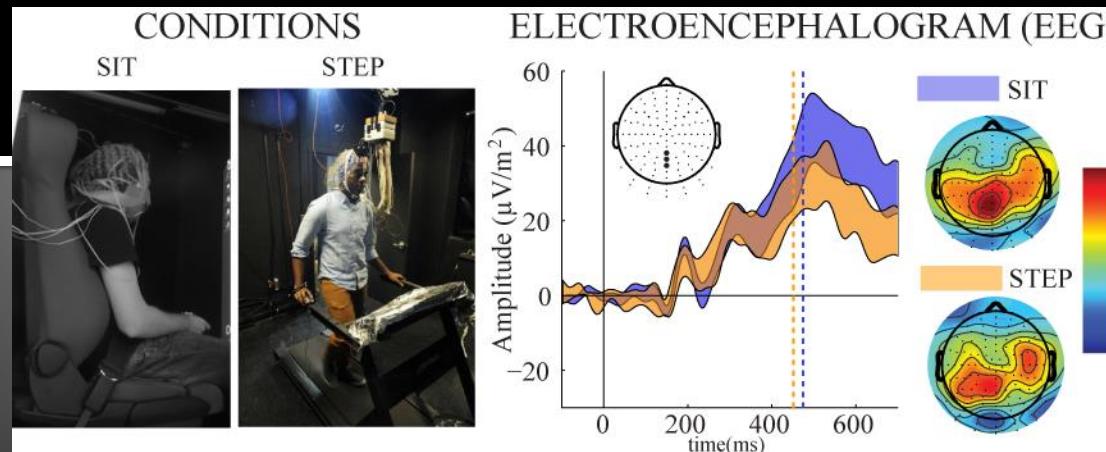


# Virtual Reality and Neuroimaging to Investigate the Neuronal Process while Walking

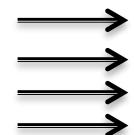
John S Butler

School of Mathematical Sciences  
Technological University Dublin



# My background

- Numerical Analysis (Trinity College Dublin, PhD work)
  - Robust Numerical methods of Prandtl Boundary Layer Problems
- Self-motion Perception (Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics)
  - Walking
  - Driving
- Unisensory and Multisensory processing
  - Developmental Disorders (Albert Einstein College of Medicine)
    - Autism Spectrum Disorder, Niemann Pick Type C
  - Movement Disorders (Trinity Centre for Bioengineering)
    - Parkinson's Disease
    - Dystonia



# Talk Overview

1. Introduction
2. Distance Perception
3. Feasibility of neural recordings while moving
4. Motor preparation in Parkinson's disease
5. Cognitive flexibility of visual load while walking

# Talk Overview

## 1. Introduction

### I. Virtual Reality

### II. Sensory information

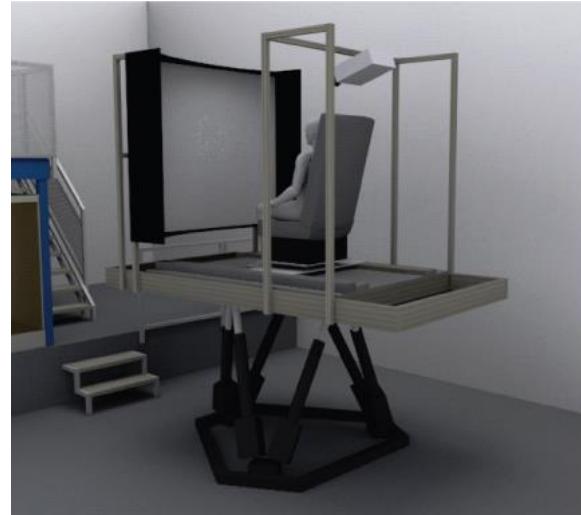
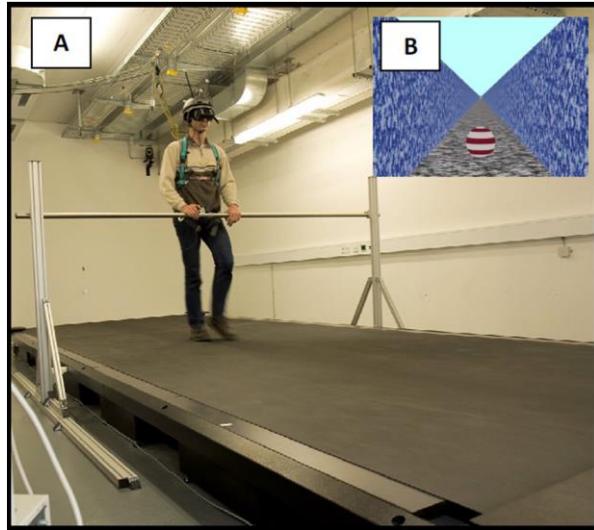
## 2. Distance Perception

## 3. Feasibility of neural recordings while moving

## 4. Motor preparation in Parkinson's disease

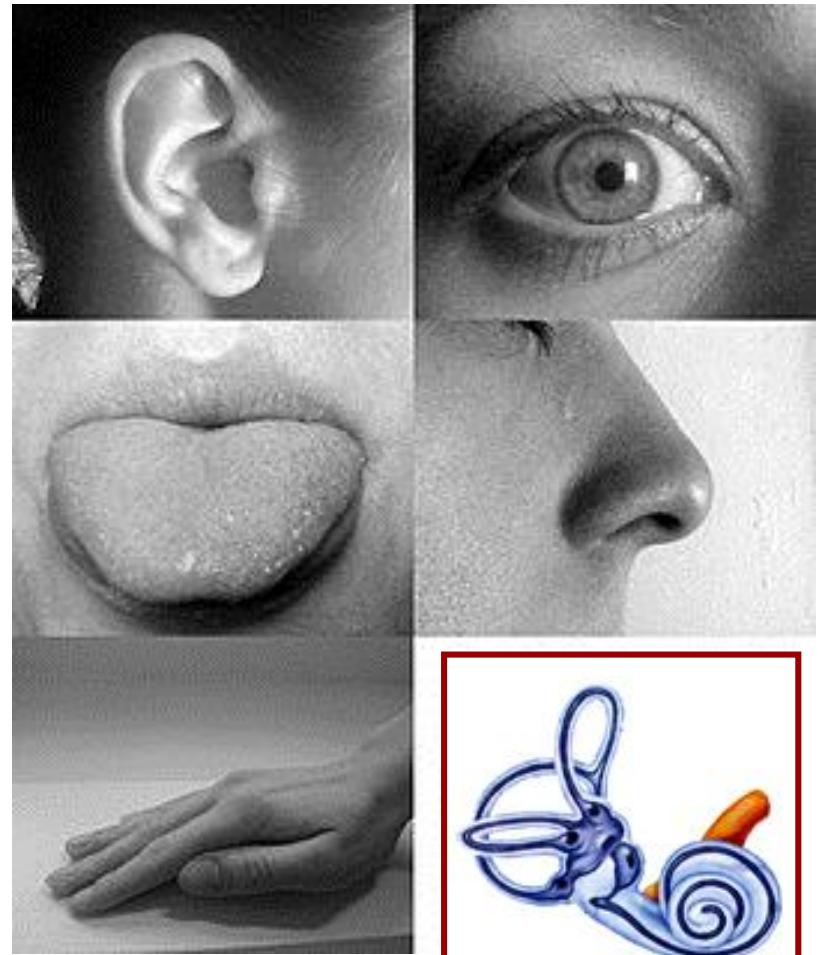
## 5. Cognitive flexibility of visual load while walking

# Virtual Reality



# Sensory information

- Hearing
- Sight
- Taste
- Smell
- Touch
- Vestibular
- Proprioception



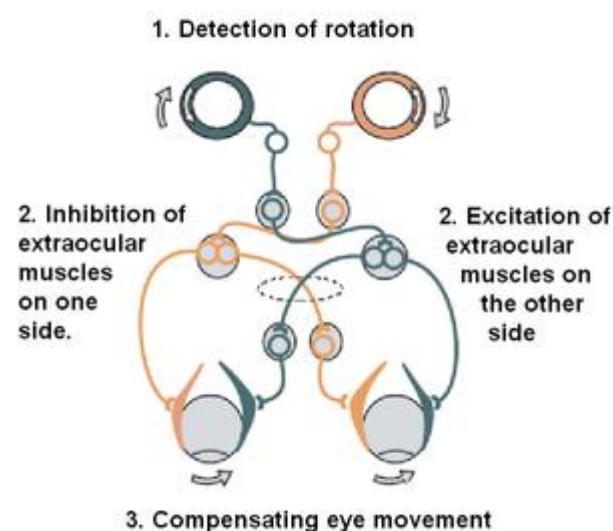
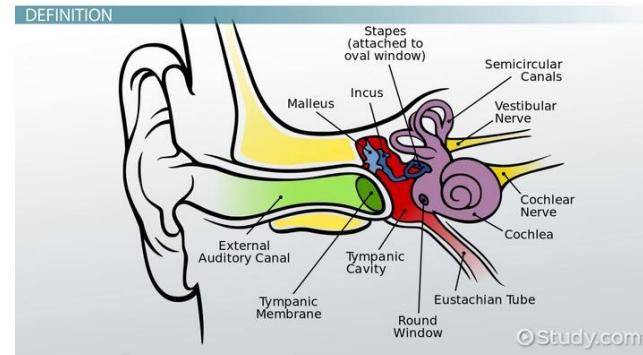
# Self-motion

- Self-motion
  - Walking
  - Driving
- Cues for Self-motion
  - Visual
  - Vestibular
  - Proprioception
  - Etc.



# Body motion Cues

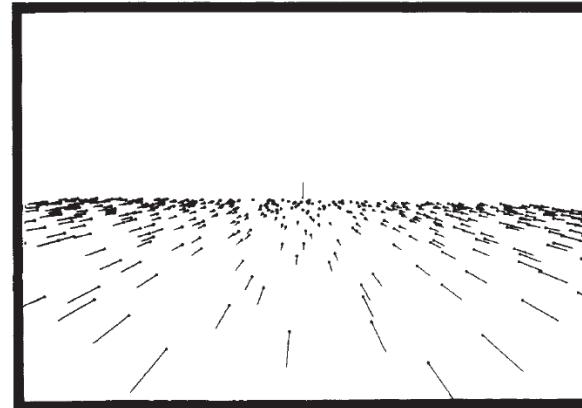
- Vestibular
  - Eye movements
  - Heading
  - Acceleration
- Proprioception
  - Somatosensory
  - Joints



# Optic flow

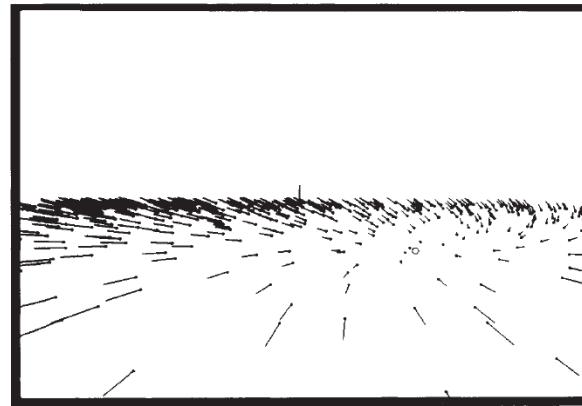
## Behavioural

- Distance perception
- Heading



## Neurophysiology

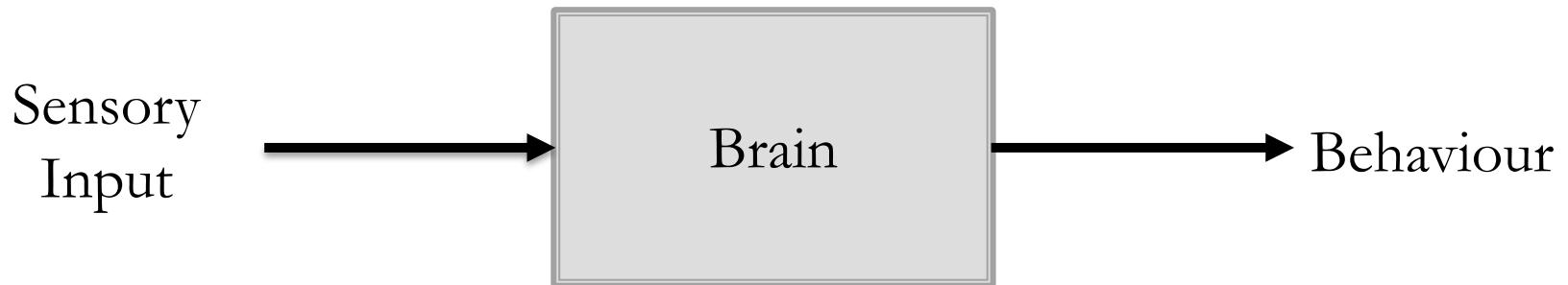
- Vection
- hFMRI (MT+)
- Heading
- MST



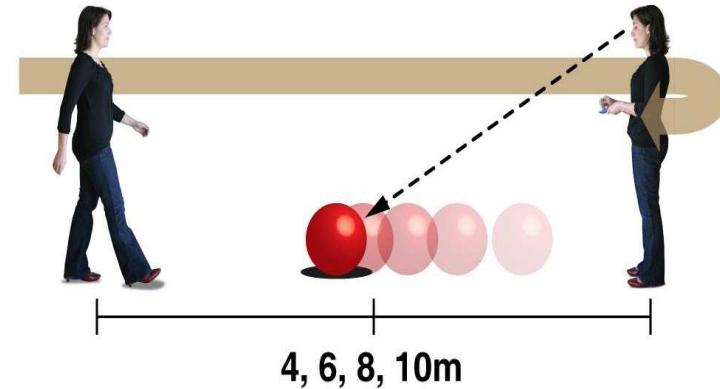
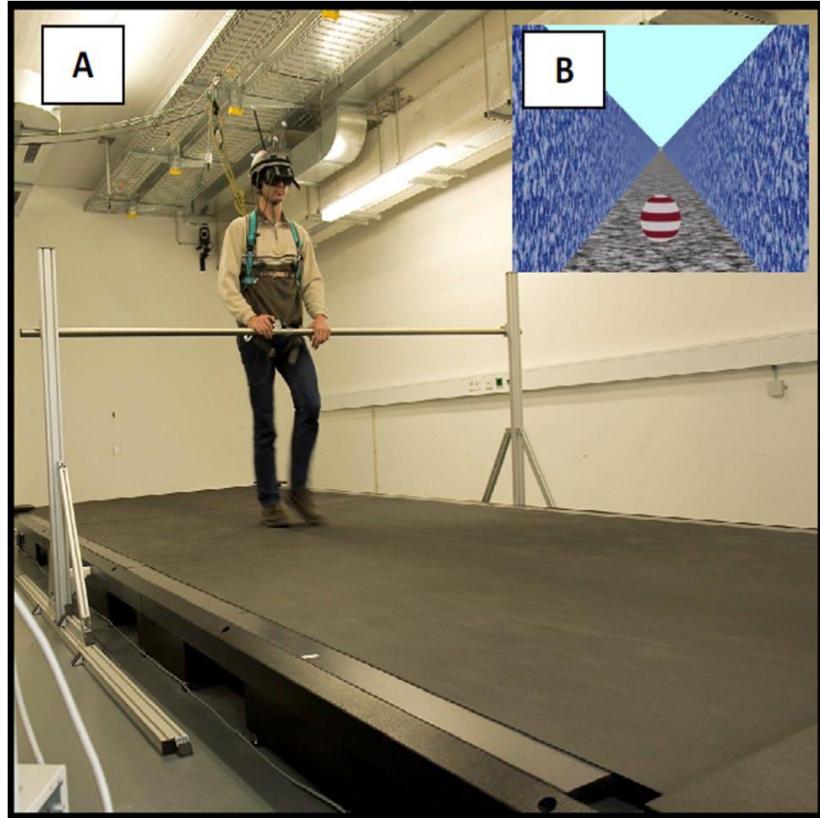
# Talk Overview

1. Introduction
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5. Cognitive flexibility of visual load while walking

# How a Mathematician starts with the Brain



# The Experiment

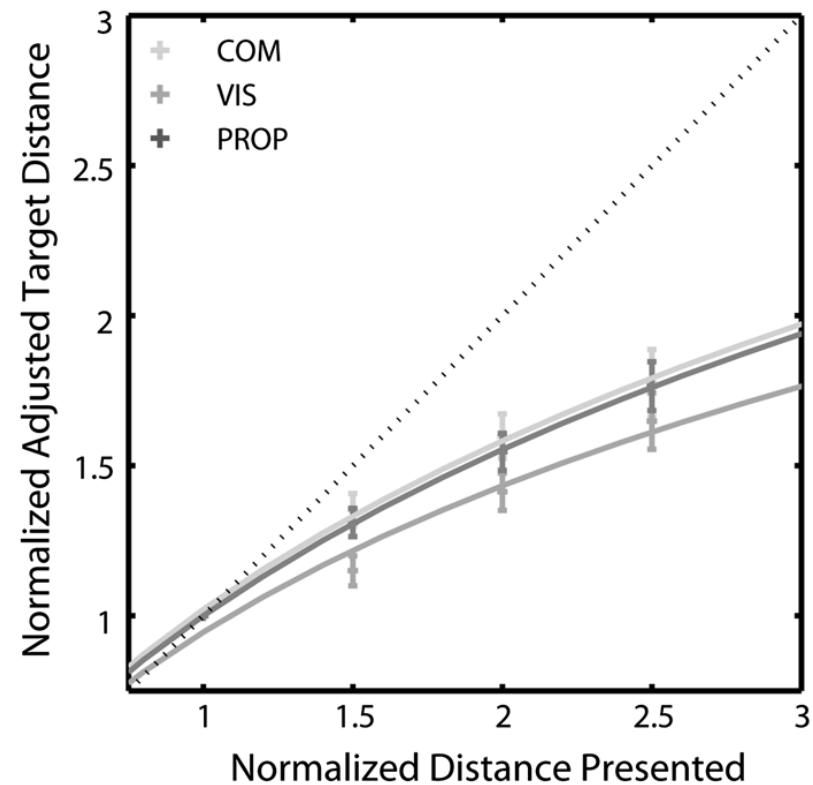
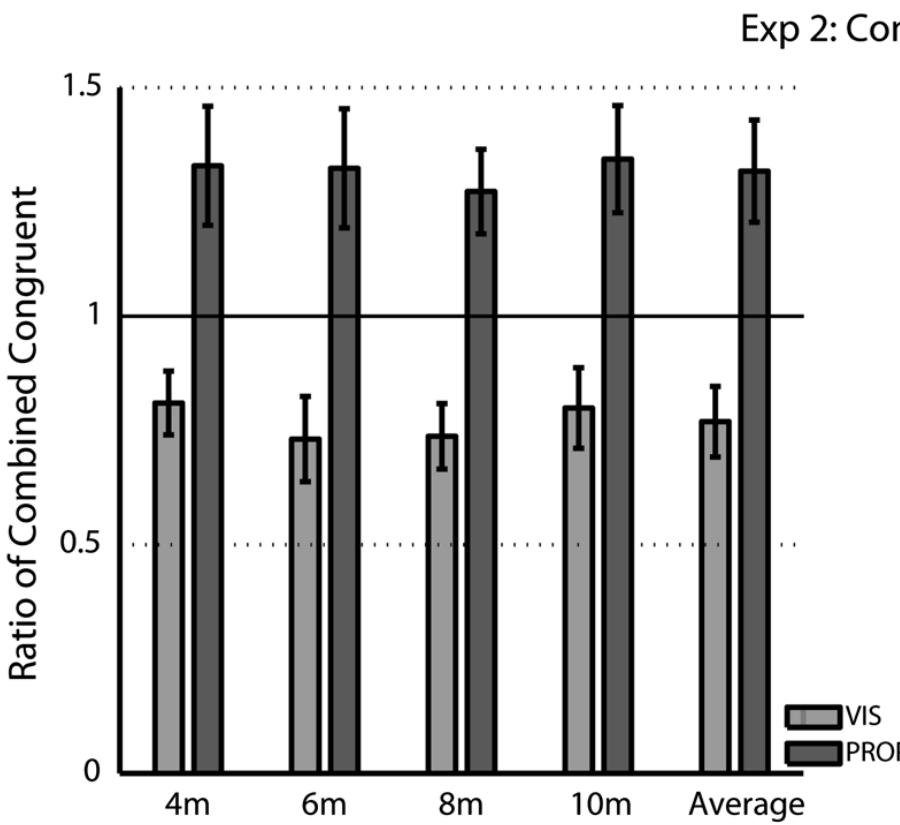


- Visual
- Proprioception (no-vision)
- Combined
- 4m, 6m, 8m, 10m

# Study 1

- Change the speed of the proprioceptive
  - $\times 0.7, \times 1.4$
- Leaking Integrator
  - $$\frac{dp}{dx} = -\alpha p + k$$
- $\alpha$  – leak rate
- $k$ -sensory gain
- 20 participants

# Study 1



# Maximum Likelihood Estimation

$$COM = w_{VIS} VIS + w_{PROP} PROP$$

Observed

$$w_{VIS} + w_{PROP} = 1$$

$$w_{Vis} = \frac{\mu_{COM} - \mu_{PROP}}{\mu_{Vis} - \mu_{PROP}}$$

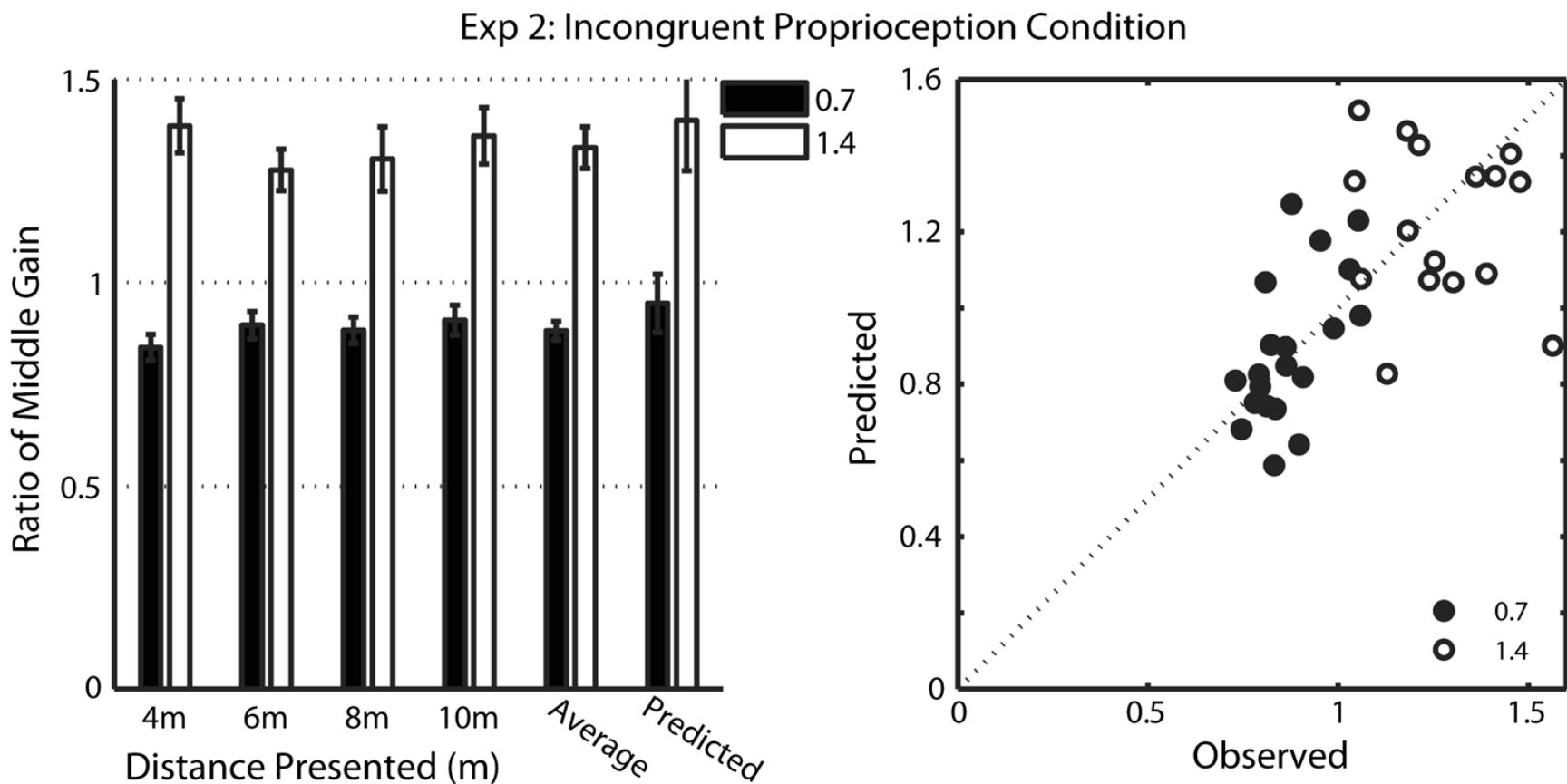
$$w_{PROP} = \frac{\mu_{COM} - \mu_{PROP}}{\mu_{Vis} - \mu_{PROP}}$$

