

光学相干弹性成像评估 SMILE 术后角膜弹性的有限元分析

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摘要 飞秒激光小切口角膜基质透镜切除术(SMILE)是一种先进的角膜屈光手术,其以微创、无瓣、小切口的特点而受到广泛关注。现阶段对 SMILE 术后角膜弹性变化的定量研究存在争议。本研究旨在利用有限元法定量分析矫正屈光度及角膜帽厚度对光学相干弹性成像(OCE)测量的角膜弹性参数的影响。有限元结果表明:随着矫正屈光度从 0 D($1\text{ D}=1\text{ m}^{-1}$)变化到 -6 D,杨氏模量的模拟值增大了 192.26%;当角膜帽厚度由 80 μm 增大到 160 μm 时,杨氏模量的模拟值增大了 11.66%(-3 D)和 13.07%(-6 D)。OCE 实验结果表明,矫正屈光度为 -6 D 时的杨氏模量测量值相较于 -3 D 矫正屈光度时增大了 94.55%。有限元分析与 OCE 实验结果均显示,矫正屈光度与 SMILE 术后角膜杨氏模量呈正相关。此外,术后角膜弹性模量随角膜帽厚度的增加而增大,但角膜帽厚度对弹性模量的影响但远小于矫正屈光度对弹性模量的影响。利用有限元法可以实现角膜弹性的精准量化,这不仅可为临床表征弹性模量提供参考,还可为实验测量角膜弹性提供理论指导。

关键词 光学相干弹性成像; 弹性模量; 有限元; 小切口角膜基质透镜切除术; 矫正屈光度; 角膜帽厚度

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1 引言

飞秒激光小切口角膜基质透镜切除术(SMILE)是当下一种主流的屈光手术。该手术可以保持角膜前基质层的完整性,因此在维持角膜生物力学稳定性方面具有一定优势^[1]。在 SMILE 过程中,先用飞秒激光切削角膜,制作出屈光透镜,然后再将透镜取出,便可达到屈光矫正的目的^[2]。但是,取出屈光透镜会降低角膜的生物力学强度,当其强度小于维持其形状所需的阈值时,角膜扩张就会发生^[3]。因此,探讨 SMILE 术后角膜的生物力学特性变化成为屈光手术领域的研究热点。弹性模量是影响角膜生物力学特性变化的主要因素之一^[4-5]。一些术后并发症的出现表明手术会改变角膜的生物弹性力学分布,甚至会破坏角膜稳态,导致屈光矫正不准或者带来二次风险^[6]。术前对病人角膜进行弹性力学评估,根据其弹性分布来判断适合患者的屈光手术以及相应的手术参数是必要的。而且,术后角膜力学分布检测可为屈光手术的风险评估、改进与发展提供重要的科学依据^[7-9]。

目前,有许多研究表明 SMILE 术后角膜弹性模量会发生变化。但是,由于患者个体性差异,并且临床上

所取出的屈光透镜及角膜帽厚度均有所不同,因此,对于 SMILE 术后角膜弹性的量化仍缺乏相关研究^[10-13]。

有限元法是用来研究人体组织生物力学特性的常用方法。Kling 等^[14]通过光学相干断层扫描和有限元法来确定角膜组织的生物力学特性。Han 等^[15]对角膜类样品进行光学相干弹性成像(OCE)有限元模拟和实验研究,验证了角膜后表面与房水之间的流体-结构界面会显著降低弹性波的速度。Li 等^[16]利用超声弹性成像结合有限元模拟评估眼球各组织的生物力学特性,结果表明,角膜、虹膜等组织与眼内压之间呈线性关系。Fang 等^[17]利用有限元法对 SMILE 术中不同厚度角膜帽的生物力学特性进行模拟,结果发现不同厚度角膜帽的生物力学特性差异较小。目前,鲜有学者用有限元法对 SMILE 术后角膜弹性进行量化。因此,矫正屈光度以及角膜帽厚度对 SMILE 术后角膜弹性的影响值得进一步研究。

OCE 是体内测量角膜弹性模量的常用方法之一,目前,该技术已迅速发展成为一种无创和定量的生物力学成像技术^[18]。Qu 等^[19]利用声辐射力光学相干弹性成像(ARF-OCE)评估了兔角膜的生物力学特性。Zhao 等^[20]利用 ARF-OCE 对人眼进行了体外实验,所

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得人眼弹性模量与其他方法的结果吻合良好,表明 ARF-OCE 是一种重建角膜弹性的有效方法。Han 等^[21]提出了一种将 ARF-OCE 与改进的相速度算法相结合的方法,并用该方法测量了不同眼压水平下飞秒激光辅助的准分子激光原位角膜磨镶术(FS-LASIK)后兔角膜的弹性分布图。

本团队使用有限元法对剪切波弹性成像实验进行模拟研究,构建了兔眼 SMILE 术后的三维个性化有限元模型,计算了 SMILE 术后角膜的二维空间分布速度图,实现了角膜局部弹性的精准量化,探寻了不同矫正屈光度及角膜帽厚度下角膜弹性的变化,并通过实验验证了 SMILE 术后角膜弹性的变化。本研究对于临床实践及实验测量角膜弹性具有指导意义。

2 材料和方法

2.1 兔眼几何模型

SMILE 术前后的临床资料均来自眼科医院。本研究采用的数据是 Corvis ST、角膜地形图仪等设备的测量数据。眼球模型的几何参数如表 1 所示,其中 $R_{f(x)}$ 、 $R_{f(y)}$ 和 $R_{f(z)}$ 分别表示角膜在 x 、 y 和 z 方向上的曲率半径,CCT 为中央角膜厚度。使用 Unigraphics NX 12.0 对兔眼进行建模,采用参数法建模,构建兔眼术前

