

Accuracy of augmented reality navigated surgery for placement of zygomatic implants; a *human cadaver study* (#102174)

1

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Accuracy of augmented reality navigated surgery for placement of zygomatic implants; a *human cadaver study*

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Purpose. Placement of zygomatic implants in the most optimal prosthetic position is considered challenging due to limited bone mass of the zygoma, limited visibility, length of the drilling path and proximity to critical anatomical structures. Augmented reality (AR) navigation can eliminate some of the disadvantages of surgical guides and conventional surgical navigation, while potentially improving accuracy. In this human cadaver study, we evaluated a developed AR navigation approach for placement of zygomatic implants after total maxillectomy.

Methods. The developed AR navigation interface connects a commercial navigation system with the Microsoft HoloLens. AR navigated surgery was performed to place 20 zygomatic implants using 5 human cadaver skulls after total maxillectomy. To determine accuracy, postoperative scans were virtually matched with preoperative 3-dimensional virtual surgical planning, and distances in mm from entry-exit points and angular deviations were calculated as outcome measures. Results were compared with a previously conducted study in which zygomatic implants were positioned with 3D printed surgical guides.

Results. The mean entry point deviation was 2.43 ± 1.33 mm and a 3D angle deviation of $5.80 \pm 4.12^\circ$ (range $1.39 - 19.16^\circ$). The mean exit point deviation was 3.28 mm (± 2.17). The abutment height deviation was on average 2.20 ± 1.35 mm. The accuracy of the abutment in the occlusal plane was 4.13 ± 2.53 mm. Surgical guides perform significantly better for the entry-point ($P = 0.012$) and 3D angle ($P = 0.05$), however there is no significant difference in accuracy for the exit-point ($P = 0.143$) when using 3D printed drill guides or AR navigated surgery.

Conclusion. Despite the higher precision of surgical guides, AR navigation demonstrated acceptable accuracy, with potential for improvement and specialized applications. The study highlights the feasibility of AR navigation for zygomatic implant placement, offering an alternative to conventional methods

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22

23 **Abstract**

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25 challenging due to limited bone mass of the zygoma, limited visibility, length of the drilling path
26 and proximity to critical anatomical structures. Augmented reality (AR) navigation can eliminate
27 some of the disadvantages of surgical guides and conventional surgical navigation, while
28 potentially improving accuracy. In this human cadaver study, we evaluated a developed AR
29 navigation approach for placement of zygomatic implants after total maxillectomy.

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32 the Microsoft HoloLens. AR navigated surgery was performed to place 20 zygomatic implants
33 using 5 human cadaver skulls after total maxillectomy. To determine accuracy, postoperative
34 scans were virtually matched with preoperative 3-dimensional virtual surgical planning, and
35 distances in mm from entry-exit points and angular deviations were calculated as outcome
36 measures. Results were compared with a previously conducted study in which zygomatic
37 implants were positioned with 3D printed surgical guides.

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40 4.12° (range $1.39 - 19.16^\circ$). The mean exit point deviation was 3.28 mm (± 2.17). The abutment
41 height deviation was on average 2.20 ± 1.35 mm. The accuracy of the abutment in the occlusal
42 plane was 4.13 ± 2.53 mm. Surgical guides perform significantly better for the entry-point ($P =$
43 0.012) and 3D angle ($P = 0.05$), however there is no significant difference in accuracy for the exit-
44 point ($P = 0.143$) when using 3D printed drill guides or AR navigated surgery.

