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Title: A dual mode breath sampler for the collection of the end-tidal and dead space fractions

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Abstract: This work presents a breath sampler prototype automatically collecting end-tidal or dead space air over single or multiple breaths. This result is achieved by real time measurements of the carbon dioxide concentration and air flow during the expiratory and inspiratory phases. Suitable algorithms, used to control a valve, guarantee that a Nalophan® bag is filled with the selected breath fraction even if the subject under test hyperventilates. The breath sampler has low pressure drop ($< 5 \text{ cm}\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$) and uses inert or disposable components to avoid bacteriological risk for the patients and contamination of the samples. A fully customisable software interface allows a real time control of the hardware and software status. The performances of the breath sampler were evaluated by comparing a) the expected and actual partial pressure values of carbon dioxide and b) the concentrations in dead space, end-tidal and mixed breath fractions of four volatile organic compounds, namely isoprene, acetone, toluene and ethanol, with the values reported in literature. Results show negligible deviations from the expected CO_2 concentration values and levels of the volatile organic compounds in dead space and end-tidal fractions in agreement with literature.

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Object: A dual mode breath sampler for the collection of the end-tidal and dead space fractions.

Breath analysis has enormous potential applications in health care because it is among the least invasive method for monitoring patients of all ages and condition. Some of the obstacles to its diffusion in clinical practice are the lack of standardized procedures and the high cost the analytical instrumentation. In literature, breath samplers have already been described, but they have several drawbacks. Some of the breath samplers have low reproducibility and accuracy of results because they are manually actuated. Other critical defects are high pressure drop, large dead volume and poor bacteriological safety.

Compared to the breath samplers described in literature, we provide a device that overcomes the aforementioned limitations. Our breath sampler is compliant with medical use and has been developed to minimized pressure drop and dead volumes. The breath sampler is fully automated through specific algorithms implemented in LabVIEW™ and is compliant with the standard ISO 9241 for the ergonomics of human-computer interaction.

Finally, we prove that the breath sampler has good performance when tested against expected values of CO₂ and with the levels of four volatile organic compounds reported in literature.

Yours faithfully,

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Journal: MEDICAL ENGINEERING & PHYSICS

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Declarations

The following additional information is required for submission. Please note that failure to respond to these questions/statements will mean your submission will be returned to you. If you have nothing to declare in any of these categories then this should be stated.

Conflict of interest

All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding.

Ethical Approval

Work on human beings that is submitted to *Medical Engineering & Physics* should comply with the principles laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki; Recommendations guiding physicians in biomedical research involving human subjects. Adopted by the 18th World Medical Assembly, Helsinki, Finland, June 1964, amended by the 29th World Medical Assembly, Tokyo, Japan, October 1975, the 35th World Medical Assembly, Venice, Italy, October 1983, and the 41st World Medical Assembly, Hong Kong, September 1989. You should include information as to whether the work has been approved by the appropriate ethical committees related to the institution(s) in which it was performed and that subjects gave informed consent to the work.

Competing Interests

None

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DOES YOUR STUDY INVOLVE HUMAN SUBJECTS? Please cross out whichever is not applicable.

Yes

No **X**

If your study involves human subjects you MUST have obtained ethical approval.

Please state whether Ethical Approval was given, by whom and the relevant Judgement's reference number

This information must also be inserted into your manuscript under the acknowledgements section prior to the References.

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A dual mode breath sampler for the collection of the end-tidal and dead space fractions

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Abstract

This work presents a breath sampler prototype automatically collecting end-tidal or dead space air over single or multiple breaths. This result is achieved by real time measurements of the carbon dioxide concentration and airflow during the expiratory and inspiratory phases. Suitable algorithms, used to control a valve, guarantee that a Nalophan[®] bag is filled with the selected breath fraction even if the subject under test hyperventilates. The breath sampler has low pressure drop ($< 5 \text{ cm}\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$) and uses inert or disposable components to avoid bacteriological risk for the patients and contamination of the samples. A fully customisable software interface allows a real time control of the hardware and software status. The performances of the breath sampler were evaluated by comparing a) the expected and actual partial pressure values of carbon dioxide and b) the concentrations in dead space, end-tidal and mixed breath fractions of four volatile organic compounds, namely isoprene, acetone, toluene and ethanol, with the values reported in literature. Results show negligible deviations from the expected CO_2 concentration values and levels of the volatile organic compounds in dead space and end-tidal fractions in agreement with literature.

Keywords: breath sampler; breath analysis; end-tidal; dead space.

1. Introduction

Exhaled air is rich of inorganic gases such as nitric oxide (NO) and carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) like acetone and isoprene and low or non-volatile compounds like hydrogen peroxide or cytokines solubilized in breath aerosol [1].

Many studies have proposed to analyse human breath for diagnostic purposes, suggesting correlations between health conditions and the concentrations of chemicals markers in this fluid [2]. Largely cited examples of such correlations are acetone and diabetes mellitus, ammonia and dysfunctions in protein metabolism, dimethylamine and renal diseases, dimethylsulfide and hepatic dysfunctions, hydrocarbons and abnormal lipid peroxidation [3, 4]. Breath analysis seems a promising diagnostic method for the screening of different kinds of patients. The very low invasiveness and the possibility of real time monitoring of physiological processes are the main potential advantages of this method, which can be also adopted for children or patients in critical conditions.

