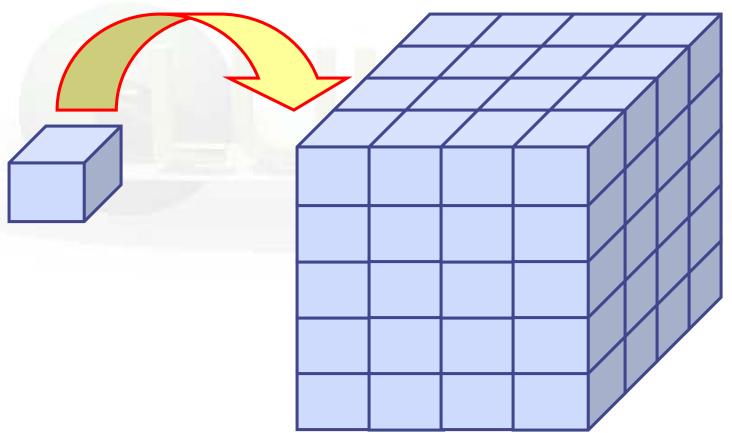


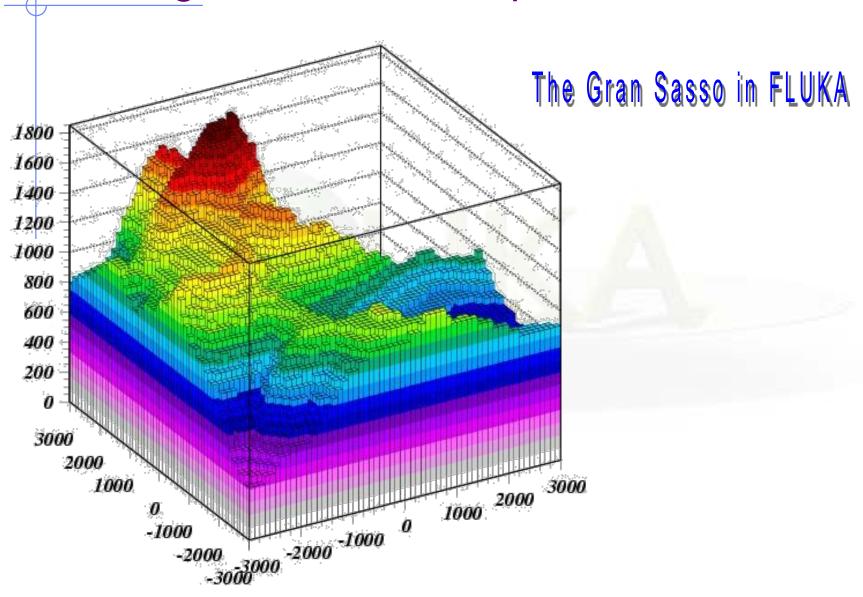
# Voxels and Medical Applications

**FLUKA Advanced course** 

 It is possible to describe a geometry in terms of "voxels", i.e., tiny parallelepipeds (all of equal size) forming a 3-dimensional grid

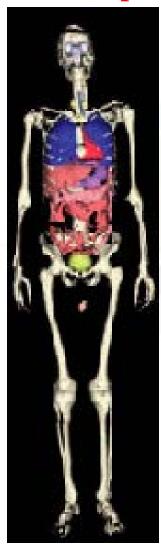


# Voxel geometries: examples



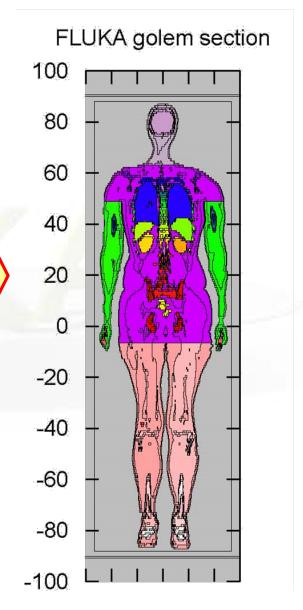
### Voxel geometries: examples

The anthropomorphic GOLEM phantom



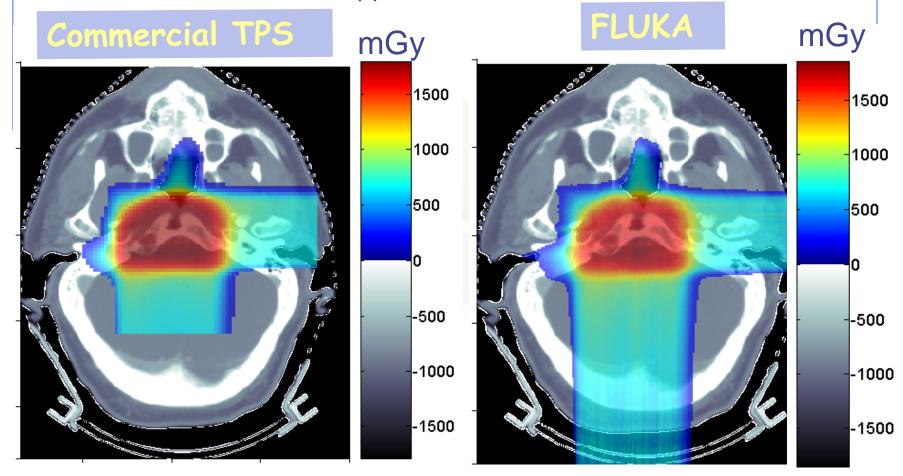
Implementation in FLUKA (radioprotection applications)

