxygen delivery and consumption so that patient outcomes are improved and healthcare resource consumption is reduced.^{3,157–163} These goals have been achieved in high-risk surgical patients and critically ill trauma or septic patients using the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) programs, perioperative fluid optimization, and EGDT programs.^{164–171} The hemodynamic goals of these programs likely overlap.^{157,163,167,172–175} Despite controversy surrounding the pulmonary artery catheter, EGDT outcome improvements appear to be independent of the specific CO measurement technology.^{157,172,173,176–178} Because CO_{TPTD-AWA} measures CO accurately^{117,179} and continuously, it is reasonable to hypothesize that its use in EGDT may improve outcomes. Apart from the studies by Goepfert et al^{180,181} demonstrating reductions in inotrope usage, length of stay, and complications after cardiac surgery, a dearth of high-quality evidence exists regarding the benefits of CO_{TPTD-AWA}-guided EGDT.^{9,21,182}

The major clinical and practical considerations when using CO_{TPTD-AWA} are as follows: ensuring accurate arterial pressure waveform reproduction, ensuring that the arterial thermistor is within or in proximity to the aorta for accurate CO_{TPTD}, consideration of conditions precluding use of this technology, and knowing when recalibration is needed.

The Modelflow CO_{AWA} technique requires faithful reproduction of the aortic pressure waveform. Damped arterial catheter systems (kinks, clots, air bubbles, compliant excessive length tubing) with inadequate frequency response contribute significantly to CO_{AWA} errors.¹⁰⁵ Although peripheral arterial pressure can be used to calculate CO_{AWA},^{116,183} arterial wave

reflection causes the shape of the arterial and aortic waveforms to differ.^{101,184} Some devices can use a transformed peripheral waveform, but the algorithm used to transform a peripheral into an aortic pressure waveform has not been made public.¹⁸³ Mostly, physicians use 4F or 5F, 15- to 20-cm-long femoral catheters to access the aorta.^{11,185} For nonfemoral (radial, brachial, or axillary) aortic access, PULSION currently offers catheters equipped with thermistors of various (8–50 cm) lengths.^{186,187} These long arterial catheters deliver reliable CO measurements,^{187–189} although progressively greater measurement errors occur with more distal arterial locations of the catheter tip.¹⁸⁸ Long upper limb catheters risk stroke either from ascending aortic plaque dislodgment or from catheter flushing with retrograde embolization of clot or air. Limb ischemia has occurred, albeit infrequently, after placement of long upper limb^{190–193} and femoral arterial catheters.¹⁹⁴ In patients undergoing vascular surgery, femoral arterial-aortic cannulation frequently is inadvisable because of lower limb vascular disease, iliac or femoral surgery and grafting, or anticipated aortic clamping.¹⁰⁵ This technology can and has been used successfully with femoral arterial catheters in children undergoing major surgery.^{69,75–79,81}

The use of Modelflow CO_{AWA} is precluded by aortic aneurysms,¹¹ aortic clamping, significant aortic regurgitation, induced hypothermia,¹⁹⁵ artificial hearts, ventricular assist devices,¹²⁴ arrhythmias,¹⁰⁵ and intra-aortic balloon counterpulsation. CO_{TPTD} appears to be accurate in the presence of intra-aortic balloon counterpulsation.¹⁹⁶

Loss of indicator can occur with regurgitant right-sided cardiac lesions and right-to-left cardiac shunts; the latter are typified by a biphasic 2-hump (camel) thermodilution curve.¹⁹⁷ CO and extravascular lung water (but not global end-diastolic volume index) data are interchangeable when the indicator is administered via either a superior vena cava or femoral venous catheter.^{198,199} Ipsilateral femoral vein and artery placement of central venous and arterial catheters should be avoided to prevent “crosstalk.”²⁰⁰ “Crosstalk” refers to temperature contamination of the arterial thermistor by ipsilateral femoral vein cold saline injection; this scenario also is characterized by a biphasic thermodilution curve.^{198–202}