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46 **Conclusion.** Despite the higher precision of surgical guides, AR navigation demonstrated
47 acceptable accuracy, with potential for improvement and specialized applications. The study
48 highlights the feasibility of AR navigation for zygomatic implant placement, offering an
49 alternative to conventional methods

50

51 **Introduction**

52 Ablative surgery in the maxilla is complicated and is accompanied with profound consequences
53 for the patient's function and appearance. To improve accuracy of surgical outcome, nowadays
54 the surgeon relies on 3-dimensional virtual surgical planning (3D VSP) when bone cuts
55 (osteotomies) are required. 3D VSP typically includes the planning of osteotomies for ablative
56 surgery with a sufficient margin from the tumour borders. Because of the high accuracy of 3D
57 VSP, surgical resections with tumour margin control can be obtained[1–3]. When one-stage
58 reconstruction surgery is indicated, the 3D VSP also includes the plan for reconstruction. For
59 example, reconstruction and rehabilitation can include location of osteotomies, accurate
60 placement of osteosynthesis materials and dental- or patient specific implants[4]. Traditionally,
61 the 3D VSP is translated towards surgery using surgical guides or image guided therapy
62 techniques like navigation.

63 Navigation is often used during tumour resection surgery in less accessible locations such as the
64 maxilla and base of the skull. Although reconstruction of maxillary defects with vascularized free
65 flaps appears to yield better speech and swallowing outcomes for extensive defects than

66 conventional prosthetic obturation, not all patients are fit for vascularized free flap
67 reconstruction[5]. In these patients, an obturator prosthesis supported by dental or zygomatic
68 implants significantly improves oral function rehabilitation outcomes. [6, 7]. Placement of dental
69 implants is often not possible due to lack of bone of the maxilla. Placement of zygomatic implants
70 is considered challenging due to the limited bone mass of the zygoma, limited perioperative
71 visibility, length of the drill path and proximity to anatomical structures like nerve bundles and
72 the orbital cavity. Therefore, guides or navigation are increasingly used in zygomatic implant
73 surgery nowadays.

74 Vrielinck et al. was one of the first to use drill guides for zygomatic implant surgery [8]. Since
75 then, multiple improvements have been made. Vosselman et al. reported on a 3D printed guide
76 using an metal insert for drilling, showing high accuracy in vitro as well as in vivo [9, 10]. One
77 challenge in using 3D printed drill guides is that the bone must be stripped of periosteum to
78 provide stable support for the surgical template. Moreover, 3D printed drill guides can only
79 properly provide control over the entry point of the trajectory, while the deeper trajectory is
80 not as controlled because real time feedback is not possible. Therefore, surgical navigation is
81 considered a promising addition and can even potentially substitute 3D printed drill guided
82 zygomatic implant surgery, mainly due to its real time guidance and feedback.

83 Augmented reality (AR) assisted navigation techniques hold the promise to improve navigation
84 performance during surgery in terms of speed, accuracy and user friendliness[11]. AR
85 navigation provides *in situ* visualisation, fusing navigation information directly with the
86 (anatomy of the) patient. Therefore the surgeon does not have to split his attention between
87 the patient and multiple screens in the operating room[12]. Several AR navigation systems for
88 OMFS have been described, including applications in orthognathic surgery, temporomandibular
89 joint arthrocentesis and dental implantology.[13–16] In this human cadaver study, we use an
90 AR navigation approach to place zygomatic implants after total maxillectomy to estimate the
91 accuracy of AR compared to surgical guides.

92

93 Materials & Methods

94 Five formalin fixated human cadaver skulls were obtained and scanned using cone beam
95 computed tomography (CBCT) (Planmeca, ProMax 3D Max, Helsinki, Finland). The settings were
96 in accordance with the clinical settings used for 3D VSP (voxel size 0.4mm). The scans were
97 converted into a 3D model using ProPlan CMF 3.0 (Materialise, Leuven, Belgium). To mimic the
98 clinical condition and to be able to implant four zygomatic implants per cadaver, a total
99 maxillectomy was included in the 3D VSP. The four zygomatic implants (Southern Implants, Irene,
100 South Africa) were planned towards the most ideal prosthetic positions based on the pre-
101 maxillectomy situation, in a slightly palatal direction from the occlusal plane. An overview of the
102 3D VSP can be seen in Fig. 1. The tip of the implant was planned in the lateral cortical bone of the
103 zygomatic complex, with a minimum distance of 2mm to the orbital cavity. Also, the minimally
104 planned distance between two unilateral implants was 2mm to ensure sufficient bone around
105 each implant. Hereafter, the 3D models were imported into the navigation software (Brainlab
106 Elements, Brainlab AG, Munich, Germany), in which the drill trajectories for the implants were

