

Design and Implementation of a Real-Time Automated ECG Diagnosis (AED) System

Masudul Haider Imtiaz¹

¹ University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Abstract

Automated ECG diagnosis (AED) classification is essential to the timely diagnosis of potentially lethal heart conditions in clinical settings. In noisy environment, ECG feature extraction problem with considerable accuracy still remains open for research. Although, Wavelet Transform (WT) has been proved to be more prominent approach than any other conventional detection algorithms, but much abstruse to implement in commercial software. To reduce this implementation complexity, in this work, a combination of DWT and FFT-IFFT pair is proposed with Adaptive thresholding technique. MATLAB analysis supports this preprocessing and automatic detection idea in terms of accuracy. A software implementation of this AED system is presented here in .net framework which can be interfaced with any commercial ECG machine by changing some parameters.

Index terms— AED system, ECG, feature extraction, heart beat detection, P-QRS-T wave, wavelet transform.

1 I. INTRODUCTION he electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG from the

German Elektrokardiogram) refers to the linear recording of quasi-periodical, rhythmically repeating small voltage signal (~1mV) synchronized by the heart, the bioelectric event generator [1,2]. The term ECG was coined into medical practice 100 years ago by Nobel Prize winner, William Einthoven, who first introduced the fundamental function of the ECG [1]. Like a signature or figure-print, ECG provides electrophysiology that indicates an overview of the cardiac health. The non-invasive recording process and the visual interpretation facility have made it as a powerful tool for the medical professionals to extract clinical information about of their patients' health. The starting point for electrocardiography is the detection of Rspikes of QRS-complex and then P and T waves reflecting the process of depolarization of the ventricles, atria & final re-polarization of ventricular myocardium respectively [3]. Researchers of biomedical field have set the standard amplitude and duration values of those peaks and their derivatives. Deviation from the standard value and asymmetric phase relationships of the resulting ECG signal reflect abnormality of the human body. Thus, it is used as the primary diagnostic tool of almost all heart diseases. Sometimes, a short period ECG test in the clinical environment may prove not to be steady at all, as often it cause imperfect reports which is a threat to the potentially lethal patients. Arrhythmia, a disease caused by irregularity in heart rhythm has always been unpredictable for short time ECG Test [4]. Those limitations often let physicians to prescribe costly hazardous diagnosis instead this non-invasive method. In spite of these highlighted drawbacks of ECG accuracy, it does not lose its zeal in patient's mind because of its cost-effectiveness and availability. Regarding this issues, a lot of researches have been carried out recently to make ECG analysis as accurate as possible. To reduce the noise and artifacts as possible, highly efficient ECG machine with the combination of analog and digital filter is of ultimate necessity in modern cardio pathology. Again, automatic detection software is now also included in all ECG system with digital display and dedicated printing facility. But the philosophy of ECG detection method behind the gorgeous front end is not transparent

44 at all and the accuracy factors. So, physicians often reject the diagnosis reports generated by this system and
45 follow the traditional methods like visual inspection or manual comparison with standard waveform. So, the
46 precise arrangement of automated ECG diagnosis (AED) system can not only reduce the physician's labor, but
47 also can assist in complicate diagnosis. Also, it may let the patients to self-study their cardiac conditions even
48 in lethal conditions without any help of the physician. This work mainly focuses on these issues and proposes an
49 accurate solution with pointing out the pros and cons of the system.

50 2 II. ECG DETAILS

51 ECG is the graphic tracing of the time duration and magnitude of 3-characteristics wave peaks P, QRS, and
52 T. P wave is the epoch related to atrial contraction. The event of ventricular contraction is represented by
53 QRS epoch. Atrial relaxation does not produce any distinct waveform in the ECG as it is overshadowed by the
54 following QRS wave. PQ, ST segment are two isoelectric base-line indicators [1,2]. PR interval represents the
55 time interval between the beginning of the de-polarizations of the atrium and the ventricle respectively. The QT
56 interval extends from the beginning of the Q wave to the end of the T wave, represents the time of ventricular
57 contraction and re-polarization

