Heart Beat Monitoring

Technological innovations in the field of disease prevention and maintenance of patient health have enabled the evolution of fields such as monitoring systems. Heart rate is a very vital health parameter that is directly related to the soundness of the human cardiovascular system. Heart rate is the number of times the heart beats per minute, reflects different physiological conditions such as biological workload, stress at work and concentration on tasks, drowsiness and the active state of the autonomic nervous system. It can be measured either by the ECG waveform or by sensing the pulse - the rhythmic expansion and contraction of an artery as blood is forced through it by the regular contractions of the heart. The pulse can be felt from those areas where the artery is close to the skin. This paper describes a technique of measuring the heart rate through a fingertip and Arduino. It is based on the principal of photophelthysmography (PPG) which is non-invasive method of measuring the variation in blood volume in tissue using a light source and detector. While the heart is beating, it is actually pumping blood throughout the body, and that makes the blood volume inside the finger artery to change too. This fluctuation of blood can be detected through an optical sensing mechanism placed around the fingertip. The signal can be amplified and is sent to arduino with the help of serial port communication. With the help of processing software heart rate monitoring and counting is performed. The sensor unit consists of an infrared light-emitting-diode (IR LED) and a photo diode. The IR LED transmits an infrared light into the fingertip, a part of which is reflected back from the blood inside the finger arteries. The photo diode senses the portion of the light that is reflected back. The intensity of reflected light depends upon the blood volume inside the fingertip. So, every time the heart beats the amount of reflected infrared light changes, which can be detected by the photo diode. With a high gain amplifier, this little alteration in the amplitude of the reflected light can be converted into a pulse.