107 planned. This study followed the Declaration of Helsinki on medical protocol and ethics and the
108 local Medical Ethics Committee (METc of the University Medical Center Groningen, 2021/504)
109 granted written permission for the retrospective anonymized use of human cadaver data in this
110 study.

111

112 In the anatomical lab, the 3D VSP is downloaded on the navigation hardware (Brainlab Curve,
113 Brainlab AG, Munich, Germany), subsequently the patients reference array was attached to the
114 cadaver skulls and registration of imaging data and the cadaver is performed. The registration is
115 performed using a minimum of four preoperatively placed 1.5 mm miniscrews (KLS Martin,
116 Tuttlingen, Germany) which were used as landmarks. Hereafter, the surgical drill was calibrated
117 using the instrument calibration matrix (Brainlab AG, Munich, Germany). We used the Microsoft
118 HoloLens I (Microsoft, Redmond WA, United States) as an AR head-mounted-display (HMD).
119 Before the surgical procedure started the HoloLens was connected to the navigation system using
120 an in-house developed workflow, based on previous work described by Glas et al[11]. This
121 augmented reality visualisation enables the surgeon to visualize and interact with the VSP and
122 navigation data while in the operating room. It collects the VSP from the navigation system and
123 visualises it in the surgical field, while updating the visualisation with real time navigation data.
124 In addition, fiducial markers were added to the HMD using a special made 3D printed reference
125 array. By doing this, the position of the surgeon is tracked by the navigation system as well,
126 enabling a semi-automated registration of the virtual overlay onto the patient and surgical tools.
127 A quick manual registration had to be performed before each use, when the HMD was put on.
128 The virtual overlay enabled visualizing directions of the planned trajectories and navigation
129 directions of the instruments, real live in the surgical field. An example of the AR navigation setup
130 is seen in Fig. 2.

131

132 *Tasks & participants*

133 The surgery was performed by OMF surgeons skilled in 3D VSP and navigated surgery. Three OMF
134 surgeons (NJ, SV, GR) drilled the implant trajectories and placed the zygomatic implants. All but
135 one of the surgeons participated in a training session where dental implants were placed in
136 sawbones using the same workflow and augmented reality visualization. After the cranial
137 resection margin of the maxilla was marked using the AR navigation, a total maxillectomy was
138 performed. Hereafter, a total of 20 zygomatic implants were placed in five cadavers using the AR
139 navigation.

140

141 *Implant placement accuracy*

142 For determining the zygomatic implant accuracy, a postoperative CBCT scan was made. A 3D
143 model was made in a similar fashion as for the 3D VSP. Hereafter the postoperative 3D skull was
144 matched virtually with the preoperative 3D VSP. Subsequently, bone entry and exit positions in
145 the zygomatic bone were defined by the intersection of the long axis of the implant with the
146 bone. Accuracy was assessed in an identical way to the method used by Vosselman et al., where
147 two coordinate systems have been used[9, 10]. Both coordinate systems are illustrated in Fig. 3
148 and defined as:

149 1) The Implant's Coordinate System (ICoS); the z-axis runs along the long axis of each
150 planned implant.
151 2) The Occlusion Coordinate System (OoS); congruent with the axial, sagittal and coronal
152 planes. The axial plane is defined by the occlusion plane derived from the positions of the
153 planned abutments.