的三维几何模型。其中:晶状体根据直径、厚度等参数构建;在晶状体外围构建厚度为 1 mm 的睫状体,通过睫状体将晶状体与眼球内壁相连^[22-23]。

表 1 眼球模型的几何参数

Table 1 Geometric parameters of the eyeball model

Parameter	Value
CCT / μm	338
Axial length / mm	16.8495
$R_{f(x)}$ / mm	6.78 (anterior)
	6.33 (posterior)
$R_{f(y)}$ / mm	6.73 (anterior)
	6.14 (posterior)
$R_{f(z)}$ / mm	6.75 (anterior)
	6.23 (posterior)

利用点云数据拟合切割面和切口。点云数据根据光学区域、术前屈光度、实际屈光透镜厚度、实际帽状厚度等参数计算得到。将点云数据导入到相应建立的术前几何模型中。此外,在光学区周边制作弧形切口,取出屈光透镜后,得到个性化兔眼三维术后几何模型。兔眼术后几何模型和网格划分结果如图 1 所示。模型的上部是角膜,下部是巩膜。图中所示的内环是切割面, x 轴的正半轴垂直于切口中心。

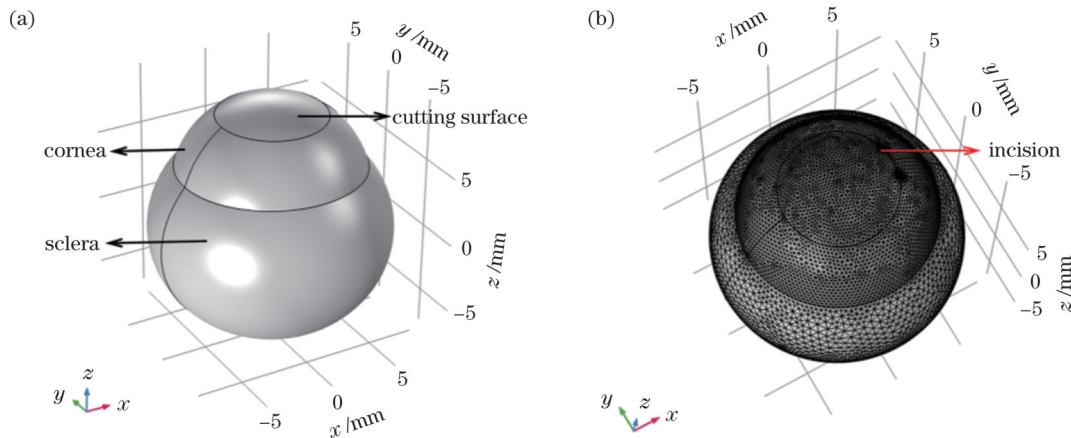


图 1 术后几何模型及网格划分结果。(a)术后几何模型;(b)术后几何模型的网格划分

Fig.1 Postoperative geometric model and mesh generation. (a) Postoperative geometric model; (b) mesh generation of the postoperative geometric model

表 2 为 11 例兔眼手术模拟参数。其中,保持角膜帽厚度相同,构建了 7 个不同矫正屈光度的 SMILE 术后模型。选取屈光度为 -3 D ($1\text{ D}=1\text{ m}^{-1}$)、 -6 D 的模型,保持屈光度相同,构建了 4 个角膜帽厚度不同的模型。值得注意的是,在临床手术中,SMILE 的安全标准也需要考虑。例如,残余间质厚度(RST)不应小于角膜中央厚度(CCT)的 60%。

2.2 兔眼材料模型

角膜具有非线性等特性。这种非线性特性可用基于 Ogden 应变能函数的超弹性材料模型来表示^[24],该

模型可以表征角膜和巩膜的超弹性、各向同性和不可压缩行为。Ogden 应变能函数表达式为

$$W = \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{G_i}{\alpha_i} (\bar{\lambda}_1^{\alpha_i} + \bar{\lambda}_2^{\alpha_i} + \bar{\lambda}_3^{\alpha_i} - 3) + \sum_{k=1}^N \frac{1}{d_k} (J - 1)^{2k} \quad (1)$$

式中: W 是应变能函数; $\bar{\lambda}_p = J^{-\frac{1}{3}} \lambda_p$ 是对应主方向的伸长率,其中 J 是弹性变形梯度的行列式; N 表示阶数; G_i 、 α_i 、 d_k 均为材料常数,表示组织的超弹性和压缩性。初始剪切模量 G 定义为

表 2 兔眼手术模拟参数
Table 2 Surgical simulation parameters of rabbit eyes

Case	Preoperative CCT / μm	Corneal cap thickness / μm	Refraction /D	Postoperative CCT / μm	Lenticule thickness / μm	RST / μm
Case 1			0	338	0	338
Case 2			-1	324	14	204
Case 3			-2	309	29	189
Case 4	338	120	-3	295	43	175
Case 5			-4	278	58	160
Case 6			-5	266	72	146
Case 7			-6	251	87	131
Case 8	338	80	-3	295	43	215
Case 9		160				135
Case 10	338	80	-6	251	87	171
Case 11		160				91

$$G = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N G_i \alpha_i \quad (2)$$

初始体积模量 k_{volume} 定义为

$$k_{\text{volume}} = \frac{2}{d_1} \quad (3)$$

为了满足级数的收敛稳定性,选择 $N=2$ 为角膜的拟合参数阶数。考虑到角膜的几乎不可压缩性,将 d_1 设为 0。基于单轴拉伸试验数据拟合得出兔眼角膜的 Ogden 二阶超弹材料参数。巩膜刚度通常是角膜刚度的 3~5 倍^[25],因此,根据 OCE 实验测得的角膜弹性值,将巩膜刚度设为角膜的 3 倍。此外,为了使模拟更接近实际生理状态,本研究考虑了晶状体、睫状体及房水等内部组织^[26-27]。兔眼各组织的材料参数如表 3 所示。