Petoussi-Henss et al, 2002

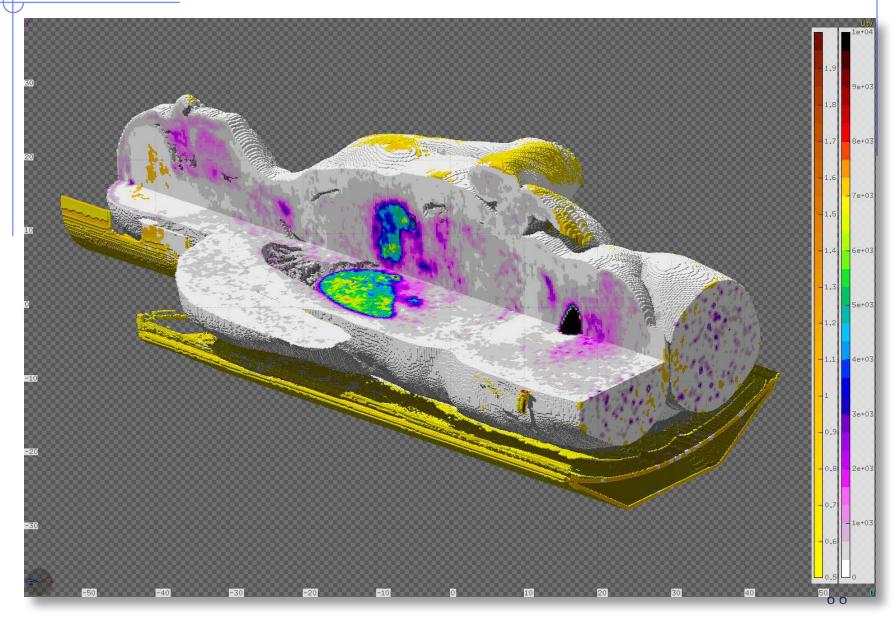


### Voxel geometries in medical applications

 Voxel geometries are especially useful to import CT scan of a human body, e.g., for dosimetric calculations of the planned treatment in radiotherapy



# Voxel geometry with PET-CT



• The CT scan contains integer values "Hounsfield Unit" reflecting the X-ray attenuation coefficient  $\mu_{x}$ 

```
HU_x = 1000 \ (\mu_x - \mu_{H20}) \ / \ \mu_{H20} , typically -1000 \leq HU \leq 3500
```

- We will use loosely the word "organ" to indicate a group of voxels (or even more than one group) made of the same "tissue" material (same HU value or in a given HU interval)
- The code handles each organ as a CG region, possibly in addition to other conventional "non-voxel" regions defined by the user
- The voxel structure can be complemented by parts written in the standard Combinatorial geometry
- The code assumes that the voxel structure is contained in a parallelepiped. This RPP is automatically generated from the voxel information.
- In the past conversion programs customized by the user were needed, recently for medical applications FLAIR takes care of the conversion.

- To describe a voxel geometry, the user must convert his CT scan or equivalent data to a format understood by FLUKA. Starting from DICOM images, this is performed directly by FLAIR.
- This stage should :
  - Assign an organ index to each voxel. In many practical cases, the user will have a continuum of HU (CT values), and may have to group these values in intervals.
  - Each organ is identified by a unique integer ≤32767. The organ numbering does not need to be contiguous i.e. "holes" in the numbering sequence are allowed.
  - One of the organs must have number 0 and plays the role of the medium surrounding the voxels (usually vacuum or air).
  - The user assigns to each NONZERO organ a voxel-region number. The voxel-region numbering has to be contiguous and starts from 1.

- The information is input to FLUKA through a special file \*.vxl containing:
  - The number of voxels in each coordinate axis
  - The voxel dimension in each coordinate axis
  - The number of voxel-regions, and the maximum organ number
  - A list of the organ corresponding to each voxel
  - A list of the voxel-region number corresponding to each organ

# Input file

Prepare the usual FLUKA input file.

The geometry is written like a normal Combinatorial Geometry input, but in addition a VOXELS card must be inserted right after the GEOBEGIN card and before the Geometry title card

- WHAT(1), WHAT(2), WHAT(3) = x, y, z coordinates chosen as the origin of the "voxel volume", (i.e. of a region made of a single RPP body extending from WHAT(1) to WHAT(1) + NX\*DX, ...) which contains all the voxels
- WHAT(4) ROT-DEFI transformation applied to whole voxel
   RPP
- WHAT(5), WHAT(6): not used
- SDUM = name of the voxel file extension will be assumed to be .vxl)



