

X-ray Production, X-ray Tubes
and Generators
Bushberg – Chapter 5
RSNA & AAPM Physics Curriculum: Module 6

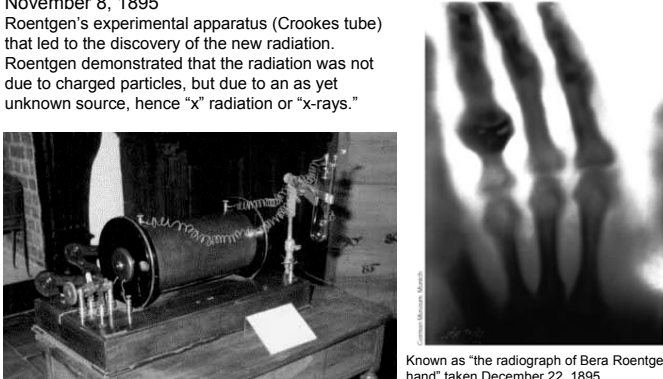
Renée Dickinson, MS
Medical Physicist, Diagnostic Physics

a copy of this lecture may be found at:
<http://courses.washington.edu/radxphys/PhysicsCourse.html>

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 1

X-rays – the Basic Radiological Tool

November 8, 1895
Roentgen's experimental apparatus (Crookes tube) that led to the discovery of the new radiation. Roentgen demonstrated that the radiation was not due to charged particles, but due to an as yet unknown source, hence "x" radiation or "x-rays."



Known as "the radiograph of Bera Roentgen's hand" taken December 22, 1895

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 2

AAPM / RSNA Physics Curriculum Module 6: X-Ray Production: Fundamental Knowledge

- Describe the 2 mechanisms by which energetic electrons produce x-rays and the energy distribution for each mechanism of x-ray production.
- Describe the function of the cathode and anode of an x-ray tube and how variations in their design influence x-ray production.
- Describe how the controls of an x-ray system affect the technique factors used in diagnostic imaging.
- Define the attributes of an x-ray beam including the function of filtration, spectrum of energies produced, and beam restriction.
- Describe the heel effect and how it can be used to improve clinical radiographs.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 3

Module 6: X-Ray Production: Clinical Application

- Demonstrate how the x-ray tube design, target material, beam filtration, and focal spot size are optimized for a specific imaging task (e.g. mammography, interventional imaging, CT)

Module 6: X-Ray Production: Clinical Problem Solving

- Analyze how changes in the x-ray system components change the image quality and dose for different procedures.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 4

Module 6: X-Ray Production: Fundamental Knowledge

- Describe the 2 mechanisms by which energetic electrons produce x-rays and the energy distribution for each mechanism of x-ray production.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 5

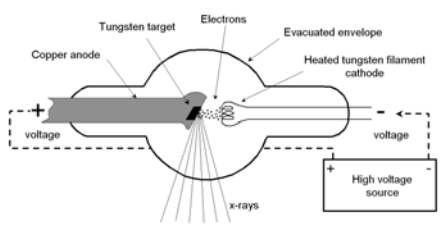
Review – Interaction with Matter (Ch. 3)

- X-ray and γ -ray interactions:
 - ...how the ionizing radiation we've already made interacts with the human body to form an image...
 - Rayleigh scatter
 - Compton scatter
 - Photoelectric absorption
 - Pair production
- Particle interactions
 - Excitation
 - Ionization
 - Radiative losses – Bremsstrahlung

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 6

Basic X-ray Production

- Electron source – cathode
- Target – Anode
- Evacuated path for the e-s to travel through – x-ray tube insert
- External energy source to accelerate the e-s – generator



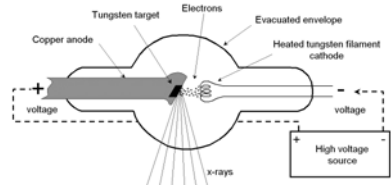
c.f. Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 98. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 7

Basic X-ray Production

- Electron interactions with the anode (target) produce:
 - Heat – the kinetic energy (KE) of the electron deposits its energy in the form of heat
 - Collision-like interactions with atoms (KE incident $e^- < BE$ orbital e^-)
 - Accounts for the majority of the interactions with the target (~99%)
 - Only ~1% of the electron interactions result in x-rays production
 - Bremsstrahlung – continuous energy spectrum
 - Coulomb interactions
 - Characteristic x-rays – discrete energies
 - Incident e^- collision with orbital e^- (KE incident $e^- > BE$ orbital e^-)

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 8

X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process



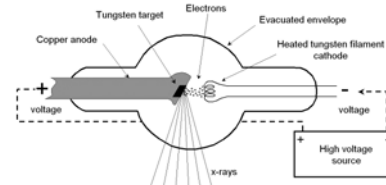
- o Cathode – source of e⁻s; negatively charged electrode
- o Anode – target for e⁻s; positively charged electrode
- o A large potential difference (kilovoltage potential – kVp) is applied across the two electrodes in an evacuated envelope (x-ray tube insert)

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 98.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