However, although the potential applications in health care are enormous, breath analysis is still a

48 challenge [5]. An obstacle is the high cost and need of skilled personnel for the analytical
49 instrumentation employed in breath profiling, typically gas chromatography with mass spectrometry
50 (GC-MS), ion mobility spectrometry (IMS), proton transfer reaction mass spectrometry (PTR-MS)
51 or selected ion flow tube mass spectrometry (SIFT-MS). A few breath tests are in the current
52 clinical practice like the urea breath test used to identify infections by *Helicobacter pylori*, a
53 bacterium associated to duodenal and gastric ulcers, stomach cancer and non-ulcer dyspepsia [6, 7,
54 8]. In such test, the patient is administered ^{13}C or ^{14}C labelled urea that, in case of infection, is split
55 into ammonia and labelled carbon dioxide by *Helicobacter pylori*'s urease. The labelled carbon
56 dioxide is then eliminated with exhaled breath. The Heliprobe System[®] (Kibion) is a commercially
57 available platform for urea breath test that does not require GC-MS to identify the presence of H.
58 pylori.

59 Another critical aspect hampering the progress of breath analysis is the lack of standardized
60 procedures for the breath tests. In particular, the reproducibility and reliability of breath sampling
61 are essential to run clinical studies that promote a real progress of knowledge. A breath collection
62 device was described by Cope et al. [9]. The subject breathed through a mouthpiece equipped with
63 an antibacterial filter connected to a non-rebreathing valve, while two transducers constantly
64 monitored pressure and volume of the exhaled air. An infrared sensor placed after the non-
65 rebreathing valve measured the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO_2). Breath flowed through a
66 relatively large duct that minimized pressure drops and served as a reservoir before the sample
67 reached the external environment. The signals from the transducers and the CO_2 sensor were
68 displayed on a personal computer (PC) screen to provide constant feedback to the operator and the
69 patient. A pump allowed the exhaled breath to be drawn through a flow divider and two duplicate
70 thermal desorption tubes. In this configuration, the dead volume is 70 mL. Another breath sampler
71 was developed by Miekisch *et al.* and consisted of a disposable mouthpiece, a series of
72 polyethylene T-pieces and a CO_2 infrared sensor [10]. Exhaled air could be sampled by either a gas-
73 tight syringe or a Tedlar bag connected just before the CO_2 sensor. The real time capnogram
74 displayed on a screen allowed the selective collection of end-tidal air. A drawback of this device
75 was that air sampling had to be manually performed or triggered by an operator who looked at the
76 capnogram, which limited reproducibility. The use of pre-evacuated stainless steel canisters opened
77 by the subject under investigation himself is also reported in literature [11].

78 A further breath sampler allowing the collection of large volumes on multiple breaths was proposed
79 [12]. The subject breathed through a mouthpiece and breath passed through a CO_2 infrared sensor
80 based on laser spectroscopy and a flow meter. A dedicated software acquired the respiratory
81 parameters from both the CO_2 sensor and the flow meter to control a system of solenoid valves.
82 This instrument automatically selected the end-tidal air fraction by either the Bohr's [13] or
83 Fowler's [14] method. Breath was collected in Nalophan[®] bags to be analysed by means of GC-MS.
84 Although end-tidal air could be sampled correctly, this system had a few weak points: 1) thermal
85 stress and insufficient mechanical stability caused the loss of alignment of the optical system used
86 for CO_2 measurements, which needed frequent calibrations; 2) a relatively high pressure drop (23
87 $\text{cm}\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$ against a desirable target $< 5 \text{ cm}\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$) due to the small orifices of valves and connections
88 to the Nalophan[®] bags. As a consequence, subjects using the system tended to fatigue and
89 hyperventilate; 3) poor bacteriological safety, as the internal ducts were hardly accessible for
90 cleaning and sterilization; 4) presence of a large dead volume (about 50 mL).

91 The breath sampler presented in this work is inspired to Cope's system but allows for i) automatic

92 sampling over single or multiple breaths and ii) selection of air coming either from the upper
93 airways (dead space sampling) or from the lungs (end-tidal sampling).

94

95

2. Materials and Methods

96

A. Hardware

97

98
99 The system was designed with a specific attention to the subject's safety and comfort as well as to a
100 controlled and reproducible sampling of selected breath fractions (end-tidal or dead space). In
101 particular, the following requirements were defined: i) components compliant with medical use; ii)
102 bacteriological safety; iii) overall pressure drop less than 5 cm·H₂O; iv) negligible contamination of
103 samples; v) instrumental dead volume much lower than the minimum sampled volume of breath; vi)
104 real time automatic adaptation to variations of the subject's breathing pattern.

105 The schematic diagram of the breath sampler is shown in Fig. 1 and consists of two sections. The
106 analysis section, which measures flow, pressure and CO₂, is in contact with the subject through a
107 sterile and disposable mouthpiece. The sampling section, where breath is sampled and collected into
108 disposable Nalophan[®] bags (PET, polyethylene terephthalate film, thickness 20 μm supplied by
109 Kalle), is connected to the analysis section. All the breath sampler components in contact with
110 breath are of inert material and are kept at 40 °C by an insulated electric wire (resistance = 3.5 Ω/m)
111 to avoid condensation. The subject breathes through a sterile mouthpiece connected to an
112 antibacterial filter (both by Sensormedics). A graphical interface, developed in LabVIEW[®]
113 (National Instruments), shows real time values of CO₂, flow, pressure and volume of exhaled air. A
114 fast mainstream sensor with a response time lower than 60 ms (Capnostat[®] 5, Respiration Inc.)
115 measures the CO₂ partial pressure (mmHg) and the respiration rate. Capnostat[®] 5 requires a supply
116 voltage of 5 V and is equipped with RS-232 interface to communicate with the Mercury module
117 (Respiration Inc.). The Mercury module (7.62 x 9.78 x 2.73 cm, 5 V, RS-232 interface) acquires
118 data from the Capnostat[®] 5 and measures the airflow and pressure by a pneumotachometer
119 characterized by a low pressure drop (2.1 cm·H₂O at 60 litres per minutes).