x: -35.068359

y: -35.068359

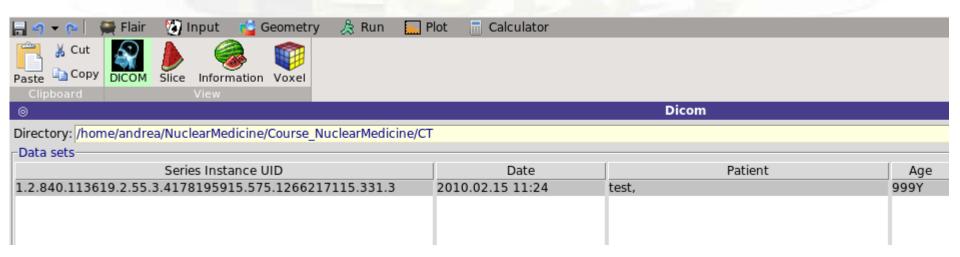
Z: -88.6855

Trans: 🔻

Filename: VOXEL1 ▼

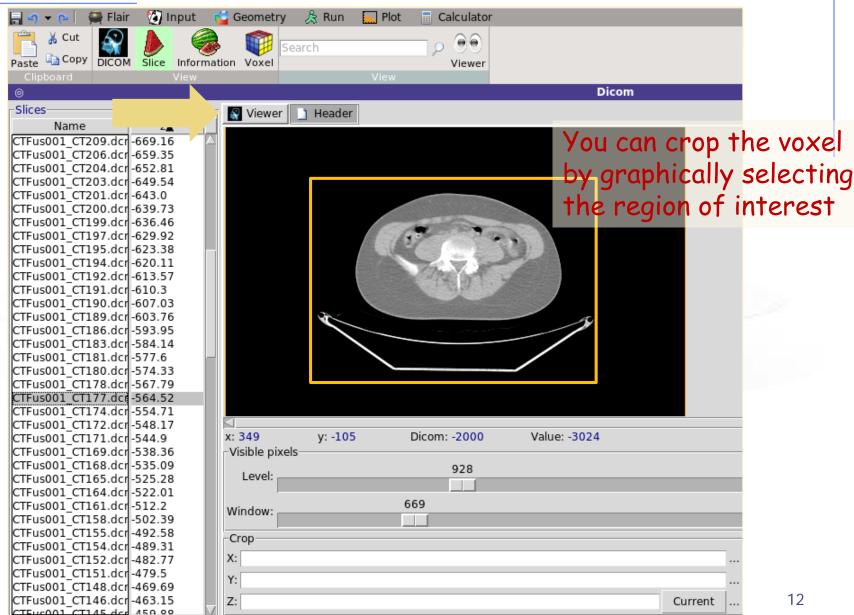
## Processing the **DICOM** files with FLAIR I

- DICOM = Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine is a medical standard for distributing any kind of medical image.
- FLAIR has a capability to process the DICOM files using the pydicom module and convert them to FLUKA VOXELS or USRBIN compatible files.
- First select the "Directory" where the DICOM data sets are located (if you have doubts press F1 and the flair manual will help you).

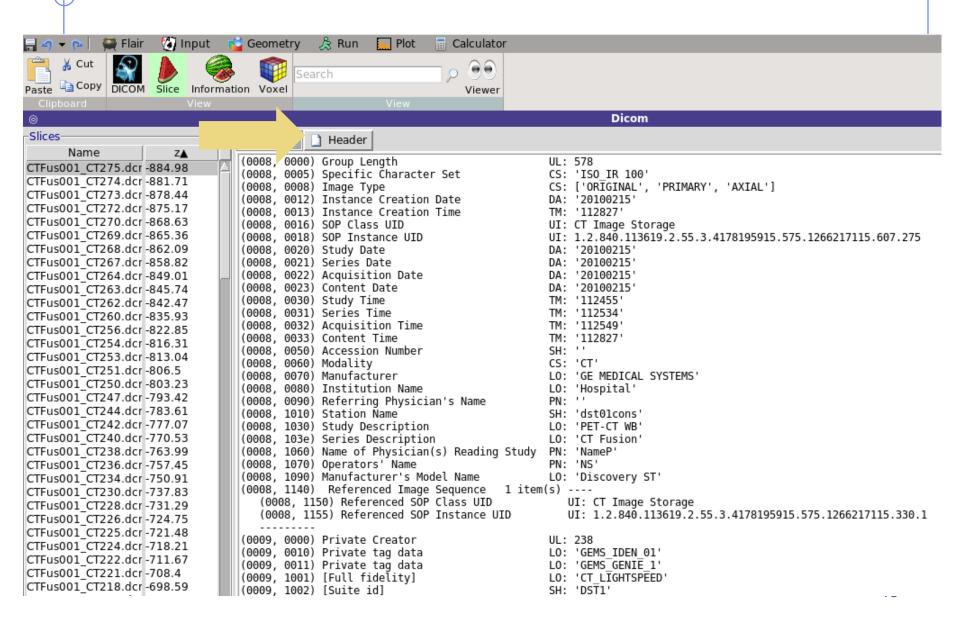


Select one "Data sets" and inspect the images.

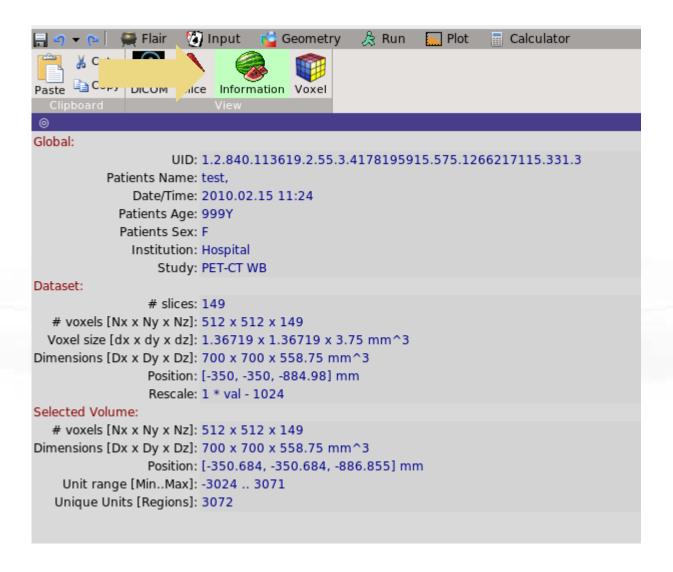
# Processing the **DICOM** files with FLAIR II