9

X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process



- o e⁻s released from the cathode gain KE as they are accelerated towards the anode
 - Energy of the e⁻s is expressed in keV (kilo electron volt)
 - The KE of the e⁻ is proportional to kVp (peak kilovoltage)
 - e.g. energies of electrons accelerated by potential differences of 20 and 100 kVp are 20 and 100 keV, respectively

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 98.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

10

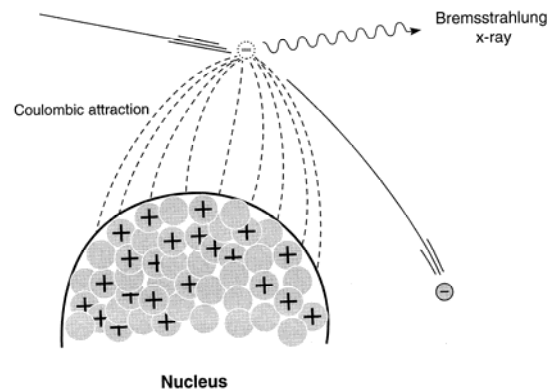
X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process

- o Target nucleus positive charge (Z·p⁺) attracts incident e⁻ (Coulomb interaction)
- o Deceleration of an incident e⁻ occurs in the proximity of the target atom nucleus
- o Conservation of Energy (Law of Physics)
 - E lost by e⁻ gained by the EM photon (x-ray) generated
 - Coulomb force of attraction varies strongly with distance ($\propto 1/r^2$)
- o X-rays that are produced by the conversion of the incident electron KE into EM radiation is known as *Bremsstrahlung* (German: “braking radiation”)

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

11

X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process



...the incident electrons on the target anode create radiative xrays

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 35.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

12

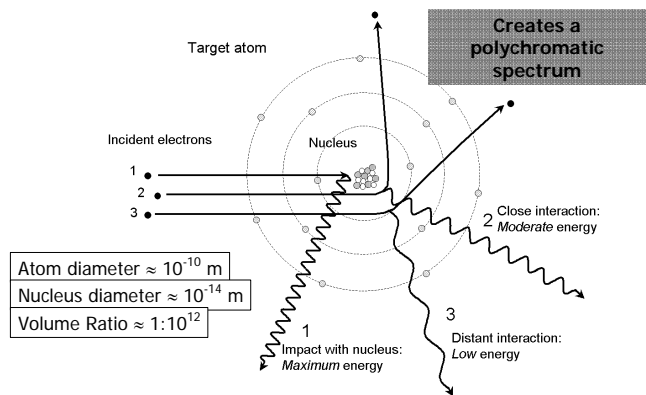
**X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process**

- o Coulomb force of attraction varies strongly with distance ($\propto 1/r^2$)
- o Impact parameter distance – the closest approach to the nucleus by the e^- – determines the amount of energy lost by the incident electron
 - \downarrow distance – \uparrow amount of E lost by incident e^- and \uparrow photon E
 - Direct impact on the nucleus (rarest event) determines the maximum x-ray E (E_{max})

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

13

**X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process**



c.f. Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 99.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

14

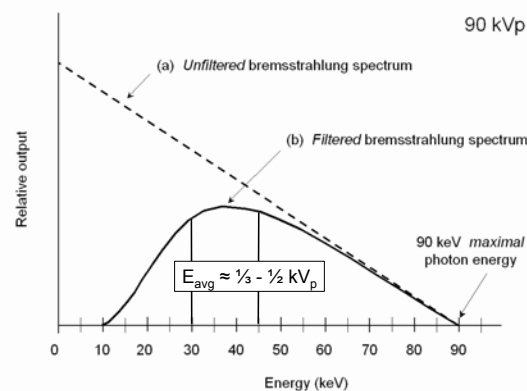
**X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process**

- o The unfiltered energy spectrum is *polychromatic*
 - Contains a large number of very low E photons
 - The spectrum \downarrow approximately linearly as photon E \uparrow due to the higher probability of a large impact parameter distance
 - The peak voltage (kVp) applied across the electrodes of the x-ray tube determines the highest x-ray E (E_{max})
 - The lowest E of the unfiltered x-ray spectrum is not easily determined, due to severe attenuation of these photons by the material and thickness of the x-ray tube envelope
- o All diagnostic x-ray equipment have filters
 - Preferentially remove low-energy x-rays (dose contribution)
 - Average x-ray energy is $\sim 1/3$ to $1/2 E_{max}$

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

15

**X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process**



c.f. Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 99.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

16

X-ray Production:
 The Bremsstrahlung Process



- o X-ray production efficiency is influenced by the target atomic number (Z) and acceleration potential (kVp)
 - Efficiency is the ratio of the radiative energy loss to collisional energy loss

$$\text{X-ray efficiency} \approx E_{\text{max}} \cdot Z \cdot 10^{-6}$$

$$I(E_i) = k \cdot Z \cdot (E_{\text{max}} - E_i)$$

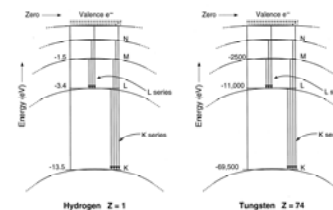
- o Example:
 - Diagnostic – 100-keV electrons impinging on tungsten (Z = 74)
 - o X-ray production ~ 0.7%
 - Therapeutic – 6-MeV electrons, tungsten target
 - o X-ray production ~ 44%