58 3 STATE OF THE ART

59 The development of the electrocardiography was the culmination of scientific efforts aimed at improving the
60 physiological phenomenon and the welfare of mankind [1]. Difficulties arise mainly from the huge diversity of
61 the waveform, noises and artifacts accompanying non-stationary ECG signals. Hence, universally acceptable
62 solution of feature extraction has not been found yet. Several QRS detection algorithms have been proposed in
63 early eighties [3,7] mainly emphasized R spike detection by amplitude derivative approaches [8,9]. Fraden and
64 Neuman [8] developed a QRS detection scheme where a threshold is calculated as a fraction of the peak value
65 of the ECG. Algorithms [9][10][11] are based on the first derivative only or both first and second derivatives.
66 Balda [10] suggested searching values exceeding the threshold in a weighted summation of the first and second
67 derivative. Ahlstrom and Tompkins in [11] proposed that the absolute values of the first derivative would be
68 smoothed and added with the absolute values of the second derivative. [7,13,14]. WT is proved more effective
69 one. In 1995, Li et al. [15] used an algorithm based on finding the maxima larger than a threshold obtained
70 from the pre-processed initial beats. Later in 1999, Kadambe et al. produced a method allocating a R peak at
71 a point being the local maxima of several consecutive dyadic wavelet scales. In both methods, a post-processing
72 is allowed to eliminate false R detections. Based on these two publications, a lot of researches were published on
73 the beat detection based on the WT ??Shyuand et al., 2004; ??ard et al., 2007;Martinez et al., 2004;Addison,
74 2005; ??hen et al., 2005; ??hen et al., 2006) [16][17][18]. Based on the functionality, WT is categorized in sub
75 sections, CWT, DWT; continuous and discrete. DWT is only the sampled version of CWT [19] although the
76 choice of wavelets, scale factor, re-configurability is limited in CWT comparatively [16][17][18][19]. But, the
77 main problem of any WT is that one has to choose the mother wavelet from a wide prototype range and the
78 scales used to analyze the signal on an empirical basis. The mother wavelet can easily be chosen based on its
79 characteristics and resemblance with a QRS wave, the ideal scale(s) at which the QRS are matched is harder to
80 guess a priori ??20]. All citation mentioned earlier are based on the MATLAB analysis using a dedicated tool
81 box. MATLAB is always useful for research work as lots of built-in library functions are developing day-by-day
82 to make it easier for end users. But, it is not at all useable in commercial software attached with a portable ECG
83 machine. The exclusion of bulky computerized system from an ECG system is of ultimate importance which may
84 sacrifice well-proved algorithms in research field due to the computational complexities. Hence, only thresholding
85 based elementary algorithms are preferred to implement than any other established research patents. Responding
86 all these motivations, authors were intended to develop acommercial software especially for the portable ECG
87 machine. It was needed to make some trade-offs with WT based detection algorithm to make it implementable.
88 So, the choice was limited to dyadic DWT approach and the Daubechies (DB) type wavelet families. A lot of
89 arguments had risen between the effectiveness of two members DB4 and DB6; as both prove comparatively better
90 in different approaches [22]. In this work, a comparative study has done and set DB4 as mother wavelet with
91 specific scale factors. In noise reduction issue, an extra FFT-IFFT pair is engaged for further de-noising along
92 with the popular WT tool. Feature extraction has been done here with some modification of the established
93 algorithms of [18][19] ??20][21][22]. After proving the accuracy of this, MIT-BIH database is also engaged to
94 prove the comparative accuracy and readiness of it. Wavelets may of orthogonal, orthonormal, bioorthogonal,
95 scalar or multi-wavelet type. This work is only limited to the orthonormal dyadic type having restricted resolution
96 of order 2^j (where $j \in \mathbb{Z}$) i.e. $a=2^j$ and $b=2^j k$. Such discrete wavelet associated with scaling functions (ϕ) can be
97 convolved with $x(t)$ to produce approximation coefficients S But the input signal coefficient S_0 is of finite length
98 $N=2^M$. So the range of scales that can be investigated is $0 \leq m \leq M$. Hence a discrete approximation of the signal
99 is written as:

100 4 IV. THEORY OF WAVELET TRANSFORM

101 Where the mean signal approximation at scale M is:

102 The detail signal approximation corresponding to scale m (error in approximation for finite length signal) is
103 given by: So, the signal approximation at a specific scale is a combination of the approximation and the detail
104 at the next lower scale.