154

155 Accuracy of the abutment, the entry and exit points were measured in the Icos. The distance
156 between planned and postoperative position was measured in a plane perpendicular to the long
157 axis of the implant. Other accuracies were measured in the OoS, these include the height
158 deviation of the abutment in the occlusal plane, the displacement of the abutment in the occlusal
159 plane, the axial, coronal, sagittal and 3D angle. A placement accuracy of 3 mm in the occlusal
160 plane for the abutment was considered to be successful, and is assumed to result in a passive fit
161 for a prosthesis[9, 10]. The accuracy was compared to the accuracy of guided placement, on
162 which we have reported earlier[9]. This study was performed in a similar fashion, the VSP was
163 followed by guided placement of 10 zygomatic implants using 5 fresh frozen human cadavers.
164 The postoperative analysis, based on the postoperatively performed CBCT, was performed
165 identically to that study.

166

167 Results

168 With the aid of the VSP, the navigated drill and AR navigation a total 4 maxillectomies were
169 performed and 20 zygomatic implants were placed in 5 cadaver heads. In one of the cadavers, a
170 maxillectomy had previously been performed. This maxillectomy has been digitally copied
171 preoperatively into the 3D VSP.

172 The implant lengths varied between 40 mm and 55mm. The mean entry point deviation was 2.43 ± 1.33 mm and a 3D angle deviation of $5.80 \pm 4.12^\circ$ (range $1.39 - 19.16^\circ$). The mean exit point
173 deviation was 3.28 mm (± 2.17), and the abutment height deviation was on average 2.20 ± 1.35
174 mm. The accuracy of the abutment in the occlusal plane was 4.13 ± 2.53 mm. The complete
175 accuracy results can be seen in Table 1. No significant differences were found between ventral
176 and dorsal implants ($P > 0.05$) nor between left or right implants ($P > 0.05$).

177 Compared to the results of our previous study on the accuracy of zygomatic implants with 3D-
178 printed surgical guides[9], all three accuracy measurements of the abutment and the entry-point
179 were significantly more accurate with the use of surgical guides. For the exit-point there was no
180 statistical significant difference. All results of the AR navigation (this study) vs guides (previous
181 work) are found in Table 1.

183

184 **Figure 3:** Description reference planes and coordinate systems for assessing the accuracy of
185 zygomatic implant. In red the planned zygomatic implant position, in blue the postoperative
186 zygomatic implant position derived from CBCT. a the implant coordinate system (ICoS) including
187 the three reproducible reference planes in which the accuracy is measured; the centre of the
188 abutment, the bone entry point, and bone exit point of the implant. b 3D angle deviation
189 between the planned position and post op position. c Visualisation of the Occlusion plane
190 coordinate system (OoS). The occlusal plane is defined parallel to a plane intersecting the

191 planned abutment positions. Perpendicular to this plane is the blue arrow which indicates the
192 direction the abutment height accuracy is calculated

193

194

195 Discussion

196 This study shows a novel AR dynamic navigation system for placement of zygomatic implants.
197 Using AR navigation 20 zygomatic implants have been placed in 5 cadavers. Surgical guides
198 perform significantly better for the entry-point (1.20 ± 0.61 mm vs. 2.43 ± 1.33 mm), however
199 no statistical differences could be found for the exit-point or 3D angle. Placement of zygomatic
200 implants at time of ablative surgery has been shown to be an effective means of accelerating oral
201 function rehabilitation, along with early loading protocols. Placement of zygomatic implants is
202 challenging, due to the length of zygomatic implants (40 to 55mm), a minor angular deviation
203 can lead to relatively large positional errors at the exit point.