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

17

X-ray Production:
 Characteristic X-ray Spectrum

- o Recall: orbital e⁻ binding energy (BE) depend on Z
 - $BE_K \propto Z^2$
 - Additionally, $BE_K > BE_L > BE_M > \dots$
- o If e⁻(KE) incident on the target exceeds the target atom e⁻(BE), it's energetically possible for a collisional interaction to eject the bound electron and ionize the atom



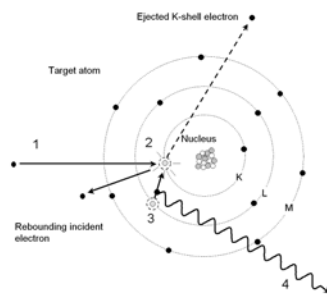
c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 22.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

18

X-ray Production:
 Characteristic X-ray Spectrum

- o Unfilled inner shells are energetically unstable
- o An outer shell e⁻ with lesser BE fills inner shell vacancy
- o As e⁻ transitions to a lower E state, the excess E can be released as a characteristic x-ray photon with E equal to the difference between the BE of the e⁻ shells
- o As BE are unique to a given element (Z), the emitted x-rays have discrete energies characteristic of that element



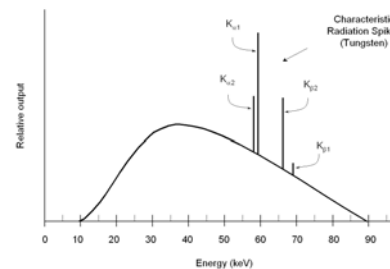
c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 101.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

19

X-ray Production:
 Characteristic X-ray Spectrum

- o Characteristic x-rays are shown as discrete E lines superimposed on the continuous bremsstrahlung spectrum
- o Example shown: The filtered energy spectrum, 90 kVp potential difference ($E_{\text{avg}} = 30\text{-}45 \text{ keV}$) and tungsten target.
 - A variety of E transitions occur from adjacent (α) and non-adjacent (β) e⁻ shells – K_{β} x-rays are more energetic than K_{α} x-rays



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 101.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

20

X-ray Production:
 Characteristic X-ray Spectrum



TABLE 5-1. ELECTRON BINDING ENERGIES (keV) OF COMMON X-RAY TUBE TARGET MATERIALS

Electron Shell	Tungsten	Molybdenum	Rhodium
K	69.5	20.0	23.2
L	12.1/11.5/10.2	2.8/2.6/2.5	3.4/3.1/3.0
M	2.8-1.9	0.5-0.4	0.6-0.2

- The target materials used in x-ray tubes for diagnostic medical imaging include:
 - W (Z=74) – general radiography
 - Mo (Z=42) – mammography
 - Rh (Z=45) – mammography
- Within each shell (other than K) there are discrete E orbitals ($\ell = 0, 1, \dots, n-1$) resulting in a fine E splitting of the characteristic x-rays

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 100.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Production:
 Characteristic X-ray Spectrum



- Characteristic x-rays other than those generated through K-shell transitions are not important in Dx imaging
 - Other transitions – characteristic x-ray energies almost entirely attenuated by the x-ray tube window or added filtration
- K-shell characteristic x-rays only occur if the KE of the incident e^- is greater than the BE of the e^- s in the K-shell (e.g. kVp > 69.5 for W)
- As the E of the incident e^- increases above the threshold E for characteristic x-ray production, the % of characteristic x-rays \uparrow
 - Example: for W target: 5% @ 80 kVp vs. 10% @ 100 kVp

TABLE 5-2. K-SHELL CHARACTERISTIC X-RAY ENERGIES (keV) OF COMMON X-RAY TUBE TARGET MATERIALS*

Shell Transition	Tungsten	Molybdenum	Rhodium
K _{K1}	59.32	17.48	20.22
K _{K2}	57.98	17.37	20.07
K _{K3}	67.24	19.61	22.72

*Note: Only prominent transitions are listed.

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 102.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 101.

Module 6: X-Ray Production: Fundamental Knowledge

- Describe the function of the cathode and anode of an x-ray tube and how variations in their design influence x-ray production.
- Describe the heel effect and how it can be used to improve clinical radiographs.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-rays – the Basic Radiological Tool

- Each part of the x-ray tube is essential to create the environment necessary to produce x-rays via
 - Bremsstrahlung
 - Characteristic x-rays
- The potential difference (kVp), tube current (mA), and exposure time (sec) are selectable parameters to determine the x-ray spectrum characteristics (quality and quantity of x-ray photons)



© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Tube

- o Tube insert – cathode, anode, rotor assembly, support structures
- o Tube housing – oil bath (heat conduction, electrical insulation), bellows (oil expansion), lead shielding (leakage radiation < 100 mR/hour @ 1 m when operated at max. settings)

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 103. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Tube: Cathode – Filament