120

121 The gauge pressure transducer is located in the same module housing an absolute pressure
122 transducer for the measurement of barometric pressure. The disposable airway adapters are in inert
123 material and suitable for both paediatric and adult subjects. Flow (L/min), pressure (cm·H₂O),
124 volume (mL) and CO₂ (mmHg) values are transmitted from the Mercury module to a PC in real
125 time (typical sampling rate 100 Hz, maximum rate 200 Hz).

126 A sterilisable non-rebreathing two-way, three-port valve (Hans Rudolph Inc.) located after the
127 sensors allows the subject to inhale and exhale with negligible effort. Two of the ports integrate a
128 flexible silicone diaphragm that opens or closes according to the air pressure so that only
129 unidirectional flow is possible. The third port is connected to the mouthpiece through the sensors. In
130 this configuration, the subject inhales ambient air from one port and exhales through the other one
131 towards the sampling section. The non-rebreathing valve has a dead volume of 15.8 mL and a
132 pressure drop of 0.6 cm·H₂O when flow is 25 L/min. Although not shown in Fig. 1, the analysis
133 section can house a pulse-oximeter (SAT-500, Intermed srl) to monitor the effect on the user of the
134 interaction with the breath sampler. SAT-500 is an infrared device that can measure heart rate and
135 oxygen saturation of both neonatal and adult subjects and send data to a PC through a RS-232

136 interface. The last component of the analysis section is the collection chamber, a 60 cm long, 2.5
137 cm wide disposable PVC tube.

138 The sampling section consists of a relay, a solenoid valve, two silicone connection tubes, a
139 Plexiglas[®] airtight container housing a disposable Nalophan[®] bag and a vacuum pump. The relay
140 (G5V-2, Omron) commands the opening of a normally closed solenoid valve (VXE21, SMC), thus
141 connecting the bag to the collection chamber. The exhaled breath is then drawn into the bag
142 (approximate volume 3 L) by the depression created in the container by the vacuum pump
143 (pumping speed 4 L/min). A further tube of proper diameter and length, which connects the airtight
144 container to ambient air, keeps the pressure inside the container at the optimal value to inflate the
145 bag. Tests were carried out to optimize the sampling volume (1 L for end-tidal and 0.5 L for dead
146 space air) and the pressure inside the container (735 mmHg). The first prototype of the breath
147 sampler is shown in Fig. 2.

148

149 *B. Software.*

150

151 The most crucial task to be accomplished by the software that controls the breath sampler is the
152 operation of the solenoid valve (*s*-valve) according to CO₂ pressure values. Fig. 3 shows a typical
153 capnogram. The end-tidal sampling corresponds to the zone of the capnogram where the CO₂
154 pressure reaches a plateau, whereas the dead space sampling corresponds to the initial baseline
155 values. Since the capnogram is an aleatory signal depending on the subject's breathing pattern,
156 prone to changes from one breath to another, the exact opening and closing times of the *s*-valve are
157 not known *a priori*. An incorrect estimation of these times leads to sample undesired fractions of
158 breath. Our preliminary choice for sampling end-tidal air was to operate the *s*-valve in
159 correspondence of a CO₂ pressure threshold calculated by subtracting a bias from the estimated
160 maximum CO₂ pressure (PCO_{2max}).

161 In general, due to the inter-individual variability, the best way to use the breath sampler is to foresee
162 a training phase during which the subject breaths for 30 s and personalized data are acquired. At the
163 end of the training phase, the software calculates the threshold subtracting the bias to PCO_{2max}. A
164 bias of 3 mmHg was chosen on the basis of empirical observations carried out in the same
165 experimental conditions.

166 However, the use of a constant threshold during sampling would only be effective if changes in the
167 patient's PCO_{2max} during sampling are negligible. This condition is seldom verified, since the
168 interaction between the device and the patient influences the respiratory pattern [9]. We chose to
169 implement an adaptive filter to update continuously the PCO_{2max} while the breath sampler is being
170 used. Assuming the series of the PCO_{2max} values to be stationary, an exponential smoothing-like
171 filter was implemented in the form of

172

$$173 \quad pres(s) = \alpha \cdot mag(s - 1) + (1 - \alpha) \cdot pres(s - 1) \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

174

175 where *pres* is the adapted value of PCO_{2max}, α is the smoothing factor ($0 < \alpha < 1$), *s* is the breath
176 number and *mag* is the PCO_{2max} at breath *s* - 1 calculated as follows.

177 At *s* = 0, $pres(0) = PCO'_{2max} - B$, where PCO'_{2max} is the maximum pressure of CO₂ acquired
178 during the training phase and *B* is the bias. When the valve closes, the software calculates the
179 changes in the sign of the derivative of the CO₂ pressure to find the local maxima occurring in the

180 end-tidal part of the capnogram. The average of the local maxima is assigned to mag and stored to
181 be used in next step, i.e. $s = 1$. The values of CO_2 pressure lower than an empirical threshold
182 (PCO_2^*) of 20 mmHg are not used in the adaptive filter algorithm to calculate the local maxima.
183 PCO_2^* can be modified by the operator through the software interface in the case of subjects with
184 particularly low values of end-tidal CO_2 pressure. The process iterates incrementing the breath
185 number s until the end of the sampling session. After a series of sampling tests, the optimal value of
186 α was set to 0.8. As an example, Fig. 4 shows a comparison of thresholds in a test during which the
187 subject's values of PCO_{2max} show substantial changes. The on/off threshold of the s -valve without
188 the adaptive filter is always $PCO'_{2max} - B = 42.1$ mmHg.

189
190 This value leads to high sample losses and increased sampling times, whereas the adaptive
191 threshold by the exponential smoothing filter provides a much better performance. The proper
192 switch of the s -valve is guaranteed by imposing via software the following conditions: a) opening
193 when CO_2 pressure has a positive derivative and is greater than the threshold; b) closing when the
194 CO_2 pressure has a negative derivative and is lower than the threshold.