105 If scale $m = 3$ were chosen, the signal approximation is like: The iso-electric baseline (indicating the PQ &
106 ST segment) shifting usually comes from the respiration and the electrode impedence at frequency wandering
107 in 0.15~0.3Hz range. As it is well under 0.5Hz, it can be suppressed without disturbing the original signal.
108 Instead of conventional high pass (digital) filter, WT is a better approach to remove the baseline wandering as
109 it introduces no latency and less distortion than the digital filter. Here, we decompose the ECG signal into 8
110 levels shown in Figure4 where the set of numbers a_j represents the 'coarse approximation' of the signal at
111 the resolution $2^{-(j-1)}$ & the set of numbers d_j represents the 'details' lost in approximating the signal at the
112 resolution 2^{-j} . Thus, given a discrete time-domain signal $X[n]$ assumed to be at the resolution 2^0 is equal to
113 $x_0[n]$ decomposed into two sets of numbers $a_1[n]$ and $d_1[n]$. $a_1[n]$ can be further divided into $a_2[n]$ and
114 $d_2[n]$ and so on. This happens by passing $X[n]$ through successive low pass $G(w)$ and high pass $H(w)$ symbolic
115 analysis filters. At every level, filtering and sub-sampling result in doubled frequency resolution, halved time
116 resolution and the elimination of half of the samples to adhere the Nyquist criteria. Reconstruction process is the
117 reverse of decomposition, where the approximation, the detail coefficients at every level are up-sampled by 2 and
118 passed through exactly matched low-pass $G(w)$ and high pass $H(w)$ synthesis filters and finally added as shown in
119 Figure4. The same number of levels is taken as in the case of the decomposition. This WT principle can be used
120 significantly in noise elimination in ECG analysis. by using DB4 prototype and reconstruct the approximation
121 (A8) and detail (D8) signals at level 8. The DB4 prototype wavelet and the details level (D1-D8) is shown in
122 Figure5 and Figure6 respectively. The summation of A8 and D8 will be the low frequency component of ECG
123 signal that causes the baseline shifting. This low frequency signal is deducted from the original ECG signal to
124 get the one excludes baseline shifting. The problem of baseline shifting is solved here by an advance filtering
125 techniques i.e. De-trended Signal (DS) Original Signal-(A8+D8). Figure5b depicts the result of De-trending
126 process. This filtering technique is adapted influenced by [22] where DB6 was used as mother prototype. This
127 approach achieves 8% more SNR than the proposal in [22]. After removing baseline wander, the resulting ECG
128 signal is now more stationary and explicit than the original one. However, some other types of noises may still
129 affect feature extraction process. These noises may be of complex stochastic processes within a wideband, so
130 one cannot remove them by using traditional digital filters. To remove such high frequency noises, one can
131 efficiently use the Wavelet decomposed signal components found by earlier successive approximations. Each
132 wavelet coefficient of those sub-bands can be modified by applying a threshold function & finally reconstructing
133 the de-noised signal. This subtle approach confirms not to lose signal's sharpest features, discarding only the
134 portions of the details that exceed a certain limit due to the occurrence of noise. Such global thresholding option
135 is derived from Donoho-Johnstone fixed-form thresholding strategy for an unscaled white noise [22]. Hence, the
136 lower details are removed from the original and the high frequency components are vitiated.