Predicted

$$\widehat{COM}^{Gain} = w_{VIS} VIS^{Gain} + w_{PROP} PROP$$



# Study 1



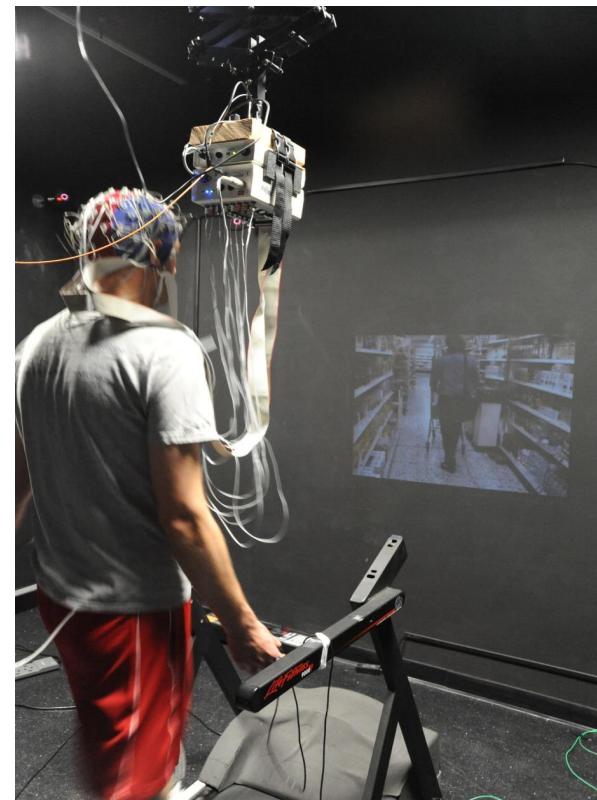
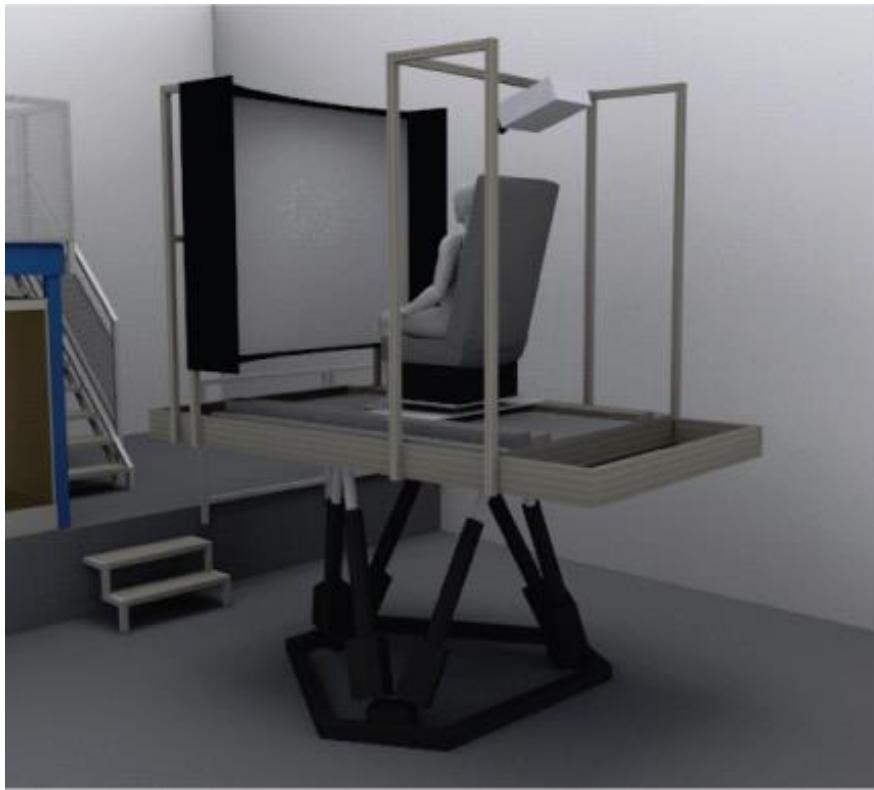
# Summary I

- This study supports previous findings that indicate a dominant role for body-based cues over dynamic visual flow in the estimation of travelled distances.
- The combination of visual and body based cues for walking is partially predicted by a Maximum Likelihood Estimation model

# Talk Overview

1. Introduction
2. Distance Perception
3. Feasibility of neural recordings while moving
  1. Motion Platform
  2. Walking
4. Motor preparation in Parkinson's disease
5. Cognitive flexibility of visual load while walking

# Virtual reality setups



# Neuronal Correlates of Self-Motion

- Behavioural tasks
  - Open loop
  - Closed loop
- Imaging techniques
  - fMRI
  - MEG
  - TMS
  - Imaging in non-human primates



# Benefits of using EEG

- Systems level snapshot
- Attention deployment
- Temporal resolution
- Light weight
- Real world environment
- Online feedback loop
- ...



# The cusp of a wave

## HARDWARE

- Advances in motion platform design
- Advances in electrodes design

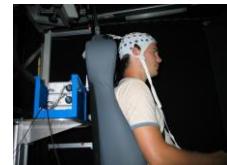
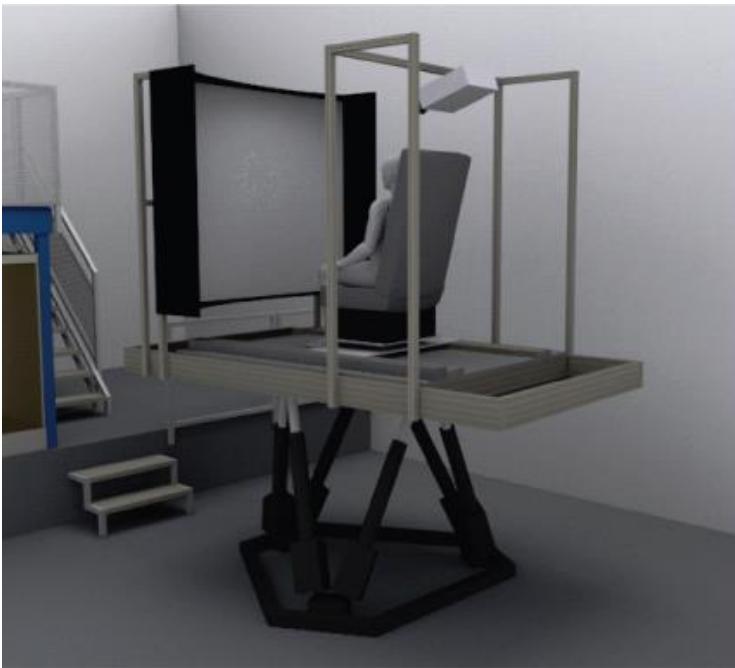
## SOFTWARE

- Advanced analysis techniques
  - Independent Component Analysis
  - Source localisation techniques
  - Mobile Brain Imaging (MoBi – Scott Makeig)
- Individual data analysis
  - Bootstrapped Statistics

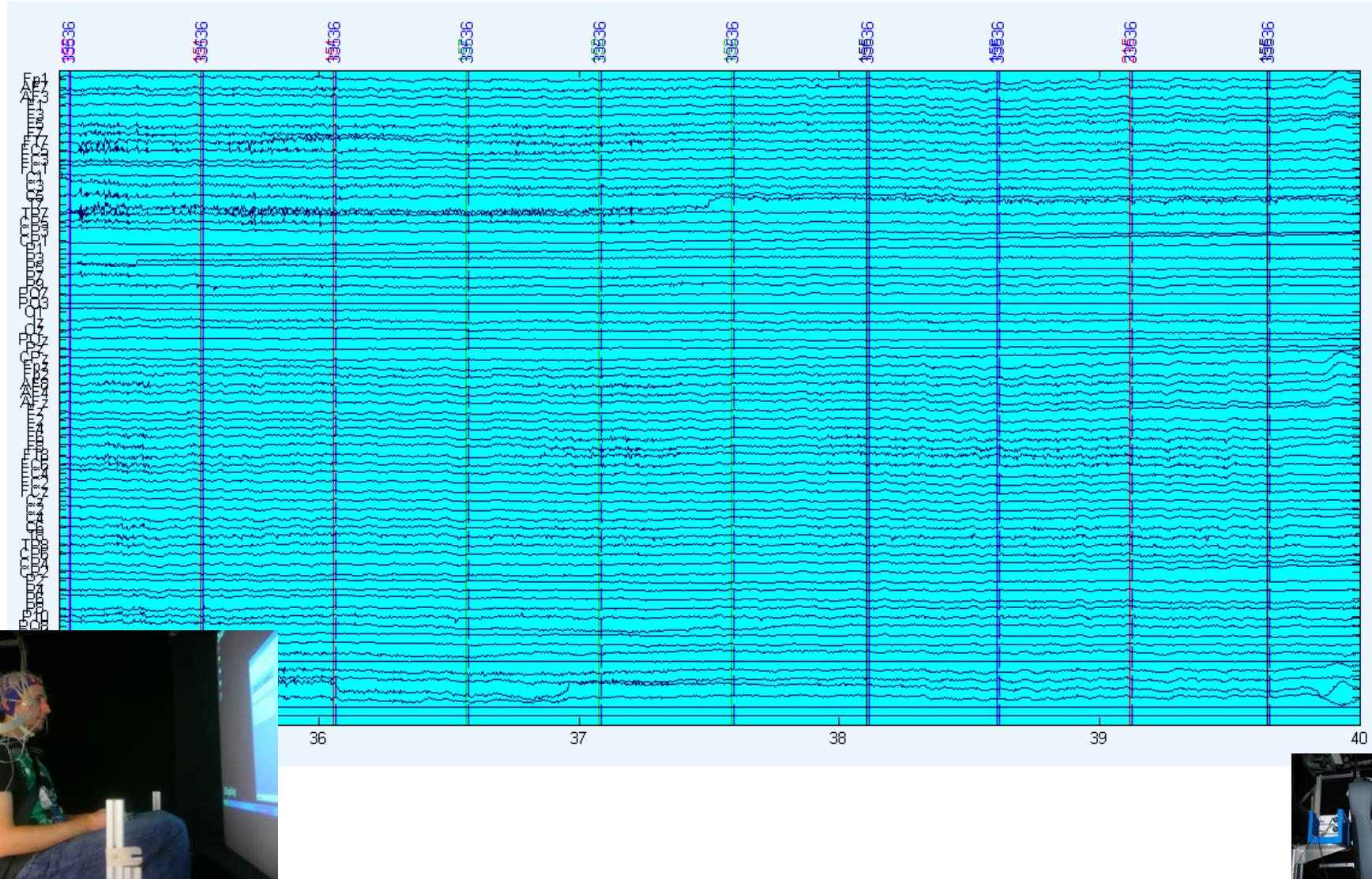


# Stewart Platform

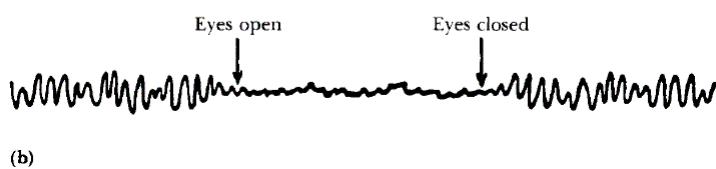
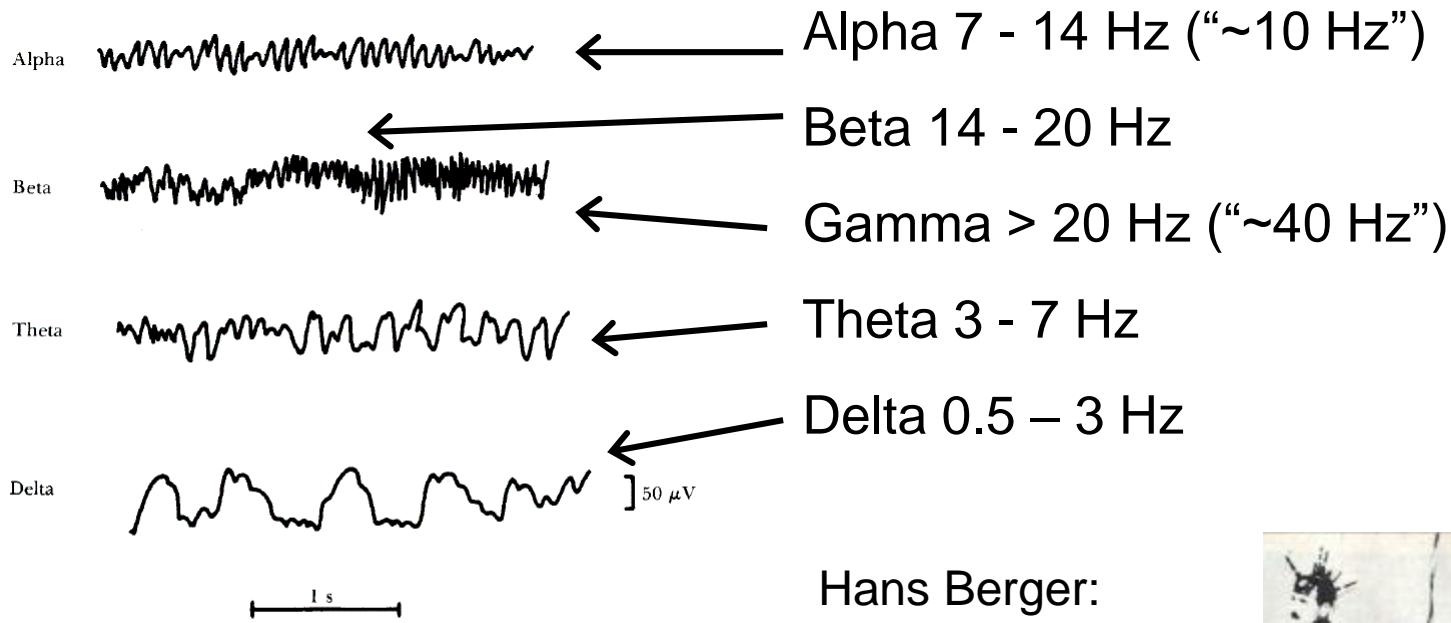
- 6 actuator legs
- 6 degrees of freedom



# Electroencephalography (EEG)



# Frequency decomposition



Hans Berger:  
First Human EEG  
recording in 1929  
- Alpha waves  
discovered



# Feasibility of EEG on a Stewart platform

## PARTICIPANT ARTIFACTS

- Eye movements
- Laughing
- Blinking
- Neck movement
- ...

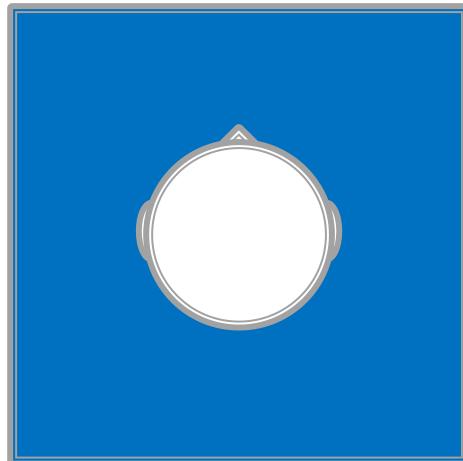
## EXTERNAL ARTIFACTS

- Phones
- Screens
- Headphones
- Plugs
- ...



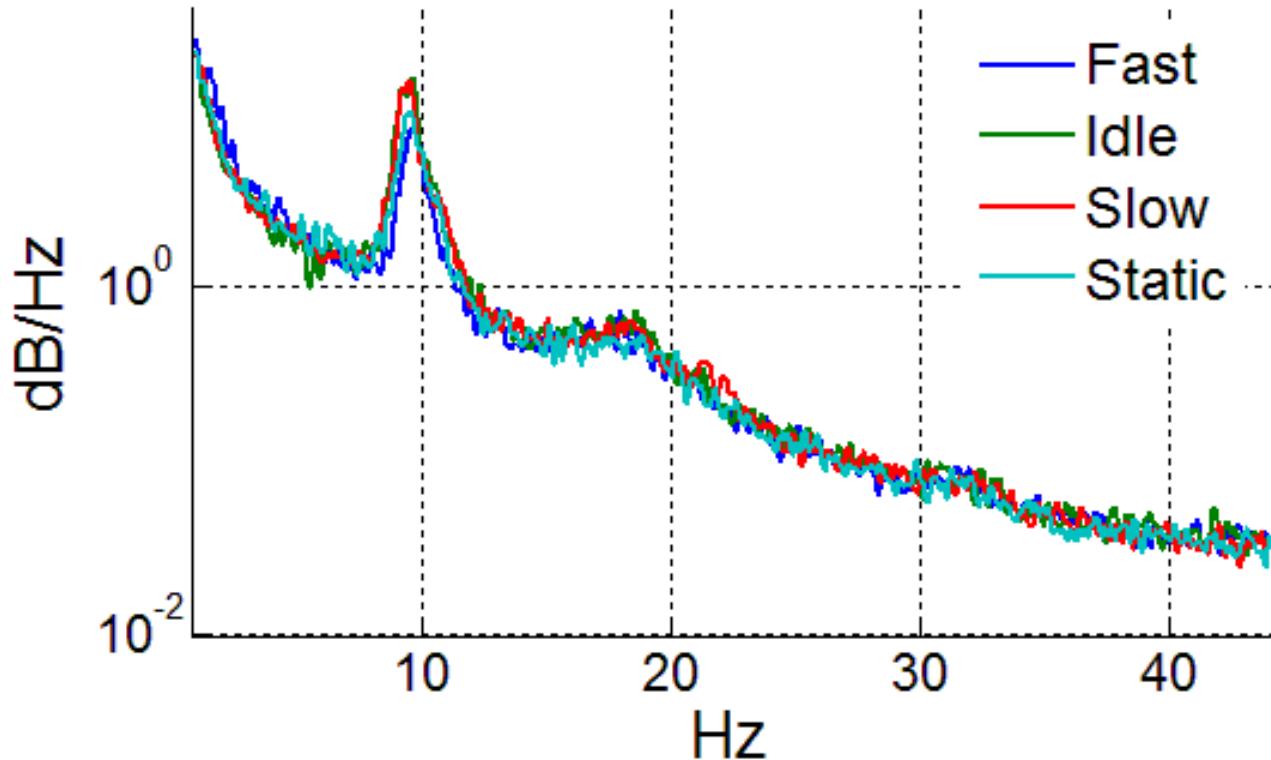
# The Movement Paradigm

- Four levels of motion
  - Stationary
  - Idle
  - Slow 0.5 hertz at 0.25mG
  - Fast 0.5 hertz at 0.75mG

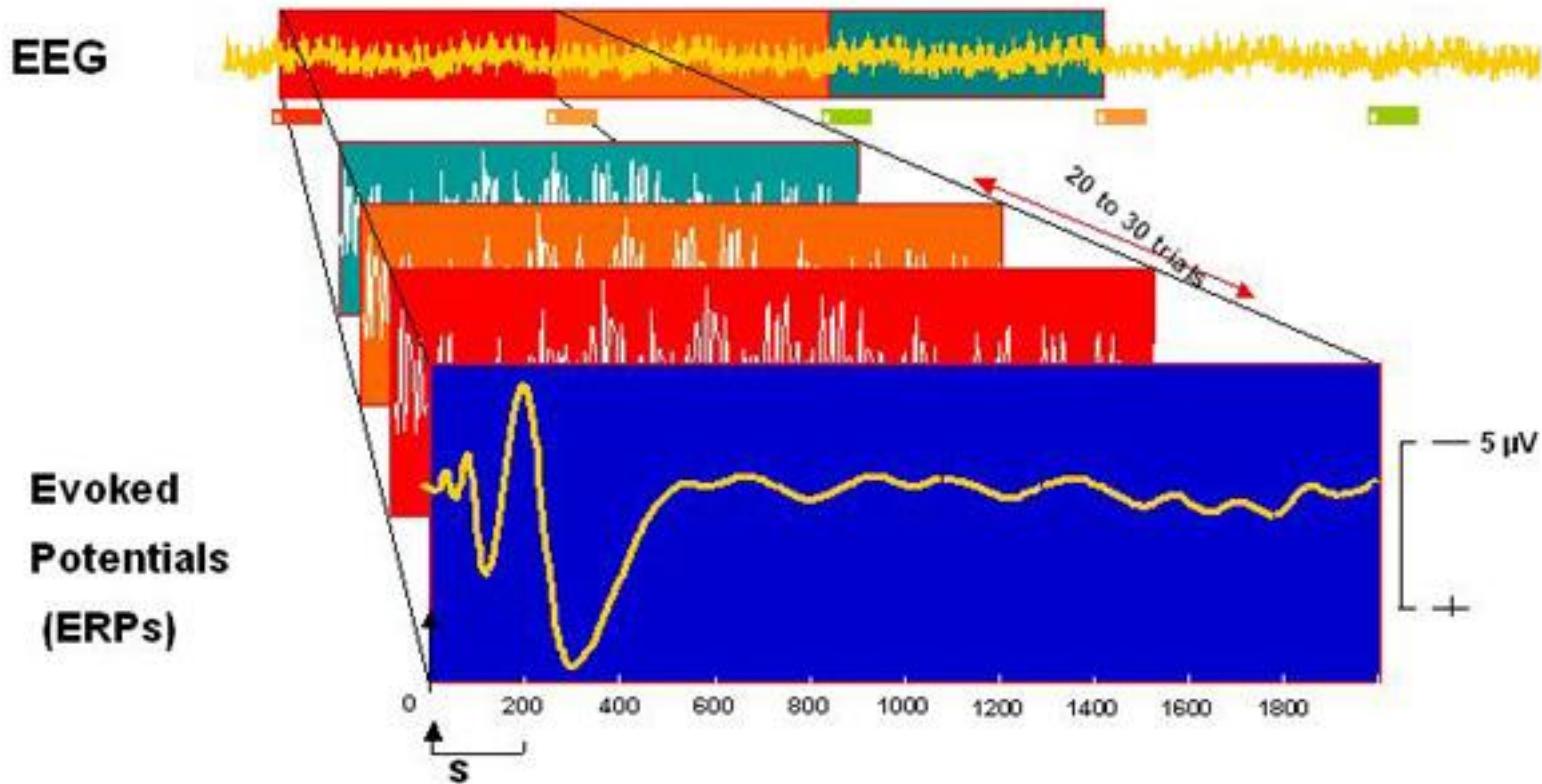


# Results - Control Experiment

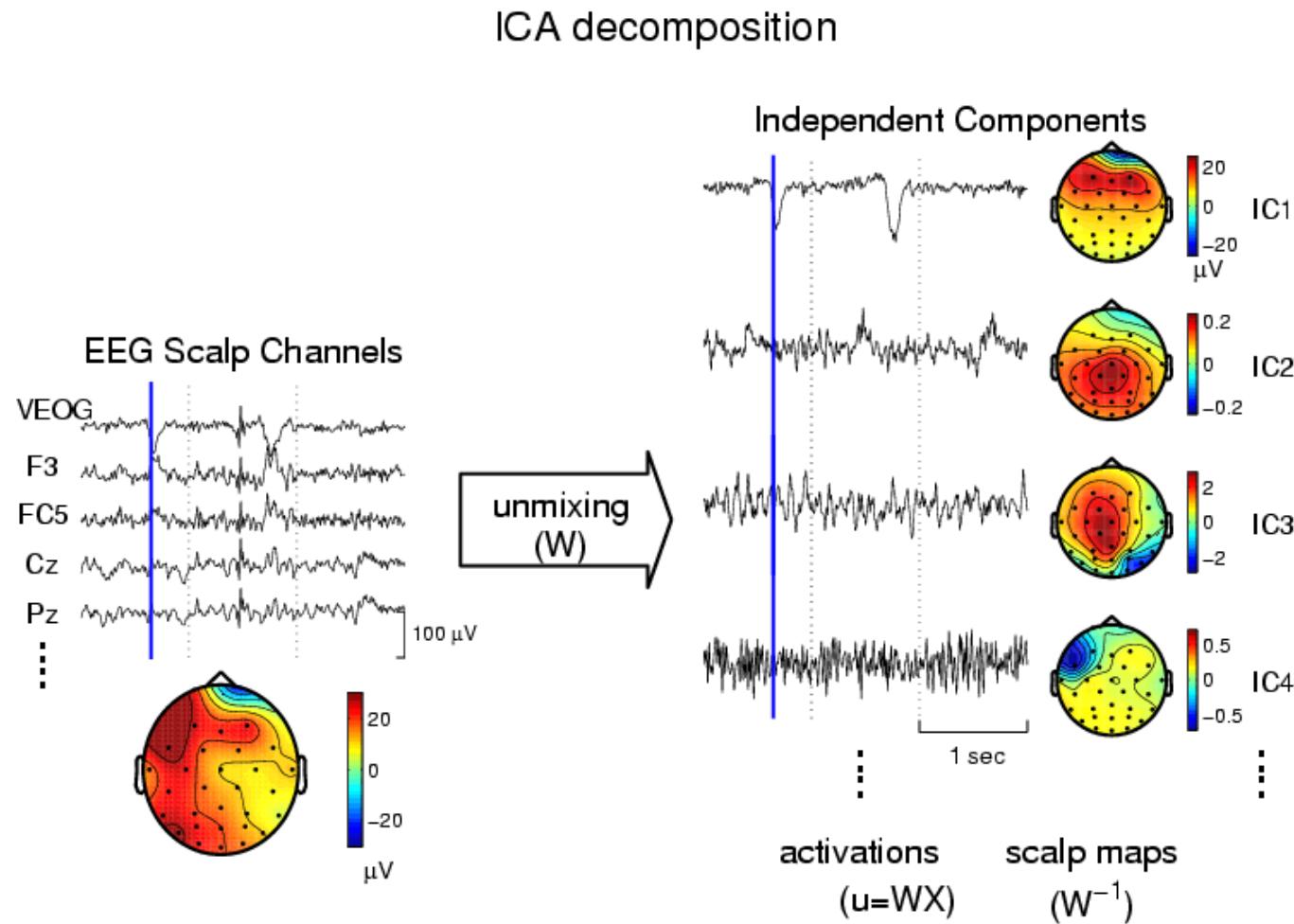
EEG can be conducted on a moving motion platform