2.3 兔眼 SMILE 的 OCE 有限元模拟

利用有限元软件 COMSOL Multiphysics 5.6 模拟角膜剪切波 OCE 实验。在多物理场中选择固体力学及层流。将建立的个性化兔眼术后三维几何模型导入有限元分析软件,基于动网格与流固耦合技术将眼房水形成的压力加载到眼球内表面。眼内压设为 10 mmHg,与实验眼压保持一致;固定约束施加在巩膜后极处,模拟视神经约束。为了解析波的传播,在波的传播方向上每一波长划分 5~8 个网格单元。根据角膜、巩膜以及各内部组织的不同计算需求,设置不同的网格尺寸,采用自由四面体网格进行划分。通过分析不同疏密网格下的计算结果验证模型的收敛性。

本研究设置的激励函数为

$$F = A \left[1 - 2\pi^2 f^2 (t - a)^2 \right] \exp(-\pi^2) \quad (4)$$

式中: f 为振源的频率,设为 6500 Hz; A 为最大激励幅值, $A=50 \mu\text{m}$; $a=0.5 \text{ms}$; t 为时间。基于瞬态动力学进行计算,时间步长取 $1 \mu\text{s}$,总计算时长为 1 ms。激励源设置在角膜中心处,激励源受到瞬态激励作用后,在

表 3 模型中的材料参数
Table 3 Material parameters in the model

Region	Material model type	Constitutive parameter
Cornea	Hyperelasticity	$G_1=466.18 \text{ Pa}$
		$\alpha_1=42.85$
		$G_2=466.19 \text{ Pa}$
Sclera	Linear elasticity	$\alpha_2=42.36$
		$\rho_1=1062 \text{ kg/m}^3$
		$E_2=195.27 \text{ kPa}$
Lens	Linear elasticity	$\rho_2=1243 \text{ kg/m}^3$
		$\nu_2=0.495$
		$E_3=20 \text{ kPa}$
Ciliary body	Linear elasticity	$\rho_3=1183 \text{ kg/m}^3$
		$\nu_3=0.499$
		$E_4=357.78 \text{ MPa}$
Aqueous humor	Newtonian fluid	$\rho_4=1600 \text{ kg/m}^3$
		$\nu_4=0.47$
		$\rho_5=998 \text{ kg/m}^3$
		$\eta=0.00103 \text{ Pa}\cdot\text{s}$

Notes: G denotes shear modulus; α denotes material constant; ρ denotes density; E denotes Young's modulus; ν denotes Poisson's ratio; η denotes dynamic viscosity.

角膜中产生横向传播的剪切波,剪切波的传播方向与受力、振动方向垂直。以剪切波振源的中心点为原点,在其右侧设置多个检测点,提取检测点在 z 方向上的时域数据,并对时域数据进行二维傅里叶变换,得到波数-频域图。确定每个频率 f 下最大强度对应的波数值 k_{wn} ,通过式(5)计算剪切波的相速度 C_s ^[28]。

$$C_s = \frac{2\pi f}{k_{\text{wn}}} \quad (5)$$

角膜的剪切模量和剪切波速相关。对于均匀、各向同性、不可压缩的线弹性介质,其杨氏模量 E 、剪切模量 G 与剪切波速的关系为

$$E = (1 + \nu)G \quad (6)$$

$$G = \rho C^2 \quad (7)$$

式中: C 为剪切波速; ρ 为介质的密度; ν 为介质的泊松比, 通常取 0.49。杨氏模量与剪切模量的关系近似为 $E = 3G$, 并且剪切波传播速度的平方与线弹性介质的杨氏模量线性相关。剪切波在非线性介质中传播时, 在每一个剪切波频率下测量得到的相速度不同, 转换得到的杨氏模量也不相同。因此, 兔眼角膜的杨氏模量可由式(8)^[29]近似计算得到。

$$E \approx 3\rho C_s^2 \quad (8)$$

式中: ρ 为兔眼角膜的密度, $\rho = 1062 \text{ kg/m}^3$; C_s 为特定频率下的剪切波相速度。

2.4 声辐射力光学相干弹性成像实验

ARF-OCE 系统由 ARF 激励单元和扫频源光学相干层析成像(SS-OCT)探测单元两部分组成。ARF 激励部分主要包括超声换能器、函数发生器和功率放大器。ARF 的激励过程如下: 函数发生器产生频率为 4.5 MHz 的正弦信号, 功率放大器对正弦信号进行放大, 放大后的信号驱动超声换能器产生声辐射力, 使兔眼角膜产生振动, 从而在角膜中形成弹性波的传播。SS-OCT 探测部分使用的激光光源的中心波长为 1310 nm, 扫频频率为 50 kHz, 相干长度为 28 nm, 光源输出功率为 20 mW。激光器发出的光经过光纤耦合器, 其中 90% 的光进入样品臂, 10% 的光进入参考臂, 两臂的返回光在光纤耦合器上发生干涉, 干涉信号被光电探测器获取。对干涉信号进行处理, 可得到被测组织的二维和三维弹性成像。