204 Navigated zygomatic implant placement was described before in multiple studies [17–21]. Some
205 studies use clinically available navigation systems [17, 22, 23], some used dental navigation
206 systems or developed their own[18, 19, 24–27], extended reality systems are also described [27,
207 28]. Zhou et al. report on 14 navigated placed zygomatic implants in patients with maxillectomy
208 defects, with an mean accuracy at the entry-point of 1.56 ± 0.54 mm, exit-point of
209 1.87 ± 0.63 mm (exit point), and an angle deviation of $2.52 \pm 0.84^\circ$ [29]. Chrcanovic et al. placed
210 16 zygomatic implants in human cadavers with an angle accuracy of $8.06 \pm 6.40^\circ$ for the anterior-
211 posterior view and $11.20 \pm 9.75^\circ$ for the caudal cranial view[30]. Vrielinck et al. report on an
212 entry-point accuracy of 2.77 mm (range 1.0 – 7.4) and exit-point accuracy of 4.46 mm (range 0.3
213 - 9.7) in a patient cohort[8]. In our study the accuracy of implant placement in human cadavers
214 after total maxillectomy was slightly higher both for the surgical guides from our previous study
215 and the AR navigation⁹. Hung et al. have placed 40 zygomatic implants in severe atrophic maxillae
216 using the Brainlab navigation system (Brainlab AG, Munich, Germany), reporting an accuracy of
217 1.35 ± 0.75 mm (entry-point), 2.15 ± 0.95 mm (exit-point), and $2.05 \pm 1.02^\circ$ angle deviation[31].
218 However, accuracy of zygomatic implantation in a resorbed maxilla might be higher due to a more
219 stable drill entry point. While drilling the trajectory after (total) maxillectomy, the bone entry
220 location is not a stable flat surface. Most likely the tip of the drill approaches the anterior wall of
221 the maxillary sinus in an oblique fashion, making an exact entry-point difficult due to sliding of
222 the drill tip along this cortical bone. Using navigation guidance, the surgeon is likely to correct for
223 this entry-point deviation by manipulating the direction of the drill, in order to get back on the
224 planned trajectory. One observation we made, is that manipulating the drill could subsequently
225 cause the drill to bend, mainly due to the length of the drill bits. As a result, the tip of the drill no
226 longer matches the virtual drill in the navigation, which in turn leads to additional inaccuracy. In
227 none of the 5 cases the placement of the implants was complicated by an orbital perforation.
228 Therefore, accuracy in this small sample seems to be accurate enough for safe application in
229 human patients of both investigated methods; drilling guides as well as AR navigation.
230 Additionally, the abutment height was within the 3 mm limit for both surgical guides as well as
231 for AR navigation.

232 Multiple factors impact the accuracy of surgical navigation, including imaging techniques,
233 registrations procedures of the patient as well as the surgical tools, how rigid these surgical tools
234 are, and moreover the human machine interface which influences the surgeon's performance.

235 Using surgical guides, an accurate result can be obtained, however, sufficient bone has to be
236 exposed for the guide to be stable during the entire drilling procedure. Moreover, the guide has
237 to be designed such that it minimises the risk of deforming during drilling. This means sufficient
238 support area and sometimes a bulkier guide. In ablative oncological surgery, the surgical area
239 might be more easily accessible while this is more restricted in elective procedures. When a
240 minimal invasive procedure is warranted AR navigation could be used as an alternative. However,
241 based on the results of this cadaver study probably the best results may be obtained, if surgical
242 guides are used for control of the entry point and AR navigation for trajectory control. While this
243 study focused on augmented reality navigation in one stage resection and reconstruction surgery
244 for placement of zygomatic implants, the AR-navigation might also be used in other
245 craniomaxillofacial indications such as maxilla, orbital, and cranial base resections.
246

247 **Conclusions**

248 This study shows a novel AR dynamic navigation system for placement of zygomatic implants.
249 Despite the fact that patient specific guides lead to a more accurate placement compared to AR
250 navigation, the accuracy of AR navigation is acceptable as well and authors are convinced that it
251 will continue to improve and will find its specific application. The study highlights the feasibility
252 of AR navigation for zygomatic implant placement, offering an alternative to conventional
253 methods
254