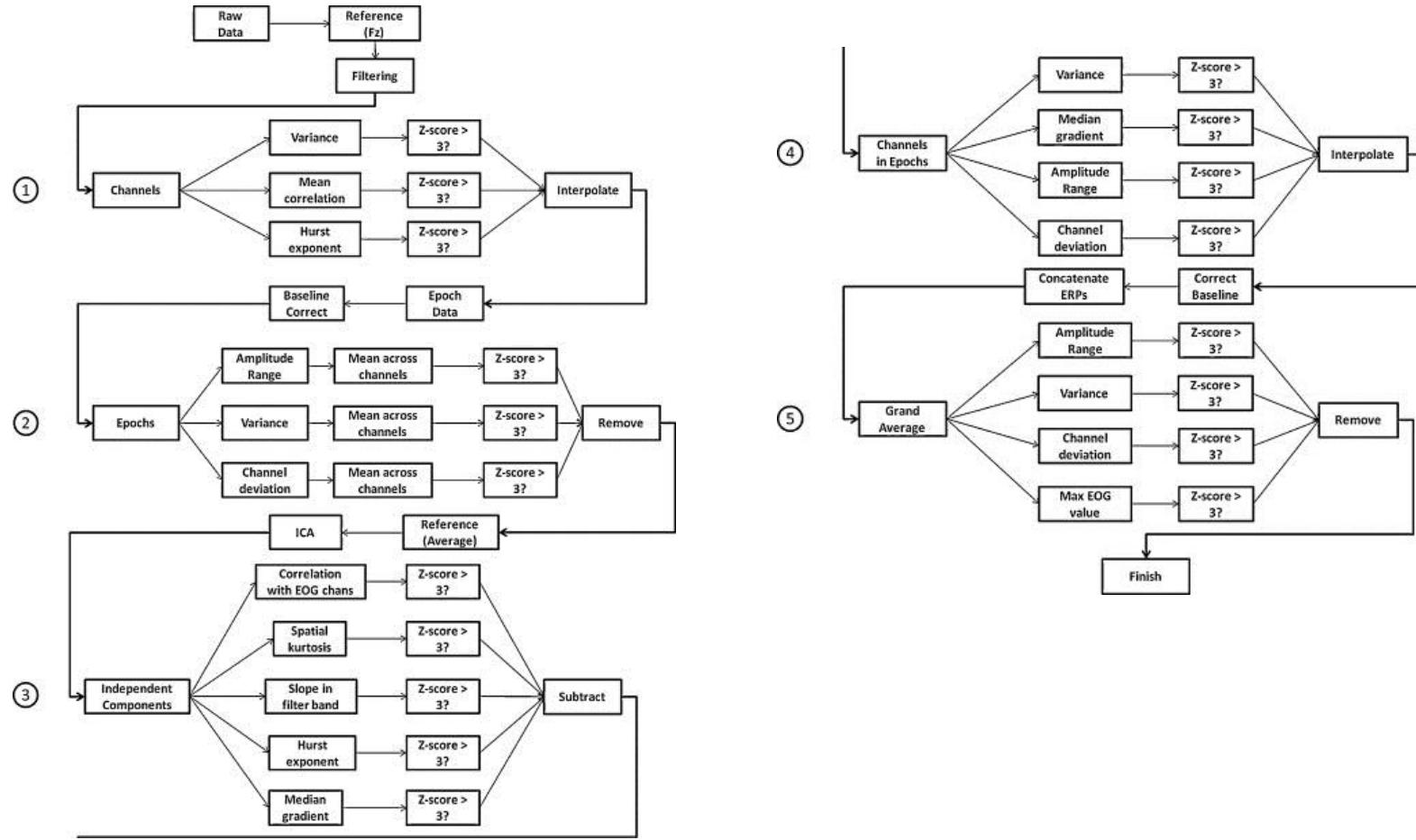
# Event-Related Potential (ERPs)



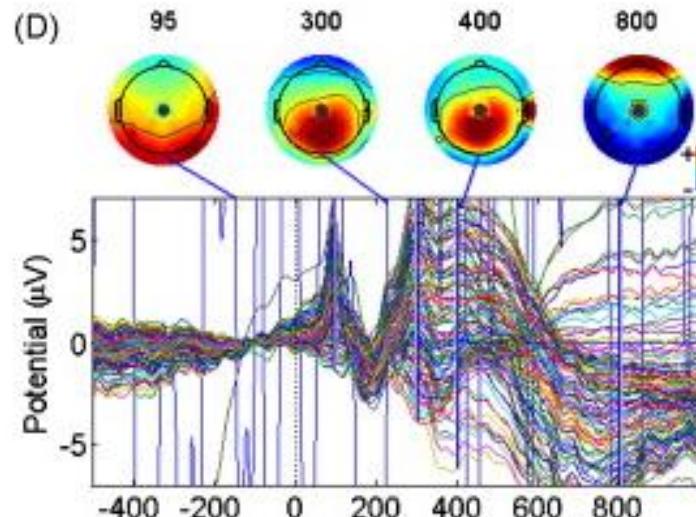
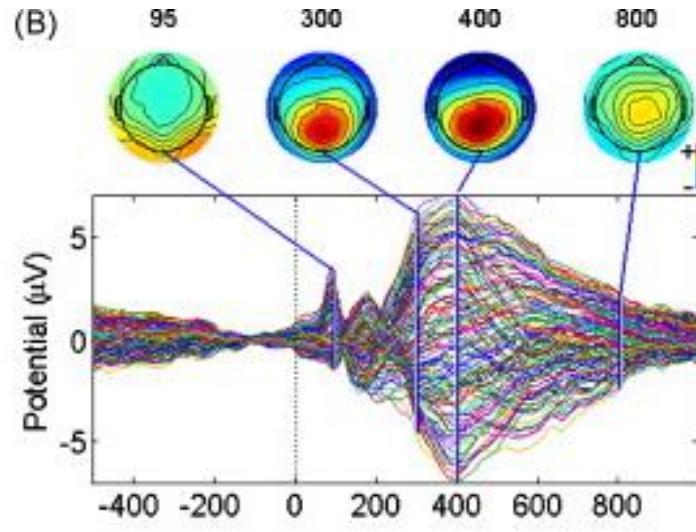
# Independent Component Analysis



# Fully Automated Statistical Thresholding for EEG artefact Rejection

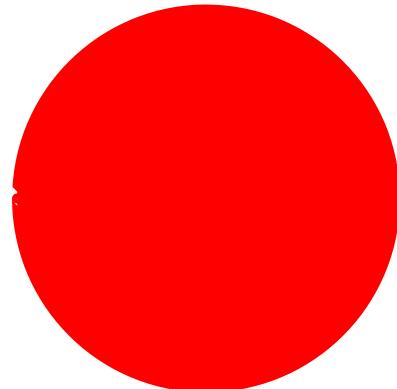
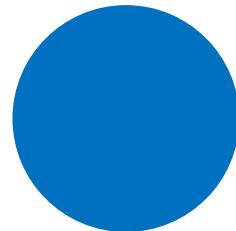


# Fully Automated Statistical Thresholding for EEG artefact Rejection



# The Oddball Paradigm

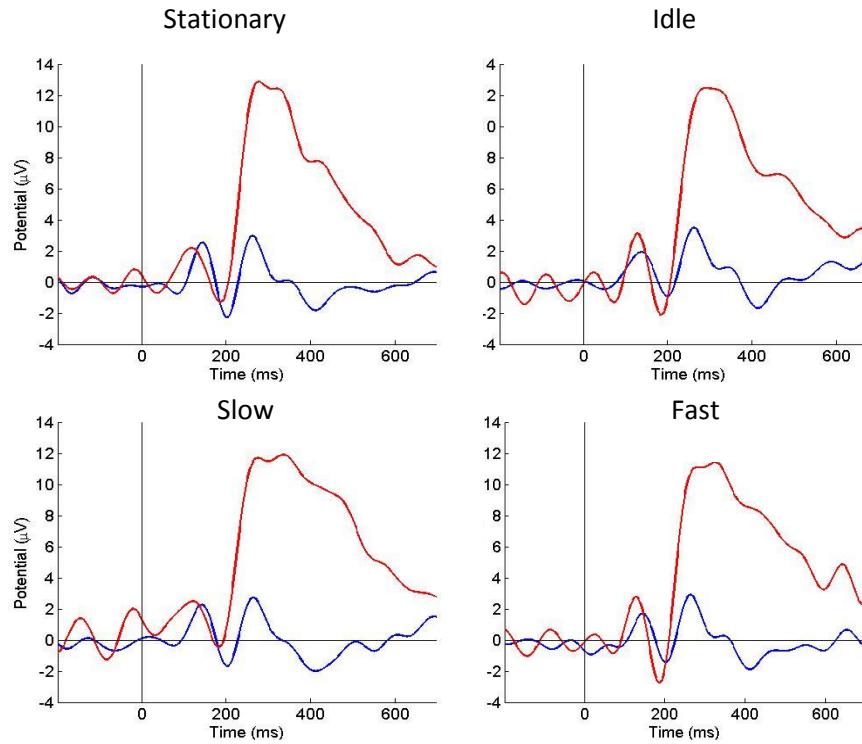
- Can we get an EEG signal while moving people?
- Visual P3 paradigm
  - 80% Standard
  - 20% Target
- Four levels of motion
  - Stationary
  - Idle
  - Slow 0.5 hertz at 0.25mG
  - Fast 0.5 hertz at 0.75mG



**SSS**T**SSSS**T**SSS**T**SS**T****



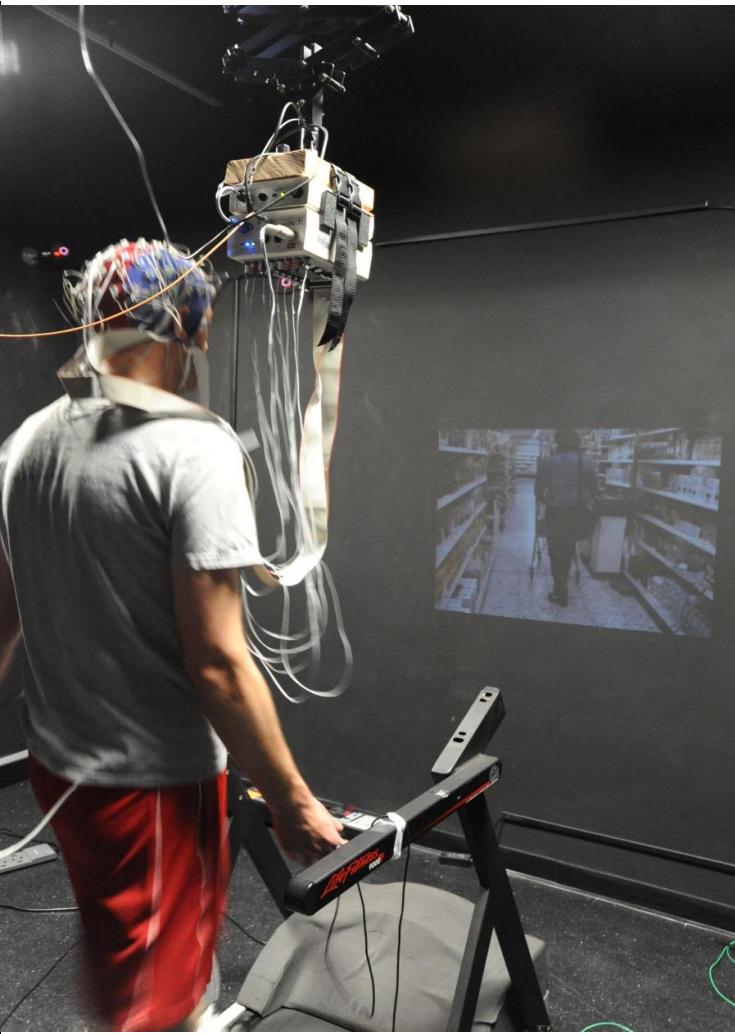
# Results - Control Experiment



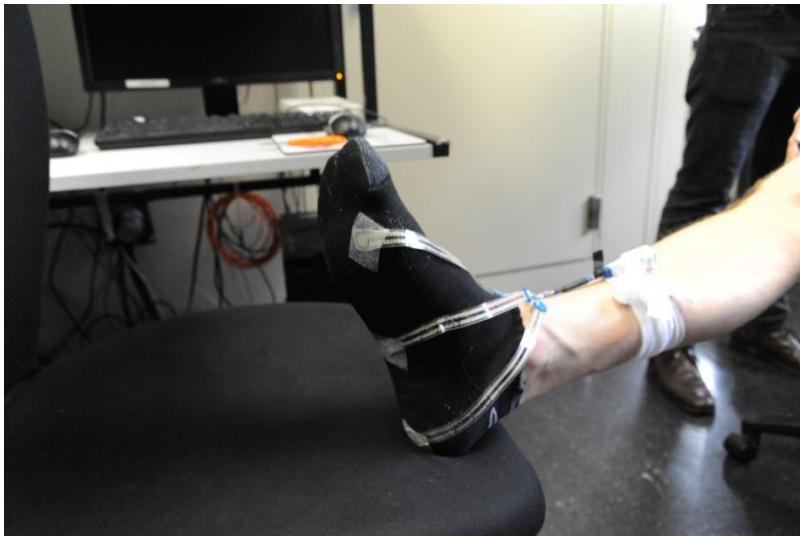
A difference was shown between the standard and target.



# EEG while Walking



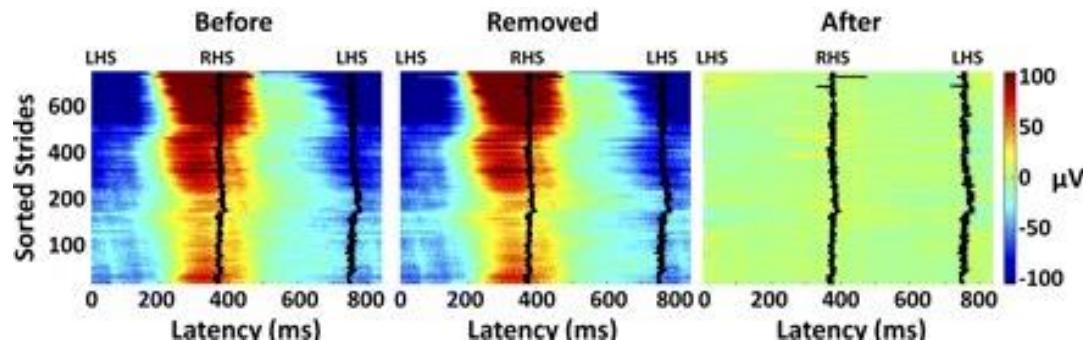
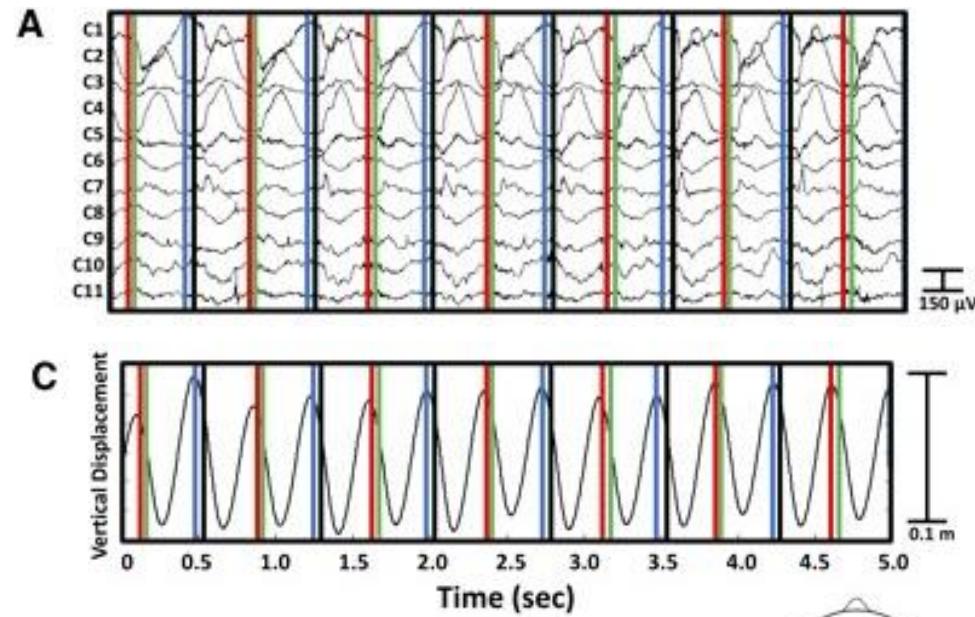
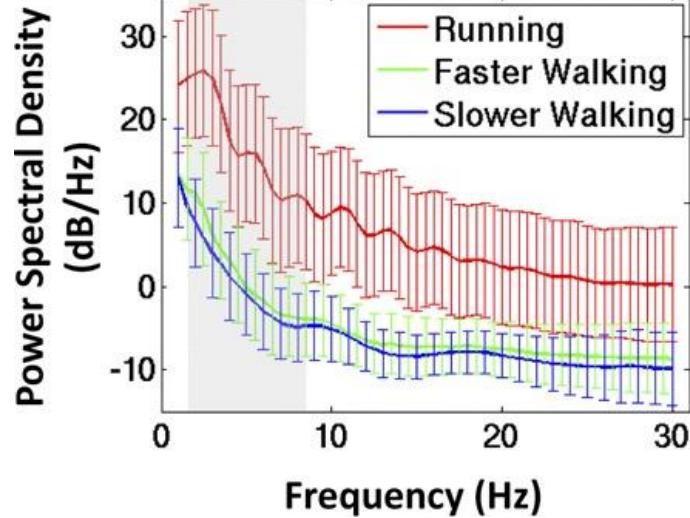
# EEG while Walking



# EEG while Walking



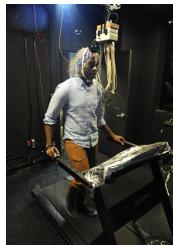
# Signal Issues with Walking



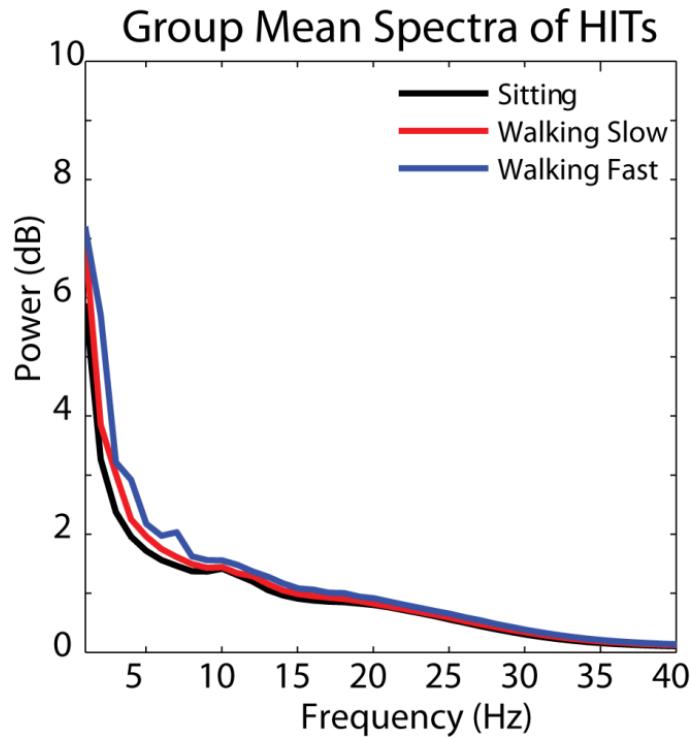
Adapted from Wagner et al. 2016, *J. Neuro*

# Response Inhibition Task

- Hit:
  - correct response in a *go* trial
- Correct Rejection:
  - successful withholding of a response in a *nogo* trial
- False Alarm:
  - Executing a response in a *nogo* trial