- o Cathode – e⁻ source
 - Helical tungsten wire filament
 - o Traces of thorium – prolong filament life and increase electron emission efficiency
 - Filament is surrounded by a focusing cup
- o Filament circuit: 10V, 7A
- o Electrical resistance heats the filament and releases e⁻ via thermionic emission (“electron cloud”)
 - Lights up – incandescence – light bulb
- o Filament current adjustments controls tube current (rate of e⁻ flow from cathode to anode - mA)

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Tube: Cathode – Focusing Cup

- o Focusing cup slot width determines the focal spot (FS) width
- o Filament length determines FS length
- o Small and large FS filaments (power loading)
 - Typical Dx focal spot sizes – 0.6 mm and 1.2 mm
 - Choice in FS usually predetermined – “threshold” technique that the FS size switches

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., pp. 104. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

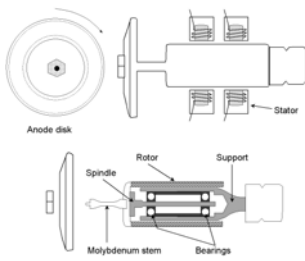
X-ray Tube: Cathode – Space Charge Limitation

- o Filament current (A)
 - Electrical resistance heats the filament (T ↑) increases thermionic emission rate
- o If kVp = 0 applied, an e⁻ cloud forms around the filament (space charge cloud)
- o If kVp applied → tube current forms b/c e⁻s attracted to anode
 - For ≤ 40 kVp: space charge cloud shields the electric field → only some e⁻ are accelerated towards the anode: space charge limited (upper limit on tube current)
 - For > 40 kVp: space charge cloud effect overcome by applied kVp → tube current only limited by the emission of e⁻ from the filament: emission-limited operation
- o Tube current (usually mA) about 5-10 times less than the filament current in the emission-limited range

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., pp. 105. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

**X-ray Tube:
 Anode Configuration**

- High melting point (heat production) & high atomic number (bremsstrahlung production)
 - Gen rad – tungsten (W, Z = 74) (10% rhenium)
 - Mammo – Molybdenum (Mo, Z = 42) and Rhodium (Rh, Z = 45)
- Fixed anode
 - W target embedded in Cu
 - Dental x-ray, portables, c-arms
- Rotating anode – better heat dissipation
- Induction motor – stator (series of electromagnets) and rotor
 - Rotor bearings are heat sensitive; Mo stem (poor heat conductor) isolates anode → anodes cools through radiative emission, heat transfers to oil bath of tube insert

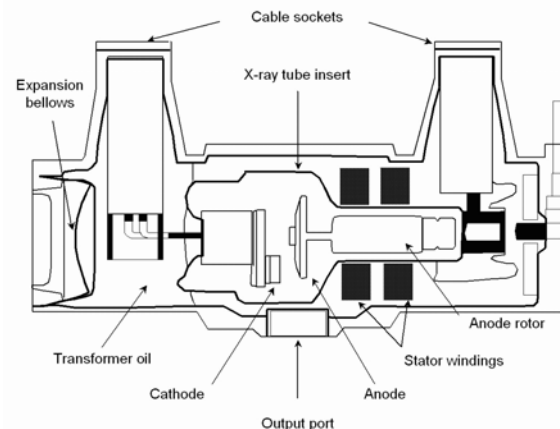


c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 107.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

29

X-ray Tube



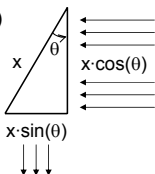
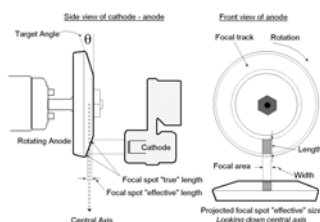
c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 103.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

30

**X-ray Tube:
 Anode Configuration – Angle and Focal Size**

- Anode angle (θ) range : $7^\circ - 20^\circ$
- Actual focal spot (FS) – defined by filament length and focusing cup (width)
 - FS width not affected by anode angle, therefore effective FS width equals actual FS width
 - Effective FS length is less than actual FS length (length of filament)**
- Foreshortening of FS length (line focus principle)
 - Effective FS size = length and width of the FS projected along the central axis of the x-ray field
 - Effective FS = Actual FS $\cdot \sin \theta$
- Smaller FS → improved spatial resolution



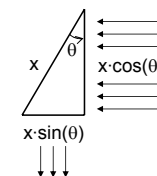
c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 108-109.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

31

**X-ray Tube:
 Anode Configuration – Angle and Focal Size**

- Diagram A: Large anode angle, Small filament length. Good field coverage, Small effective focal spot, Poor power loading.
 - Diagram B: Large anode angle, Long filament length. Good field coverage, Large effective focal spot, Good power loading.
 - Diagram C: Small anode angle, Long filament length. Poor field coverage, Small effective focal spot, Good power loading.
- $\uparrow \theta \rightarrow \uparrow$ apparent focal spot size (B and C)
 - $\uparrow \theta \rightarrow \uparrow$ heat loading
 - $\uparrow \theta \rightarrow \uparrow$ field coverage (compare B and C)
 - 7-9 degrees – small FOV clinical apps (fluoro II size and SID limitations)
 - 12-15 degrees – gen rad apps w/short FS-to-image distance (e.g. 40")



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 108-109.