137 In this work, lower details D1, D2 are removed and the signal becomes smoother and noise disappears
138 since noises are marked by high frequency components picked up along QRS complex identification is the most
139 important segment of any ECG feature extraction algorithm. The efficiency of total algorithm largely depends
140 on the accuracy of this module. The R peaks have the largest amplitude among all, allowing them the easiest
141 way to detect and good reference points for farther detections. In this study, for detecting R-waves, the benefits
142 of WT are utilized intelligently. Only details up to the level D6 are kept for QRS complex detection and all the
143 rest are discarded. By observing the average amplitudes of the R-waves, 30% of the maximum value is being
144 set initially as the threshold level (T). any upward excursion that exceeds the T is taken as an Rwave otherwise
145 termed as noise. Thus, by calculating two slope values, one upward & one downward, an Rwave can be detected.
146 Consecutive R-waves are detected using the same technique and noise peaks are eliminated. The detection of
147 the QRS complex is being done from identified R peaks based on modulus maxima [21][22]. The Q and S point
148 occurs about the R Peak with in 0.15second. The left point denotes the Q point and the right one signify the S
149 point. Calculating the distance from zero point or close to zero on the left side of R Peak within the threshold
150 limit denotes the presence of Q point. Similarly the S point comes from the right hand detection [Figure9]. This
151 is the most convenient way to measure those peaks and their derivatives.

152 ii. P and T wave detection P wave is detected from filtered and de-noising ECG signal using the method
153 "Length-Amplitude-Slope" introduced by [20]. To determine P wave amplitude, slope, starting point, destination
154 and forms, the fourth scale WT information is employed here. Fourth scale is chosen based on energy analysis
155 of P wave in ECG signal and the impact of baseline drift. This method is only possible if QRS detection and
156 interval calculation is done correctly. Employing a threshold amplitude, P wave is searched in RR interval.
157 RR and PR standard intervals are 0.6-1.0s and 0.12-0.20s respectively. It is assumed that this is a P peak
158 in every 0.40s before the identified R spike. Then applying a threshold value of 30% of the standard value
159 0.25mV, all detected maxima points are leveled as P wave. Also the instantaneous P-R and P-P intervals are
160 measured accordingly. After detecting P-wave and QRS-complex, "Curve Length Transform" described in [19]
161 is followed as T-wave detection algorithm. The details are omitted here. Summarizing all the steps, outcome
162 of the complete feature extraction method is shown in Figure10. needed a graphical user interface (GUI) with
163 an input segment to provide the raw ECG signal and a separate report generation section. Being motivated by
164 this, arule based architecture is designed based on the well known "Water Fall Method" of software development

6 IX. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

165 with the following steps: system requirement, system design, implementation & the verification. This system
166 will extract the characteristic feature of ECG signal with the comparison of predefined standard parameters and
167 predict the diagnosis based on abnormalities found on that The user interface form, termed as "Main Form"
168 is designed for the end-user or physician. It contains three menus named "Setup", "Task" and "Exit". "Setup"
169 tab is to set the standard amplitude and duration values for three categorized patients: male, female & children
170 in separated forms named "Normal Amplitude" & "Normal Duration" under "Normal Amplitude Setup" and
171 "Normal Duration Setup" sub-menus of "Setup" menu [Figure11].

172 The total information of the deviation of standard parameters for any specific disease is needed to input in
173 the "Abnormalities" form through the "Abnormalities

174 "Setup" sub-menu under the "Setup" menu. For an instance, Hypocalcaemia, a heart disease has deviations
175 mainly in ST segment with the prolonged QT specified by the physicians. These syndromes are stored in the
176 attached SQL server 2008 database in the process schematically shown in Figure12. These procedures are repeated
177 many times to store all the deviations [Table2].