255 **Acknowledgements**

256 N/A
257

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Figure 1

Overview of the 3D VSP

(A) The osteotomy of the maxillectomy is planned. **(B)** The abutment positions of the zygomatic implants are based on the pre-maxillectomy situation, in a slightly palatal direction from the occlusal plane. **(C)** The tip of the implant is planned in the lateral cortical bone of the zygomatic complex, with a minimum distance of 2mm between implants and to the orbital cavity. **(D)** The 3D VSP is uploaded into the navigation system where the drill trajectories are defined

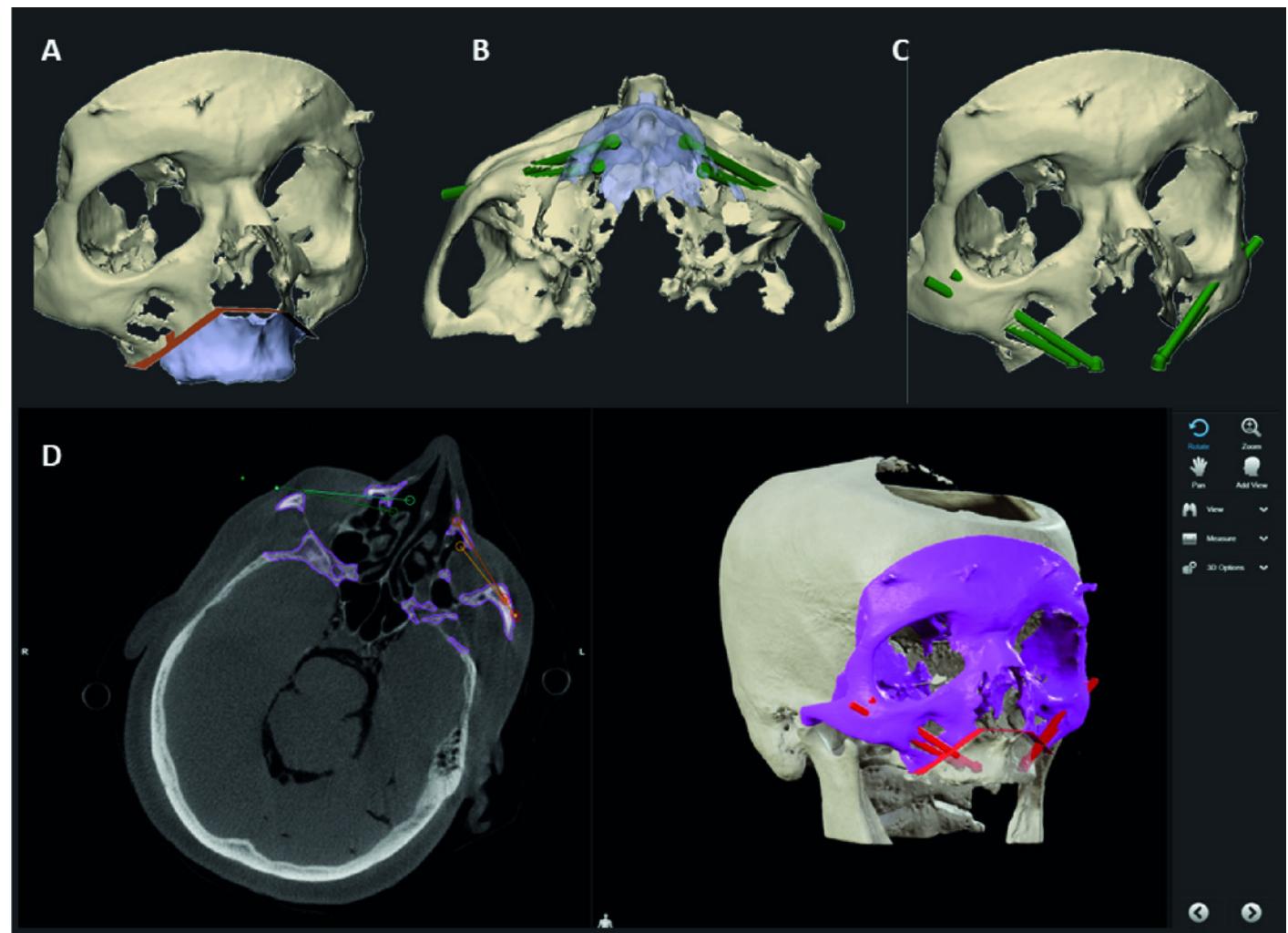


Figure 2

AR navigation system and interface

(A) Image of the setup during the cadaver experiment. The surgeon wearing the HoloLens with a custom made reference array attached. Fiducial markers on the reference arrays of the HoloLens, surgical drill and skull enable the navigation system to track the objects and project the visualisation on the patient. **(B)** An example of the AR visualisation as seen by the surgeon during the phantom setup. Virtual