Large mode area and nearly zero flattened dispersion photonic crystal fiber by diminishing the pitch of the innermost air-holes-ring

Jiajia zhang (赵佳佳)1, Jin Hou (侯健)1*, Chunyong Yang (杨春勇)1, Zhiyou Zhong (钟志有)1, Yihua Gao (高义华)2, and Shaoping Chen (陈少平)1

1Hubei Key Laboratory of Intelligent Wireless Communications and Information Engineering, South-central University for Nationalities, Wuhan 430074, China
2Wuhan National Laboratory for Optoelectronics (WNLO), School of Physics, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan 430074, China

*Corresponding author: houjin@mail.scuec.edu.cn

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In this study, we propose that by diminishing only the pitch of the innermost air-holes-ring of a HF1 photonic crystal fiber, both an effective mode area up to 100 μm² at 1.55 μm wavelength and nearly zero dispersion of 0.2 ± 1 ps/(km·nm) within a spectrum range of 1.23–1.65 μm can be achieved simultaneously. Because only one parameter is needed to be tuned in the proposed design scheme, the fiber would be easier to be fabricated compared to other fibers using either multiple changing parameters or additional kinds of materials and would have potential applications in optical communications.

Numerical results show that, in an optimized PCF, both a flattened chromatic dispersion of 0.2 ± 1 ps/(km·nm) within a wavelength range from 1.23 to 1.65 μm and an effective mode area more than 100 μm² at 1.55 μm wavelength can be achieved.

Our design is based on a previous investigated PCF[12], which obtained a large effective mode area while maintained a flattened dispersion by precisely adjusting the diameter and position of the defect air-holes in a HF7 PCF. In our design, we expect that by only diminishing the pitch of innermost air-holes-ring in a HF1 PCF[13], a similar performance would be obtained with a relative simpler structure. Figure 1 shows the schematic cross-section of the proposed PCF. It is composed of circular air-holes arranged in a hexagonal lattice in the background of pure silica. The silica core is formed by removal of a single air-hole in the fiber centre and the number of the air-hole-rings is assumed to be 11, which is also well known as HF1 PCF. The diameter of air-holes d is assumed to be 0.8 μm, and the lattice constant Λ is with 2.5 μm. Here, considering the state of the art in the fiber fabrication, the value of Λ1 should not be too small. So the scope of parameter Λ1 is limited from 2.5 μm to 1.0 μm.

The chromatic dispersion $D(\lambda)$ of a PCF contains waveguide dispersion and material dispersion, which can be calculated from the second derivation of the real part of the effective mode index $n_{eff}$ as[13]

$$D(\lambda) = -\frac{\lambda}{c} \frac{d^2 \text{Re}(n_{eff})}{d\lambda^2},$$

(1)

where $c$ is the speed of light in vacuum, the effective index $n_{eff}$ of the fundamental mode in PCF is obtained by solving the Maxwell equations as an eigenvalue problem.
with a plane-wave expansion method\cite{14}. The effective area of the fundamental mode $A_{\text{eff}}$ is using the following definition\cite{15}:

$$A_{\text{eff}} = \frac{\iint |E|^2 \, dx \, dy}{\iint |E|^4 \, dx \, dy}, \quad (2)$$

where $E$ is the transverse electric field vector and $S$ denotes the whole fiber cross-section.

Fig. 2 shows the calculated chromatic dispersion curves as a function of the wavelength $\lambda$ with $d = 0.8 \, \mu m$ and $\Lambda = 2.5 \, \mu m$, for a changing $\Lambda_1$ within a range from 2.5 to 1.0 $\mu m$. The black solid curve represents the chromatic dispersion of the initial fiber with $\Lambda_1 = \Lambda = 2.5 \, \mu m$. The blue solid curves with various geometric shapes show that the chromatic dispersion curves shift down with the decreasing of $\Lambda_1$ from 2.4 $\mu m$ to 2.1 $\mu m$ in a step of 0.1 $\mu m$. The red dash-dot curves with various geometric shapes describe the chromatic dispersion shift upward with a further decreasing of $\Lambda_1$ from 2.0 $\mu m$ to 1.0 $\mu m$ in a step of 0.2 $\mu m$.

Comparing the blue solid curves with the red dash-dot curves, we find that a slight decrement of $\Lambda_1$ from its initial value gains a greater impact to the variation of dispersion than further decrement of $\Lambda_1$. The dispersion curve firstly shifts downward as the decrement of $\Lambda_1$. While the dispersion curve is decreasing downward, the point of the greatest decline in the dispersion curve is gradually moving from longer wavelength zone to shorter wavelength zone. However, when the decrement of $\Lambda_1$ is beyond a specific critic value, the dispersion curve turns to shift upward. While the dispersion curve is shifting upward, the point of the greatest decline is moving from shorter wavelength zone to longer wavelength zone. Therefore, there must be an optimum $\Lambda_1$ value for the proposed PCF, at which a flattened dispersion curve around the wavelength of communication band would be obtained. From the result shown in Fig. 2, the optimum dispersion curve is with $\Lambda_1 = 1.8 \, \mu m$, and its dispersion variation is only $0.2 \pm 1 \, \text{ps/(km nm)}$ within a wavelength range of $1.23 \sim 1.65 \, \mu m$.

Moreover, the effective mode area variation with the changing of $\Lambda_1$ is also given in Fig. 3. As shown in Fig. 3(a), when $\Lambda_1 = \Lambda = 2.5 \, \mu m$, the fundamental mode electric field distributions is limited to the innermost ring, and the effective mode area at the wavelength of 1.55 $\mu m$ is less than 20 $\mu m^2$. On the other side, as shown in Fig. 3(b), when $\Lambda_1$ is decreased to its optimum with 1.8 $\mu m$, the effective mode area soars greatly to 102 $\mu m^2$ at the same wavelength. As $\Lambda_1$ decreased, mode field tends to distribute mainly in the space between the innermost and the neighborhood air-holes-ring. Obviously, the area covered by the mode field in Fig. 3(b) is far larger than that in Fig. 3(a). Having understood the influence of the innermost air-holes pitch on the chromatic dispersion and effective mode area of PCF, we also can use the method to tailor the effective mode area and chromatic dispersion of PCF for other applications.

In conclusion, we investigate and analyze the influence exerted by the pitch of the innermost air-holes-ring on the chromatic dispersion and effective mode area in a PCF. According to the method mentioned above, a PCF both with large effective mode area beyond 100 $\mu m^2$ at 1.55 $\mu m$ wavelength and ultra-flattened dispersion of 0.2 $\pm 1 \, \text{ps/(km nm)}$ in a wavelength range of $1.23 \sim 1.65 \, \mu m$ is achieved. The proposed PCF reduces the difficulty of fabrication compared to other design schemes using either multiple changing parameters or additional kinds of materials. The design principle presented here can also be applicable for square lattice PCFs. Taking all these things into account, the
proposed PCF would have a wide application in ultrabroadband WDM transmission system.

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References

Fig. 3. Fundamental mode electric field intensity distributions for PCFs with different innermost pitch sizes. (a) $\Lambda I = 2.5 \mu m$, (b) $\Lambda I = 1.8 \mu m$. 