178 b) Core/ Processing Unit

179 The standard values and disease syndromes being input on "Normal Duration", "Normal Amplitude",
180 "Abnormalities" forms are being stored in tables "Wave Standard Duration", "Wave Standard Amplitude",
181 "Abnormalities Symptom Data" respectively in "ECG Analytical Soft DB" database. Another table, "Patient" is
182 reserved for storing patient personal information attached with his/her ECG (.xml) file. The Relational Database
183 schema is shown in Figure13. This userfriendly system is developed in .net framework using C# language. The
184 characteristic features being extracted using De-noising, De-trending, WT, FFT-IFFT pair techniques, will be
185 stored in "Patient Real Data info" The fields of this table will be compared with the standard values and
186 abnormalities stored earlier and will generate a probabilistic diagnosis based on this ruled based architecture.
187 Thus "Comparison Result" table will be filled on and to display in report generation unit. c) Report Generation
188 and Case Study "Task" menu containing "ECG Analysis" and "ECG Signals" sub-menu in the "Main Form"
189 is the report generation section where to recognize/ browse the given ECG log file (.xml format) with patient
190 details. Extracted characteristic features from all 12-leads will be displayed in tabular format with probabilistic
191 diagnosis in "ECG Analysis" form Figure14. Again, in some analysis purposes, sometimes it is necessary for
192 physicians to have visual representation of ECG waveform than to have the measured characteristic value, may
193 be 12-lead graph all-together for comparison. "ECG Signals" form is designed (Figure15) for this purpose with
194 the scales are in millisecond and millivolt in time & amplitude axis respectively.

195 5 VII. ANALYSIS

196 To analysis the performance of the proposed system, it was needed the noise simulated raw ECG signal and
197 the real life ECG data. Using advanced signal processing toolkit (ASPT) in Lab VIEW (Laboratory Virtual
198 Instrument Engineering Workbench)-2009, the low noise ECG signal (used in earlier analysis) and the raw
199 waveform from MIT-BIH Arrhythmia database are simulated by mixing different types of noises (Figure13). For
200 the performance analysis of the proposed software, a series of raw ECG log files with the diagnosis report by
201 their system has been collected from the Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of Dhaka. Table4
202 shows the comparisons with the proposed system developed in SectionVI. It is obvious from these outcomes that
203 the diagnosis reports generated by the proposed algorithm are quite similar to the diagnosis report collected
204 from the reference system with only 10% variation. The functionality of this software has also being checked
205 by a physician. The proposed algorithm obtains an average sensitivity rate of 93.7% and average error rate
206 below 8% after analyzing 25 records. To our knowledge, only the R spike detectors based on Li's algorithm [15]
207 obtained the comparable results with sensitivity between 99.7% and 99.9%. However, that algorithm makes use
208 of several heuristic rules and requires the setting of many empirical parameters. Here the proposed algorithm
209 achieves comparable performances with a simple non-parametric thresholding method and without any need of
210 advanced post processing stage comparing to that article. Also, the presented the software implementation of
211 this algorithm proves that the accurate diagnosis is always satisfactory utilizing this detection logic.

212 6 IX. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

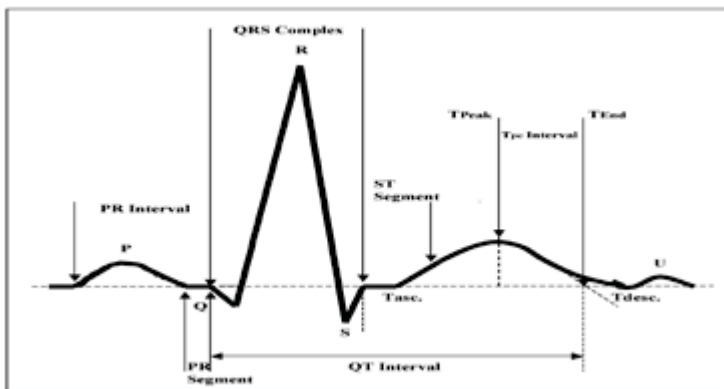
213 The large variety of ECG feature extraction algorithms and the continuous efforts for their enhancement proves
214 that universally acceptable solution has not been found yet. In this study, emphasizing on wavelet thresholding,
215 relevant noise removal and utilization of simple detection logic for the ECG characteristics detection is present.
216 A robust and efficient tool for fast, less complex practical software is also provided that can be interfaced
217 efficiently with commercial ECG machines. The complete verification of the proposed software can lead a
218 massive utilization in even rural areas where the presence of the physicians is not so available. The day-by-