195 Sampling of dead space is based on a similar principle, but in this case inhaled/exhaled breath flow
196 ($F_{I/E}$) and volume ($V_{I/E}$) data are used to control the s -valve. In fact, the CO_2 pressure in dead
197 space air is similar to the level in ambient air, about 0.3 mmHg, and the risk of sampling ambient air
198 instead of dead space air with a CO_2 -controlled opening would be high. The software commands the
199 relay so that the s -valve is only open when the following conditions are both verified: the slope of
200 $V_{I/E}$ ($V_{I/E}^s$), calculated every four samples, is positive and $F_{I/E}$ is negative. Fig. 5 shows an example
201 of the profiles of the CO_2 pressure, $V_{I/E}^s$, $F_{I/E}$ and the state of the s -valve. The state index (0 =
202 closed, 1 = opened) of the s -valve was multiplied by a factor of 50 to be visible in Fig. 5. The
203 software interface does not allow the customization of settings for the actuation of the s -valve for
204 dead space sampling.

205

206

3. Results

207 A. Performances of the breath sampler

208

209 A volume of about 30 mL separates the point where CO_2 is measured from the point where the
210 sample is collected. For this reason, the opening of the s -valve has to be delayed. In the case of end-
211 tidal sampling, the delay was estimated on the basis of the average breath flow during the 500 ms
212 after the opening of the s -valve. After independent 5 tests, each composed by seven respiratory acts,
213 the average flow was 20 L/min, standard deviation = 0.8 L/min. With this flow, breath took about
214 90 ms to reach the collection chamber. The delay was then set to 100 ms to have a safety margin,
215 and the accuracy of this value was verified by comparing the estimated and actual CO_2 pressure
216 values within the bag in five independent tests. Table 1 proves that 100 ms are sufficient to sample
217 the desired end-tidal fraction with a percentage error of about 1%.

218

219 The air left from previous sampling in the tube connecting the collection chamber and the s -valve
220 might represent a source of contamination. However, this possible error is negligible as the volume
221 of the tube is only 1.7 mL.

222 Table 2 compares the expected and the actual CO_2 concentrations in dead space samples. At the

223 beginning of expiration, when dead space is sampled, the flow is typically higher than at the end of
224 expiration, when the end-tidal fraction is sampled. However, the same delay (100 ms) to open the *s*-
225 valve was used as a conservative choice.

226 It is worth noting that Table 2 shows an average difference between the expected and the actual
227 values of about 1.7 mmHg. This result can be explained by the fact that the sampled volume per
228 breath is much smaller in the dead space mode than in the end-tidal mode. Therefore, for the same
229 sampled volume, errors sum up over a larger number of breaths. Furthermore, in the dead space
230 case, contaminations arise from breath fractions with a higher CO₂ content, so that minimal
231 dilutions produce a large effect on the concentration of this gas. For this reason, the measurement of
232 CO₂ concentration in dead space samples represents a severe check for the presence of a significant
233 contamination from the end-tidal fraction, which the values reported in Table 2 allow to exclude.
234

235 *B. Analysis of VOCs*

236
237 Four typical breath VOCs, namely acetone, isoprene, ethanol and toluene were measured in end-
238 tidal, dead space and mixed breath samples. Due to their different chemical and physical properties,
239 in particular water solubility, blood/air partition coefficient ($\lambda_{b/a}$) and volatility, these compounds
240 show different concentrations in different breath fractions.

241 End-tidal, dead space and mixed breath samples were collected from five healthy volunteers (3
242 males and 2 females), who had also signed an informed consent to participate in this study. Mixed
243 breath was collected by manually actuating the *s*-valve. During breath collection, each subject sat
244 on a chair and wore a nose clip. Ambient air was periodically sampled in Nalophan[®] bags (1 L)
245 during the test and analysed to exclude the risk of contamination, which is a major problem in
246 clinical environments [15].

247 VOCs were analysed by the analytical method described in [16]. Briefly, 100mL of breath were
248 transferred at 50 mL/min into a glass adsorption tube packed with 250 mg of 60/80 mesh Tenax GR
249 phase. The adsorption tube was thermally desorbed by an automated two-stage thermal desorption
250 unit (STD 1000, DANI Instrument) equipped with an internal trap packed with 70 mg of Tenax GR.
251 The VOCs were separated by a gas chromatographic column (DB-624, 60 m length, 0.25 mm
252 internal diameter, 1.4 μ m film thickness, Agilent Technologies) and then identified and quantified
253 by mass spectrometry (Trace DSQ, Thermo Electron Corporation). The stability of the response
254 factor of the GC-MS unit was checked daily by injecting a standard solution of labelled toluene-D8
255 (99.8% purity, Armar Chemicals).

256
257 The typical distribution of the VOCs in the sampled breath is shown in Fig. 6 and is in accordance
258 with a) their chemical-physical proprieties, i.e. water solubility and the coefficients of blood/air
259 partition ($\lambda_{b/a}$) shown in Table 3, and b) the results reported in [10]. In fact, the highest
260 concentration of acetone and isoprene were observed in the end-tidal fraction, while comparable
261 levels of ethanol and toluene were obtained in all the breath fractions.
262

263 *C. Contamination of breath samples*

264
265 The collection chamber and the non-rebreathing valve were closed with Teflon caps to identify
266 possible contaminants added into samples by the breath sampler. The *s*-valve was opened to fill (50

267 mL/min) the sampler with reference air at room temperature. After 6 h, the air sample was analysed
268 and traces of chloroform and 2-methyl-1,3-dioxolane were found. A possible source of chloroform
269 is the PVC tube used as the collection chamber [17]. The concentration value for chloroform (30
270 ppb) does not represent a risk for the subject under test, as it is much lower than the acute inhalation
271 minimal risk level (MRL) of 0.1 ppm [18]. The other compound, 2-methyl-1,3-dioxolane, is a
272 contaminant released by the Nalophan[®] bag, as previously reported [12].
273

274 **4. Conclusion**

275
276 The end-tidal and dead space sampling tests show that the breath sampler can efficiently sample
277 selected fractions of exhaled air into Nalophan[®] bags. Our breath sampler has low pressure drop (<
278 5 cm·H₂O) and small dead volume (30 mL) compared to the other breath samplers reported in
279 literature, and complies with the requirement of bacteriological safety. Its relatively small
280 dimensions allow the breath sampler to be transported easily by a trolley to reach patients who are
281 unable to access the laboratory.