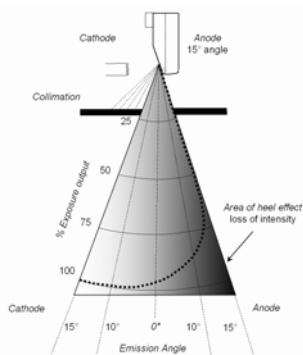
© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

32

X-ray Tube:

Anode Configuration – Heel Effect

- o Reduction of x-ray beam intensity towards the anode side of the x-ray field
- o Although x-rays generated isotropically at depth on interaction
 - Self-filtration by the anode
 - Anode bevel causes greater intensity on the cathode side of the x-ray field
- o Use to advantage
 - PA chest exposure – orient chest to anode and abdomen to cathode
 - Mammo – orient nipple to anode and chest wall to cathode
- o Less pronounced as SID ↑



c.f. Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 112.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

33

Module 6: X-Ray Production: Fundamental Knowledge

- o Define the attributes of an x-ray beam including the function of filtration, spectrum of energies produced, and beam restriction.

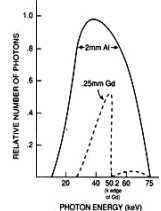
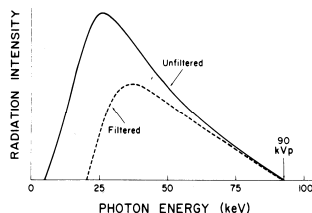
© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

34

X-ray Tube:

Filtration

- o Filtration: x-ray attenuation as beam passes through a layer of material
- o Inherent filtration
 - Glass or metal insert at x-ray tube port (attenuate < 15 keV)
- o Added filtration
 - Sheets of metal intentionally placed in the beam (in x-ray tube housing)
 - o Common – Al, Cu, plastic, Mo, Rh
 - Absorb low-energy x-rays, reduce patient dose
 - ↑ beam quality
- o HVL – half value layer (mm Al)
 - Indirect measure of effective energy of x-ray beam
 - US – CFR Title 21 compliance – minimum HVL



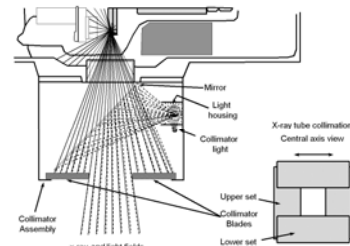
c.f. Curry, et al., Christensen's Physics of Diagnostic Radiology, 4th ed., pp. 89, 91.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

35

X-ray Tube:

Collimation



- o Collimators adjust size and shape of x-ray beam
- o Parallel-opposed lead shutters
- o Light field mimics x-ray field (CFR Title 21 Regs)
- o Reduces dose to patient; ALARA: as low as reasonably achievable
- o Limited irradiated field → reduced scatter radiation to image receptor → improved image contrast
- o Positive beam limitation (PBL) – auto beam collimation (CFR Title 21 Regs)

c.f. Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 115.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

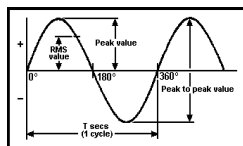
36

X-ray Generators – Function

- We need to power our x-ray tube – need kVp power to initialize bremsstrahlung production
- Alternating currents (AC) vs direct currents (DC)
 - 1880's – “War of Currents”
 - Thomas Edison (inventor)
 - vs
 - George Westinghouse (entrepreneur)
 - Nikola Tesla (inventor – basic design of modern AC power system)



- AC (current reverses direction cyclically) – **electricity**
 - Sinusoidal wave
 - Transformers

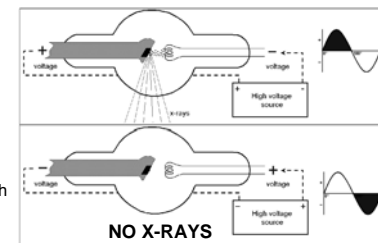


c.f.: <http://www.ukradioamateur.org/full/gfx/dwg/#2-3.gif>

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Generators – Function

- US outlets
 - 120 volts (V), 60 Hertz (Hz where Hz = cycles per second)
- To make x-rays, we need **KILOVOLTAGE**, plus those **CYCLES** are a problem too... Normal power supply just won't cut it for “efficient” x-ray production! (120 v → kVp to make x-rays)
- Generator parts:
 - Input power supply
 - Transformers – V to kV
 - Autotransformers – fine kV selection
 - Diodes and Triodes
 - Current control
 - Rectifier circuit to utilize both positive and negative of alternating current
 - Multi-phase inputs...