实验样品为一只屈光手术后的新西兰大白兔, 其

左、右眼分别进行了 -3 D 和 -6 D 的 SMILE 手术。实验前对样品进行全身麻醉处理, 再进行眼部局部麻醉。固定好样品位置, 使用扩张器将兔眼撑开, 对暴露出来的眼球进行测量, 再将超声换能器和样品放置于磷酸盐缓冲液(PBS)中。为了保证实验过程中眼内压稳定, 采用设计的眼压控制器使兔眼眼内压(IOP)保持为 10 mmHg。实验程序经南昌航空大学审查通过。声辐射力光学相干弹性成像实验在术后第 25 天进行。

3 结 果

3.1 有限元模拟结果

保持角膜帽厚度为 $120 \mu\text{m}$, 构建了 0 D ~ -6 D 共 7 个矫正屈光度模型。选取 -3 D 与 -6 D 模型, 在其基础上改变角膜帽厚度为 $80 \mu\text{m}$ 和 $160 \mu\text{m}$, 构建了 4 个角膜帽厚度不同的模型。利用有限元法模拟兔眼术后角膜的 OCE 实验。通过提取角膜检测区域的时间位移数据, 采用相速度算法对时间位移数据进行处理, 得到角膜剪切波的相速度。图 2 为有限元模拟结果, 其展示了不同时刻剪切波由角膜中心向两侧传播的过程。图 3 为 SMILE 术后兔眼角膜剪切波相速度的计算结果(以 -6 D 为例)。图 3(a) 展示了采集的时域数据经二维傅里叶变换后得到的波数-频率分布图, 图 3(b) 为相速度频散曲线。当矫正屈光度为 -3 D 和 -6 D 时, 通过式(5)计算得到角膜剪切波速分别为 5.606 m/s 和 7.732 m/s , 则由式(8)可以计算得到角膜杨氏模量分别为 100.127 kPa 和 190.471 kPa 。

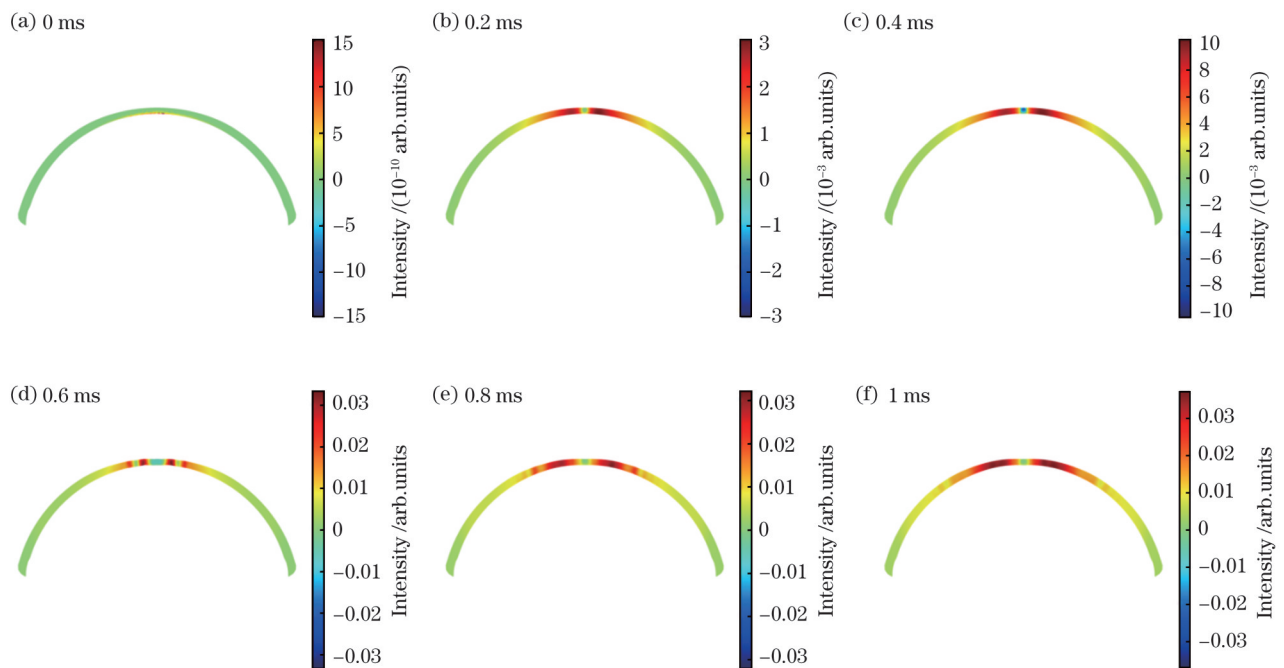


图 2 SMILE 术后兔眼角膜剪切波传播过程的有限元模拟

Fig. 2 Finite element simulation of shear wave propagation in rabbit eyes cornea after SMILE