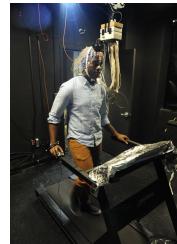


# Feasible to acquire usable EEG data



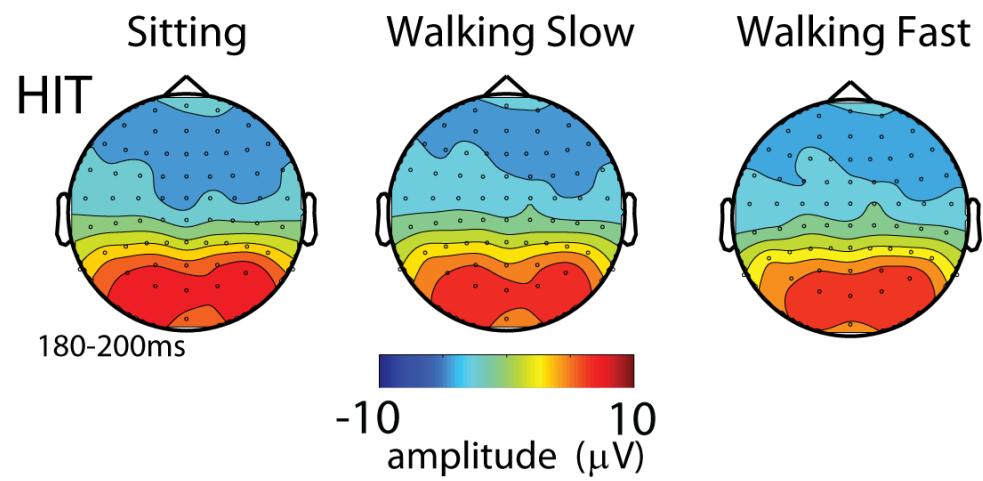
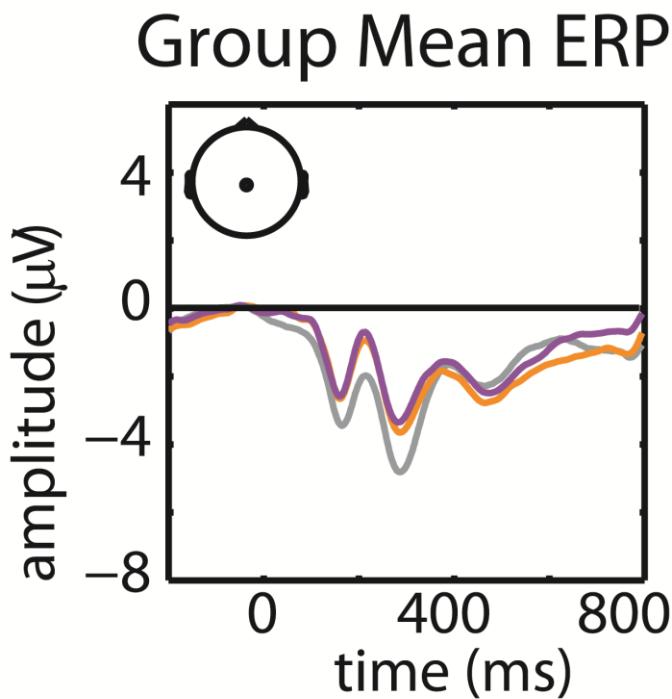
	Sitting	Walking Slow	Walking Fast
<b>SNR Hit (dB)</b>	54.8±2	53.6±1.6	49.9±2.2
<b>SNR CR (dB)</b>	35.3±2	34.0±2.5	32.6±2.2

Highly similar early evoked response and power spectrum point to the feasibility of acquiring EEG while walking



# Feasible to acquire usable EEG data

HIT  
— Sitting  
— Walking Slow  
— Walking Fast

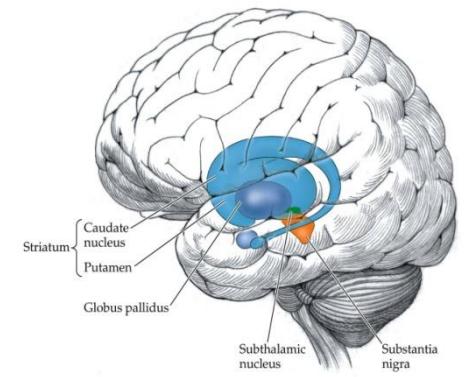


# Talk Overview

1. Introduction
2. Distance Perception
3. Feasibility of neural recordings while moving
4. **Motor preparation in Parkinson's disease**
5. Cognitive flexibility of visual load while walking

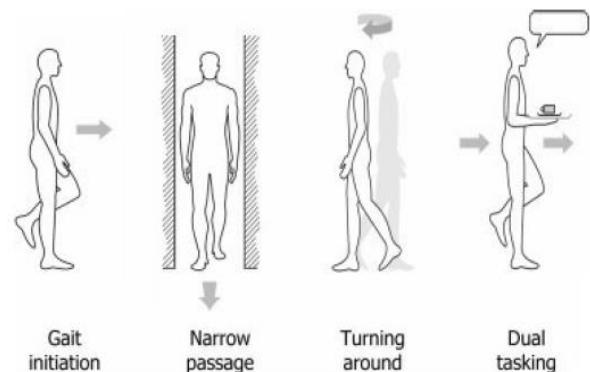
# Parkinson's Disease

- Parkinson's disease (PD): neurodegenerative disorder characterised by loss of dopaminergic signalling in the basal ganglia
- Motor symptoms
  - Tremor
  - Bradykinesia
  - Rigidity
  - Postural disturbance
  - Freezing of gait
- Non-motor features: constipation, depression, anxiety, cognitive impairment, autonomic instability, hallucinations and impulse control disorders.
- Treatment: dopamine replacement or deep brain stimulation

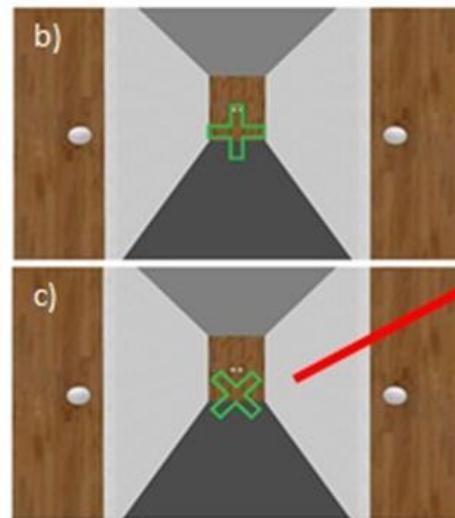
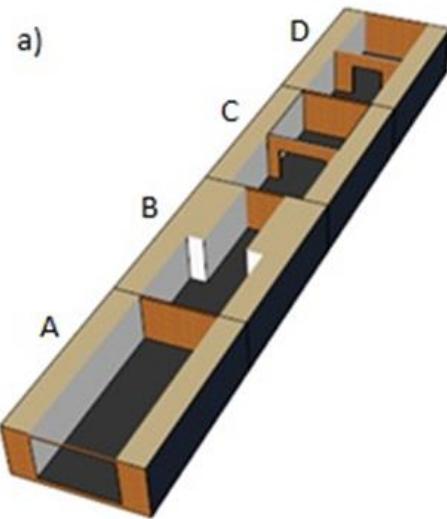


# Freezing of Gait

- Intermittent gait disturbance - feet glued to floor
  - Most apparent in late-stage Parkinson's disease
- Affects up to 60% patients with Parkinson's disease
- Causes falls
- Poorly understood
  - No effective treatments
  - Difficult to study
  - Heterogeneous



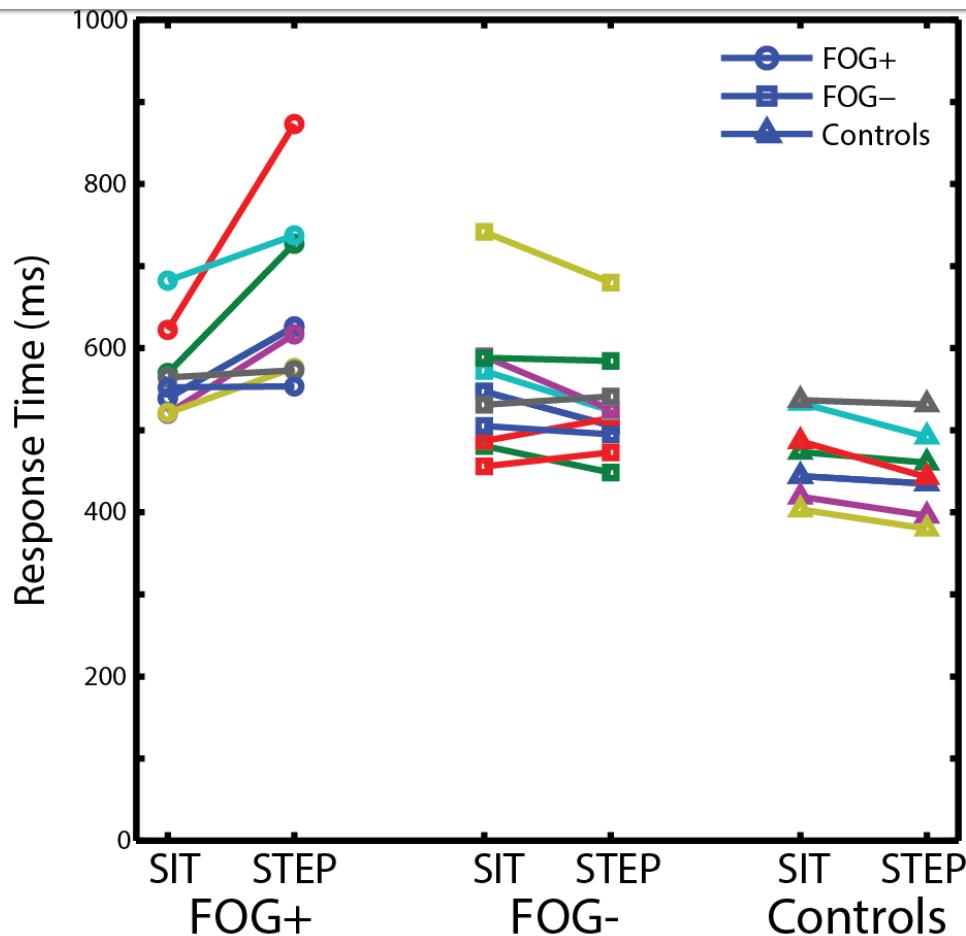
# Dual Task



# Oddball task while Stepping in Place

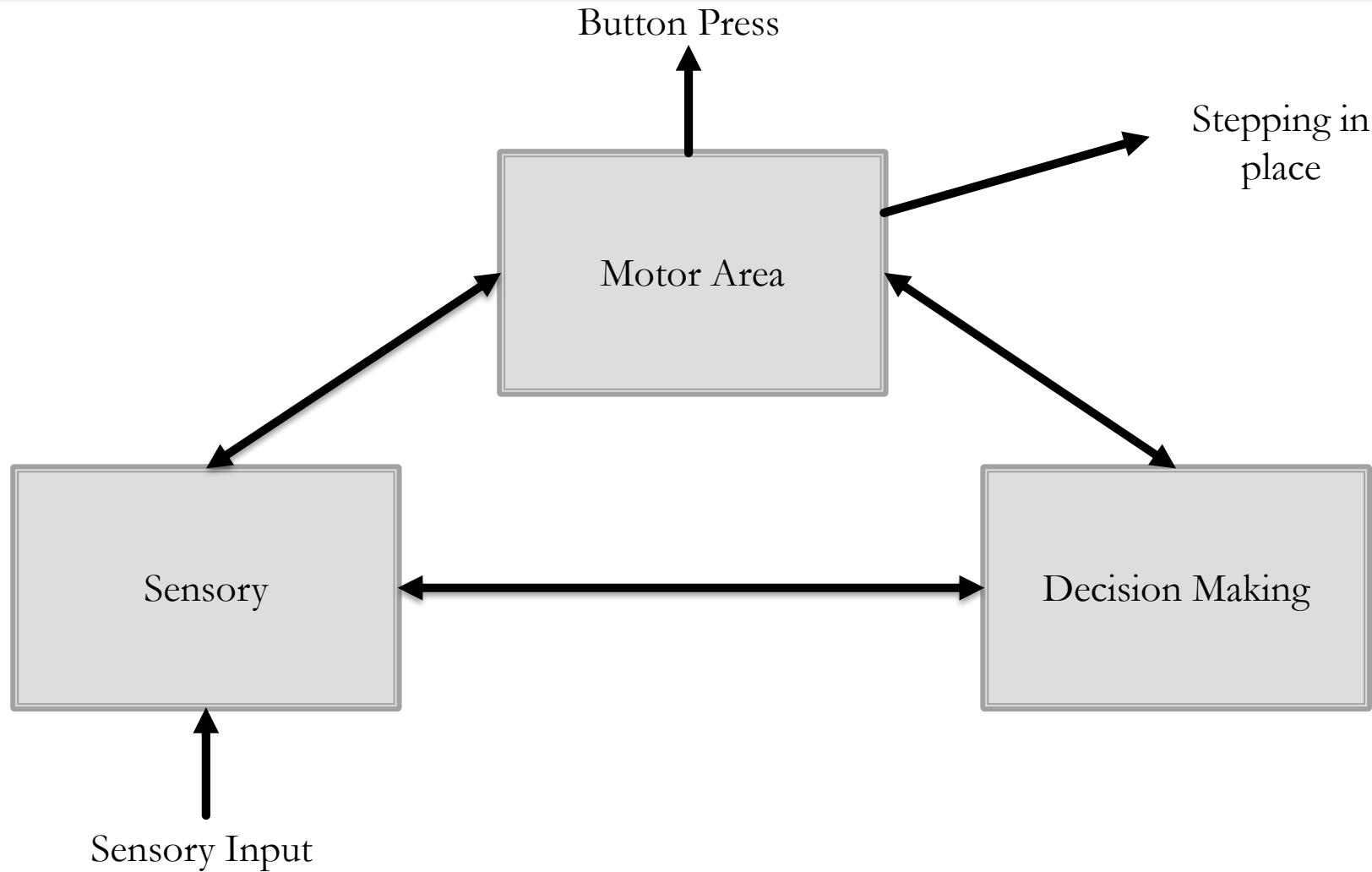
	FOG+	FOG-	Control	s	
N	8	10	7		■ Standard (80%)
Age (years)	65.7	62.5	25		■ Target (20%)
Gender (M:F)*	7:1	4:6	3:4		■ Button Response
H&Y stage	2.6	2.3			
Disease Duration (years)*	12.3 (8.36)	7.0 (3.6)			■ 1000ms epochs
UPDRS III	28.6	29.1			■ 128 channels
MOCA	24.0	26.1			
FAB*	14.9	17.3			

# Behavioural



**Significant interaction of Response Times for group (FOG+, FOG-, Controls) and condition (SIT, STEP)**

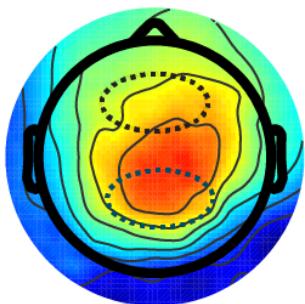
# Sensory Motor Decision Making



# Laplacian (Second Order Spatial Derivative)

ERP (mV)

FOG-



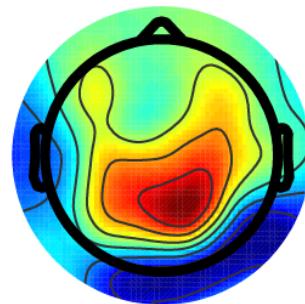
FOG+



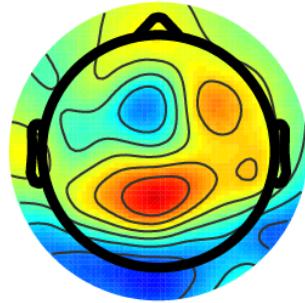
454-654ms

Laplacian (mV/m<sup>2</sup>)

FOG-



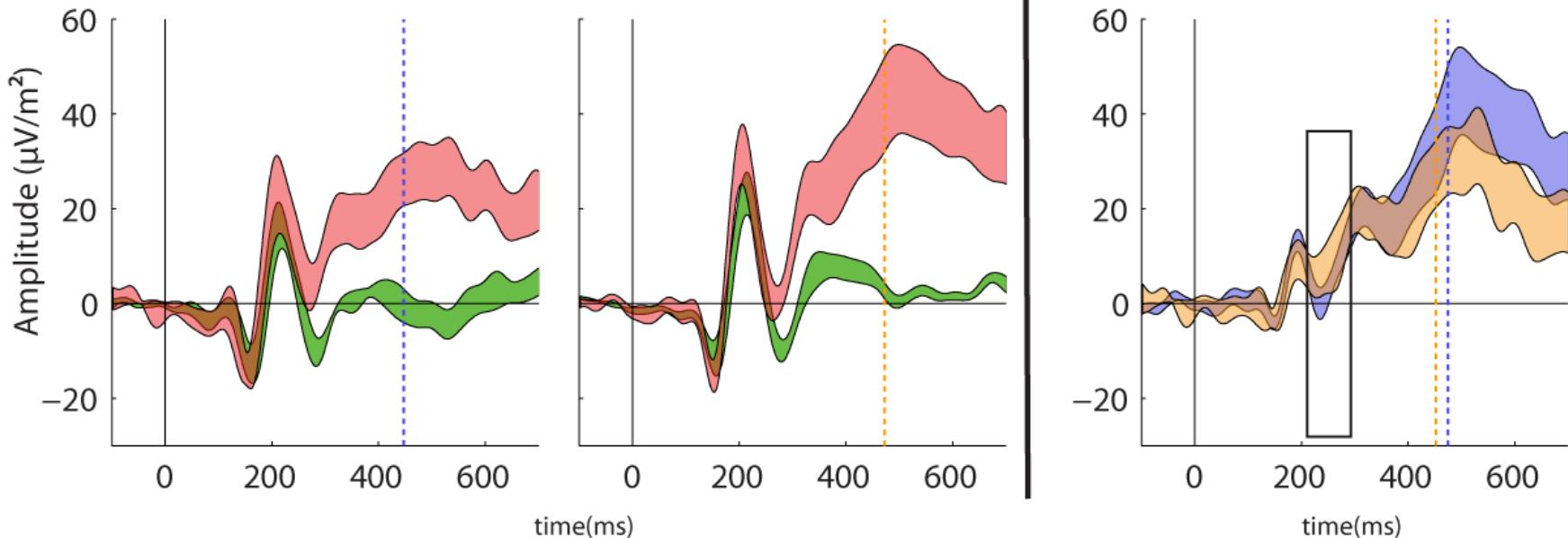
FOG+



454-654ms

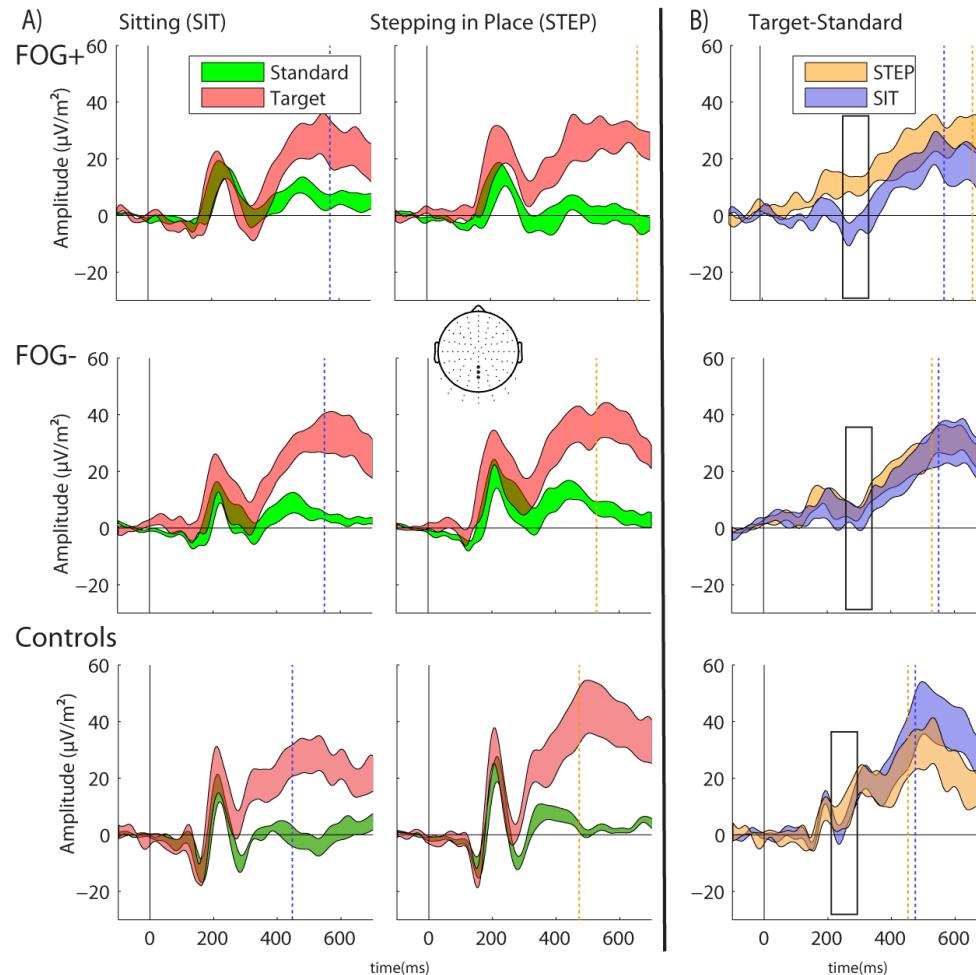
# Standard vs Target

Controls



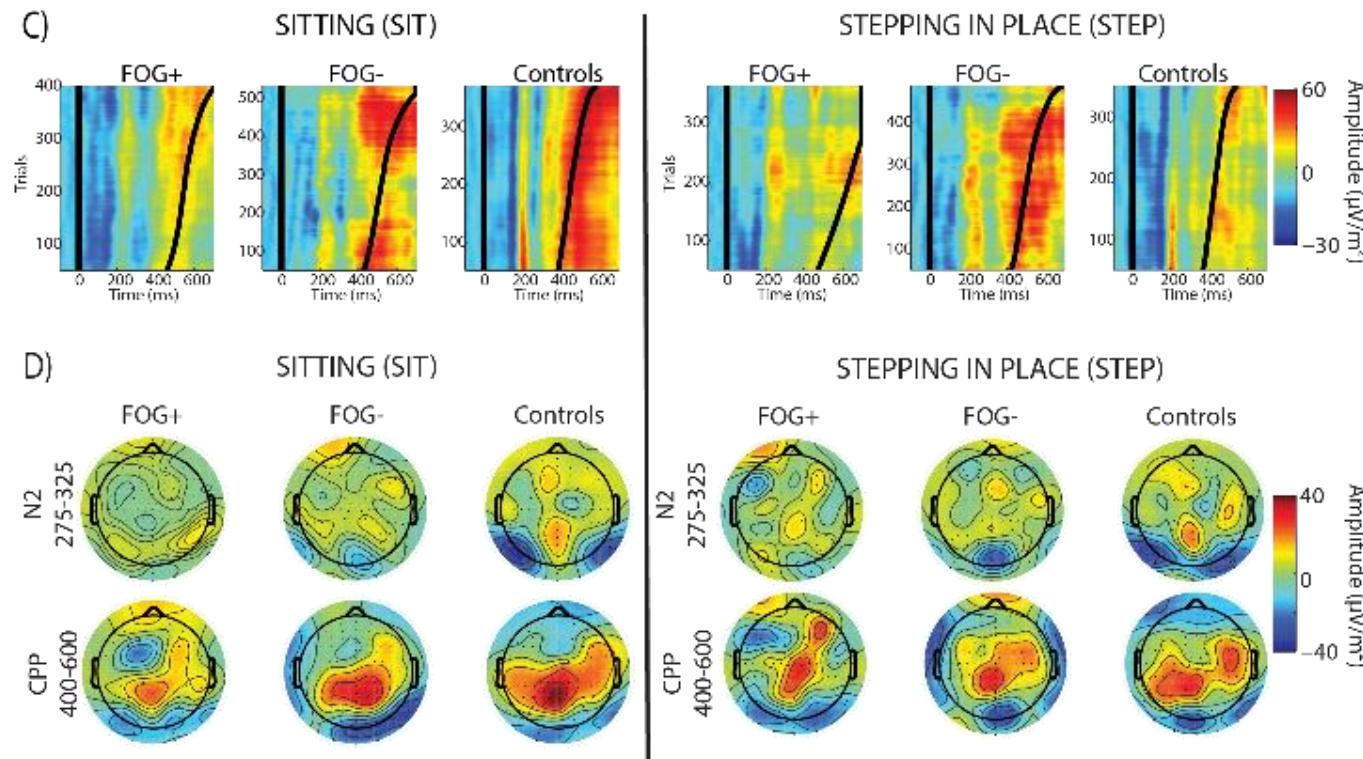
Relatively clean data for both sitting and stepping in place