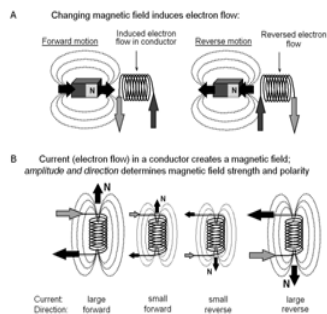


c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 98. (MODIFIED)

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Generators – Components & Design Electromagnetic (EM) Induction

- EM induction is a reciprocal b/w electric and magnetic fields
- A changing magnetic field induces a potential difference in a coil of wire which causes a current (I) to flow in the coil
 - I is also proportional to B
- An electrical current (I) produces a magnetic field (B)
 - The magnitude and polarity of B is proportional to magnitude and direction of I



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 117.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Generators – Components & Design Electromagnetic (EM) Induction

- From Maxwell's EM equations
- A time changing magnetic field (dB/dt) induces a potential difference (voltage) in a coil of wire (solenoid) which causes a current (I) to flow in the coil:
 - $I \propto dB/dt$ – **Faraday's Law**
- Causing a potential (voltage) difference between the ends of the solenoid causes a current (I) to flow which produces a static magnetic field (B):
 - $B \propto I$ – **Ampere's Law**

Maxwell's Equations

$\oiint \mathbf{E} \cdot \mathbf{n} \, dS = \frac{q}{\epsilon_0}$	Gauss's Law	
$\oiint \mathbf{B} \cdot \mathbf{n} \, dS = 0$	(no monopoles)	
$\oint \mathbf{B} \cdot d\mathbf{l} = \mu_0 (i + \epsilon_0 \frac{d\Phi_E}{dt})$	Ampere's Law	
$\oint \mathbf{E} \cdot d\mathbf{l} = -\frac{d\Phi_B}{dt}$	Faraday's Law	
$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{E} = \frac{\rho}{\epsilon_0}$		$\nabla \times \mathbf{B} = \mu_0 (\mathbf{j} + \epsilon_0 \frac{d\mathbf{E}}{dt})$
$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$		$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{d\mathbf{B}}{dt}$

(Differential Forms)

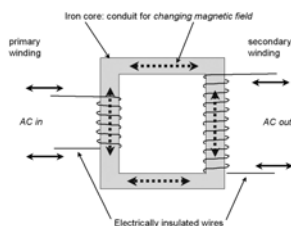
c.f.: <http://www.physics.hmc.edu/courses/Ph51maxwell.gf>

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

X-ray Generators – Components & Design Voltage Transformation (EM Induction)

- “Transformation” of an alternating input voltage into an alternating output voltage (using the principles of EM induction)

- EM induction occurs when AC current in primary winding induces B in the iron core
- B permeates the core and induces a current in the secondary winding



- Alternating voltages are sinusoidal

- $V_p(t) = V_p \sin(2\pi ft)$ and
- $B(t) = B \sin(2\pi ft)$

- Magnitudes of V_p and V_s depend on the ratio of the number of primary (N_p) and secondary (N_s) transformer windings

- Superimposition of B from adjacent turns
- Law of Transformers – dictates output voltage/current
 - Step-up transformer – $N_p < N_s$
 - Step-down transformer – $N_p > N_s$
 - Isolation transformer – $N_p = N_s$

$$\frac{V_p}{V_s} = \frac{N_p}{N_s}$$

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 117.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

c.f.: <http://www.ukradioamateur.org/full/gfx/dwg/f2-3.gif>

X-ray Generators – Components & Design Voltage Transformation (EM Induction)

- Ideal transformers – power input equals power output

$$P[\text{watt}] = I \left[\frac{\text{C}}{\text{s}} \right] \cdot V \left[\frac{\text{J}}{\text{C}} \right]$$

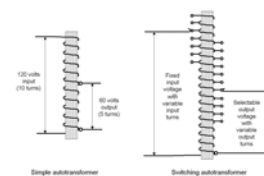
$$\text{Therefore, } 1 \text{ watt} = 1 \frac{\text{J}}{\text{s}}$$

$$V_p \cdot I_p = V_s \cdot I_s$$

- Center tapping to ground – limits max voltage to 1/2 the peak voltage; reduces electrical insulation requirements and improves electrical safety

- Autotransformers – iron core wrapped with a single wire; self-induction rather than mutual induction

- Conducting taps allow the input to output turns to vary, resulting in small incremental change between input and output voltages
- A switching autotransformer allows a greater range of input to output values



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 117.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

c.f.: <http://www.ukradioamateur.org/full/gfx/dwg/f2-3.gif>

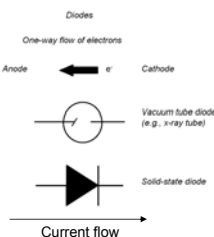
X-ray Generators – Components & Design Diodes and Triodes (current control in a circuit)

- Diodes – e⁻ flow in only a single direction
 - Vacuum tube (e.g. x-ray tube) or solid-state device (silicon or germanium with impurities)
 - Two electrodes (cathode, anode)

- Triodes – e⁻ flow in single direction with on/off function

- e.g. cathode cup
- Two electrodes PLUS additional electrode used as a “switch”

- Note : current flows in direction of “positive charge,” therefore, the direction of e⁻ flow is opposite of current flow in an electrical circuit



- Recall – x-ray tube is a diode; during negative cycle, NO x-rays!