282 The sampling of selected breath fractions may allow specific chemicals to be correlated with an
283 anatomical site of origin (alveoli, dead space and mouth). The flexibility of the system permits to
284 customize the sampling session and to take into account the physiological differences among
285 subjects. The breath sampler showed good performances when the expected and actual partial
286 pressure values of CO₂ were compared. Furthermore, the breath sampler was tested to analyse the
287 concentrations of four typical VOCs (isoprene, acetone, toluene and ethanol). Results were in
288 agreement with their chemical-physical properties and with those reported in literature. Tests were
289 only performed on a limited number of healthy subjects, thus a more extensive clinical validation is
290 required to refine the system.

291 In compliance with the standard ISO 9241 on the ergonomics of human-computer interaction, the
292 software interface not only provides all data regarding the hardware status, but it also fully
293 customisable. The output file is in Excel[®] format. The operator can at any time visualize the status
294 of the system, modify the settings and save all the information regarding the patient and the
295 sampling mode.
296

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301
302

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304
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308

309 **Ethical approval**

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311 Not required.

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Conflict of interests

None.

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Figure 1
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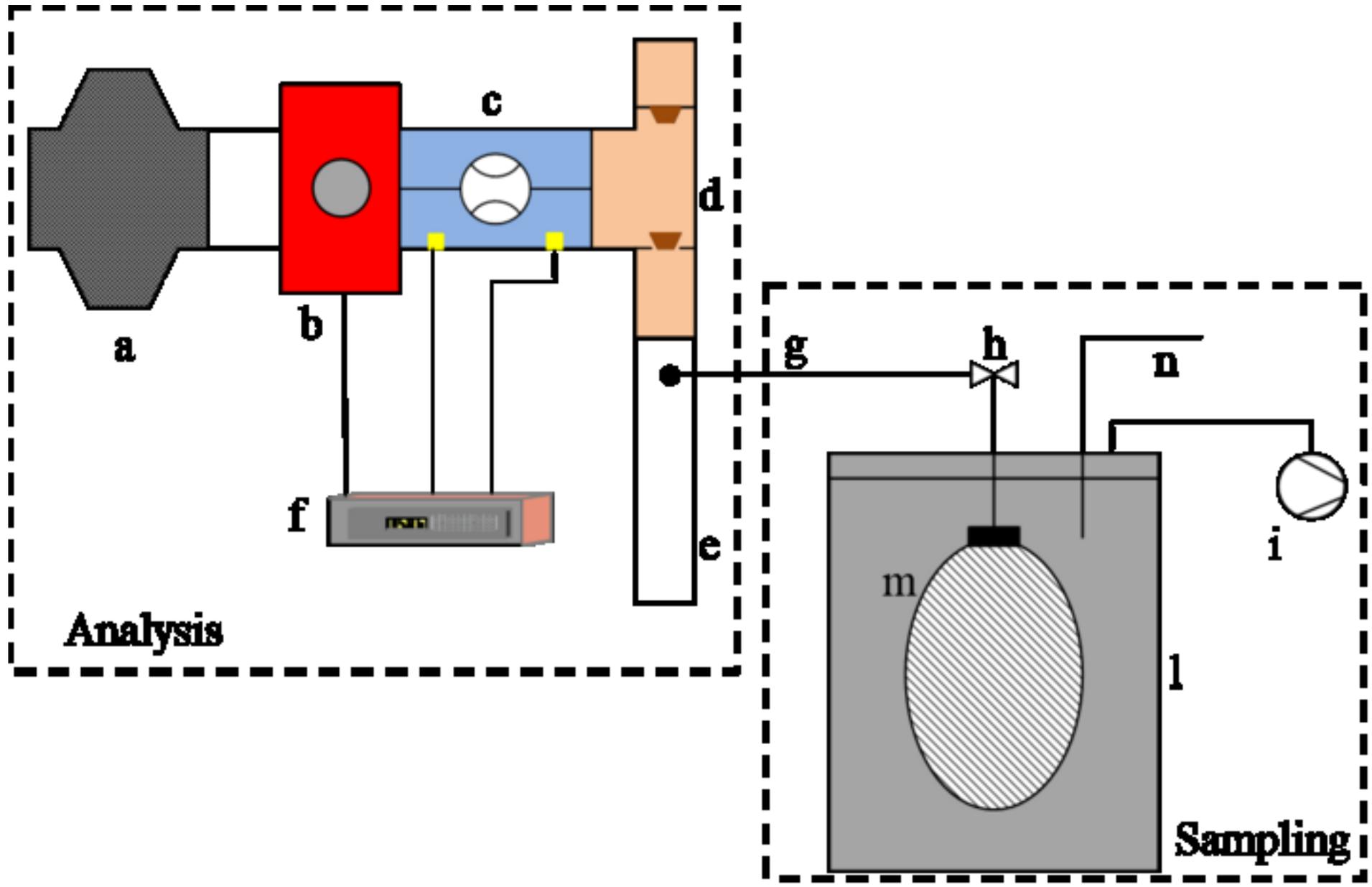