# Standard vs Target



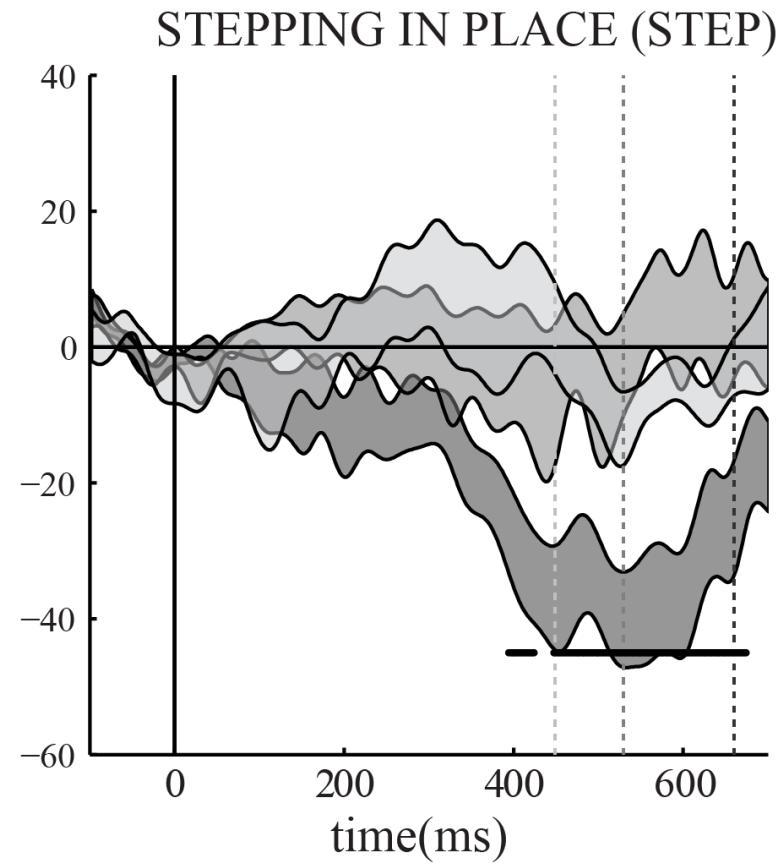
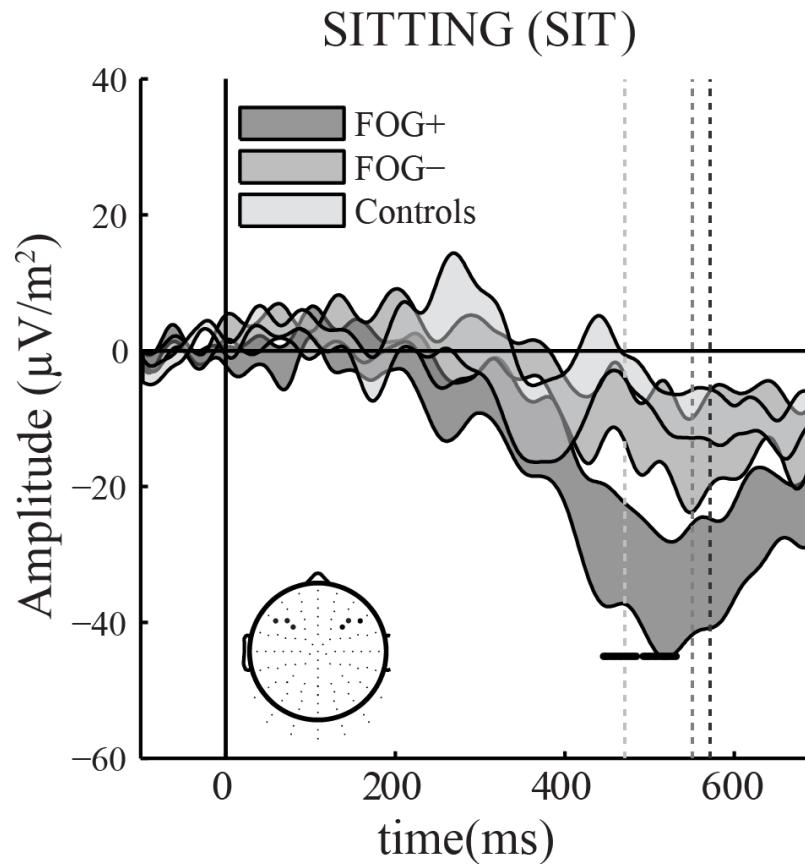
Relatively clean data for both sitting and stepping in place

# Automatic (N2) and decision (CPP) response



Automatic response (N2) is absent in FOG+ while stepping in place

# Readiness Potential



Earlier onset and larger motor response for the FOG+ group

# Summary III

- With the added load of stepping in place FOG+ response times were slowed
- Absence of N2 suggests that early “automatic” resources are being re-allocated
- The larger and earlier onset of the LRP while walking illustrates the recruitment of resources to perform the task

# Talk Overview

1. Introduction
2. Distance Perception
3. Feasibility of neural recordings while moving
4. Motor preparation in Parkinson's disease
5. **Cognitive flexibility of visual load while walking**

# Visual Load

- Participants: 16 young adults (mean age = 26 years)
- Self-selected treadmill walking speed (average = 3.9 km/h)
- Experimental conditions
  - **Cognitive Load:**
    - Engage in task
    - Walking only (do not engage in task)
  - **Visual Load:**
    - Static star field
    - Optic flow no perturbations (NOP)
    - Optic flow mediolateral perturbations (MLP)

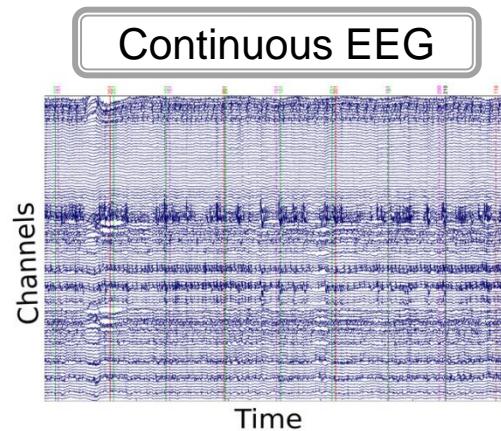
[www.fraps.com](http://www.fraps.com)

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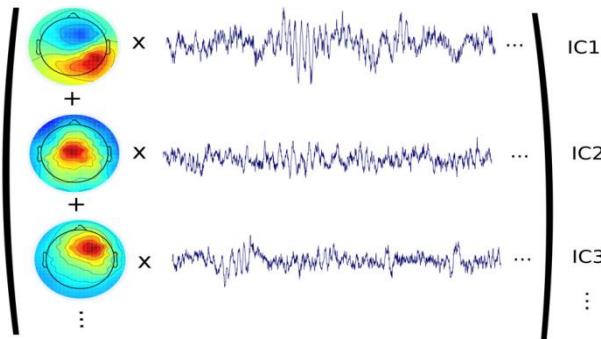
[www.fraps.com](http://www.fraps.com)



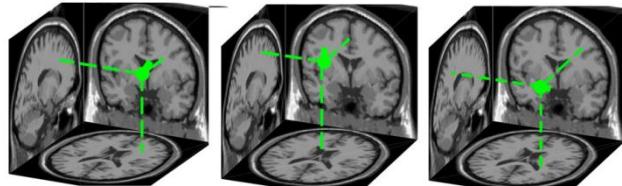
# Methods: ICA and clustering analysis



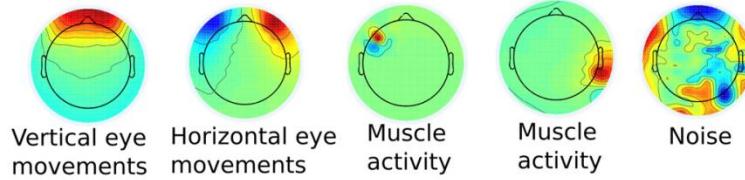
1. ICA (brain vs artifact activity)



2. Estimate IC equivalent current dipole locations

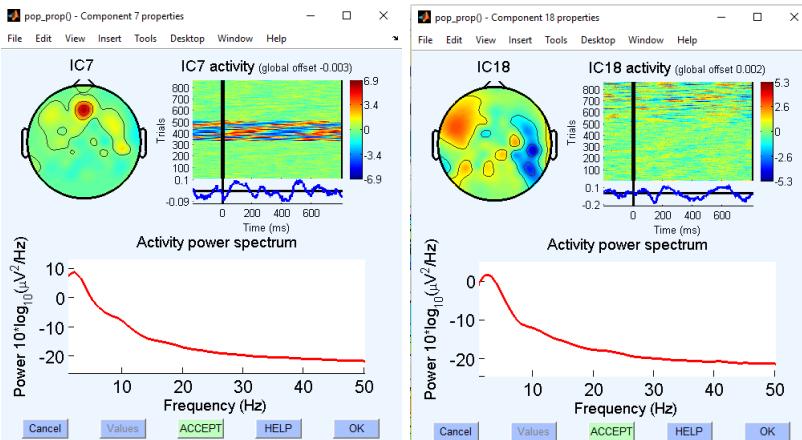
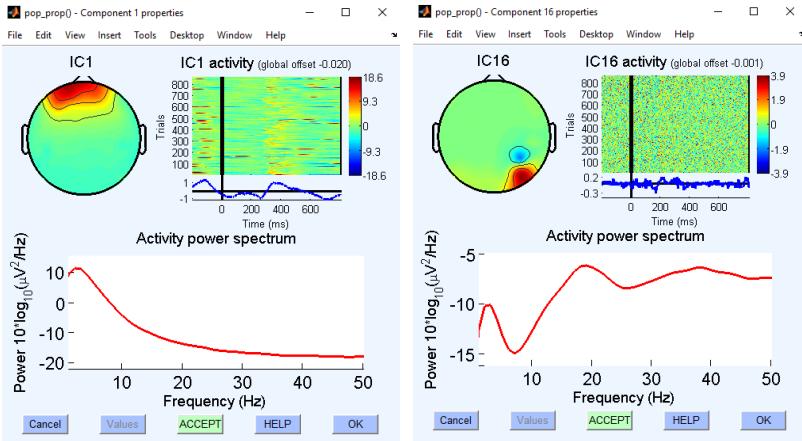


3. Identify & deselect non-brain artifact ICs

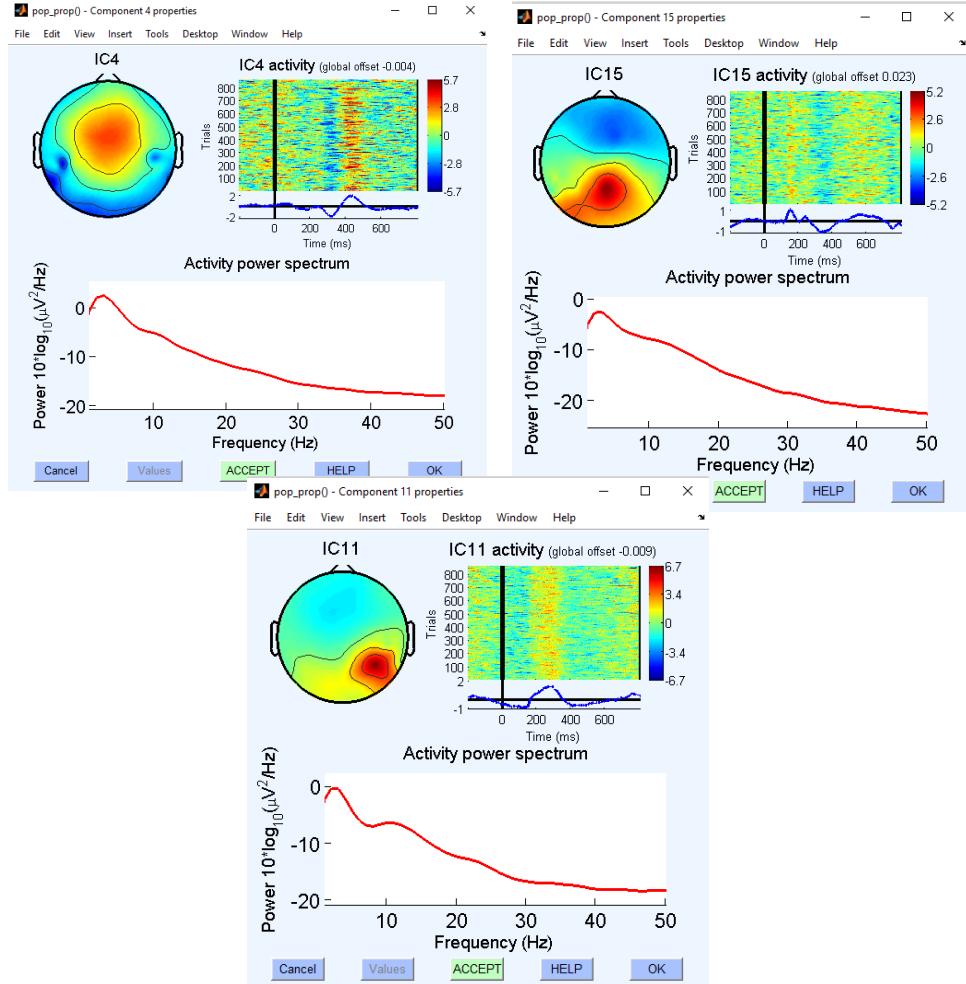


# ICA artifact rejection

## Artifactual Components

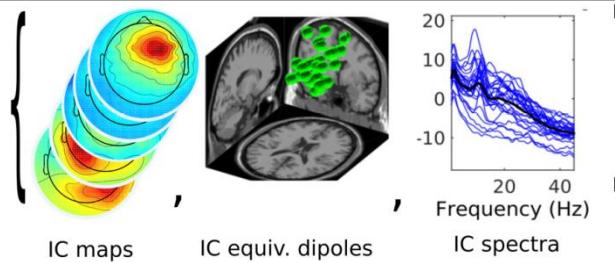


## Brain Components

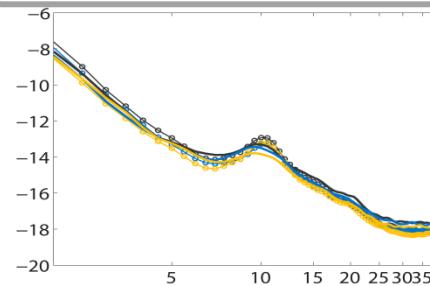


# Methods: ICA and clustering analysis

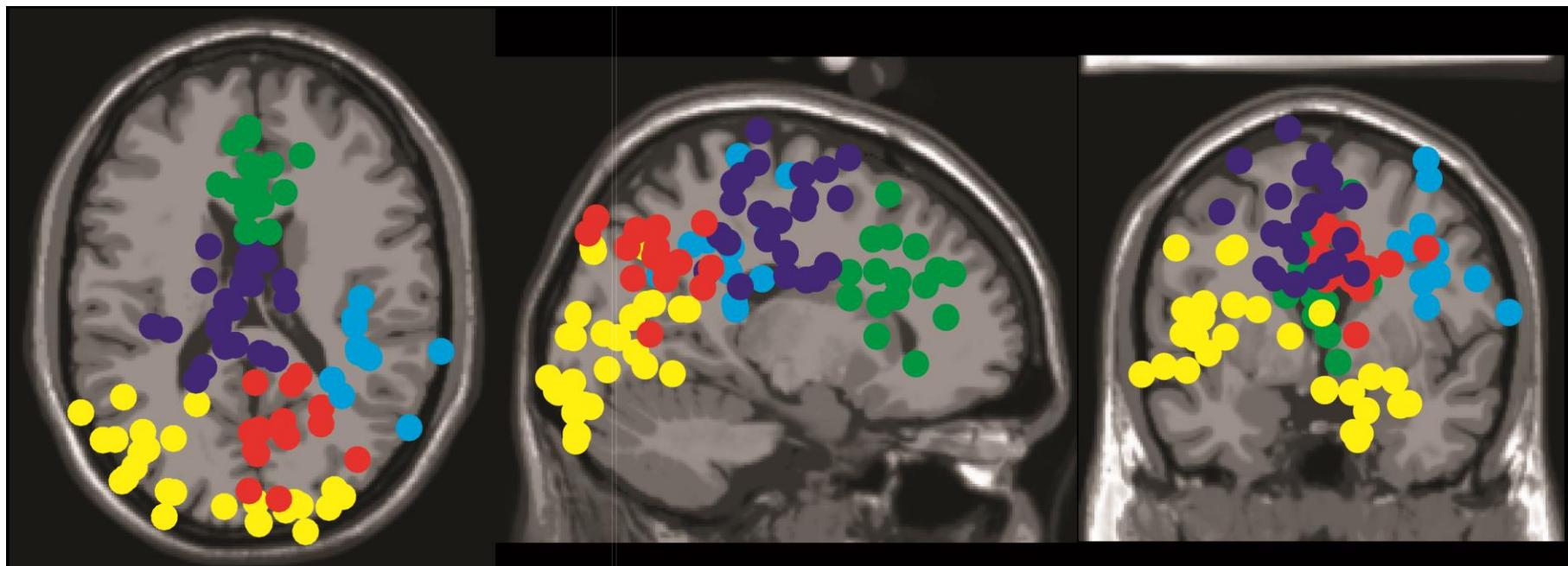
4. Cluster remaining brain ICs across subjects, based on:



5. Average IC periodograms across each cluster, for each condition



# Cortical IC Clusters

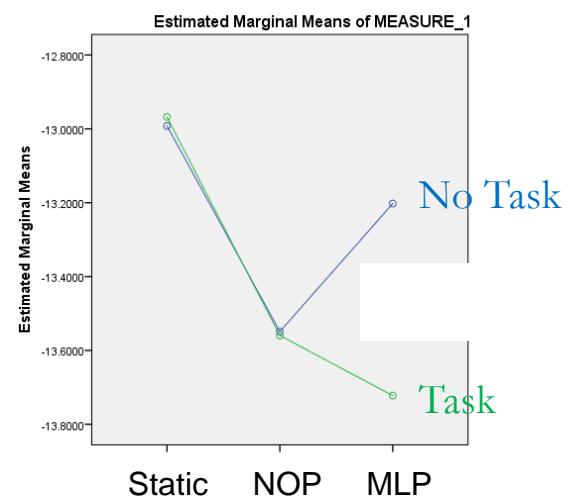
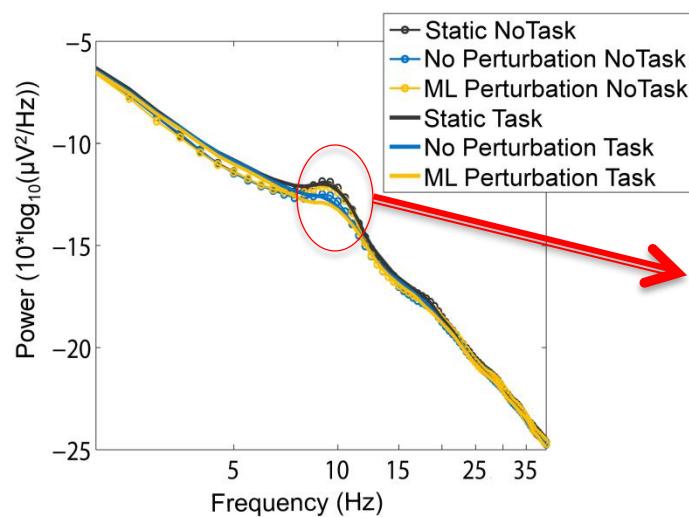
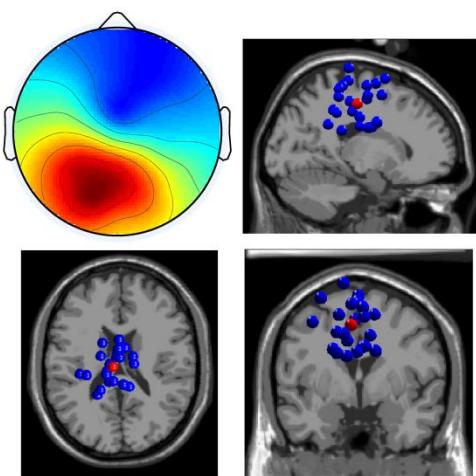


# Hypotheses for Power Spectral Density

1. Power (amplitude) reduction or desynchronization, in 8-30Hz -> cortical excitability before and during movements
  - Hypothesis: decreased mu and beta power with increased sensory load (optic flow vs. static)
2. Visual processing leads to reduced alpha power over occipital regions
  - Hypothesis: Sensory load and cognitive load (processing letters vs. not processing letters) will lead to decreased power in the alpha (8-14Hz) band over occipital regions
3. Increased alpha power over parietal regions is linked to attentional mechanisms to suppress task-irrelevant information
  - Hypothesis: sensory load, particularly unreliable visual scene motion (ML perturbations) will drive alpha power over parietal cortex

# PSD: frontal (SMA & ACC) Clusters

Supplementary motor area (14 S, 23 ICs)



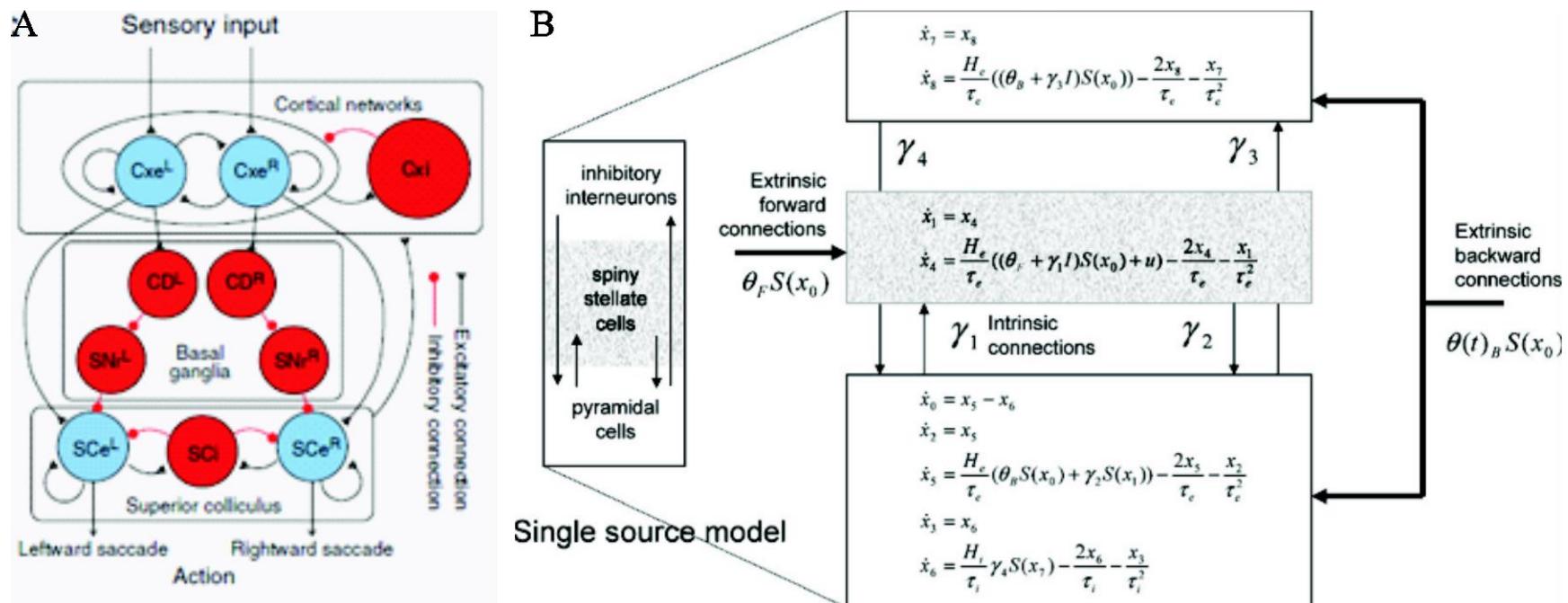
# Summary IV

- One of the first studies that has attempted to understand cortical underpinnings of gait control under conflicting sensory demands
- ICA and clustering approach helped define a distributed network of sources responsive to sensory and cognitive load
- Optic flow induced changes in gait & posture may be used as a tool to assess cortical underpinnings of dynamic stability

# Conclusion

- Simple models can explain and predict self-motion
- EEG can be collected during active and passive motion
  - Meaningful results that further our understanding of self-motion

# Future Directions



# Thank you



Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Adam Snyder

Brenda Malcolm

Pierefilipo DeSanctis

John Foxe



Trinity College Dublin

Hugh Nolan

Robert Whelan

Richard Reilly



Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics

Jennifer Campos

Heinrich Bülfhoff



The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

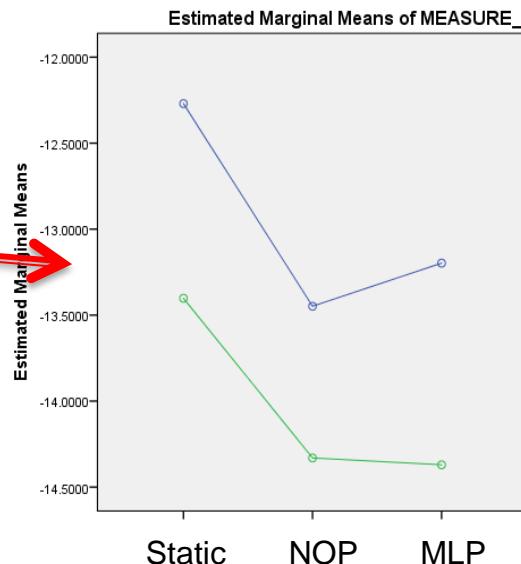
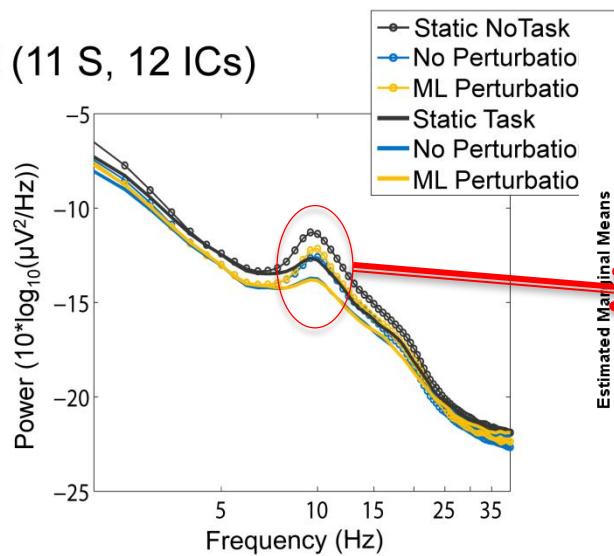
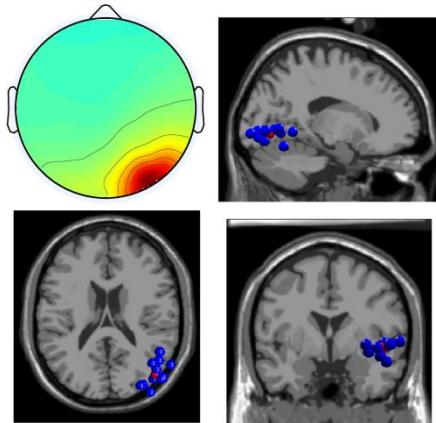
Conor Fearon

Timothy Lynch

# Any questions



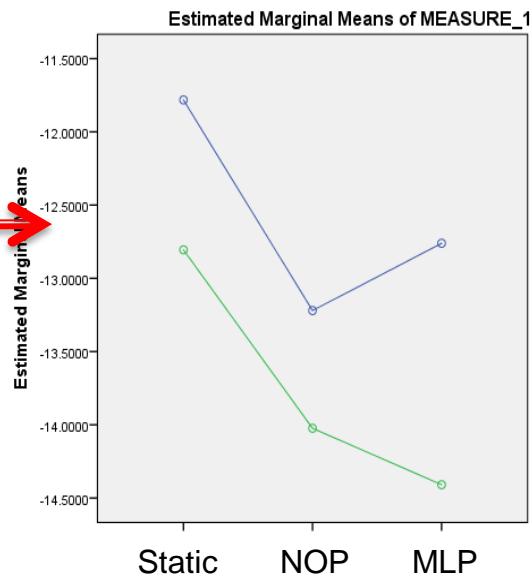
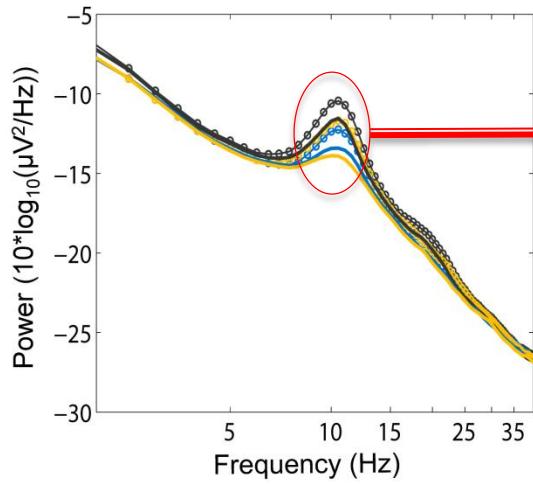
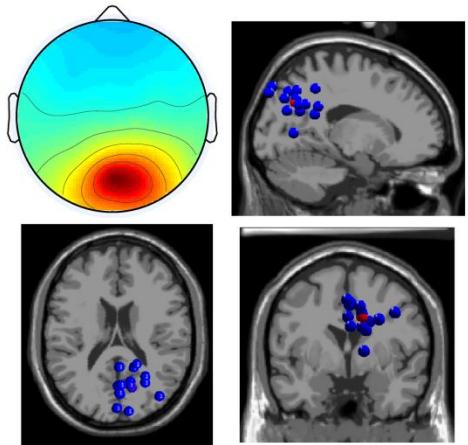
# PSD: Occipital alpha



Visual load →

# PSD: Right parietal alpha

Parietal lobe, precuneus (11 S, 15 ICs)



Visual load →

# Vestibular Oddball

- Vestibular Conditions
  - Diagonal Left Target
  - Diagonal Right Target
- Vestibular P3 paradigm
  - 80% Standard (320 sweeps)
  - 20% Target (80 sweeps)
- 15 participants
- 128 scalp channels



# The aging brain shows less flexible reallocation of cognitive resources during dual-task walking: a mobile brain/body imaging (MoBI) study

Age	Young	Old
Range	21.8-36.1	57.7-71.0
Mean	27.2	63.9
SD	4.6	4.0

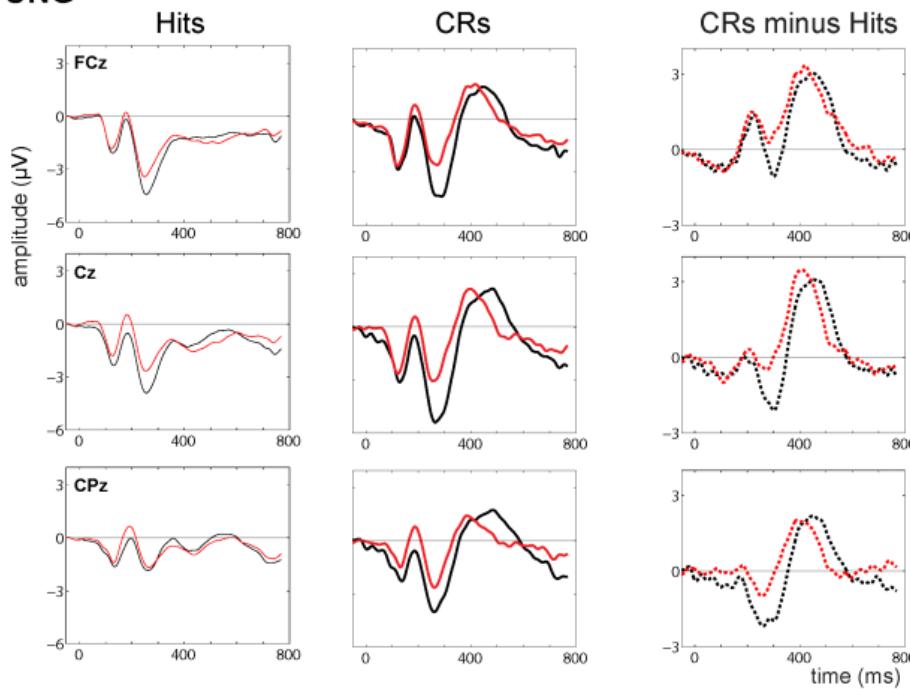
N=18

N=18

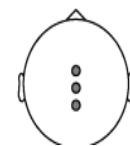


# ERP - Young

YOUNG

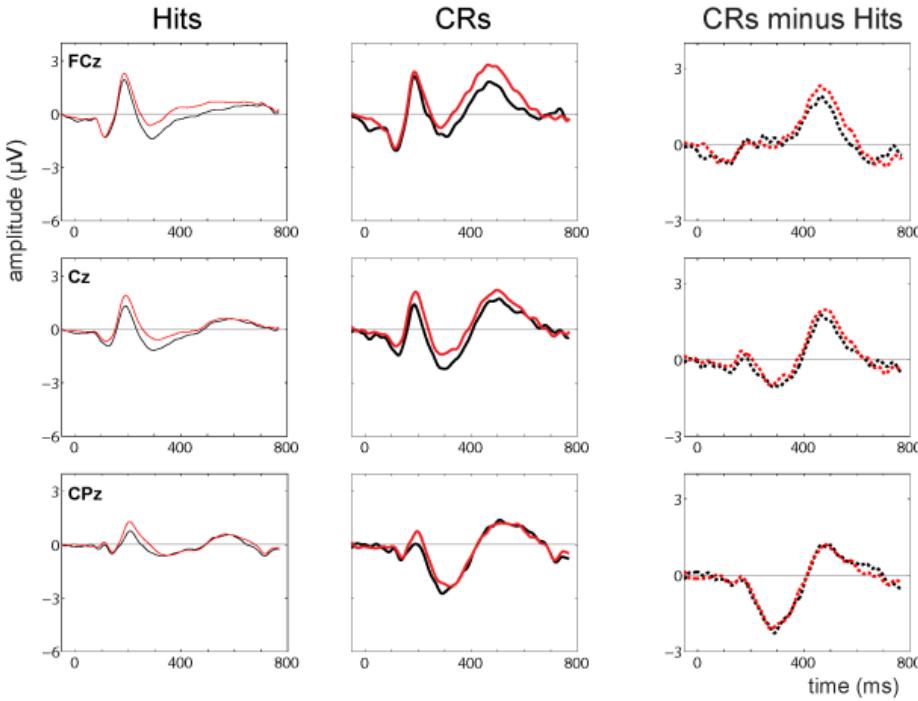


<b>Hits</b>	<b>Correct Rejections (CRs)</b>
— Sitting	— Sitting
— Walking	— Walking



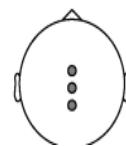
# ERP - Old

OLD

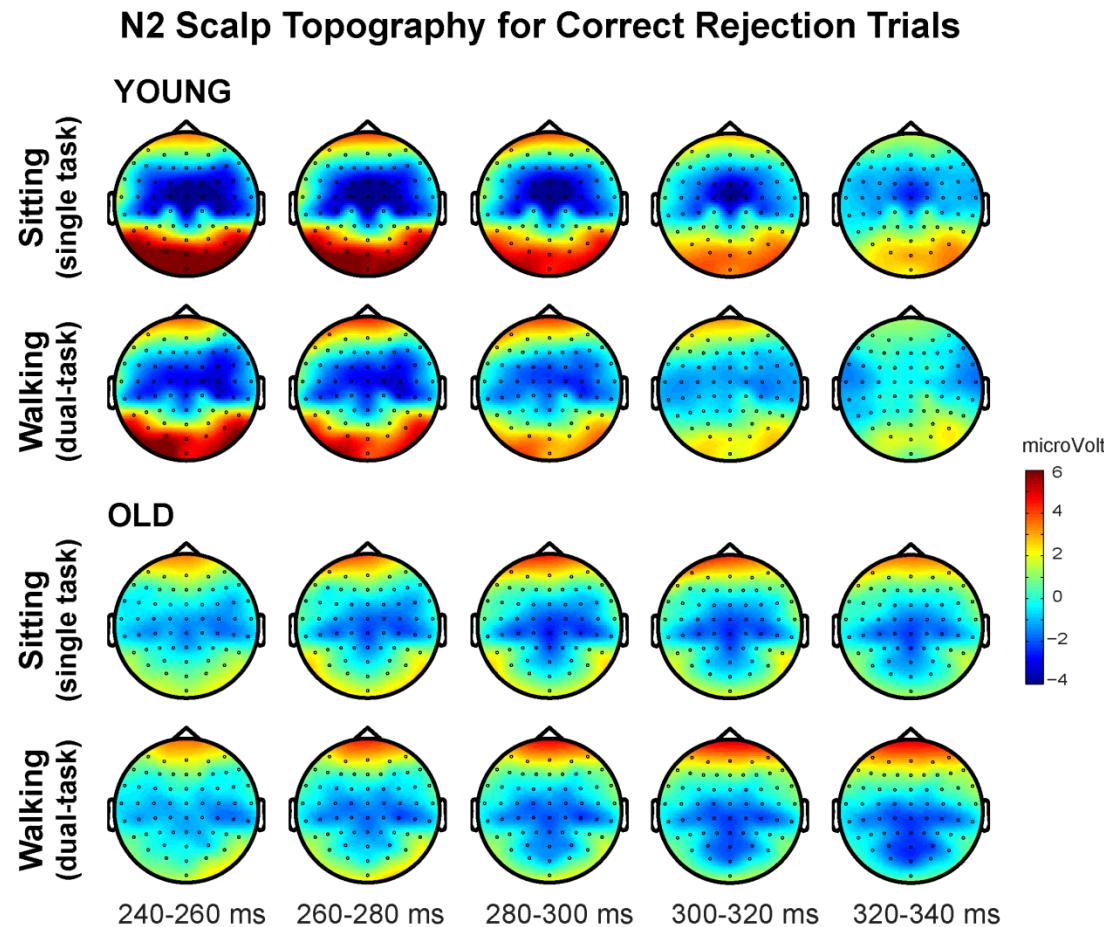


Hits  
— Sitting  
— Walking

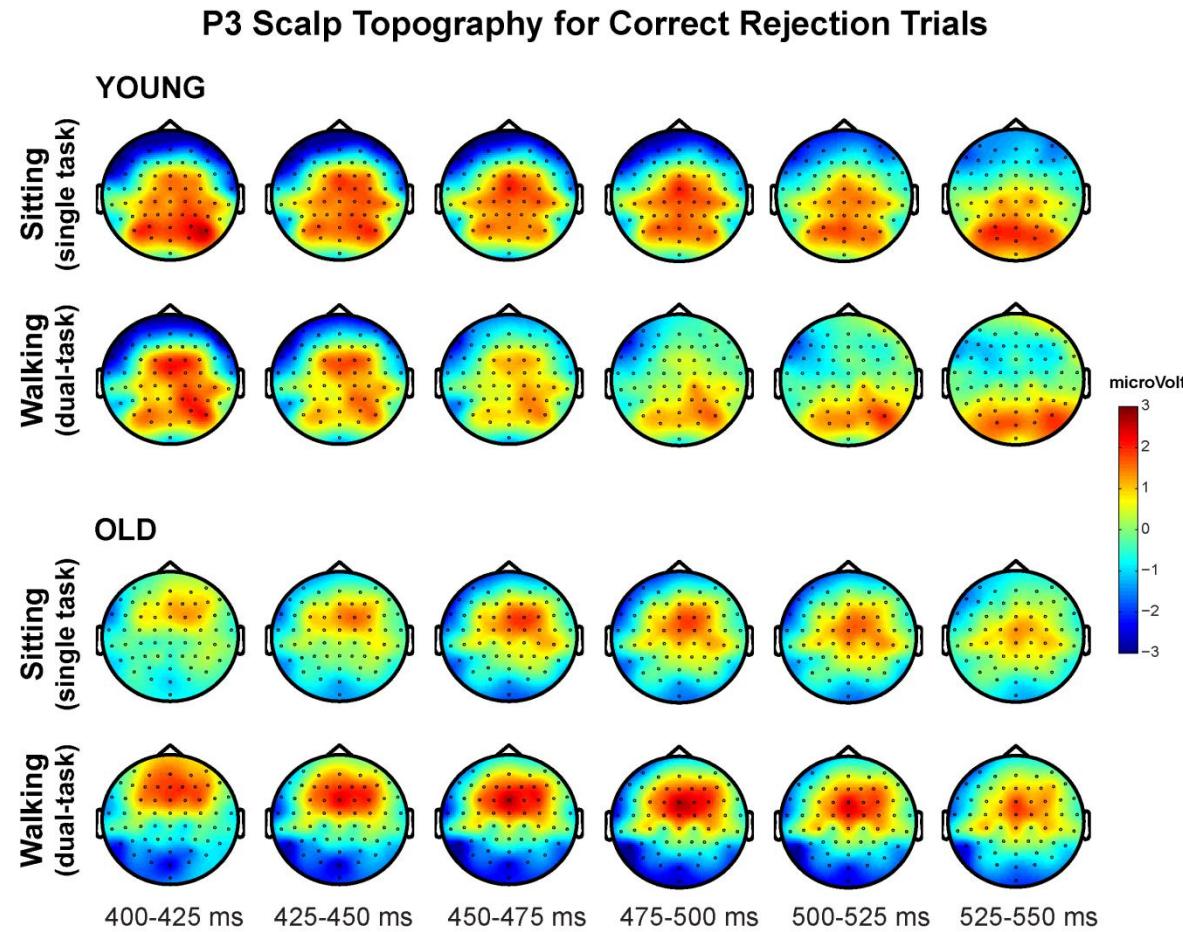
Correct Rejections (CRs)  
— Sitting  
— Walking



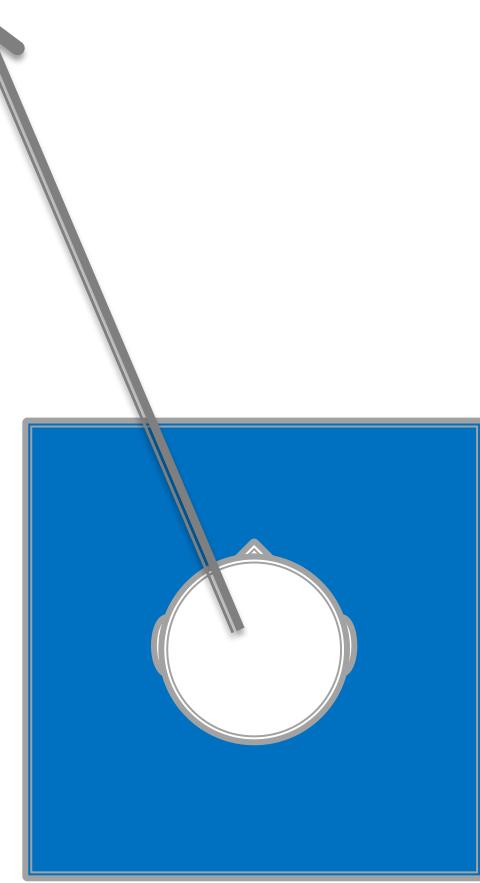
# N2 topographical distribution



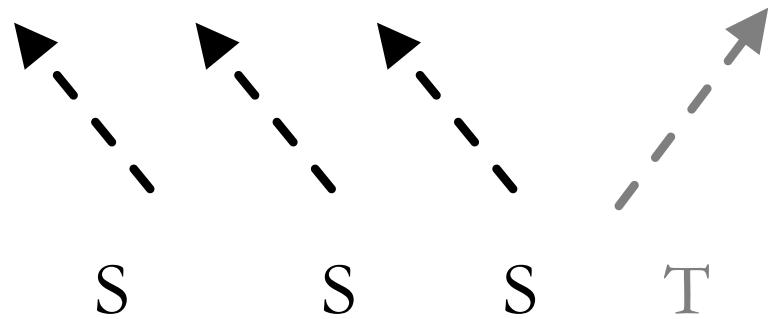
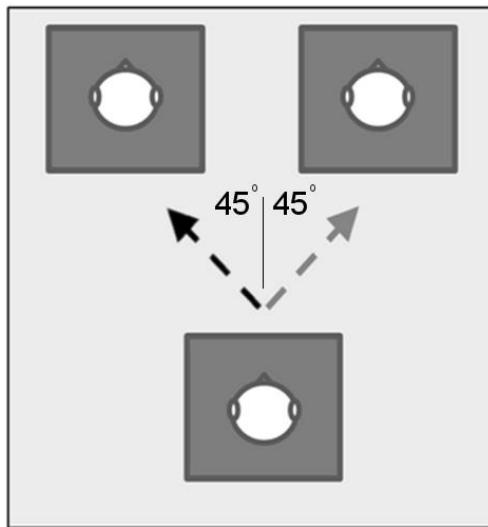
# P3 topographical distribution