navigational indicators are projected into the surgical area. The colour and size of the green circles change with manipulating the direction of the drill. The depth to target is also updated real time.

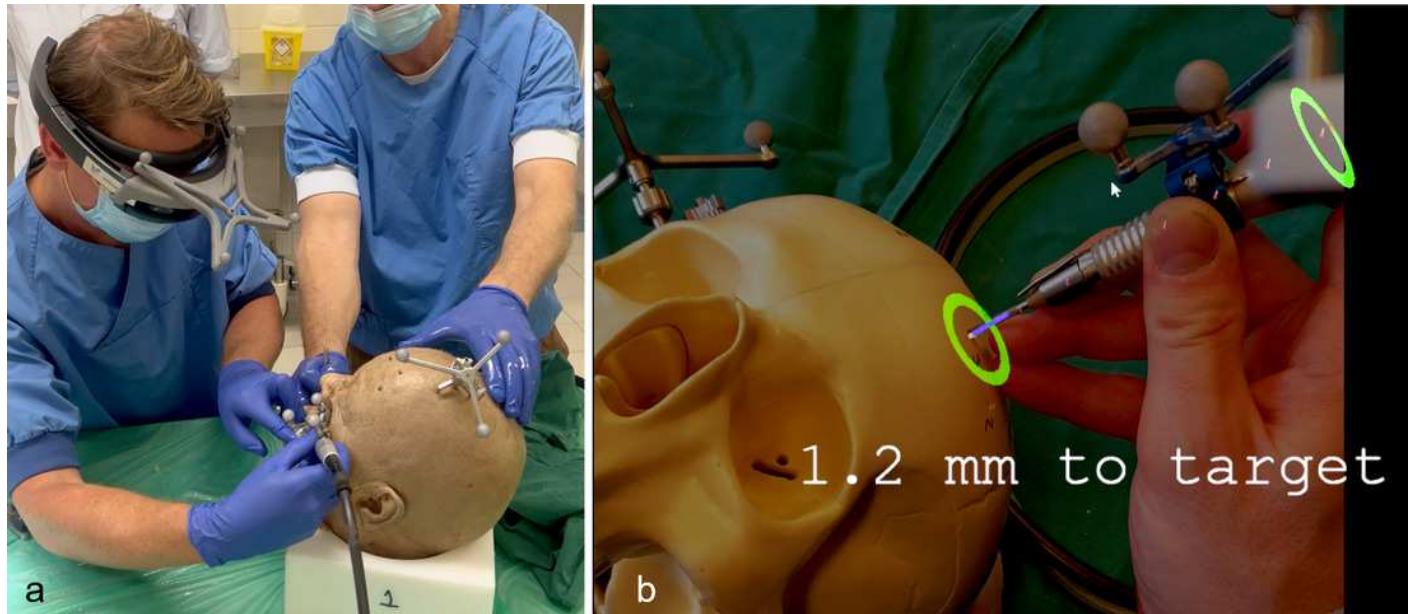


Figure 3

Reference planes and coordinate systems

Description reference planes and coordinate systems for assessing the accuracy of zygomatic implant. In red the planned zygomatic implant position, in blue the postoperative zygomatic implant position derived from CBCT. **(A)** the implant coordinate system (ICoS) including the three reproducible reference planes in which the accuracy is measured; the centre of the abutment, the bone entry point, and bone exit point of the implant. **(B)** 3D angle deviation between the planned position and post-op position. **(C)** Visualisation of the Occlusion plane coordinate system (OCoS). The occlusal plane is defined parallel to a plane intersecting the planned abutment positions. Perpendicular to this plane is the blue arrow which indicates the direction the abutment height accuracy is calculated