Figure 2
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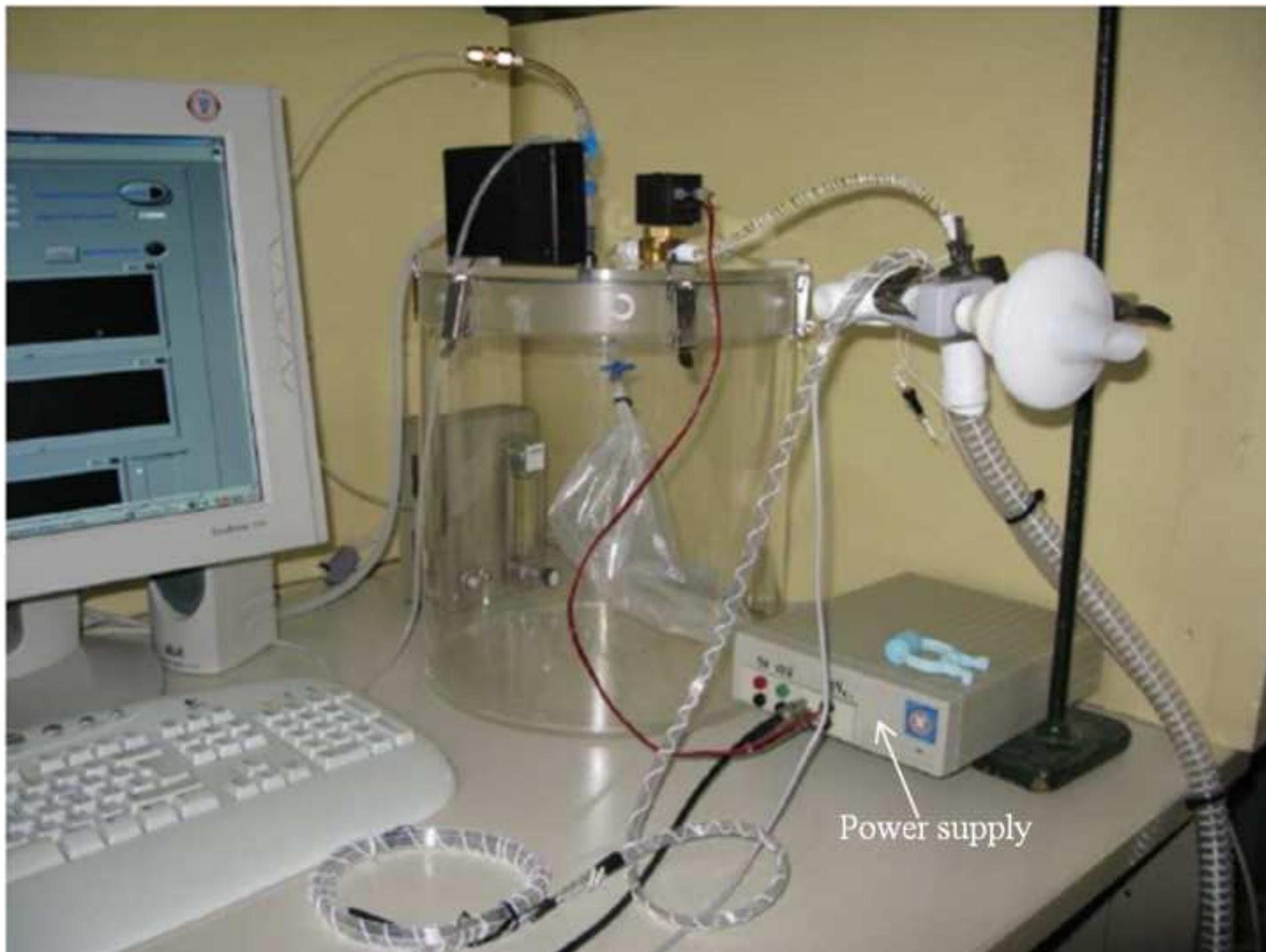