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1

Figure 1: Figure 1 :



2

Figure 2: Figure 2 :



3

Figure 3: Figure 3 :



Figure 4:



Figure 5: Wavelet

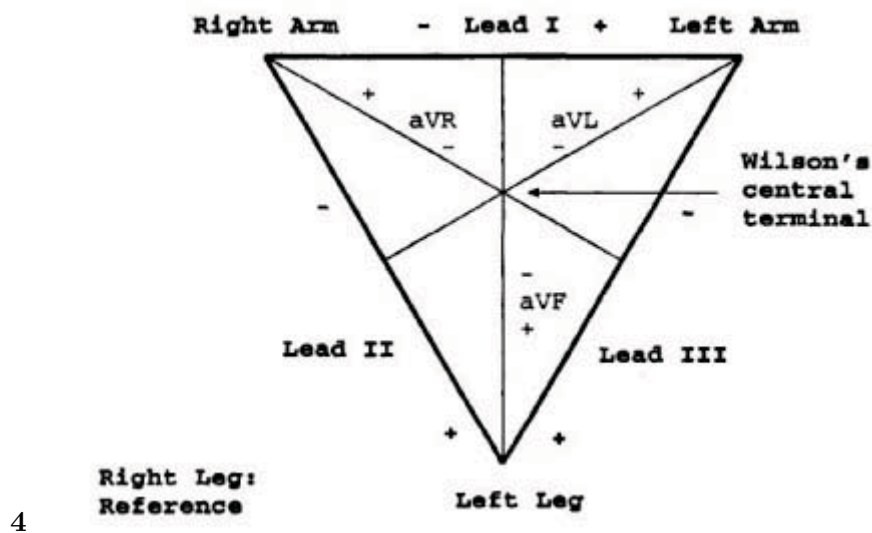


Figure 6: Figure 4 :

$$W(a,b) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(t)\psi_{a,b}(t)dt$$

Figure 7:

$$\psi_{a,b}(t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{a}}\psi * \left(\frac{t-b}{a} \right)$$

56

Figure 8: Figure 5 Figure 6 :

$$T_{m,n} = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x(t)\psi_{m,n}(t)dt.$$

7

Figure 9: Figure 7 :

$$S_{m,n} = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x(t)\phi_{m,n}(t)dt.$$

8

Figure 10: Figure 8 :

$$x_0(t) = x_M(t) + \sum_{m=1}^M d_m(t)$$

9

Figure 11: Figure 9 :

$$x_M(t) = S_{M,n}\phi_{M,n}(t)$$

10

Figure 12: Figure 10 :

$$d_m(t) = \sum_{n=0}^{M-m} T_{m,n}\psi_{m,n}(t).$$

11

Figure 13: Figure 11 :