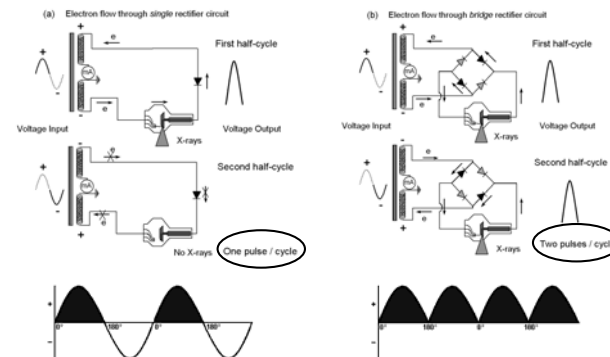
c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 121.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

43

X-ray Generators – Components Diodes and Triodes (current control in a circuit)

- Rectifier Circuit – utilize both positive and negative cycle of input voltage



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 125.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

44

X-ray Generators – Circuit Design

Single and Three Phase Generators (rectified)

- Single-phase (1 ϕ) generator
 - Tube current for specific filament current non-linear below 40 keV due to space charge effect
 - Cable capacitance smoothes
 - Minimum exposure time = 1/120th sec
- Three-phase (3 ϕ) generator
 - Three single phase waveforms
 - Out of phase by 120 degrees
 - Higher effective voltage
 - Greater control over exposure timing

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., pp. 127-128. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 45

X-ray Generators – Circuit Design

High Frequency Inverter Generator

- Contemporary, state-of-the-art
- High frequency alternative waveform (up to 50 kHz)
- Most efficient, more compact and less costly to manufacture
- Induced voltage in a transformer also a function of the frequency
 - $V \propto (dB/dt) \propto f \cdot N \cdot \sigma_{area}$
 - not as many windings needed → smaller form factor
- Also constant-potential generator
 - Provides nearly constant voltage to the x-ray tube
 - Replaced with high frequency, inverter generator

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 130. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 46

X-ray Generators – Circuit Design

Voltage Ripple and Root-Mean-Square Voltage

- % voltage ripple (VR) = $(V_{max} - V_{min}) / V_{max} \cdot 100\%$
- Root-mean-square voltage: (V_{rms})
 - The constant voltage that would deliver the same power as the time-varying voltage waveform
- As %VR ↓, the V_{rms} ↑
- High ripple factor generators:
 - Low voltage → low E x-rays
 - ↑ patient dose
 - ↑ exposure time

Generator type	Typical voltage waveform	kV ripple
Single-phase 1-pulse (self rectified)		100%
Single-phase 2-pulse (full wave rectified)		100%
3-phase 6-pulse		13% - 25%
3-phase 12-pulse		3% - 10%
Medium-high frequency inverter		4% - 15%
Constant Potential		<2%

c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., pp. 132 and 138. © UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 47

Module 6: X-Ray Production: Fundamental Knowledge

- Describe how the controls of an x-ray system affect the technique factors used in diagnostic imaging.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS 48

Operator Console Technologist

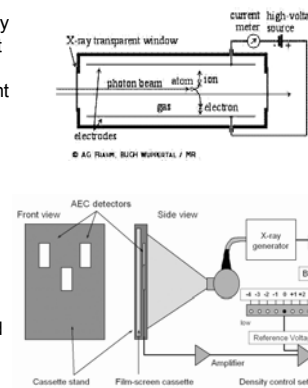
- The operator selects the peak kilovoltage (kVp), the tube current (mA), the exposure time (sec) and focal spot size**
- The kVp determines the x-ray beam quality (penetrability) which plays a role in subject contrast
- The x-ray tube current (mA) determines the x-ray fluence rate (photons/cm²-sec) emitted by the x-ray tube at a given kVp
 - $mAs = mA \cdot sec$ (exposure time) \propto photons/cm² (fluence)
- **Low mA selections allow the small focal spot size to be used and higher mA settings require the use of large focal spot size due to anode heating considerations

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

49

Operator Console Phototimers

- Although a technologist can manually time the x-ray exposure (set filament mA and exposure time or the mAs), phototimers help provide a consistent exposure to the image receptor
- Ionization chambers produce a current that induces a voltage difference in an electronic circuit
- Tech chooses kVp; the x-ray tube current terminates when induced voltage equals a reference voltage
- Phototimers are set for only a limited number of exposure levels, thus +/- settings



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., p. 134.

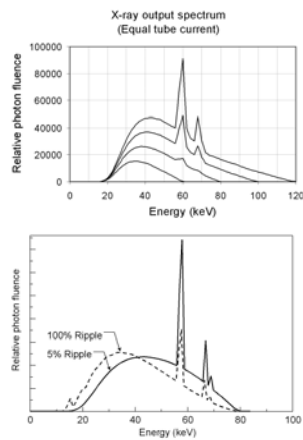
© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

50

Factors Affecting X-ray Emission Quality and Quantity

- Quantity = number of x-rays in beam
 - $\propto Z_{\text{target}} \cdot (kVp)^2 \cdot mAs$
- Quality = penetrability of x-ray beam and depends on:
 - kVp
 - generator waveform (%VR)
 - tube filtration (mm Al)
- Exposure depends on both quantity and quality
 - Changes in kVp can be compensated by changes in mAs to maintain the same exposure:

$$kVp_1^5 \cdot mAs_1 = kVp_2^5 \cdot mAs_2$$



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., pp. 136 and 137.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