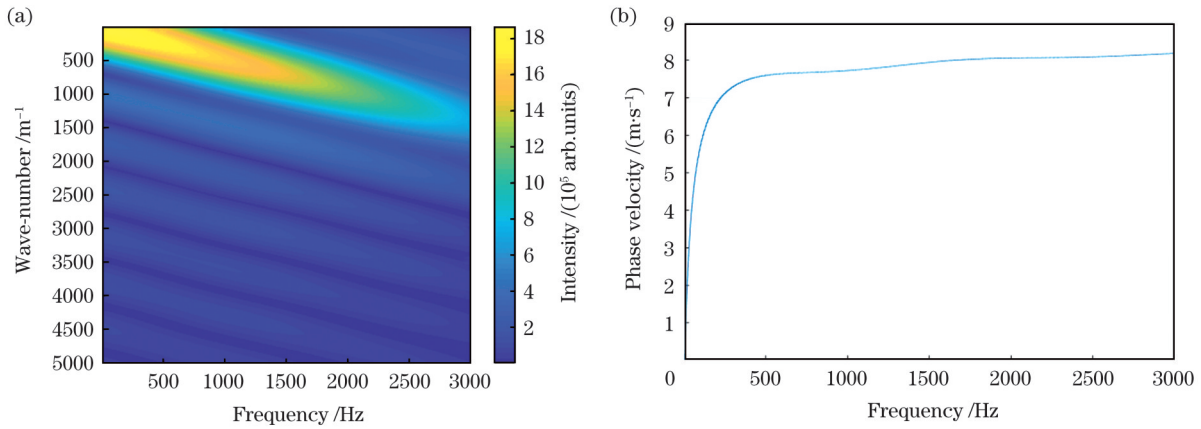


图 3 SMILE 术后兔眼角膜剪切波成像相速度计算结果(以 -6 D 为例)。(a)波数-频率图;(b)相速度频散曲线

Fig. 3 Phase velocity calculation of the shear wave in rabbit eyes cornea after SMILE (using -6 D as an example). (a) Wave number-frequency map; (b) phase velocity dispersion curve

3.2 矫正屈光度对 SMILE 术后弹性模量模拟值的影响

图 4(a)、(b)分别展示了剪切波速和弹性模量随矫正屈光度的变化。由图 4(a)可以看出,随着矫正屈光度由 0 D 变化至 -6 D ,角膜剪切波速由 4.52 m/s 增大至 7.732 m/s ($\text{IOP}=10\text{ mmHg}$),并且剪切波速曲线的拟合优度 $R^2=0.9828$,说明拟合效果良好。根据式(8),可通过角膜剪切波速计算得到角膜的杨氏模量。

由图 4(b)可以看出,随着矫正屈光度由 0 D 变化至 -6 D ,角膜的杨氏模量由 65.091 kPa 增大至 190.471 kPa 。

图 4 表明,随着矫正屈光度由 0 D 变化至 -6 D ,角膜剪切波速增大了 71.06% ,杨氏模量增大了 192.26% 。矫正屈光度与 SMILE 术后角膜杨氏模量呈正相关,即 SMILE 术后角膜的弹性模量随着矫正屈光度的增大而增大,并且角膜剪切波速表现出随矫正屈光度增大而非线性增大的趋势。

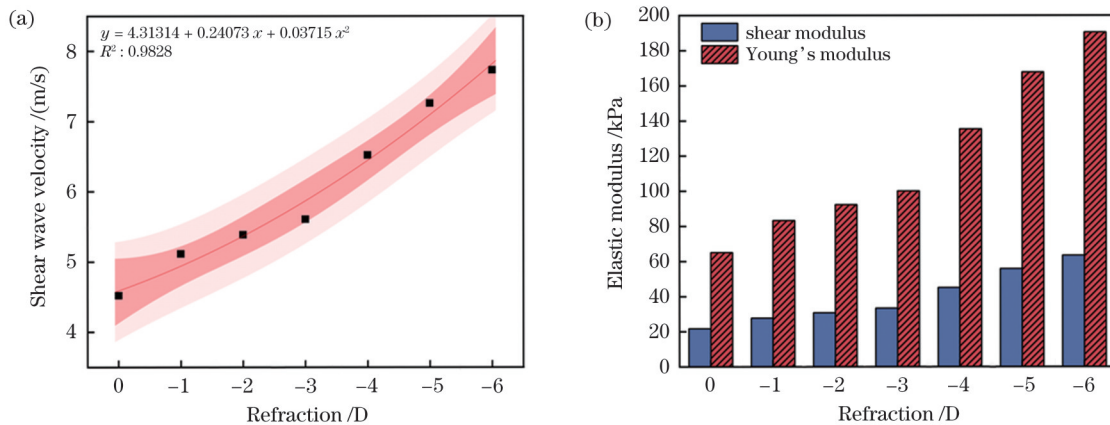


图 4 剪切波速与弹性模量随矫正屈光度的变化。(a)剪切波速的变化;(b)弹性模量的变化

Fig. 4 Variation in shear wave velocity and elastic modulus with corrected refraction. (a) Variation in shear wave velocity; (b) variation in elastic modulus

3.3 角膜帽厚度对 SMILE 术后弹性模量模拟值的影响

图 5(a)、(b)分别展示了切削变量之间的关系以及剪切波速随角膜帽厚度的变化。图 5(a)给出了屈光透镜厚度(h_{LT})、角膜帽厚度(h_{CAP})、残余间质厚度(h_{RST})与角膜中央厚度(h_{CCT})之间的关系,可得 $h_{\text{CAP}} + h_{\text{LT}} + h_{\text{RST}} = h_{\text{CCT}}$ 。图 5(b)展示了不同角膜帽厚度下的剪切波速。当矫正屈光度为 -3 D 时,随着角膜帽厚度从 $80\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 增大至 $160\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,角膜剪切波速从 5.508 m/s 增大至 5.648 m/s ,变化了 2.54% ;当矫正屈光度为 -6 D 时,随着角膜帽厚度从 $80\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 增大至 $160\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,角膜剪

切波速从 7.645 m/s 增大至 8.041 m/s ,增大了 5.18% 。

图 6 显示了不同角膜帽厚度下的弹性模量。当矫正屈光度为 -3 D 时,随着角膜帽厚度从 $80\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 增大至 $160\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,角膜的杨氏模量由 91.021 kPa 增大至 101.633 kPa ,增大了 11.66% ;当矫正屈光度为 -6 D 时,随着角膜帽厚度从 $80\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ 增大至 $160\text{ }\mu\text{m}$,角膜的杨氏模量由 186.209 kPa 增大至 206.015 kPa ,增大了 13.07% 。这表明,随着角膜帽厚度增大,角膜剪切波速及弹性模量也随之增加,但角膜帽厚度对角膜剪切波速及弹性模量的影响要远远小于矫正屈光度的影响。