# Processing the **DICOM** files with FLAIR III

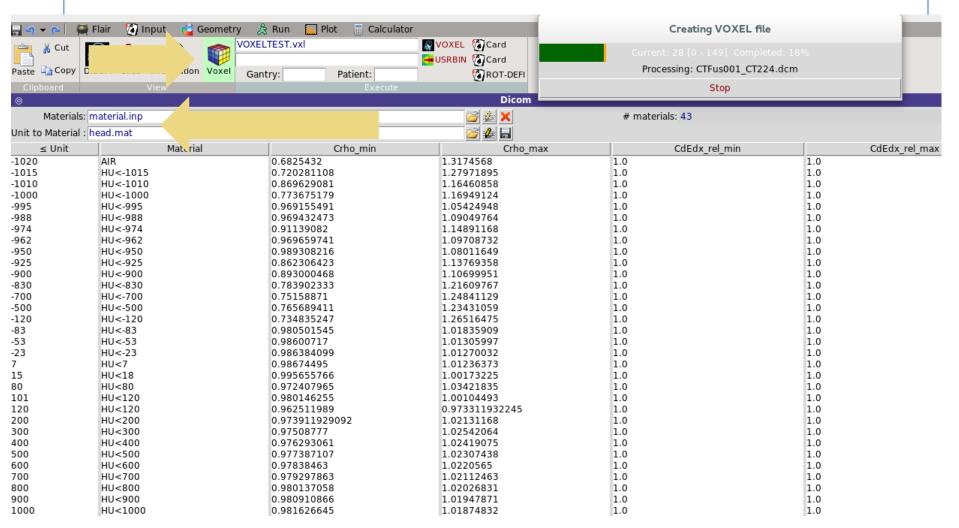


# Processing the **DICOM** files with FLAIR IV



## Processing the **DICOM** files with FLAIR V

 The "Voxel" tab is used in order to convert the dataset to VOXELS or USRBIN format. For the VOXEL geometry two additional files are needed (example: material.inp and head.mat in the flair/dicom dir).



# Processing the **DICOM** files with FLAIR VI

- • Unit: specify the upper limit of the range. Every entry will correspond
   to a range from the previous upper limit+1 until the current upper limit.
- Material: select any of the predefined FLUKA materials defined previously.

Optionally you can specify correction factors for the density and dE/dx

- Crho\_min/Chro\_max: density correction factors to be applied on the lower/upper limit of the unit range (see next slides).
- CdEdx\_rel\_min/CdEdx\_rel\_max: relative correction factors on dE/dx for minimum/maximum unit in the range (see next slides).

≤ Unit	Material	Crho_min	Crho_max	CdEdx_rel_min	CdEdx_rel_max
-1020	AIR	0.6825432	1.3174568	1.0	1.0
-1015	HU<-1015	0.720281108	1.27971895	1.0	1.0
-1010	HU<-1010	0.869629081	1.16460858	1.0	1.0
-1000	HU<-1000	0.773675179	1.16949124	1.0	1.0
-995	HU<-995	0.969155491	1.05424948	1.0	1.0
-988	HU<-988	0.969432473	1.09049764	1.0	1.0
-974	HU<-974	0.91139082	1.14891168	1.0	1.0
-962	HU<-962	0.969659741	1.09708732	1.0	1.0
-950	HU<-950	0.989308216	1.08011649	1.0	1.0
-925	HU<-925	0.862306423	1.13769358	1.0	1.0
-900	HU<-900	0.893000468	1.10699951	1.0	1.0
-830	HU<-830	0.783902333	1.21609767	1.0	1.0
-700	HU<-700	0.75158871	1.24841129	1.0	1.0
-500	HU<-500	0.765689411	1.23431059	1.0	1.0
-120	HU<-120	0.734835247	1.26516475	1.0	1.0
-83	HU<-83	0.980501545	1.01835909	1.0	1.0
-53	HU<-53	0.98600717	1.01305997	1.0	1.0

# Voxel Body

- The usual list of NB bodies, not including the RPP corresponding to the "voxel volume" (see VOXELS card above). This RPP will be generated and added automatically by the code as the (NB+1) th body, with one corner in the point indicated in the VOXELS card, and dimensions NX\*DX, NY\*DY and NZ\*DZ as read from the voxel file.
- The usual region list of NR regions, with the space occupied by body named VOXEL or numbered NB+1 (the "voxel volume") subtracted. In other words, the NR regions listed must cover the whole available space, excepted the space corresponding to the "voxel volume". This is easily obtained by subtracting body VOXEL or NB+1 in the relevant region definitions, even though this body is not explicitly input at the end of the body list.

VOXELS		x: -35.068359 Trans: ▼	y: -35.068359 Filename: VOXEL1 ▼	z: -88.6855
SPH	BODY1	x: 0. R: 10000.	у: 0.	Z: <b>0.</b>
SPH	BODY2	x: 0. R: 1000.	у: 0.	Z: <b>0.</b>
◆ END				
REGION	REG1 expr: BODY1-BODY2		Neigh: 5	Volume:
REGION	REG2 expr: BODY2-VOXEL		Neigh: 5	Volume:
◆ END				
IAI GEOENI	1	~		

# **Voxel Regions**

The code will automatically generate and add several regions:

NO additional regions, where NO = number of non-zero organs:

Name	Number	Description
VOXEL	NR+1	sort of a "cage" for all voxels. Nothing should ever be deposited in it. The user shall assign vacuum to it.
VOXEL001	NR+2	containing all voxels belonging to organ number 0. There must be at least 2 of such voxels, but in general they should be many more. Typical material assignment to this region is air
VOXEL002	NR+3	corresponding to organ 1
VOXEL003	NR+4	corresponding to organ 2
VOXEL###	NR+2+NO	corresponding to organ NO

#### Few remarks

- The assignment of materials is made directly by FLAIR.
   The user has to assign the materials to the regions defined by combinatorial geometry.
- The "head.mat" and "material.inp" files are examples, the user should update these files taking into account his calibration curves.

