myocardial segments for detecting artefacts, but with indicating distractions leading to suboptimal accuracy (figure 1c). A CNN trained with additional guidance on attention is shown to pay the desired attention to the right structures and avoids distractions (figure 1d).

Conclusion CNN designed with support of attention visualisation, and trained with guidance on attention can lead to significantly more transparent and accountable AI use in clinical practice.

10

INTER-FIELD STRENGTH AGREEMENT OF MYOCARDIAL STRAIN MEASUREMENTS USING TISSUE TRACKING CARDIOVASCULAR MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING

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Background The agreement of left ventricular (LV) strain measurements using cardiovascular magnetic resonance (CMR) tissue tracking at different field strengths is unknown. We compared inter-field strength agreement of systolic and diastolic strain/strain rates at 1.5T and 3T.

Methods We prospectively enrolled 17 healthy volunteers and 3 participants with diabetes but no cardiovascular disease, from a diet and exercise intervention study. Subjects underwent CMR balanced steady state free precession cine imaging with retrospective ECG gating at 3T followed by 1.5T on the same day. Acquisition voxel size was $1.66 \times 1.33 \times 8$ mm and $1.90 \times 1.52 \times 8$ mm, respectively, temporal resolution 48 ms and 38 ms, TR 3.44 and 2.76 and TE 1.51 and 1.15. Acquisitions were reconstructed to 30 phases. Short axis cine images at 1.5T were obtained following adenosine stress and gadolinium contrast, whereas short axis images at 3T and all long axis images were acquired before contrast administration. Scans were analysed offline by a single experienced observer blinded to patient details, using *cmr42* software (Circle Cardiovascular Imaging, Calgary, Canada). End-diastolic epicardial and endocardial and end-systolic endocardial borders were defined manually and propagated by the software throughout the cardiac cycle to derive longitudinal, circumferential and radial global systolic strain (GLS, GCS and GRS) and peak early diastolic strain rates (longitudinal, circumferential and radial PEDSR). Inter-field strength

Abstract 10 Table 1 Left ventricular function, volume and strain measurements

LV function and volume			
LVEF (%)	59.8 (4.1)		
LVEDV (ml)	158.6 (28.1)		
LVESV (ml)	64 (14.1)		
LV mass (g)	87.1 (21)		
LV strain measurements	1.5T	3T	ICC
GLS (%)	-17.5 (1.4)	-15.6 (1.4)	0
GCS (%)	-19.8 (2)	-18.4 (2.3)	0.49
GRS (%)	35.3 (6.1)	31.7 (6.7)	0.49
Longitudinal PEDSR (s^{-1})	0.87 (0.14)	0.72 (0.1)	0
Circumferential PEDSR (s^{-1})	1.03 (0.14)	0.93 (0.21)	0.3
Radial PEDSR (s^{-1})	-2.06 (0.42)	-1.76 (0.56)	0.12

mean (SD): LV, left ventricle; LVEF, left ventricular ejection fraction; LVEDV, left ventricular end diastolic volume; LVESV, left ventricular end systolic volume; GLS, global longitudinal strain; GCS, global circumferential strain; GRS, global radial strain; PEDSR, peak end diastolic strain rate; ICC, intraclass correlation coefficient

agreement was assessed with intraclass correlation (ICC) and Bland Altman plots.

Results Mean age was 50 ± 6.3 years and 50% were male. LV function, volumetric and strain data are presented in table 1. Mean systolic strain measurements were higher at 1.5T versus 3T (all $p < 0.05$). Inter-field strength agreement was fair for GCS and GRS (ICC=0.49). Despite all images being acquired before contrast, there was no agreement for GLS (ICC=0; table 1). Bland Altman plots are shown in figure 1. All PEDSR measurements had poor agreement (ICC range 0–0.3; table 1).

Conclusion In this pilot study, strain measurements showed fair inter-field strength agreement for GCS and GRS and no agreement for GLS. This may relate to different signal-to-noise characteristics between field strengths. Further work is needed with randomised comparisons, but these data suggest strain measurements obtained at 1.5T and 3T are not interchangeable.

11

NOVICE MARATHON TRAINING REVERSES VASCULAR AGEING

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Abstract 10 Figure 1 Bland Altman plots for systolic strain measurements; a. global longitudinal strain (GLS), b. global circumferential strain (GCS), c. global radial strain (GRS)

Abstract 11 Figure 1 Age and distal descending aortic distensibility before training (left), and the change with training (right)

Background Ageing is strongly associated with aortic stiffening, contributing to increased cardiovascular risk even in healthy individuals. Aortic stiffness is reduced in lifelong athletes, but whether training in novice runners can modify this process remains unclear. We hypothesized that exercise training for a first-time marathon would have beneficial effects on the age-related increase in aortic stiffness.

Methods Untrained healthy volunteers were recruited prior to starting training for the London Marathon. Assessment pre-training and two weeks post-marathon included central (aortic) BP (cBP), and phase contrast 1.5T CMR in the ascending (Ao-A) and descending thoracic aorta at two levels (pulmonary artery bifurcation and diaphragm – Ao-P and Ao-D). Aortic distensibility and beta-stiffness (β , a pressure-independent measure) were measured and correlated with chronological age at baseline to derive biological aortic age before and after training. Data are mean changes (95% confidence intervals).

Results 139 first-time marathon completers (age range 21–69, 50% male) had assessment pre-training and 2 weeks post-marathon completion. As expected, increasing age decade was associated with decreasing distensibility by 2.3, 1.9 and $3.1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ mmHg}^{-1}$ for the Ao-A, Ao-P, and Ao-D respectively (partial $r=0.4-0.5$), figure 1.

Training decreased cSBP and cDBP by 4 (2.5–5.3) and 3 mmHg (1.6–3.6), Table 1. With training, descending

Abstract 11 Table 1 Changes in central (aortic) blood pressure and aortic stiffness before and after exercise training

	Baseline		Follow-up		p
Central SBP (mmHg)	110	(102,121)	106	(100,114)	<0.001
Central DBP (mmHg)	76	(72,81)	74	(69,78)	<0.001
Distensibility ($\times 10^{-3} \text{ mmHg}^{-1}$)					
Ascending	8.63	(5,11)	8.45	(6,12)	0.14
Proximal Descending	8.52	(6,12)	9.06	(6,13)	0.009
Diaphragmatic	13.63	(11,18)	15.17	(12,21)	0.001
Descending					
Beta-stiffness					
Ascending	2.88	(2.48,4.18)	3.12	(2.38,4.28)	0.60
Proximal Descending	3.12	(2.42,4.33)	2.94	(2.28,4.03)	0.07
Diaphragmatic	2.02	(1.69,2.34)	1.96	(1.62,2.3)	0.02
Descending					

Data are median (interquartile ranges).
Abbreviations: SBP= systolic blood pressure; DBP= diastolic blood pressure.

aortic distensibility increased at both Ao-P and Ao-D levels (by 9%, $p=0.009$ and 17%, $p=0.001$), whilst unchanged in the ascending aorta. This translated to a reduction in biological aortic age at Ao-P by 3.9 (1.1–7.5) and Ao-D 4.5 years (1.8–8.2). β decreased by 7% at the Ao-D level, $p=0.02$. Participants with slower marathon running times (Ao-P partial $r:-0.20$, $p<0.05$), and older age (figure 1) showed a greater increase in descending aortic distensibility with training.

Conclusions Training for and completing a marathon improves central blood pressure and aortic stiffness even in novice athletes. These changes are the equivalent to a ~4 year reduction in vascular age. These benefits were greatest in older, less fit individuals.¹

12 THIS ABSTRACT HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN