Moving from Cellular Responsiveness to Functional Vision: Characterizing the Perceptual Performance of Optogenetic Vision

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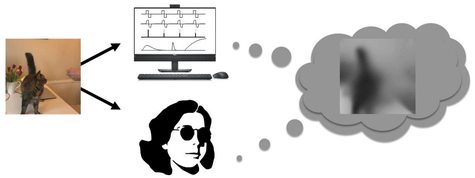
1. The Virtual patient

Predicting the Perceptual Experience of Optogenetic Vision

THE WHY?

- Optogenetics uses retinaldehyde-binding proteins to elicit light sensitivity in remaining healthy retinal cells (bipolar and/or ganglion cells).
- **But, cell responsiveness is not the same as functional vision!**
- Hence, we simulate a virtual patient to study the perceptual performance of optogenetic vision



THE HOW?

1. **Model the neural response of opto-protein $^{4x}BGAG_{12,460}$:SNAP-mGluR2 [2]**

2. Measure visual acuity of simulated optogenetics

- **2.1 Metric:** temporal Contrast Sensitivity Function (tCSF)
- **2.1 Experiment:** To identify orientation (+/- 45°) of gratings across a range of spatial and temporal frequencies.
- **2.2 Conditions:** tCSFs were measured for (i) neurotypical vision (ii) optogenetic filtering

2. Modeling the Optogenetic Response

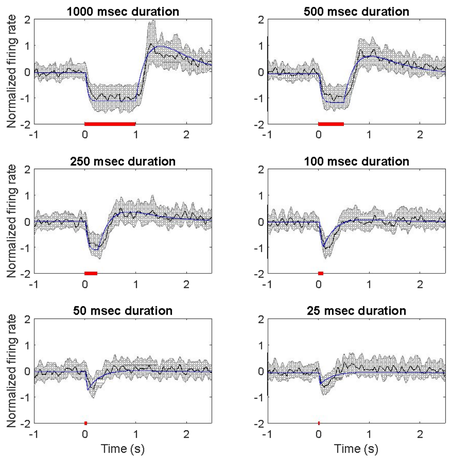


Fig.1. (i) Average RGC responses (black) (ii) model predictions (blue) for flashes of light with varying durations (red)

- We use the following system of differential equations to model the neural response time course to flashes of light in rd1 mice retina expressing $^{4x}BGAG_{12,460}$:SNAP-mGluR2 [2].
- Photoactivation of this opsin in retinal ganglion cells (RGC) triggers a fast suppression of spontaneous firing followed by a rebound excitation when light is turned off

$$\frac{dy_{on}}{dt} = \frac{-aS + (b_0 - y)}{\tau_{on}}$$

$$\frac{dy_{off}}{dt} = \frac{-aS + s(b - y)}{\tau_{off}}$$

$$\frac{db}{dt} = \frac{abS + (b_0 - b)}{\tau_b}$$

S(t): stimulus
Y(t): firing rate
b(t): drifting baseline

a,b : scale factors
b0 : starting baseline
τ_{on}, τ_{off}: time constants

3. Measuring Visual Acuity: Simulated Optogenetics

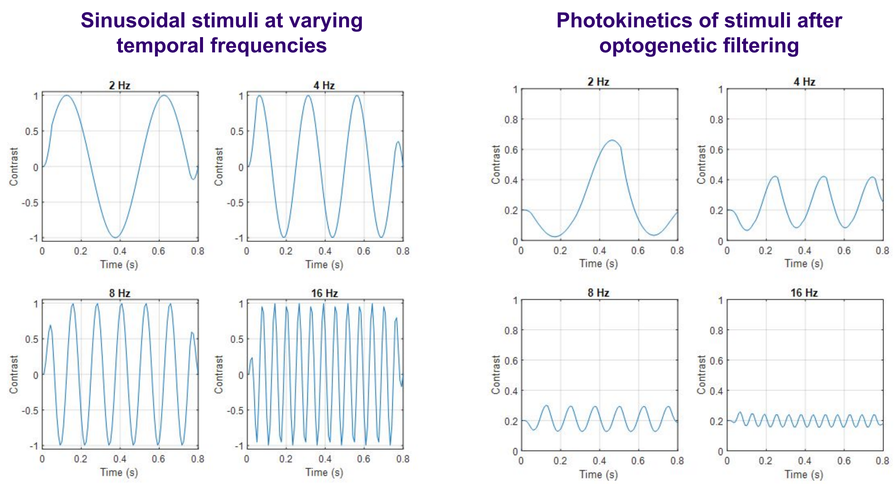


Fig 2. Modulation of sinusoidal stimuli by non-linear photokinetics of $^{4x}BGAG_{12,460}$:SNAP-mGluR2

4. Comparison of Detection Thresholds

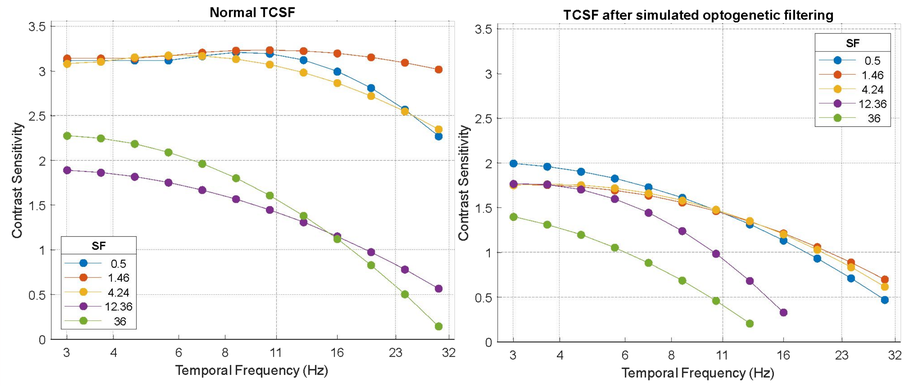


Fig 3. Temporal contrast sensitivity for varying temporal and spatial frequencies across five participants with (i) neurotypical vision (ii) optogenetic vision based on the model for $^{4x}BGAG_{12,460}$:SNAP-mGluR2 opsin.

5. Discussion

- **Sensitivity:** tCSF measurements indicate **10x fold loss -** even more severe at higher temporal frequencies.
- **Snellen Acuity: ~20/40** at low temporal frequencies to **~20/100 - 20/200** at high temporal frequencies.
- **Target population:** patients with **uncontrollable nystagmus** might be **poor candidates** for optogenetic treatments
- Losses are likely to be **more severe in the presence of rapid eye-movements**
- **Applicability:** Framework can be extended to model any opto-protein; provides a systematic quantitative methodology to study perceptual performance

REFERENCES
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[3] Fine, Boynton 2015. Pulse trains to percepts: The challenge of creating a perceptually intelligible world with sight recovery technologies. Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society B Biological Sciences. (DOI: 10.1098/rstb.2014.0208)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The research reported in this scientific work was supported by the National Institute of Health under the R01 grant for Sight restoration with award number GR013090. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Izzy Storm for assisting in data collection and Dr. Ariel Rokem for his thoughtful insights on matters of mathematical modeling. We would also like to thank Dr. Kelly Chang for her support on the project.

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