### Practical issues for Medical Applications

#### General problems for MC calculations on CT scans

- How to assign realistic human tissue parameters (= materials) for MC Calculation?
- How to find a good compromise between the number of different HU values (~ 3000-5000) and the materials to be considered in the MC?
  - (issues on memory and computation speed when attempting to treat each HU number as a different material !!!)
- How to preserve continuous, HU-dependent information when segmenting the HU numbers into intervals sharing the same "tissue" material?
  - (critical for ion range calculation in hadron therapy !!!)

### CT stoichiometric calibration (I)

CT segmentation into 27 materials of defined elemental composition (from analysis of 71 human CT scans)

Air, Lung,
Adipose tissue

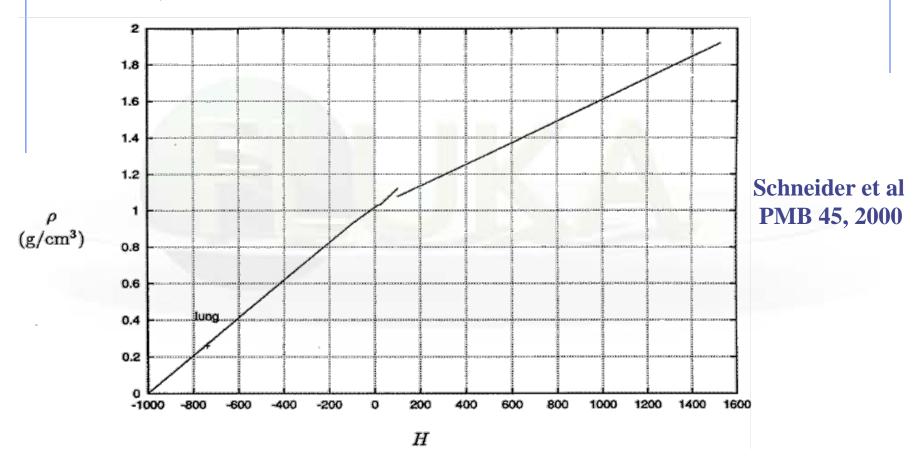
Soft tissue

Skeletal tissue

	$w_i(pp)$											
H	H	C	N	0	Na	Mg	P	S	Cl	Ar	K	Ca
-1000950			75.5	23.2						1.3		
-950120	10.3	10.5	3.1	74.9	0.2		0.2	0.3	0.3		0.2	
-12083	11.6	68.1	0.2	19.8	0.1			0.1	0.1			
-8253	11.3	56.7	0.9	30.8	0.1			0.1	0.1			
-5223	11.0	45.8	1.5	41.1	0.1		0.1	0.2	0.2			
-22-7	10.8	35.6	2.2	50.9			0.1	0.2	0.2			
8-18	10.6	28.4	2.6	57.8			0.1	0.2	0.2		0.1	
19-80	10.3	13.4	3.0	72.3	0.2		0.2	0.2	0.2		0.2	
80-120	9.4	20.7	6.2	62.2	0.6			0.6	0.3			
120-200	9.5	45.5	2.5	35.5	0.1		2.1	0.1	0.1		0.1	4.5
200-300	8.9	42.3	2.7	36.3	0.1		3.0	0.1	0.1		0.1	6.4
300-400	8.2	39.1	2.9	37.2	0.1		3.9	0.1	0.1		0.1	8.3
400-500	7.6	36.1	3.0	38.0	0.1	0.1	4.7	0.2	0.1			10.1
500-600	7.1	33.5	3.2	38.7	0.1	0.1	5.4	0.2				11.7
600-700	6.6	31.0	3.3	39.4	0.1	0.1	6.1	0.2				13.2
700-800	6.1	28.7	3.5	40.0	0.1	0.1	6.7	0.2				14.6
800-900	5.6	26.5	3.6	40.5	0.1	0.2	7.3	0.3				15.9
900-1000	5.2	24.6	3.7	41.1	0.1	0.2	7.8	0.3				17.0
1000-1100	4.9	22.7	3.8	41.6	0.1	0.2	8.3	0.3				18.1
1100-1200	4.5	21.0	3.9	42.0	0.1	0.2	8.8	0.3				19.2
1200-1300	4.2	19.4	4.0	42.5	0.1	0.2	9.2	0.3				20.1
1300-1400	3.9	17.9	4.1	42.9	0.1	0.2	9.6	0.3				21.0
1400-1500	3.6	16.5	4.2	43.2	0.1	0.2	10.0	0.3				21.9
1500-1600	3.4	15.5	4.2	43.5	0.1	0.2	10.3	0.3				22.5

### CT stoichiometric calibration (II)

Assign to each material a "nominal mean density", e.g. using the density at the center of each HU interval (Jiang et al, MP 2004)



But "real density" (and related physical quantities) varies continuously with HU value !!!

### The region-dependent CORRFACT card

- "CORRFACT" card allows to alter material density for dE/dx and nuclear processes
- First two inputs specify a density scaling factor (restricted to the interval [2/3,3/2]) for charged particle ionization processes (WHAT(1)) and for all other processes (WHAT(2)) to the region(s) specified by the inputs WHAT(4-6) [cf. manual]
- This is especially important in ion beam therapy to force the MC to follow the same semi-empirical HU-range calibration curve as the Treatment Planning System (TPS) for dosimetric comparisons
- FLAIR automatically appends the CORRFACT cards calculated taking into account the calibration curves provided by the user at the end of the .vxl file.

