

The partial volume effect can be defined as the loss of apparent activity in small objects or regions because of the limited resolution of the imaging system. It occurs in medical imaging and more generally in biological imaging such as positron emission tomography (PET) and single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT). If the object or region to be imaged is less than twice the full width at half maximum (FWHM) resolution in x-, y- and z-dimension of the imaging system, the resultant activity in the object or region is underestimated. A higher resolution decreases this effect, as it better resolves the tissue.

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