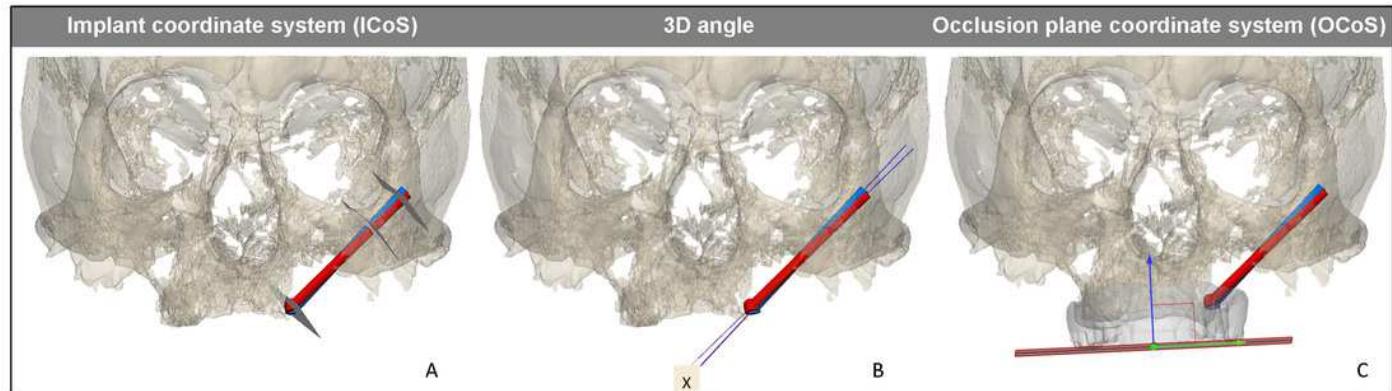


Table 1(on next page)

Accuracy data

Results of the postoperative analysis of the Implant coordinate system (IcoS) and occlusion coordinate system (OcoS) measurements for the Augmented reality system (this paper) and with the use of patient-specific guides (previous work) [9] . Statistical significant differences are highlighted in blue.

		Augmented Reality		Guides	
		Mean (±SD)	Range	Mean (±SD)	P value
<i>ICos</i> <i>deviation</i>	Abutment (mm)	3.34 (± 2.11)	0.60 - 8.63	1.19 (± 0.63)	0.005
	Entry-point (mm)	2.43 (± 1.33)	0.60 - 5.96	1.20 (± 0.61)	0.012
	Exit-point (mm)	3.28 (± 2.17)	1.36 - 11.65	2.12 (± 1.24)	0.143
<i>OCos</i> <i>deviation</i>	Abutment in occlusal plane (mm)	4.13 (± 2.53)	1.09 - 2.53	1.77 (± 1.31)	0.012
	Abutment height from occlusal plane (mm)	2.20 (± 1.35)	0.08 - 4.63	1.03 (± 0.85)	0.021
	Axial angle (°)	5.76 (± 4.74)	1.04 - 21.63	2.07 (± 2.63)	0.062
	Coronal angle (°)	2.44 (± 2.02)	0.27 - 7.63	0.99 (± 2.32)	0.682
	Sagittal angle (°)	7.62 (± 6.55)	0.39 - 25.27	1.48 (± 3.59)	0.047
	3D angle (°)	5.80 (± 4.12)	1.39 - 19.16	2.97 (± 1.43)	0.051