### How to account for HU-dependent dEdx

#### In the INPUT

 Let several regions share the same material composition and mean density according to CT segmentation (reduced number of materials to save memory / initialization time)

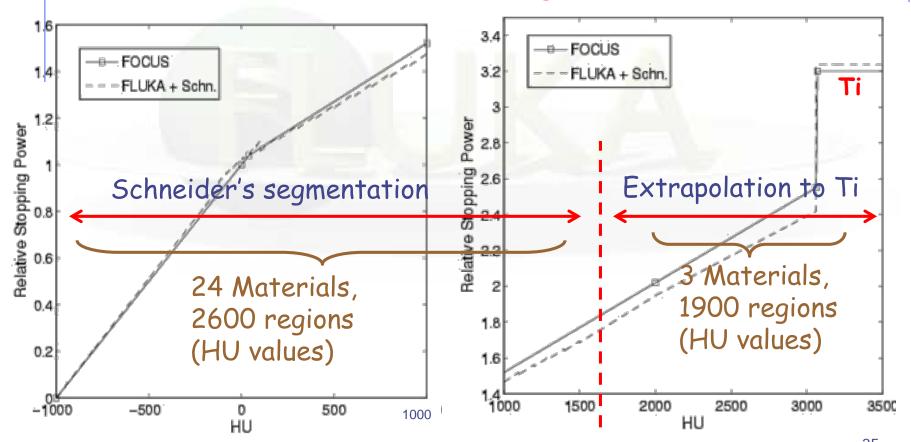
ASSIGNMA BONE VOXEL005 (region number 25)
ASSIGNMA BONE VOXEL016 (region number 31)

■ Use CORRFACT to impose the desired correction for stopping power (⇒ ion range!) in the regions KREG corresponding to different organs IO (i.e., different HU values) sharing the same MATERIAL assignment

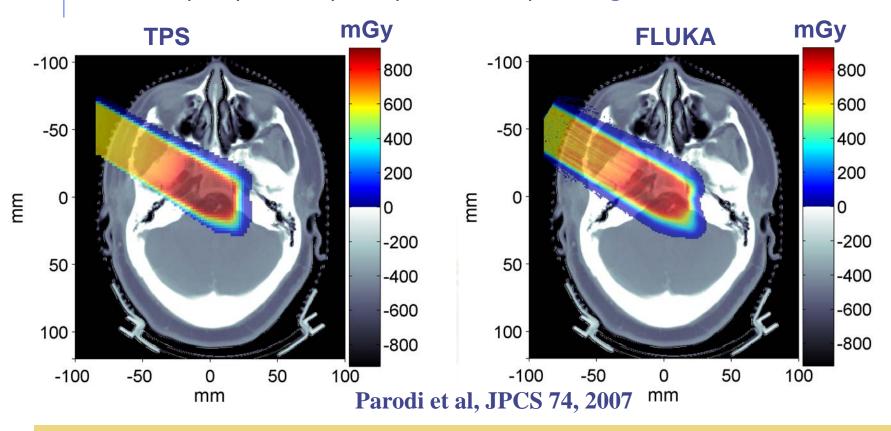
CORRFACT 0.85 0.0 0.0 VOXEL005 Region #25 corresponds CORRFACT 1.3 0.0 0.0 VOXEL016 to "softer" bone than #31

# Forcing FLUKA to follow the same range calibration curve as TPS for p @ MGH Boston

The CORRFACT ionization scaling factors were obtained from the dEdx ratio between TPS and FLUKA (+ Schneider "mass density") -> The user should update the "head.mat" file with his own calibration for CdEdX\_rel taking into account his TPS.



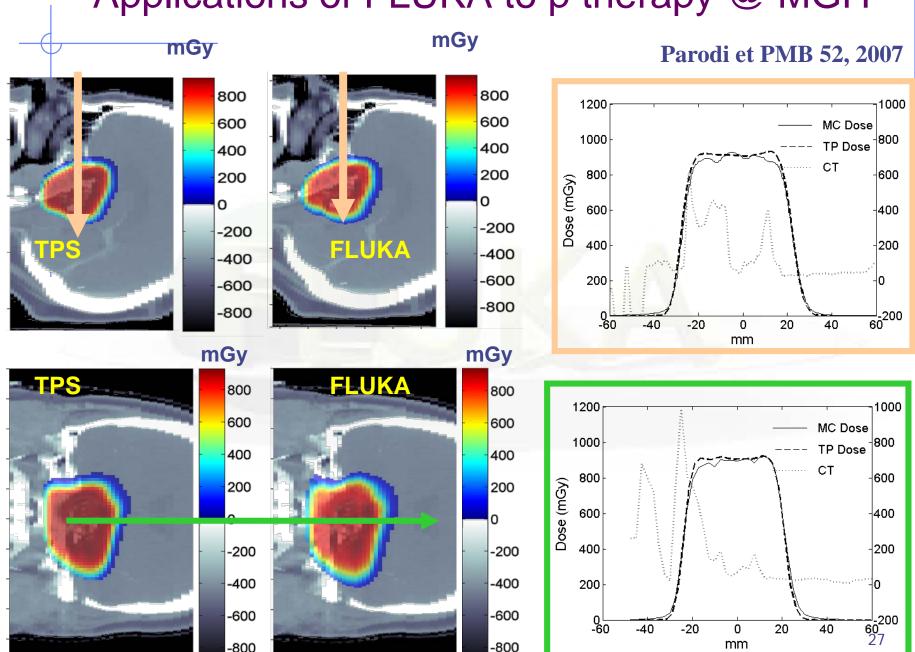
Input phase-space provided by H. Paganetti, MGH Boston