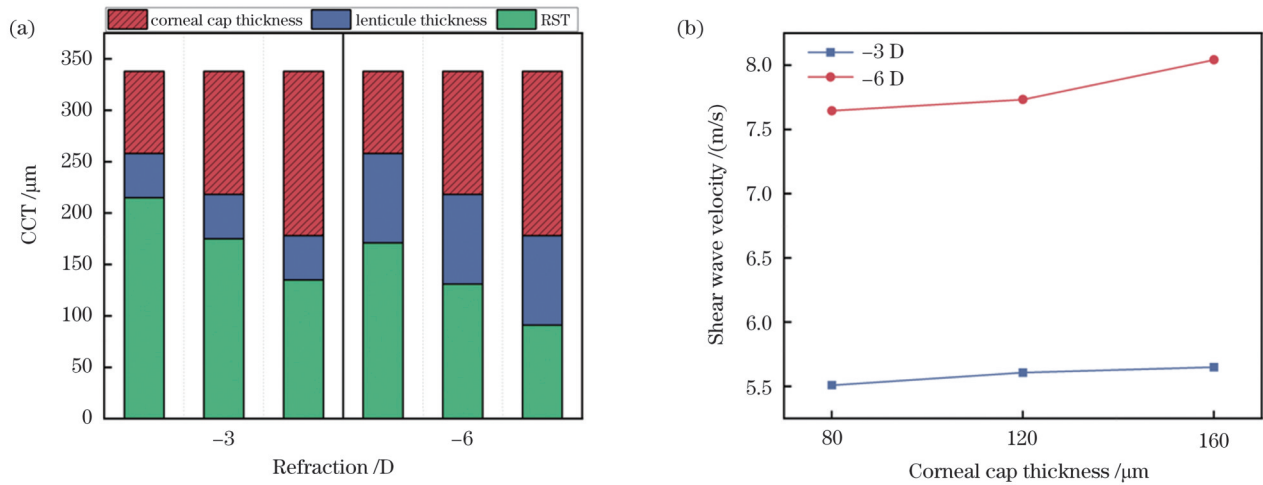


图 5 切削变量之间的关系以及剪切波速随角膜帽厚度的变化。(a)切削变量之间的关系;(b)剪切波速的变化

Fig. 5 Relationship between cutting variables and variation in shear wave velocity with corneal cap thicknesses. (a) Relationship between cutting variables; (b) variation in shear wave velocity

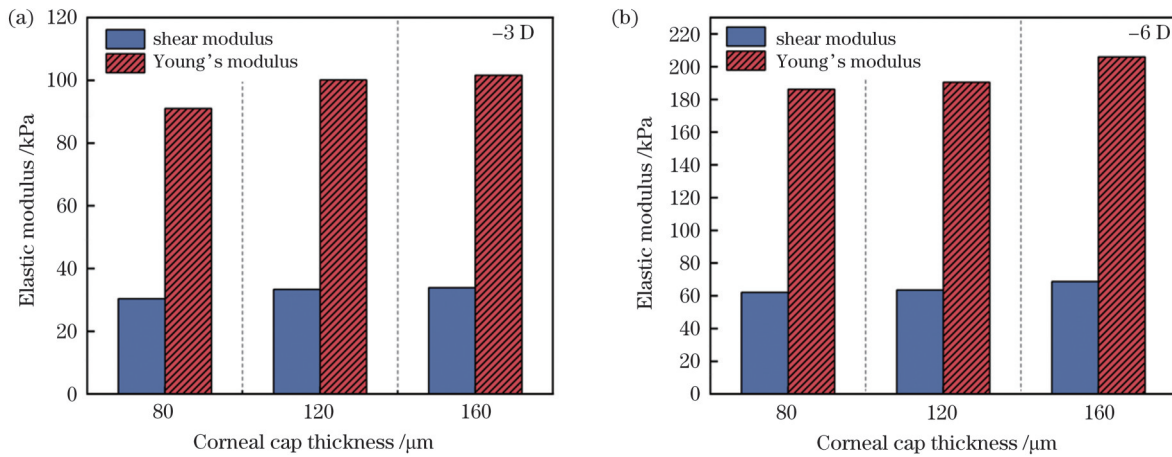


图 6 不同矫正屈光度下弹性模量随角膜帽厚度的变化。(a) -3 D; (b) -6 D

Fig. 6 Variation in elastic modulus with corneal cap thicknesses for different corrected refractions. (a) -3 D; (b) -6 D

3.4 ARF-OCE 实验结果

在实验过程中,移动位移台将兔眼和固定单元置于扫描透镜下方,激励位置在兔眼角膜中央,通过 OCT 检测单元扫描角膜表面获取结构图像,观察

OCT 结构图像并在成像质量达到采集要求时固定升降台,开始实验数据的采集。图 7 是在体兔眼 SMILE 术后角膜弹性成像结果,图 8 是在体兔眼 SMILE 术后角膜弹性波相速度计算结果(以 -6 D 为例)。