Figure 3

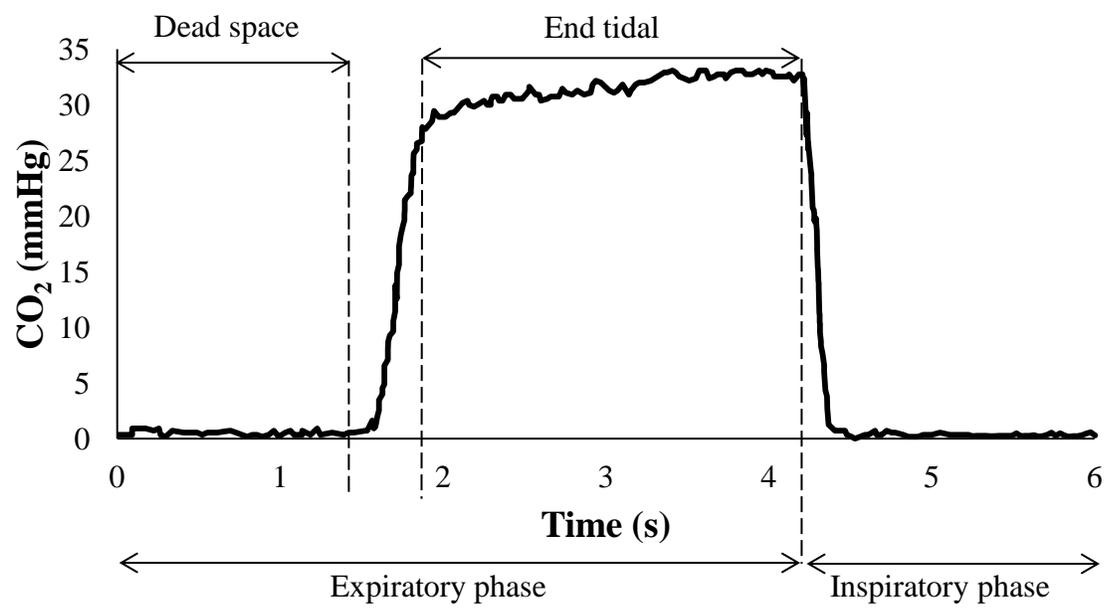


Figure 4

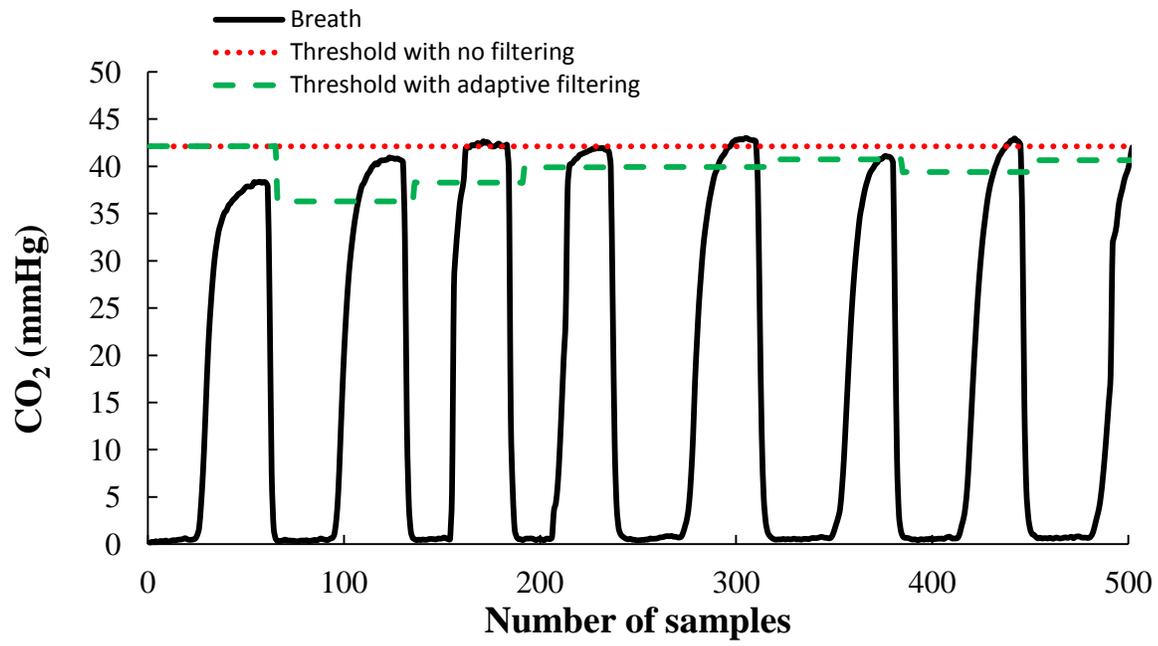


Figure 5

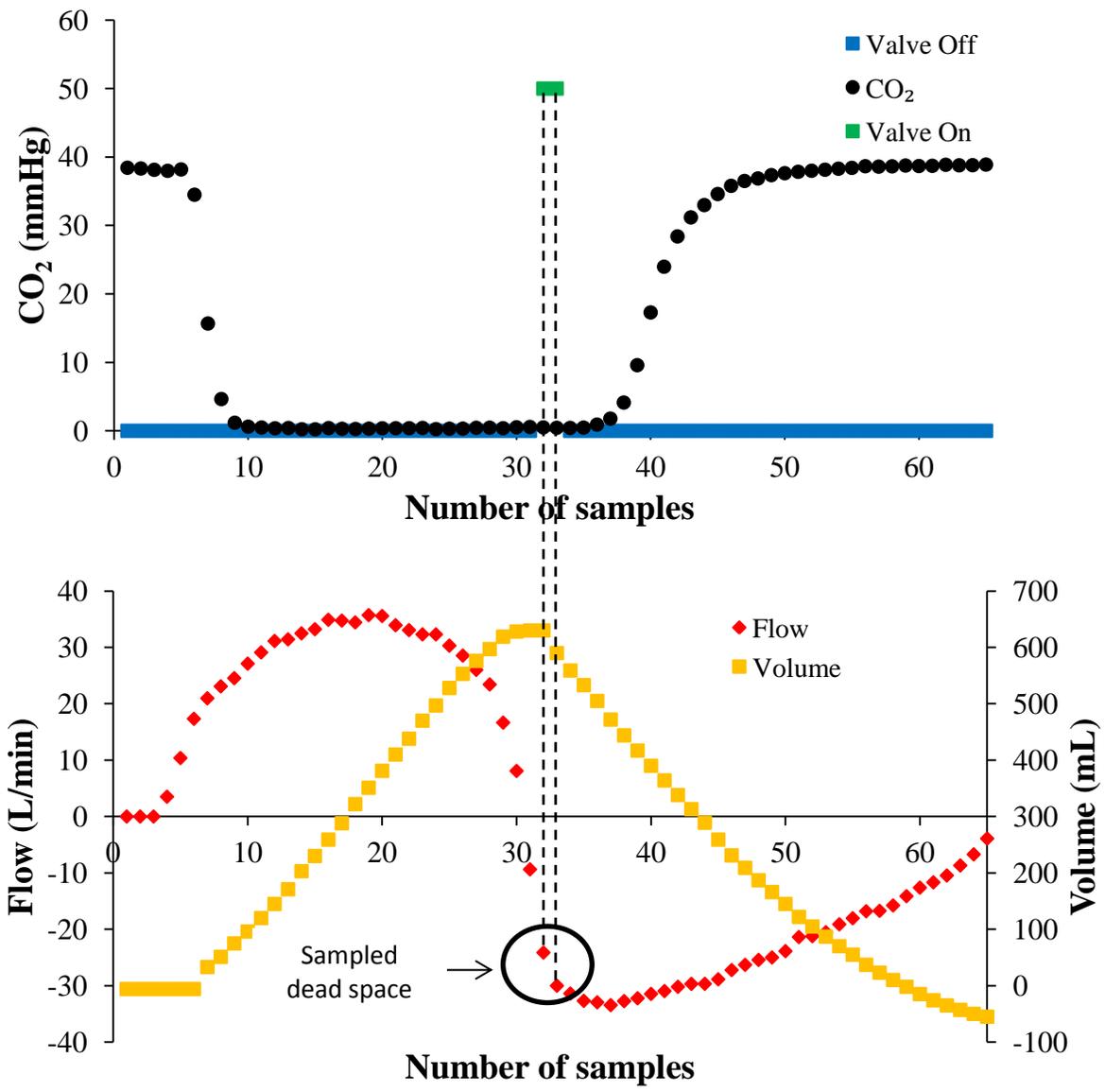


Figure 6

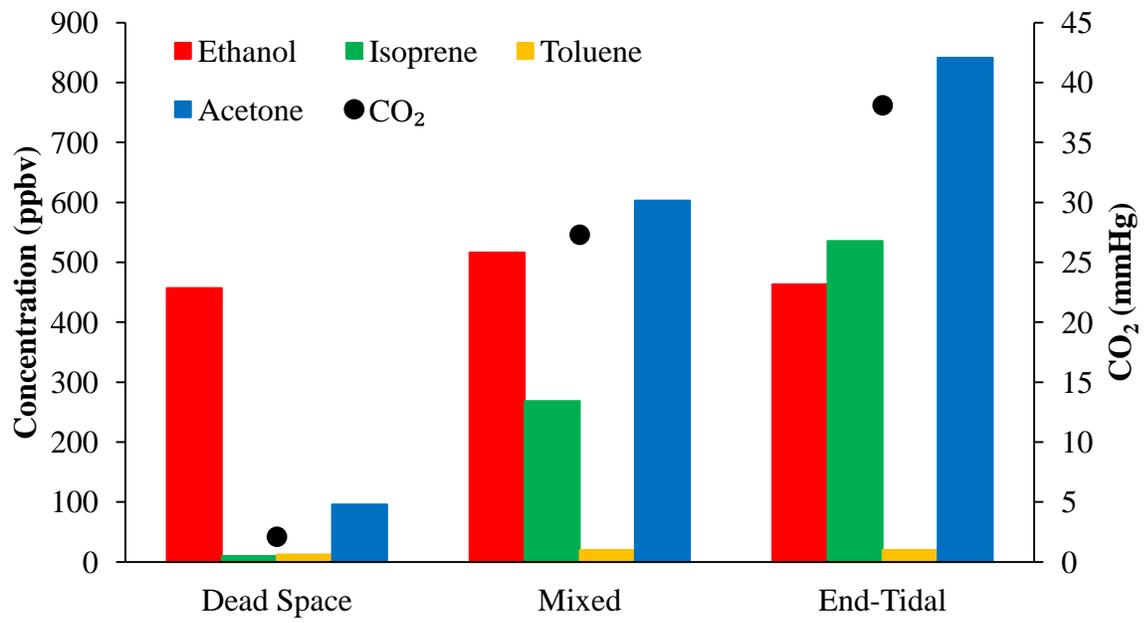


Figure Captions

Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the breath sampler. a) mouthpiece and anti-bacterial filter; b) CO₂ sensor; c) flow meter (pneumotachometer); d) non-rebreathing valve; e) collection chamber of exhaled breath; f) Mercury module; g) connection tube; h) solenoid valve; i) vacuum pump; l) airtight container; m) Nalophan[®] bag; n) tube controlling the pressure inside the container.

Fig. 2. The prototype of the breath sampler as it appears in the assembled version.

Fig. 3. Typical capnogram measured by the breath sampler.

Fig. 4. Comparison of thresholds calculated with and without the exponential smoothing filter. The adaptive filter provides better results.

Fig. 5. Illustrative test for dead space sampling: CO₂ pressure, volume and flow profiles as well as *s*-valve state are shown during a single breath. Flow is considered to be positive during inspiration and negative during expiration, volume is obtained by integrating flow. The state index of the valve (0 or 1) is multiplied for a factor of 50 to be visible in the plot.