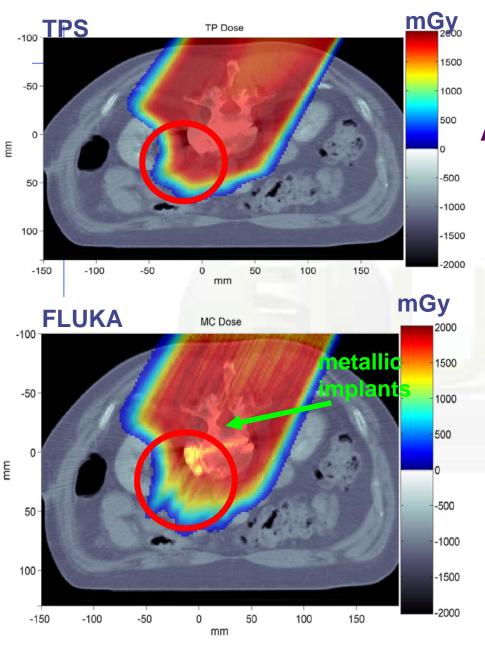
Prescribed dose: 1 GyE

 $MC: \sim 5.5 \cdot 10^6$  protons in 10 independent runs

(11h each on Linux Cluster mostly using 2.2GHz Athlon processors)



-800



Prescribed dose: 2 GyE

MC:  $\sim 7.4 \ 10^7 p$  in 12 independent runs ( $\sim 130 h$  each on 2.2 GHz Linux cluster)

K. Parodi et al, IJROBP 2007

# Biological predictions with mixed field

Estimation of the biological effect is important in many applications (hadron therapy, space radiation, etc...)

The linear-quadratic model for the biological response predictions is often used :

$$S = \exp(-\alpha * D - \beta * D * D)$$

where S is the (cell, tissue) survival and  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are the linear and quadratic term for the dose response.

 $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  values depends from many factors:

- Particle type (Z, A)
- Particle energy
- Cell / Tissue type
- Biological endpoint
- · ...

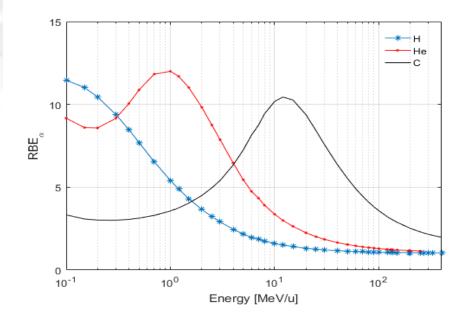
α and β values are passed to FLUKA with RAD-BIOL card

#### RAD-BIOL

#### RAD-BIOL: reading biological parameter cards

- WHAT(1) = 0 always
- WHAT(2-6): not used
- SDUM = biological data file name (10 character long) the file must be named <sdum>.dat

Example of an input biological table for H, He and C ions expressed as RBE $_{\alpha} = \alpha_{ion} / \alpha_{photons}$  as function of MeV /u



#### **TPSSCORE**

This card controls some scoring parameters relevant for TPS-like calculations.

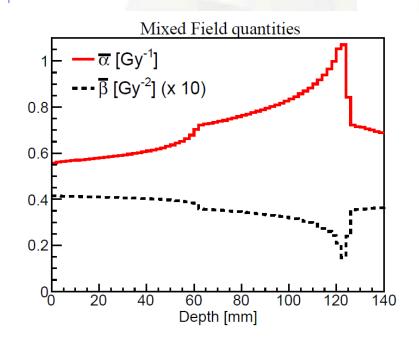
#### For SDUM = BIOTOBIN

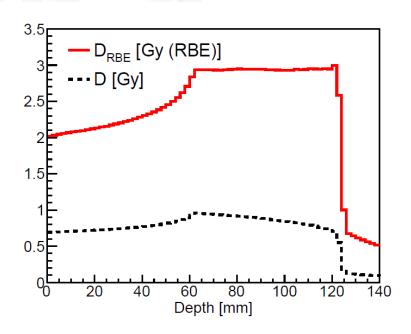
- WHAT(1) = > 0, alpha-beta cellular line index to be associated to the USRBIN defined by WHAT(4)-WHAT(6) (see RAD-BIOL)
- WHAT(2), WHAT(3) = not used
- WHAT(4) = from binning WHAT(4)
- WHAT(5) = to binning WHAT(5)
- WHAT(6) = in step of WHAT(6)

RAD-BIOL						TABL	ENAMAB
USRBIN	11.	ALPHA	۸-D	-42.	10.	0.	30.0ALPHADa
USRBIN	0.	0.	0.0	100.		600.	0 &
USRBIN	11.	SQBE1	TA-D	-42.	10.	0.	30.0BETADa
USRBIN	0.	0.	0.0	100.		600.	0 &
<b>TPSSCORE</b>	1.		A	ALPHAD	a BE	ETADa	BIOTOBIN