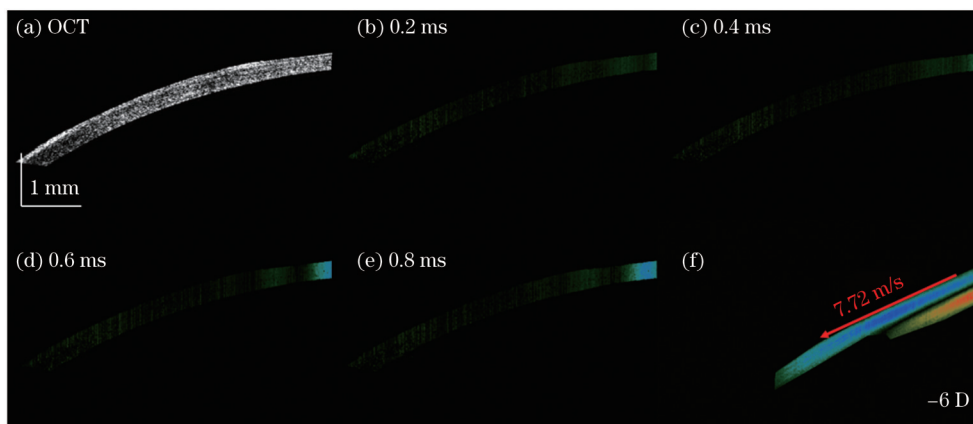


图 7 SMILE 术后在体兔眼角膜弹性成像结果。(a)二维 OCT 结构图;(b)~(e)弹性波传播图;(f)弹性波的时空多普勒位移图

Fig. 7 ARF-OCE experiment results of cornea for *in vivo* rabbit eyes after SMILE. (a) Two-dimensional OCT structure diagram; (b)~(e) elastic wave propagation maps; (f) spatio-temporal Doppler displacement diagram of elastic wave

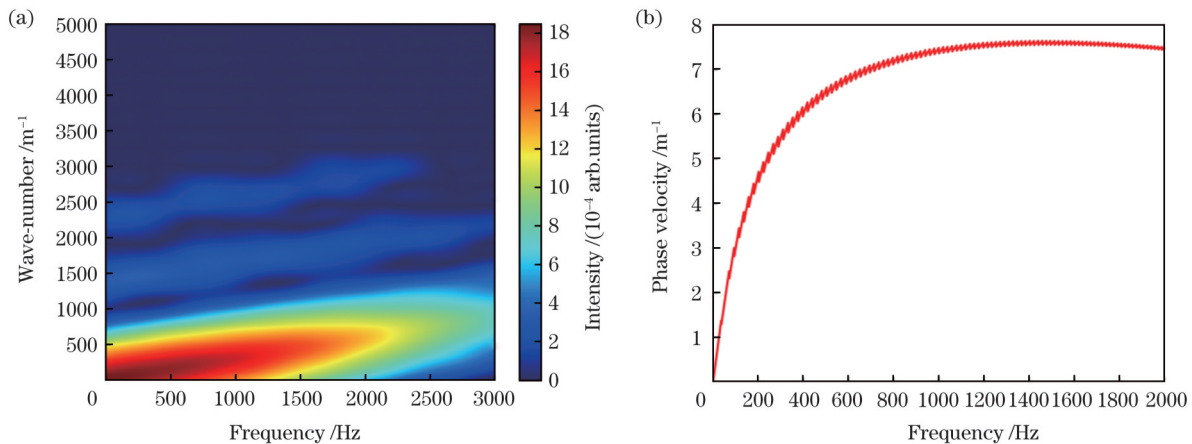


图 8 SMILE 术后在体兔眼角膜弹性波相速度计算结果图。(a)波数-频率图;(b)相速度频散曲线

Fig. 8 Phase velocity calculation of the elastic wave in cornea for *in vivo* rabbit eyes after SMILE. (a) Wave number-frequency map; (b) phase velocity dispersion curve

图 7(a)是兔眼角膜的二维 OCT 结构图。为了可视化兔眼角膜中弹性波的传播过程,通过 ARF-OCE 系统获取了不同时刻的多普勒 OCT 图像。图 7(b)~(f)展示了不同时刻弹性波在角膜内部的传播,可以看出弹性波从右侧向左侧传播。图 8(a)、(b)展示了计算得到的波数-频率分布图与相速度频散曲线。

ARF-OCE 实验测得 SMILE 术后 -3 D、-6 D 角膜弹性波相速度分别为 5.534、7.719 m/s,则由式(8)可以计算得到角膜的杨氏模量分别为 97.572、189.831 kPa,后者相对于前者增大了 94.55%。与 ARF-OCE 实验测得的弹性波速相比,有限元法测得 -3 D、-6 D 矫正屈光度下的弹性波速误差分别为 1.3%、0.2%。该结果验证了有限元模拟结果与实验结果的一致性,有限元法可以很好地模拟 OCE 实验,并且能够实现角膜弹性的精准量化。

4 讨 论

之前的研究表明术后角膜弹性模量会降低,这可能是由于术后角膜的生物力学特性发生了变化^[30]。本研究的模拟结果与 ARF-OCE 实验结果一致,术后角膜弹性模量增大可能是由于术后角膜应力增大,超弹材料的弹性模量受应力的影响较大。

有限元分析的优势在于可以模拟临床或实验情况下无法实现的情形。在矫正屈光度为 -6 D、角膜帽厚度为 160 μm 时,剪切波速相较于矫正屈光度为 -3 D 时明显增大。这可能是由于术后保留的 RST 过小。RST 对 SMILE 术后角膜的生物力学特性有显著影响^[31]。为了使有限元模拟更接近实际的实验过程,本研究还构建了晶状体、睫状体及房水等组织。有些研究往往会忽略晶状体、睫状体及房水等内部组织对角膜的影响^[32],后续可以对眼球内部组织间的相互影响进行更深入的研究。

需要说明的是,本研究具有一定的局限性,ARF-

OCE 实验样品较少,同一只兔子的左右眼生物力学特性仍可能存在差异。此外,本研究利用有限元法模拟剪切波弹性成像来实现角膜弹性测量的精准量化,后续可以继续优化超声波模型,使用兰姆波等来量化角膜弹性,并考虑角膜除非线性外的其他材料特性,例如各向异性、非均匀性等。