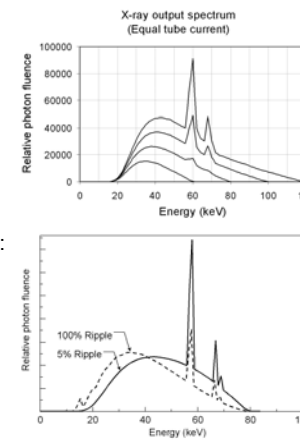
51

Factors Affecting X-ray Emission Quality and Quantity

- Change from 60 kVp to 80 kVp:
 - $\left(\frac{kVp_2}{kVp_1}\right)^2 = \left(\frac{80}{60}\right)^2 \cong 1.78$
 - Increases the dose 78%
- Adjust the technique to maintain the same exposure (i.e. dose) as the original technique (60 kVp, 40 mAs):

$$\left(\frac{kVp_2}{kVp_1}\right)^5 \cdot mAs_1 = \left(\frac{80 kVp}{60 kVp}\right)^2 \cdot 40 mAs \cong 9.5 mAs$$

$$kVp_1^5 \cdot mAs_1 = kVp_2^5 \cdot mAs_2$$



c.f.: Bushberg, et al., The Essential Physics of Medical Imaging, 2nd ed., pp. 136 and 137.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

52

Raphex 2000 General Question



- o **G36.** The ratio of heat to x-rays (heat : x-rays) produced in a typical diagnostic target is:
 - A. 1 : 99
 - B. 10 : 90
 - C. 50 : 50
 - D. 90 : 10
 - E. 99 : 1

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

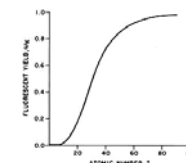
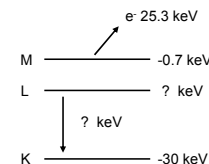
53

Raphex 2000 General Question



- o **G37.** Consider an atom with the following binding energies: K-shell, 30 keV; M-shell, 0.7 keV. An electron with a kinetic energy of 25.3 keV is ejected from the M-shell as an Auger electron following L to K transition. The binding energy of the L-shell electron is _____ keV.

- A. 1.4
- B. 4.0
- C. 4.7
- D. 15.0
- E. 29.3



- $E = 25.3 + 0.7 = 26$ keV where E is equal to the difference between the binding energies of the K- and L-shells.
- 26 keV = $BE_K - BE_L = 30$ keV - BE_L ; $BE_L = 4$ keV.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

54

Raphex 2002 General Question



- o **G40.** Tungsten has the following binding energies: K = 69 keV, L = 12 keV, M = 2 keV. A 68 keV electron striking a tungsten target could cause emission of which of the following photons?
 - 1. 66 keV characteristic x-ray.
 - 2. 57 keV bremsstrahlung.
 - 3. 57 keV characteristic x-ray.
 - 4. 10 keV characteristic x-ray.
 - A. 1, 2, 3 and 4
 - B. 1, 3
 - C. 2, 4
 - D. 4 only

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

55

Raphex 2003 General Question



- o **G35.** Two filaments are found in some x-ray tubes. The purpose is to:
 - A. Function as a spare in case one filament burns out.
 - B. Produce higher tube currents by using both filaments simultaneously.
 - C. Double the number of heat units that the target can accept.
 - D. Enable the smallest focal spot to be used, consistent with the kVp/mA setting.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

56

Raphex 2000 General Question



- o **G41.** All of the following affect the shape of the x-ray spectrum **except**:
 - A. The added filtration.
 - B. The type of rectification used in the x-ray circuit.
 - C. The speed of rotation of the anode.
 - D. The energy of the electrons hitting the target.
 - E. The composition of the x-ray target.

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

57

Raphex 2003 General Question



- o **G41.** The quality of an x-ray beam cannot be characterized only in terms of the kVp, because beams with the same kVp may have different _____ .
 - A. Filtration
 - B. Half-value layers
 - C. Maximum wavelengths
 - D. Target materials
 - E. All of the above

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

58

Raphex-like Diagnostic Question



- o A CT scanner is operated at 120 kVp and 200 mA. Scans are 1 second in duration. If the anode heat storage capacity of the x-ray tube is 2.4 MJ, how many consecutive CT slices can be taken safely without overheating the tube?
 - A. 40
 - B. 60
 - C. 80
 - D. 100
 - E. 120
- o 1 slice = 120 kVp · 200 mA · 1 sec = 24,000 J = 24 kJ
- o 2.4 MJ = 2400 kJ; 2400 kJ/24kJ = 100 slices

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

59

Raphex 2002 General Question



- o **G39.** In an x-ray machine with a tungsten target, increasing the kVp from 100 to 125 will increase all of the following **except**:
 - A. The total number of x-rays emitted.
 - B. The maximum energy of the x-rays.
 - C. The average energy of the spectrum.
 - D. The energy of the characteristic x-rays.
 - E. The heat units generated (for the same mAs).

© UW and Renée Dickinson, MS

60