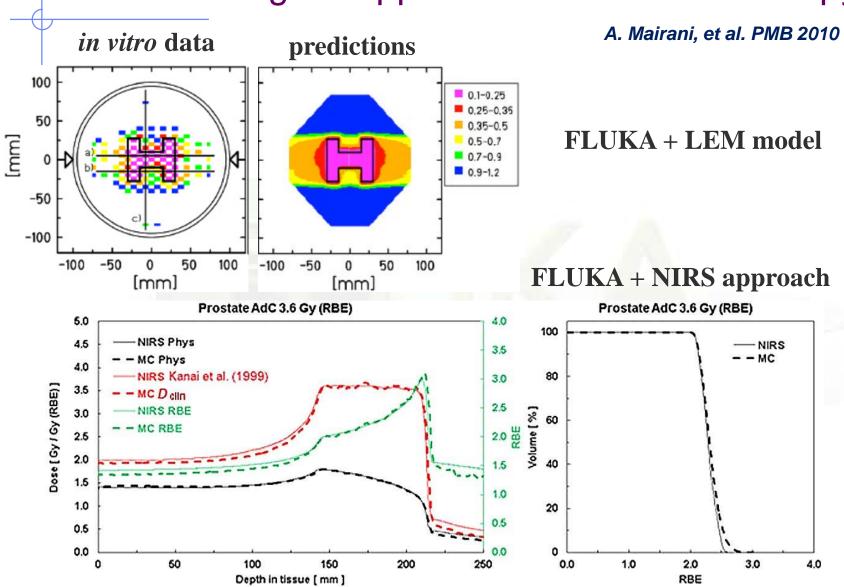
#### **TPSSCORE**

- Use TPSSCORE to calculate the mixed radiation field liner and quadratic term (left panel)
- Use USRBIN dose (D) and TPSSCORE to calculate biological dose (D<sub>RBE</sub>, right panel in red) in the postprocessing

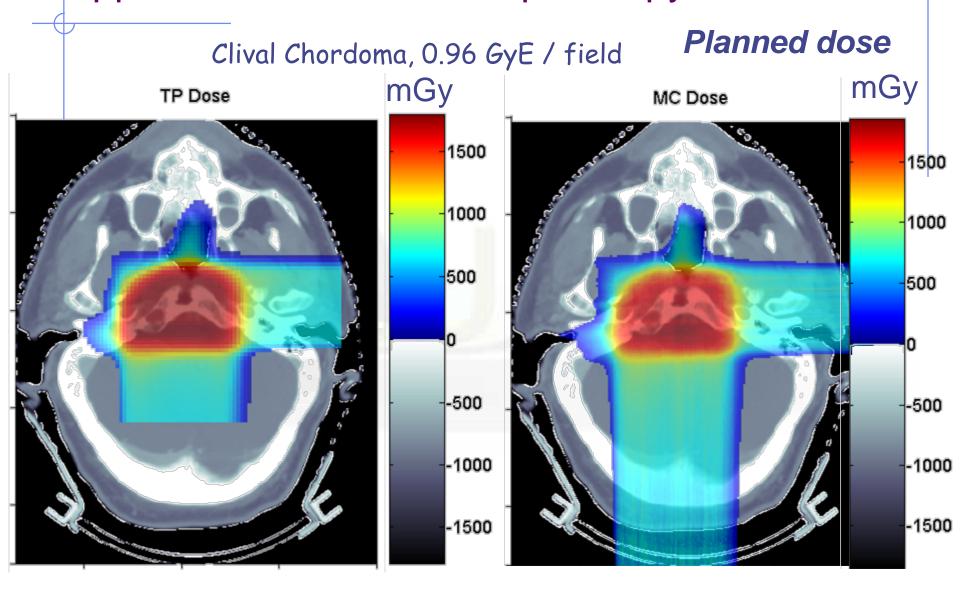




#### FLUKA biological application for <sup>12</sup>C ion therapy

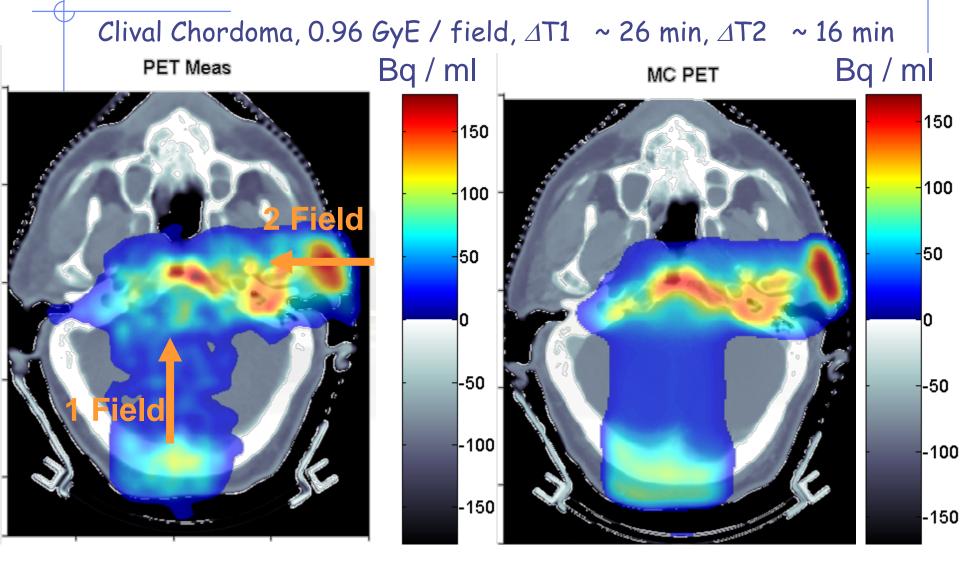


G. Magro, et al. PMB 2017



#### Post-radiation PET/CT @ MGH

#### Average Activity



K. Parodi et al, IJROBP 2007

... and FLUKA-voxel functionalities being also used at HIT and CNAO 3.5