5 结 论

通过构建个性化兔眼三维有限元模型,使用有限元法对 SMILE 术后兔眼角膜 OCE 实验进行了模拟研究,并通过 ARF-OCE 实验进行了验证。有限元分析结果表明,矫正屈光度和角膜帽厚度的增加均会导致角膜弹性模量模拟值的增大,前者的影响更大,并且呈非线性增大。ARF-OCE 实验结果与有限元模拟结果一致,-6 D 矫正屈光度下的弹性模量测量值相较于 -3 D 下的显著增大。综上,利用有限元法可以实现角膜弹性的精准量化,可为临床上表征弹性模量提供参考,同时可为实验上精准测量角膜弹性提供理论指导。

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Finite Element Analysis of Corneal Elasticity After Small Incision Lenticule Extraction Surgery Evaluated by Optical Coherence Elastography

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Abstract

Objective Small incision lenticule extraction (SMILE) has garnered significant attention due to its advantages of small incisions, absence of corneal flaps, and preservation of cornea integrity. During SMILE, a laser is used to cut the corneal stromal layer, and the refractive lenticule is obtained and removed to correct myopia. The corneal incision alters the corneal structure, reducing its biomechanical strength and resistance to deformation. Latrogenic keratectasia occurs when the biomechanical strength is below the threshold required to maintain corneal shape. Thus, investigating the biomechanical changes in the cornea after SMILE surgery has become a key research area in the field of refractive surgery. Elastic modulus is a primary factor affecting the biomechanical changes of the cornea. Some studies have indicated changes in corneal elastic modulus after SMILE. However, there are notable variations among patients. The refractive lenticule and corneal cap thickness differ considerably in clinical practice. Consequently, the quantitative analysis of the corneal elastic modulus after SMILE remains controversial. This study aimed to quantitatively examine the influence of corrected refraction and corneal cap thickness on the corneal elastic modulus using the finite element method (FEM) after SMILE.

Methods This study used Corvis ST technology and corneal topographic maps. A parametric modeling approach was applied to reconstruct a preoperative three-dimensional geometric model of rabbit eyes, including the lens, ciliary body, and aqueous humor. Additionally, the cutting surface and incision were fitted using point cloud data. Seven postoperative SMILE models with different corrected refractions were created while maintaining the same corneal cap thickness. Furthermore, four models with different corneal cap thicknesses were reconstructed with corrected refraction being maintained in the range of the -3 D and -6 D. The finite element software COMSOL Multiphysics 5.6 was used to simulate the corneal shear-wave optical coherence elastography (OCE) experiment. The intraocular pressure was set to 10 mmHg, which is consistent with the experimental intraocular pressure. A transverse propagating shear wave was generated in the cornea after transient excitation at the excitation source. The central point of the shear-wave vibration source was designated as the origin, and multiple detection points were set on its right side. The temporal displacement data were extracted at the detection points. The phase velocity algorithm was applied to obtain the dispersion curve of the phase velocity for the shear wave. The corneal elasticity was then quantified. Finally, the effects of corrected refraction and corneal cap thickness on the simulated corneal elastic modulus after SMILE were examined. The corneal elasticity in rabbit eyes after SMILE was measured non-invasively using ARF-OCE experiments. The obtained value of the corneal elastic modulus was used to validate the simulation results.

Results and Discussions The results indicated that the simulated corneal Young's modulus increased significantly by 192.26% when the corrected refraction changed from 0 D to -6 D. Furthermore, the result of the curve-fitting of shear-wave velocity at various corrected refractions was good ($R^2 = 0.9828$). The curves indicated a nonlinear correlation between the shear-wave velocity and corrected refraction (Fig. 4). When the corrected refraction was -3 D and -6 D, with the corneal cap thickness increasing from $80\ \mu\text{m}$ to $160\ \mu\text{m}$, the simulated corneal elastic modulus indicated a slight increase of 11.66% and 13.07%, respectively. The results revealed that as the corneal cap thickness increased, the simulated corneal elastic modulus increased; however, the effect was significantly less than the effect of the corrected refraction (Figs. 5 and 6). Subsequently, the ARF-OCE experiment was used to measure the elastic modulus of -3 D and -6 D cornea after SMILE in rabbit eyes. The measured values were 97.572 and 189.831 kPa, respectively, representing an increase of 94.55% (Fig. 8). These experimental results confirm the results of the FEM simulations. The elastic wave velocity errors of the corrected refraction (-3 D and -6 D) obtained by the FEM are 1.3% and 0.2%, respectively, compared with the elastic wave velocity measured by the ARF-OCE experiment. This demonstrates that FEM can effectively simulate OCE experiments and accurately quantify corneal elasticity.

Conclusions A personalized three-dimensional FEM of rabbit eyes was reconstructed. The corneal OCE experiments in rabbit eyes after SMILE were simulated using the FEM and validated using ARF-OCE experiments. The findings indicate that increased corrected refraction and corneal cap thickness lead to increased simulated corneal elastic modulus. The former has a more significant influence, demonstrating a nonlinear increase. The latter has less significant effects than the former. This conclusion was also confirmed by the ARF-OCE experiments. This study theoretically examined the influence of single factors such as correction refraction on corneal elastic modulus and achieved an accurate quantification of corneal elasticity using FEM. This study provides theoretical insights into accurate experimental measurement of corneal elasticity and serves as a reference for the clinical characterization of elastic modulus.

Key words optical coherence elastography; elastic modulus; finite element; small incision lenticule extraction; corrected refraction; corneal cap thickness