Fig. 6. Typical distribution of ethanol, isoprene, toluene and acetone, and the partial pressure of CO₂ collected in healthy volunteers with the breath sampler.

Tables

Table 1. Comparison between the expected and the actual CO₂ pressure values in the Nalophan[®] bag for the end-tidal sampling.

Test	Estimated CO ₂ (mmHg)	Actual CO ₂ (mmHg)
1	34.7	35.1
2	34.5	34.1
3	35.2	35.5
4	32.7	32.3
5	33.1	32.9

Table 2. Comparison between the expected and the actual CO₂ pressure values in the Nalophan[®] bag for dead space sampling.

Test	Expected CO ₂ (mmHg)	Actual CO ₂ (mmHg)
1	0.3	3.8
2	0.7	1.7
3	0.6	1.5
4	0.4	2.1
5	0.4	1.8

Table 3. Chemical and physical properties of ethanol, isoprene, toluene, and acetone.

	Water solubility*	$\lambda_{b/a}$ (Reference)	Gas exchange
Isoprene	0.7 (g/L)	0.75 ± 0.08 ([1])	Alveoli
Acetone	soluble	245 ± 32 ([2])	Airways
Toluene	0.5 (g/L)	16 ± 2 ([2])	Alveoli and airways
Ethanol	miscible	1139 ± 58 ([3])	Airways

*References from the CAS database list (www.chemicalbook.com)