# Vestibular Oddball



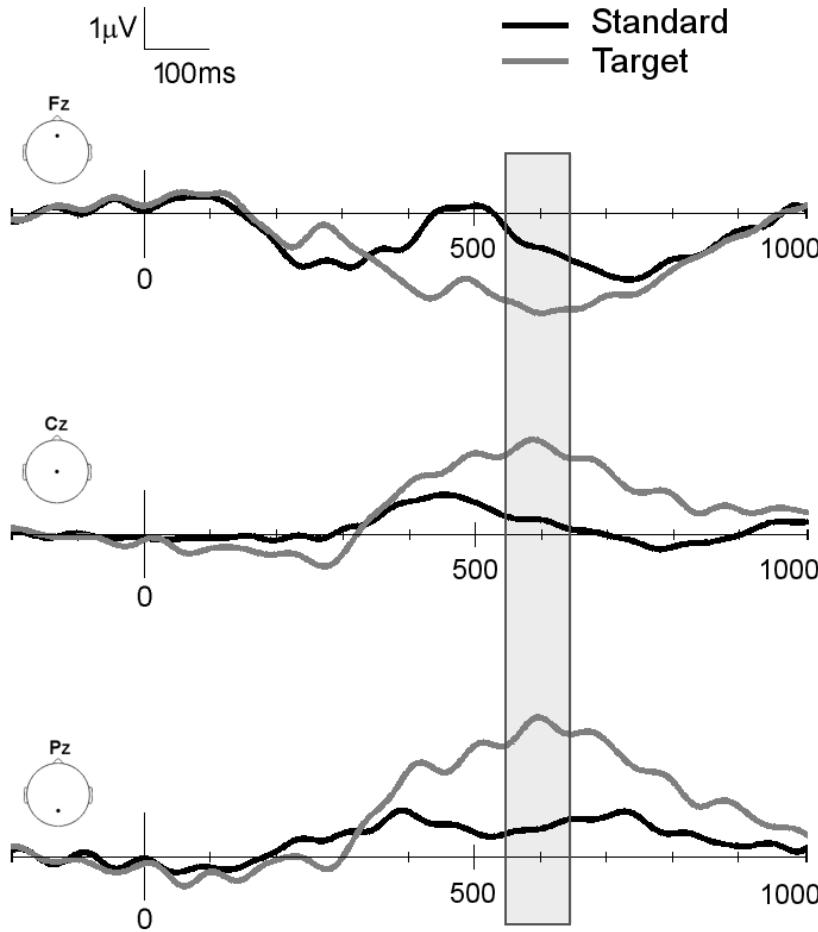
# Procedure



A neuronal marker for vestibular change detection



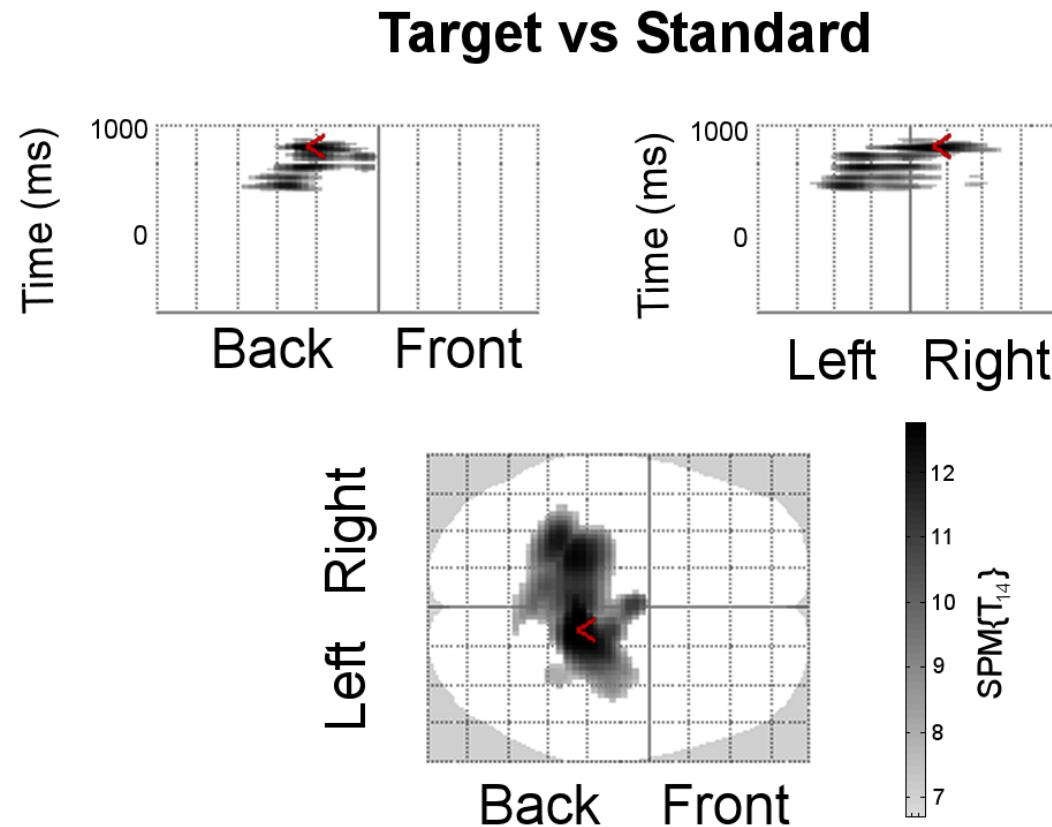
# Results- Vestibular P3



- Statistical difference between the standard and target



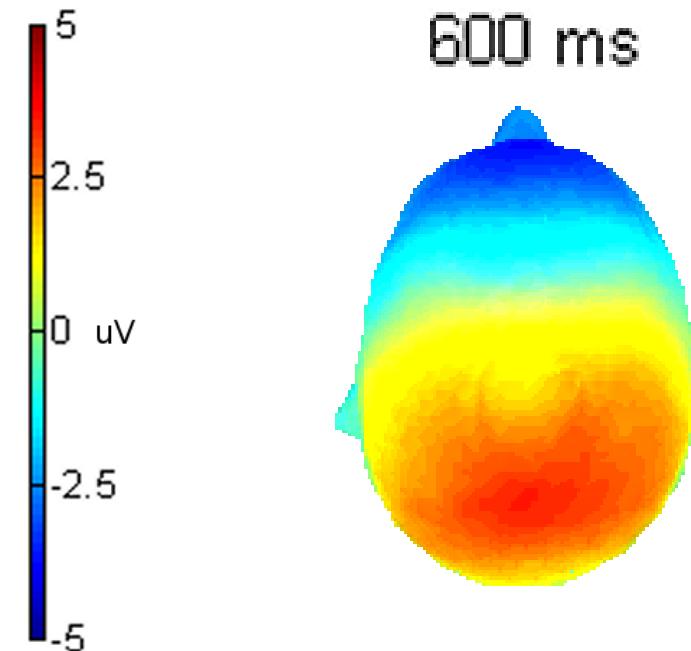
# P3 distribution



Target topographic scalp distribution is similar to the typical P3 distribution for other sensory modalities



# Scalp Distribution



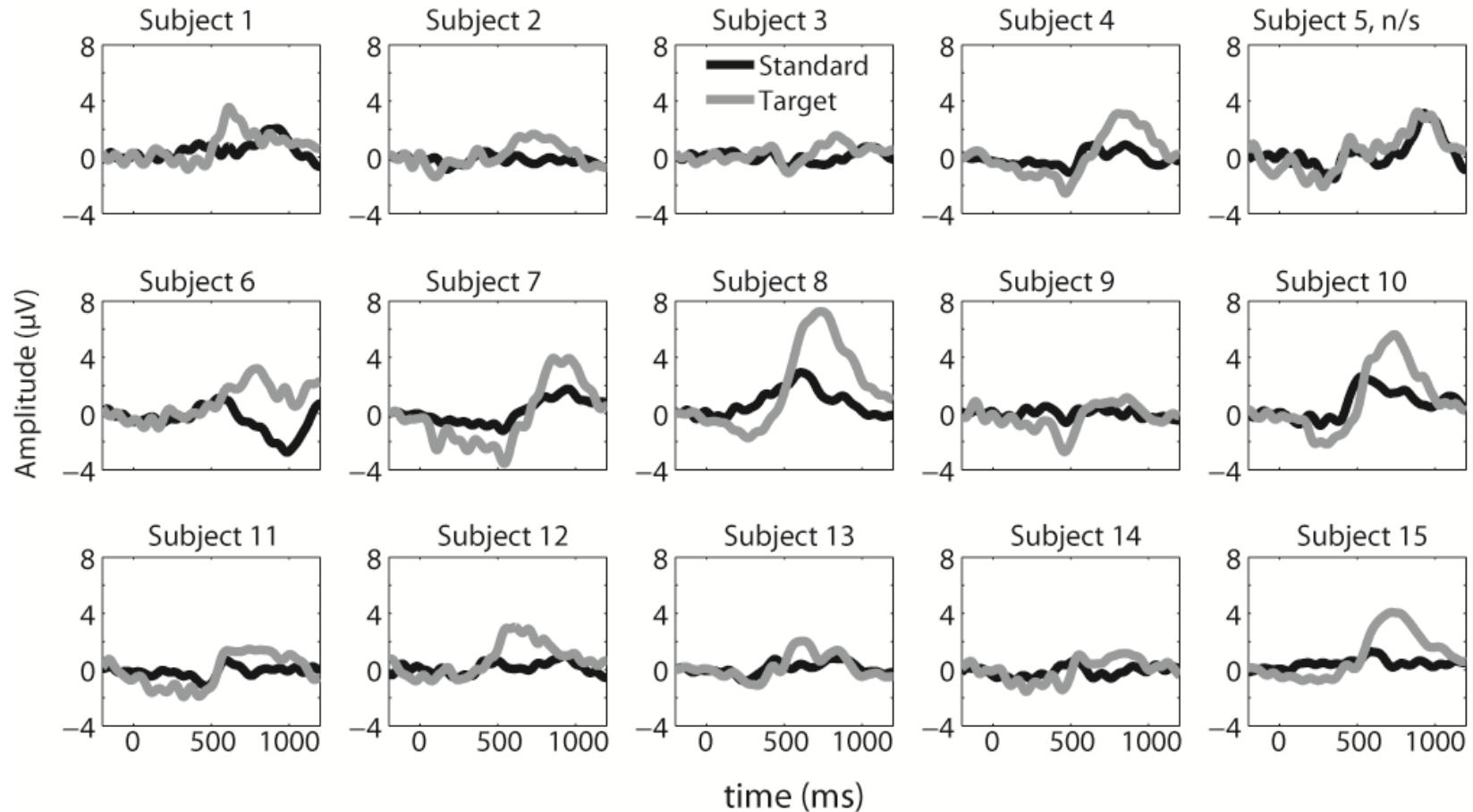
- Target topographic scalp distribution is similar to the typical P3 distribution for other sensory modalities



# Individual Participant Analysis

## BOOTSTRAP

# Individual Participant data



14 of 15 participants exhibited a P3



# Summary II



- This is the first time vestibular heading change detection has been shown to elicit a P3 component.



# Response Inhibition Task



## Task

- Go/Nogo Response Inhibition Task
- NoGo: repetition of the same picture
- Stimulus presentation rate 1/ per sec
- $\text{Go/Nogo} = 80/20\%$

## Conditions

- Sitting
- Walking Slow (2.4 km/h)
- Walking Fast (5 km/h)



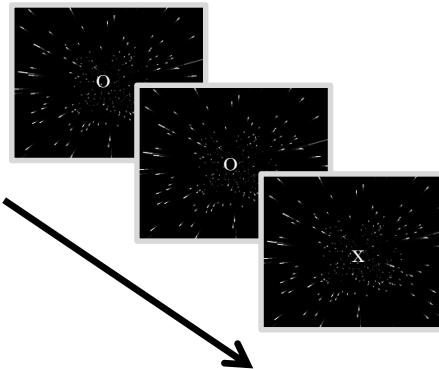
# Methods

## Participants

- Young Adults (n=16) mean age = 25.6 years
- Average walking speed: 3.9 km/hr (range: 3.2 – 4.5)

## 6 Experimental Conditions

- Task Load (2) x Optic Flow (3)
- 3 blocks of each condition
- Task:
  - Go/No-Go probability = 80%/20%
  - Letter presentation = 400ms
  - Random SOA : 600-800ms
- Optic Flow
  - static (control condition?)
  - steady/no perturbation
  - mediolateral perturbations

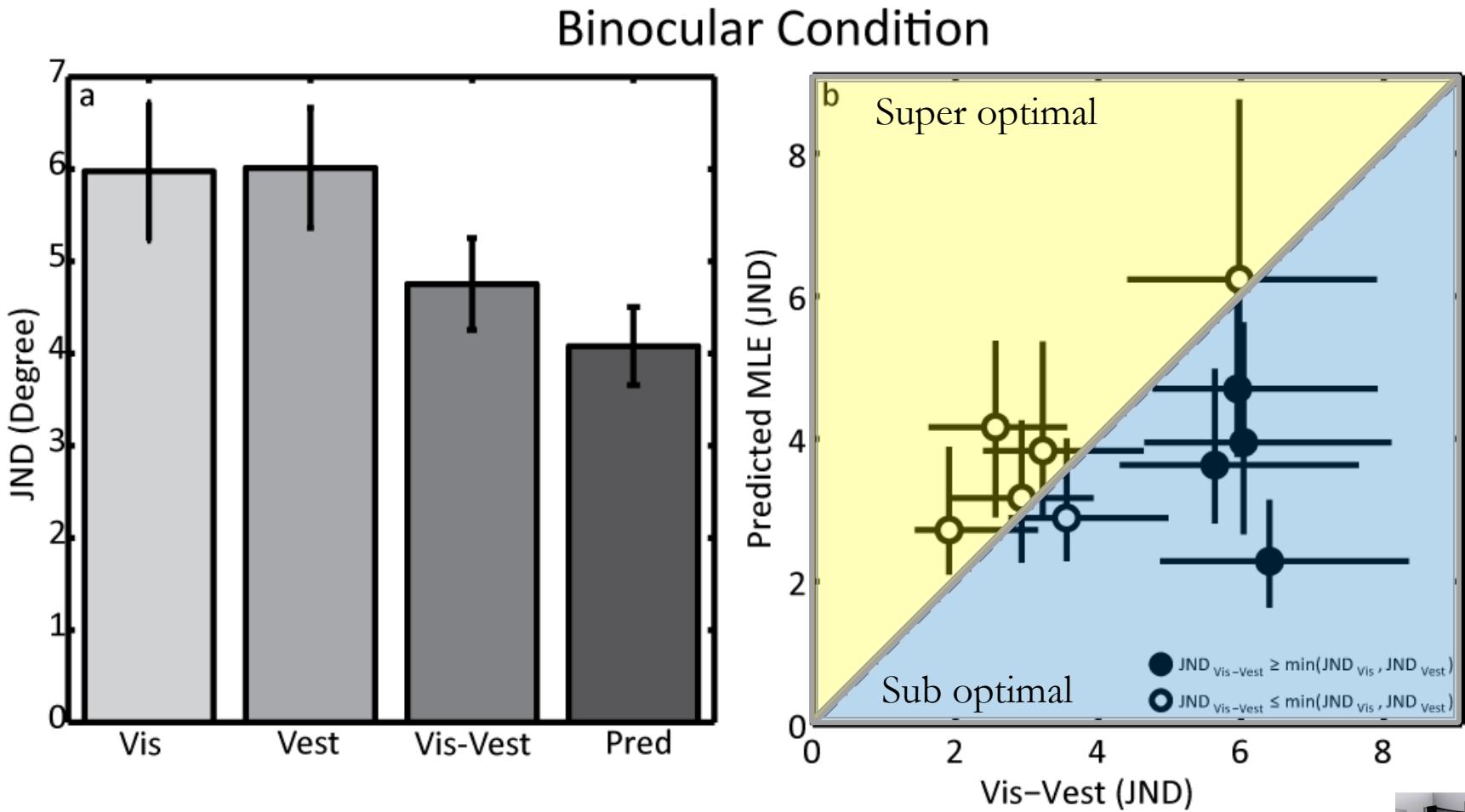


Cognitive Load	Sensory Load: Optic Flow Perturbation (relative to walking speed/direction)		
	Static/No-Task	Congruent/No-Task	Incongruent/No-Task
Static-Task	Congruent/Task	Incongruent/Task	

# Summary IV

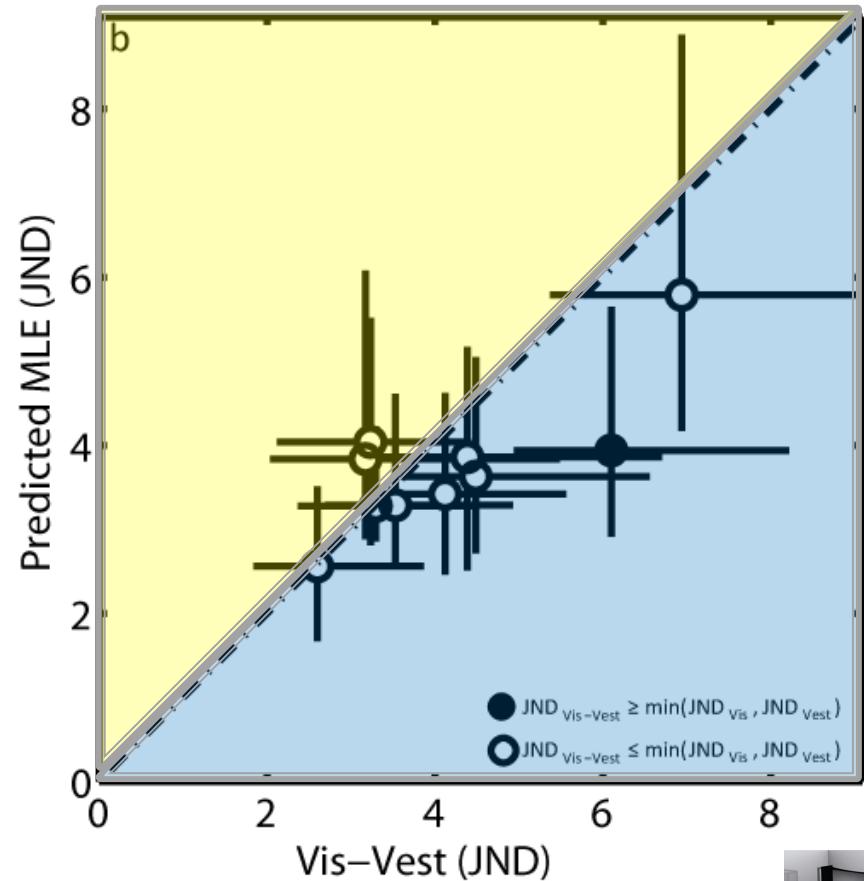
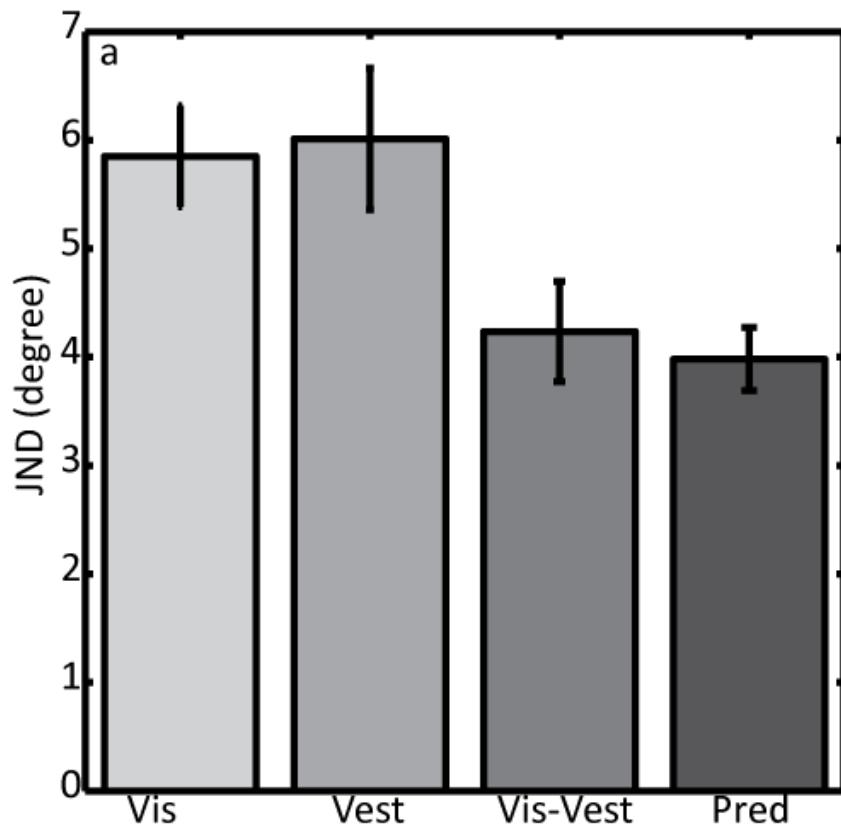
- Younger adults adjust gait and cognitive control when presented with a dual task situation
- Healthy older adults show a lack of flexibility, both in terms of adjusting physical behavior and in reconfiguring cognitive control mechanisms at the neural level.

# Binocular Condition



# Stereoscopic Condition

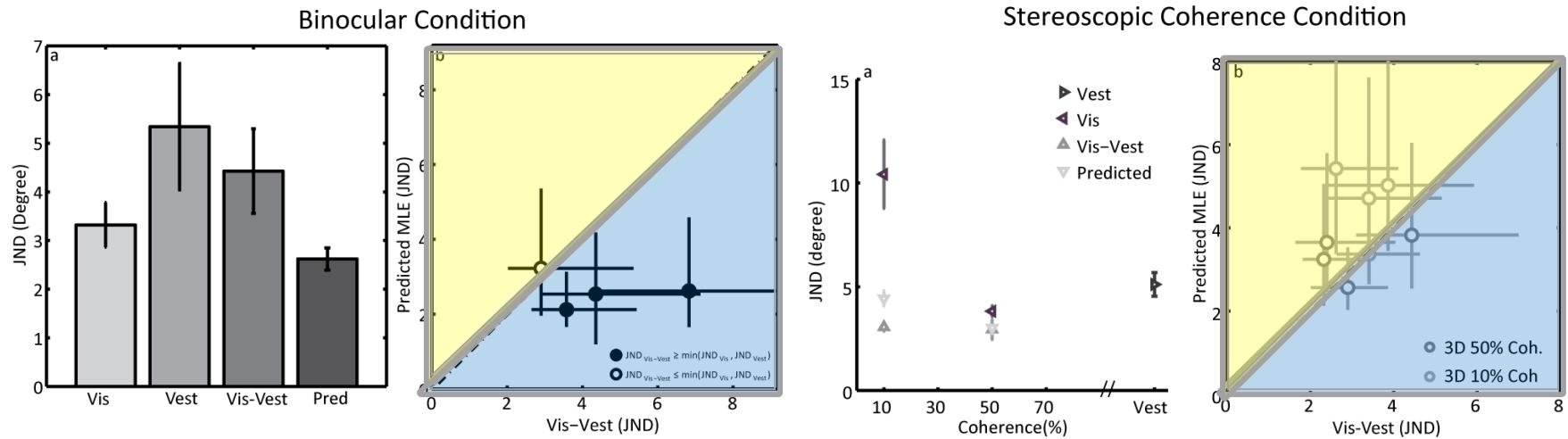
Stereoscopic Condition



9 of the 10 exhibit optimal combination of sense



# Reproducible nature of result



A subset of the original participants were re-run  
and exhibited identical results



# Summary

- The presence/absence of stereoscopic visual information can impact the extent to which visual and vestibular cues are integrated during heading perception.
- This was reproducible within participants

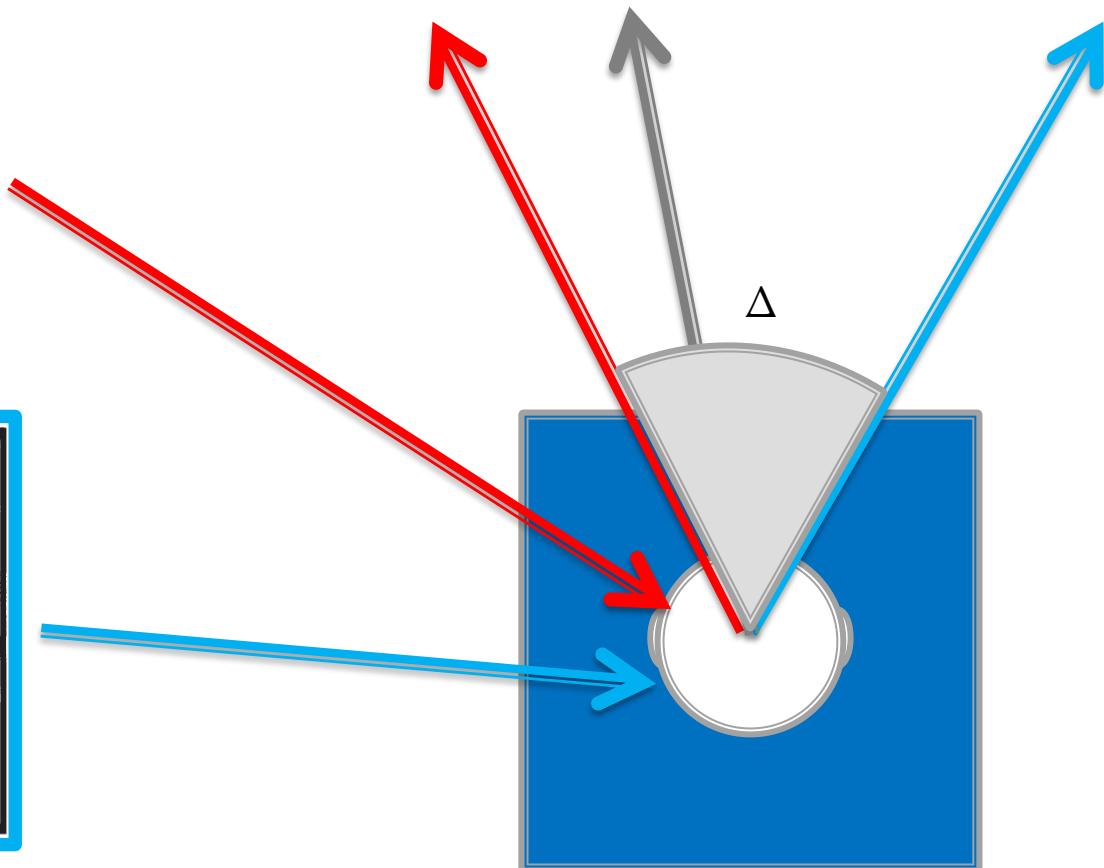
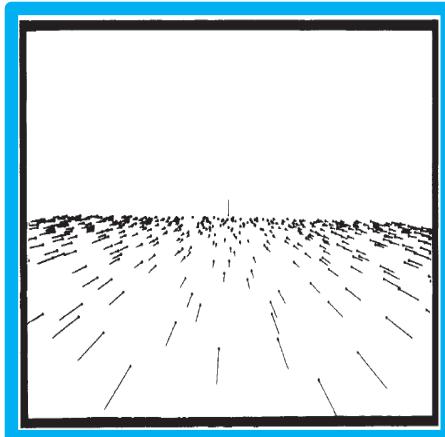