A significant, unresolved issue occurs when Modelflow CO_{AWA} warrants recalibration. Authorities recommended recalibration every 6 to 8 hours under stable conditions.¹¹ Recommendations regarding the recalibration interval range from 1¹²⁰ to 44 hours.^{105,117,203,204} This discrepancy is explained by the need for recalibration not being time related, but CO_{AWA} becoming inaccurate following rapid hemodynamic changes, particularly following changes in SVR.^{65,106,121,127,204} After initial calibration, mild changes in SVR did not affect Modelflow CO_{AWA} accuracy;²⁰⁵ however, CO_{AWA} errors of up to 40% occurred if SVR changed by $> 15\%$.^{122,204,206,207} Modelflow CO_{AWA} accuracy is critically dependent on vascular tone, and the technique assumes that vascular resistance is relatively constant.²⁰⁸ Suggestions that clinicians recalibrate after weaning from cardiopulmonary bypass,^{209,210} acute hemorrhage or rapid fluid infusion, inotrope-vasopressor administration,^{106,207} patient repositioning, aortic clamping and unclamping, and onset of intra-abdominal hypertension and sepsis²¹¹ are logical.^{212–214} An important advantage of the CO_{TPTD} calibration

method is that it may be repeated as needed because the iced saline indicator is not toxic and does not risk accumulation. Recalibration can be cumbersome, time-consuming, and inconvenient at times of hemodynamic instability—this being the exact situation in which robustness and knowledge of CO are likely to be of most use.^{66,120,132,142,143} Indicators of exactly when Modelflow CO_{AWA} requires recalibration remain a subject for research.^{204,207,215}

CO_{TPTD} assumes a constant arterial temperature during the measurement period. Deviations from “baseline” temperature that are not due to the iced saline bolus constitute “thermal noise”, with deleterious effects on CO_{TPTD} precision and accuracy.^{216,217} The effect of hypothermia on CO_{TPTD} accuracy has not been well studied.^{216,217}

INDICATORS OF PRELOAD OBTAINED FROM CO_{TPTD} AND AWA_{CO} MONITORS

CO_{TPTD} can provide a series of indicators of preload, including intrathoracic thermal volume (ITTV), pulmonary thermal volume (PTV), global end-diastolic volume (GEDV), and intrathoracic blood volume (ITBV) (Fig 4).²¹⁸ Stroke volume and pulse-pressure variation derived from the arterial pressure-time waveform are not unique to this technique and have been reviewed elsewhere.²¹⁹

The first determination in Fig 4, ITTV, the total volume of blood contained in both cardiac chambers and the pulmonary vasculature, is the volume of distribution between injection and measurement sites (“needle-to-needle” volume). ITBV was measured formerly using a double-tracer method relying on

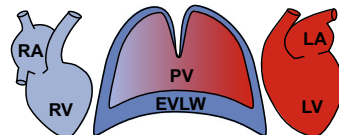
the Fick principle. This double-tracer method was composed of intravenous bolus injection of iced dextrose water mixed with indocyanine green. Indocyanine green binds to plasma proteins, stays intravascularly, and provides an indication of ITBV. The double-indicator and CO_{TPTD} techniques differ. When the thermal signal of the latter contacts the huge surface area of the pulmonary circulation, heat disperses to intravascular and extravascular spaces within the lungs. CO_{TPTD} calculates ITTV^{96,97,104,150,212,220}; this value exceeds ITBV measured using the double-indicator technique. Nonetheless, Godje et al²²⁰ established that the thermal indicator technique is sufficiently accurate to supplant the double-indicator method.