$$x_m(t) = x_{m-1}(t) - d_m(t)$$

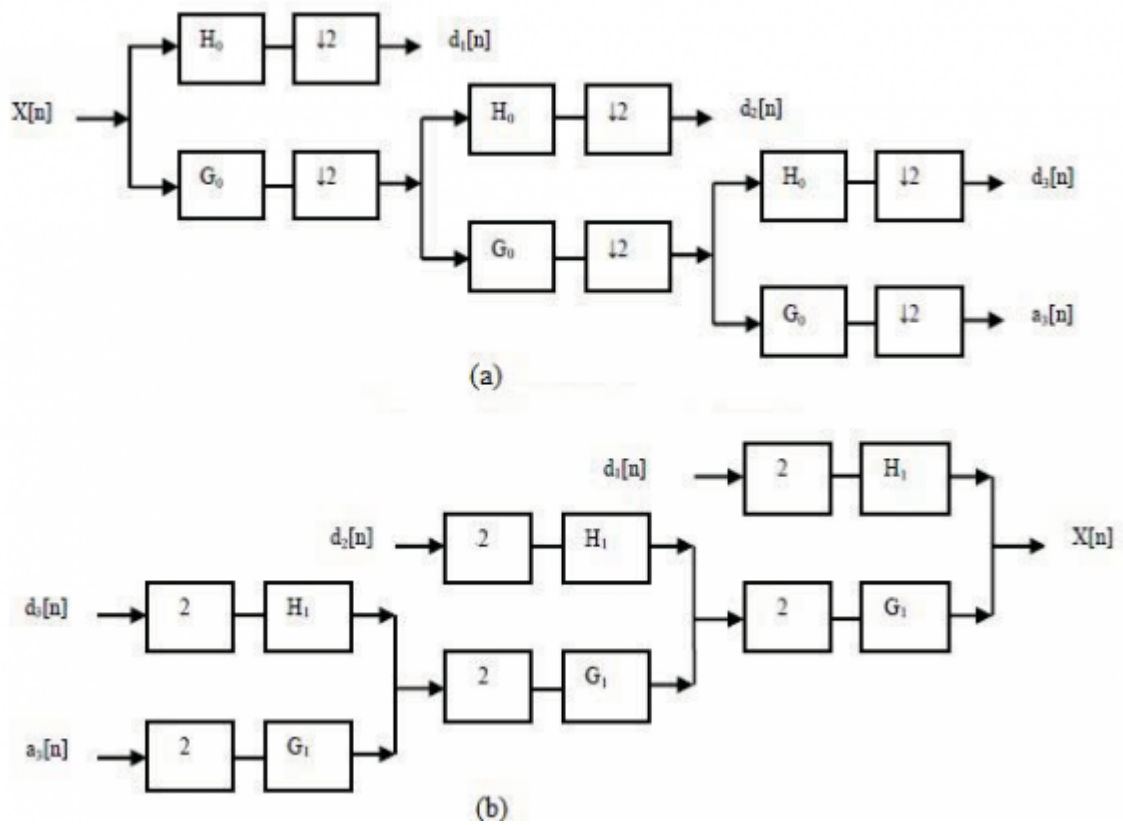
12

Figure 14: Figure 12 :

$$x_3(t) = x_0(t) - d_1(t) - d_2(t) - d_3(t)$$

13142)15

Figure 15: Figure 13 :Figure 14 : 2 () YearFigure 15 :



1315

Figure 16: Figure 13 :Figure 15 :

Figure 17: table .

3

using reference MIT-BIH Database

Record No.	Total Beats	Detected Beats TP	Sensitivity (%)	Accuracy (%)
100	2273	2172	89.96	11.04
101	1865	1864	93.12	6.88
102	2179	2100	92.15	7.75
103	2078	2123	94.52	5.48
105	2543	2633	91.86	8.14
107	2124	2088	92.35	7.65
108	1775	1864	93.49	6.51
109	2530	2520	89.67	10.33
115	1953	1825	90.23	9.77
118	2278	2187	94.56	5.44
119	1987	1768	95.16	4.84
124	1473	1366	89.65	10.35
200	2601	2806	90.12	9.88

Figure 18: Table 3 :

	Case 1		Case 2		Case 3	
	This	Ref.	This	Ref.	This	Ref.
ECG	This	Ref.	This	Ref.	This	Ref.
Features	system	system	system	system	system	system
P-int	10ms	12ms	15ms	20ms	10ms	15ms
QRS-int	10ms 14ms 20 ms	18 ms 15ms 20ms				
T-int	15ms	16ms 35 ms	30 ms	40ms		42ms
PQ-int	20ms	23ms 15 ms	18 ms	15ms		19ms
QT-int	45ms	40ms 30 ms	35 ms	35ms		32ms
PR-int	20ms	15ms 15 ms	20 ms	16ms		15ms
ST-int	40ms	38ms 20 ms	22 ms	25ms		28ms

Figure 19: Table 4 :

219 day improvement in Biomedical field demands the comprehensive update of the software's database to include
 220 the miniature researches. And the more attractive feature could have been ^{1 2 3 4}

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221 included based on the interests of end-level users (patients). These are left open for the future.

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