An Implicit Methodology for the Numerical Modeling of Locally Inextensible Membranes

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Abstract : We present in this paper a fully implicit finite element method tailored for the numerical modeling of inextensible fluidic membranes in a surrounding Newtonian fluid. We consider a highly simplified version of the Canham-Helfrich model for phospholipid membranes, in which the bending force and spontaneous curvature are disregarded. The coupled problem is formulated in a fully Eulerian framework and the membrane motion is tracked using the level set method. The resulting nonlinear problem is solved by a Newton-Raphson strategy, featuring a quadratic convergence behavior. A monolithic solver is implemented, and we report several numerical experiments aimed at model validation and illustrating the accuracy of the proposed method. We show that stability is maintained for significantly larger time steps with respect to an explicit decoupling method.

Keywords : finite element method, level set, Newton, membrane
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