The method of ITTV measurement involves use of the product of CO and mean transit time, the latter being the time taken for half the indicator solution to pass the arterial detection point (Fig 3B). The VolumeView/EV1000 modification uses the maximum upslope and downslope of the thermodilution washout curves; this provides volumes comparable to the PiCCO monitor, but has the putative advantage of avoiding problems with identifying recirculation.²²¹

After estimating ITTV, PTV can be calculated (Fig 4). While using indocyanine green to estimate CO, Hamilton observed that the dye washout rate was determined not only by CO but also by the sizes of the “mixing chambers” into which the indicator had been injected.²²² Newman et al²²² refined this hypothesis as follows: If the cardiac chambers and vessels are considered as a series of mixing compartments into which indicator is added, the indicator washout rate should be proportional to the size of the largest mixing chamber.⁶⁹ These authors demonstrated mathematically and experimentally that

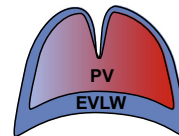
1. Intrathoracic Thermal Volume: $ITTV = CO \times MTt$

Definition: Thermal distribution volumes of cardiac chambers plus pulmonary thermal volume



2. Pulmonary Thermal Volume: $PTV = CO \times Edt$

Definition: Thermal distribution volume of the lungs including intravascular, interstitial and alveolar volumes

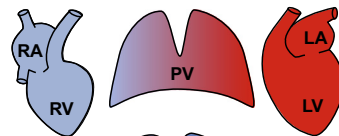


3. Global End-diastolic Volume: $GEDV = ITTV - PTV$

Definition: Sum of the end-diastolic volumes of all heart chambers, excluding intrathoracic blood volume



4. Intrathoracic Blood Volume: $ITBV = GEDV \times 1.25$



5. Extravascular Lung Water: $EVLW = ITTV - ITBV$

Definition: Water content outside of the pulmonary vasculature including the pulmonary interstitium plus any alveolar fluid

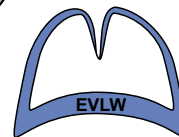


Fig 4. The principles and formulas underlying calculation of intrathoracic volumes and extravascular lung water. LA, left atrium; LV, left ventricle; PV, pulmonary vasculature; RA, right atrium; RV, right ventricle.

the volume of this largest chamber was the quotient of CO and the slope of the semilogarithmic indicator concentration versus time washout curve. The pulmonary (thermal) blood volume can be estimated from the product of the initial washout rate of the CO_{TPTD} curve termed the “exponential decay time” and CO (Fig 3).^{69,222} A semilogarithmic transformation of the CO_{TPTD} curve is performed to facilitate accurate measurements of exponential decay time and other parameters.^{11,96,202,223} The theory by Newman et al²²² is based on the assumptions that injection of indicator is instantaneous, indicator and blood mix completely and immediately, pulmonary blood volume is constant and does not change with ventilation, recirculation does not occur, and flow is constant.

GEDV, the end-diastolic volume of blood in the cardiac chambers (Fig 4), is the difference between ITTV and PTV. Sakka et al²²⁴ described intrathoracic blood volumes to consistently be 1.25 times greater than GEDV.

GEDV and ITBV have been compared with central venous pressure and pulmonary capillary wedge pressure as measures of preload. Although good relationships between these volumetric indices with stroke volume and prediction of fluid responsiveness have been demonstrated,^{24,225–228} other research indicates significant interindividual variation,²²⁹ that they are not superior²³⁰ or as accurate as dynamic measures of preload,²³¹ and that their application may be limited to situations in which arrhythmias would preclude the use of pulse-pressure variation or stroke-volume variation.⁹⁶

INDICATORS OF EXTRAVASCULAR LUNG WATER OBTAINED FROM CO_{TPTD}

Extravascular lung water (EVLW) effectively represents the volume of distribution of the cold indicator in the perfused areas of the lungs.^{150,232} It is estimated from the difference between ITTV and ITBV (Fig 4); these measurements compare favorably with measurements derived from gravimetry, the gold standard EVLW measurement technique.^{202,233–239} The normal range of EVLW is 3 to 7 mL/kg, but EVLW typically is >10 mL/kg in pulmonary edema.^{233,240–242} EVLW progressively increases with the severity of acute lung injury.^{240–244} It has been proposed as a diagnostic,^{240,243–248} prognostic,^{245,249–251} and therapeutic guide^{233,252} to fluid administration in acute lung injury and other conditions.²²⁸

Despite its promise, the single-indicator (thermal) dilution method of measuring EVLW has not yet been adopted widely or accepted for clinical use.²³⁶ It also has several potential problems^{96,233,235,236,253}; reviews by Effros et al²⁵⁴ and Brown et al²³⁶ indicated that the assumptions used in EVLW measurements may not always be valid. The reliability and sensitivity to detect smaller changes of EVLW have been questioned^{233,253–256} because EVLW has been found within normal limits in 35% of patients with acute lung injury.²⁰⁰ More specifically, obstruction of pulmonary vessels prevents conduction of thermal indicator to the extravascular spaces causing underestimation of EVLW. This issue occurs only if obstruction arises in vessels >500 μ m in diameter; micro-obstruction as found in acute lung injury does not pose a problem. The effect of positive end-expiratory pressure depends on whether

pulmonary vascular obstruction or alveolar recruitment results, causing underestimation and overestimation of EVLW, respectively. Lung resection decreases pulmonary blood volume, distorting the relationship between GEDV and EVLW, causing underestimation of the latter.²³³ The contention that ITBV and CO are mathematically coupled has been repudiated.^{203,223,224,232}

INDICATORS OF CARDIAC PERFORMANCE OBTAINED FROM CO_{TPTD}

CO_{TPTD} provides 2 indices of performance: cardiac function index, the quotient of CO and GEDV (units = minute⁻¹), and global ejection fraction, the quotient of 4 times stroke volume and GEDV.^{179,257,258} These indices correlate with ($r^2 = 0.27$ – 0.76) and track left ventricular systolic function during various clinical situations (eg, sepsis, acute myocardial infarction, acute cardiac failure).^{88,128,259} Cardiac function index <3.7 to 6.8 minute⁻¹ and global ejection fraction <28% predict left ventricular ejection fraction <35% to 40%, with sensitivity and specificity values between 86% and 81% and 63% and 88%, respectively.^{88,128,257,259}

Cardiac function index and global ejection fraction represent global left and right ventricular performance.^{128,257} These parameters do not represent left ventricular function in the presence of predominant right ventricular dilation^{128,257}; they cannot replace echocardiographic assessment and discrimination of left and right ventricular dysfunction.^{128,257,260,261}

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The most pressing issue is validation of whether CO_{TPTD-AWA}-guided EGDT and therapy guided by derived volumetric and cardiac function parameters will enhance recovery after surgery and improve intensive care outcomes.^{9,59} Whether dissimilar cardiac output monitoring technologies are interchangeable also needs to be addressed.^{9,137,142,143} Future technologic developments may include a “transfer function” to ensure satisfactory accuracy when using peripheral arterial catheterization.^{100,183} Instead of standalone monitors, manufacturers will likely license incorporation of this technology into a wider variety of multiparameter physiologic monitors. Such integrated monitoring platforms would permit an assortment of allied CO measurement techniques, such as intermittent bolus CO_{PAC} and CO_{TPTD}, continuous thermoaddition CO_{PAC}, and calibrated or uncalibrated CO_{AWA}; in the future, finger CO_{AWA}^{14,262} and radial artery applanation tonometry may become options in the same monitor.^{28,37} Such versatility would allow customization of EGDT appropriate to the clinical scenario.¹⁵

CONCLUSIONS

CO_{TCTD-AWA} technology is a useful hemodynamic tool. However, as with any monitoring device, an understanding of the technology as well as an appreciation of its limitations are needed. Interpretation of the data obtained from CO measurement technology within the clinical context will ensure its safe and appropriate use in guiding patient management.

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