# Talk Overview

- Passive Heading detection
  - 1. The role of Stereo cues
  - 2. Conflict of information
  - 3. Neural correlates of heading detection change
- Active tasks
  - 4. Walking
  - 5. Neural recordings while walking



# Visual-Vestibular Integration for Heading (conflict)



# Why introduce a conflict?

- By introducing a conflict we can see if there is a breakdown of the combination of sense
- We can calculate the weights given to each cue

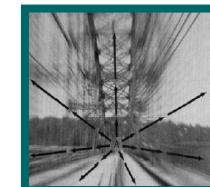


# The logic of conflicts

Equally weighted



Vestibular weighted more



Vision weighted more



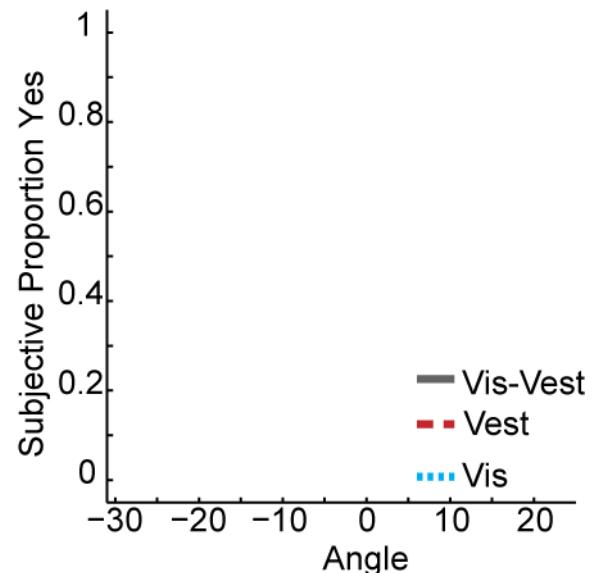
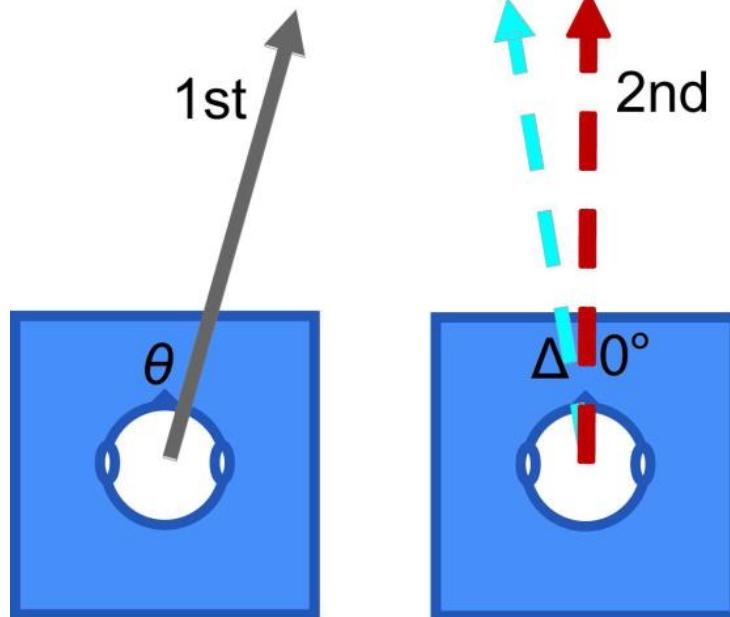
# Individual participant analysis

Vis-Vest

Vestibular

Visual

Incongruent



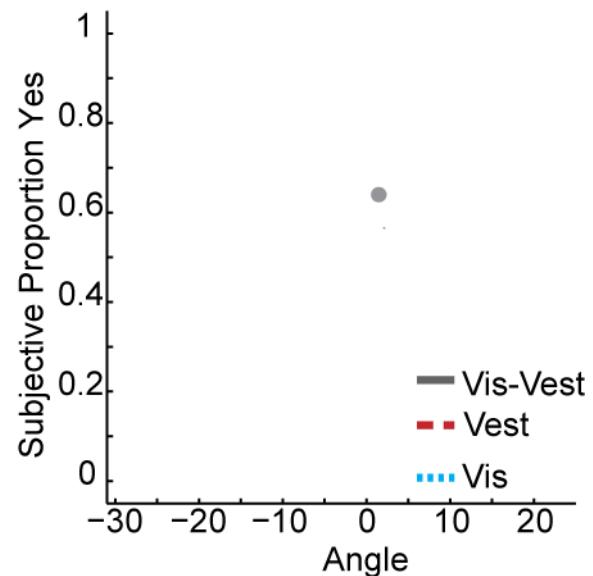
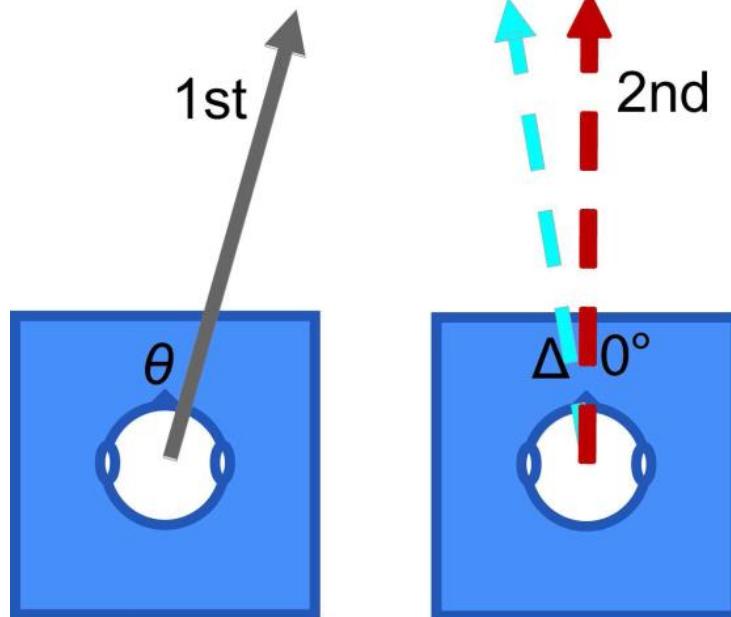
# Individual participant analysis

Vis-Vest

Vestibular

Visual

Incongruent



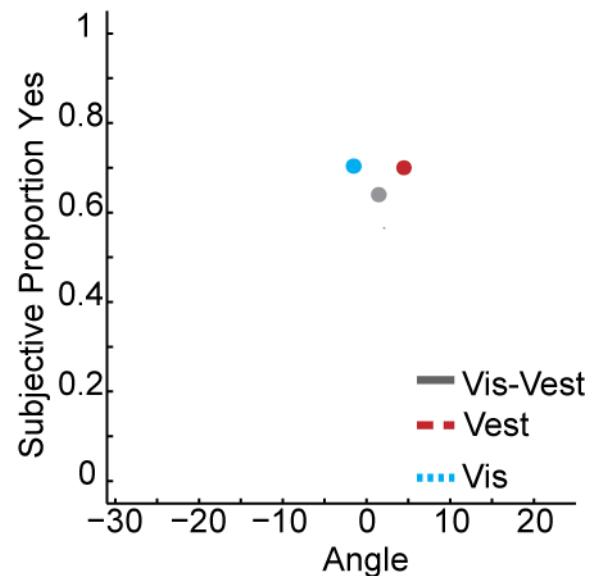
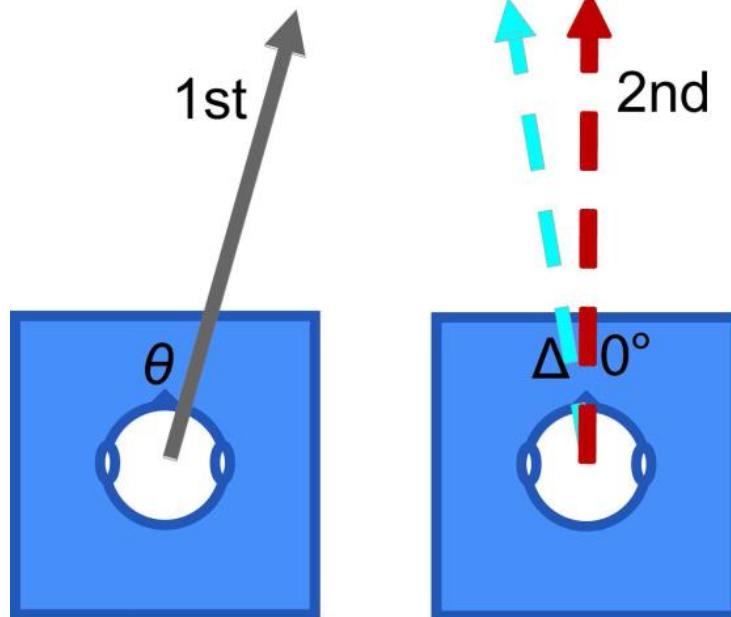
# Individual participant analysis

Vis-Vest

Vestibular

Visual

Incongruent



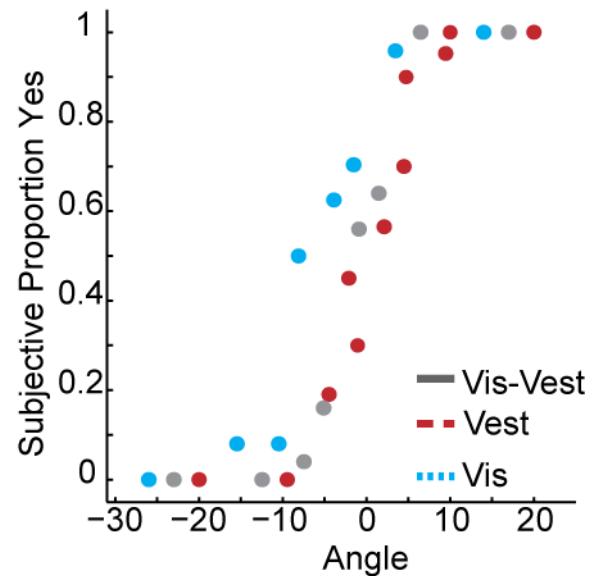
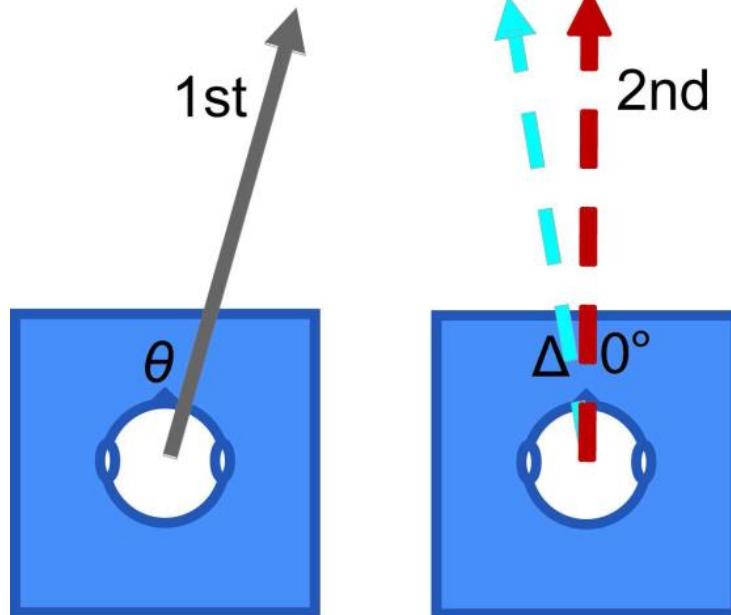
# Individual participant analysis

Vis-Vest

Vestibular

Visual

Incongruent



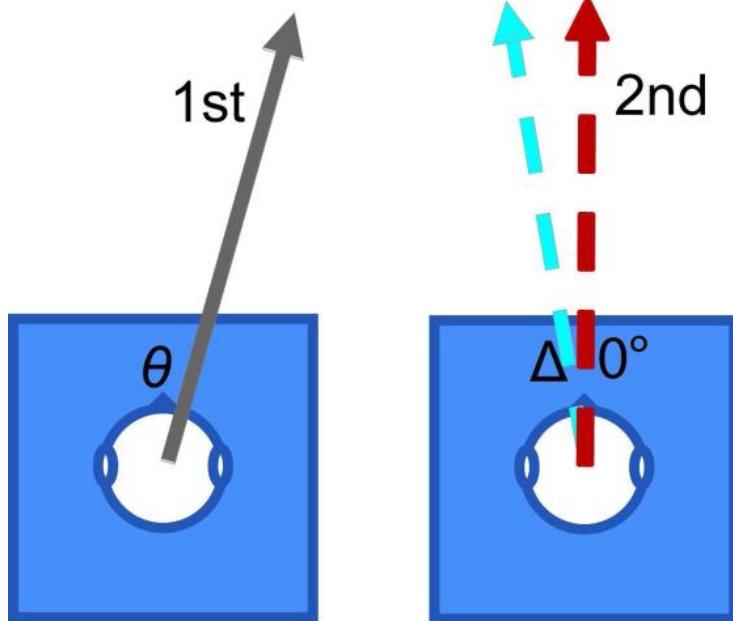
# Individual participant analysis

Vis-Vest

Vestibular

Visual

Incongruent



# Maximum Likelihood Estimation

$$\hat{S}_{Vis-Vest} = w_{Vis} \hat{S}_{Vis} + w_{Vest} \hat{S}_{Vest}$$

Observed

$$w_{Vis} = \frac{PSE_{Vis-Vest} - PSE_{Vest}}{PSE_{Vis} - PSE_{Vest}} \quad w = \frac{1/\sigma_{Vis}^2}{\frac{1}{\sigma_{Vis}^2} + \frac{1}{\sigma_{Body}^2}}$$

Predicted

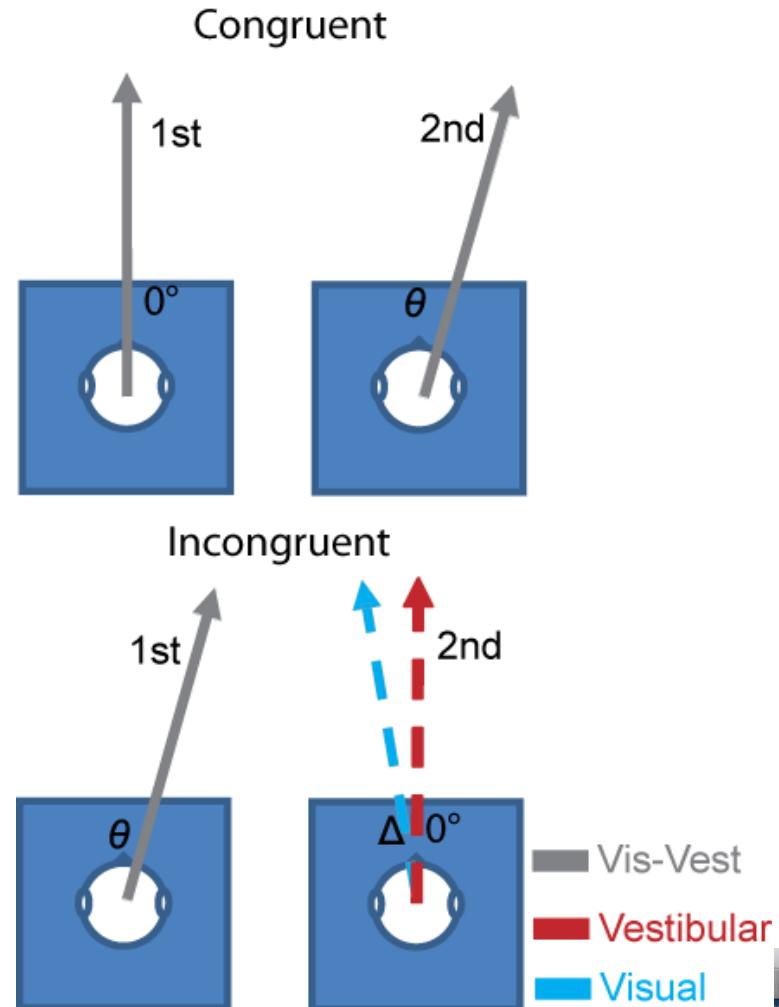
$$\hat{w}_{Vis} = \frac{1/JND_{Vis}^2}{1/JND_{Vis}^2 + 1/JND_{Vest}^2}$$



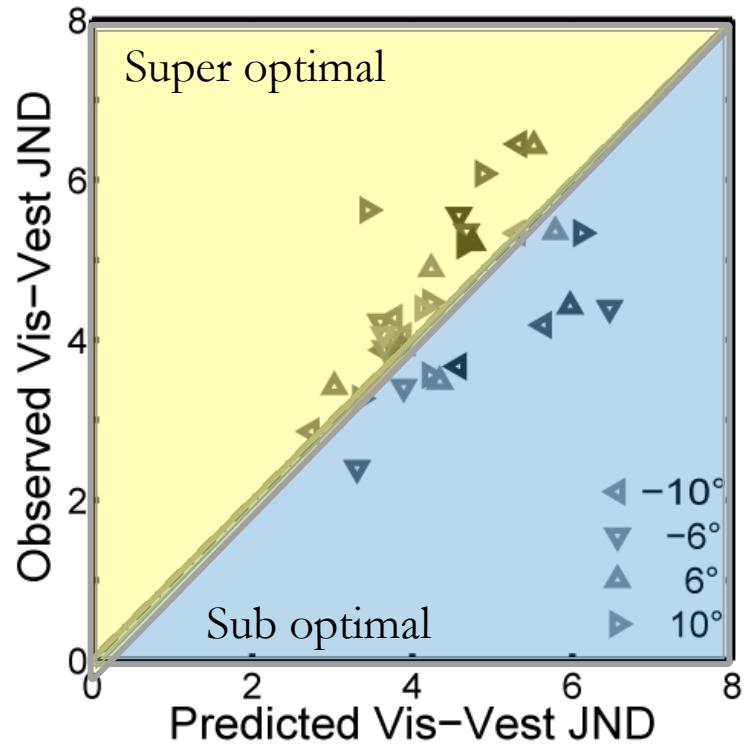
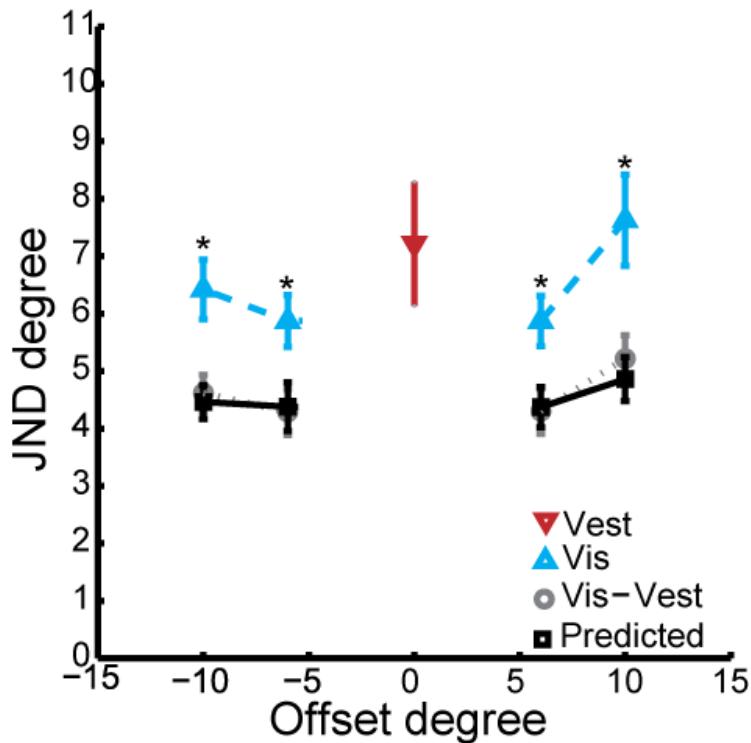
# Spatial Conflict

## Conditions

- 1 Vestibular alone
  - One Standard
  - $\Theta=0^\circ$
- 4 Visual alone
  - Four standards
  - $\Theta=\pm 6^\circ, \pm 10^\circ$
- 4 Visual-vestibular
  - One Standard
  - $\Theta=0^\circ$
  - Four Offset
  - $\Delta=\pm 6^\circ, \pm 10^\circ$



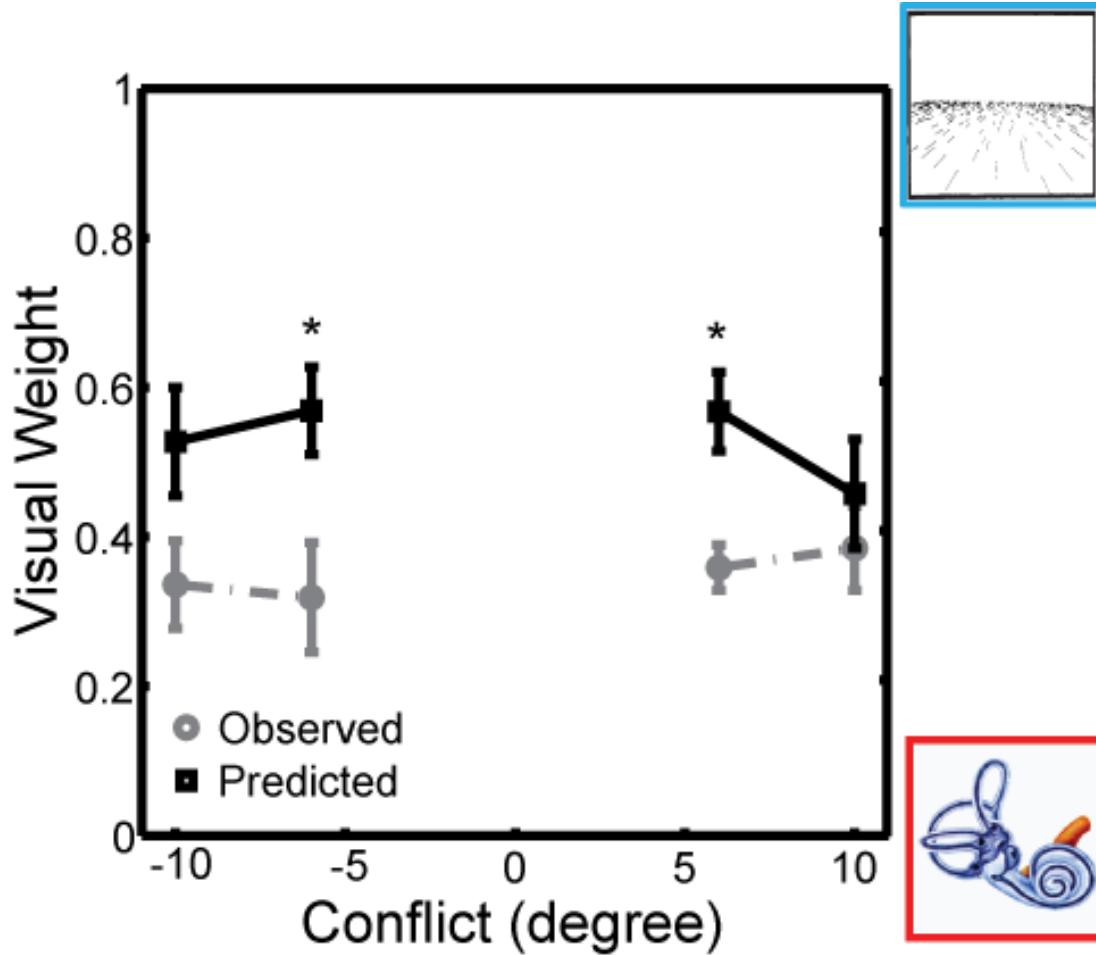
# Optimal reduction in variance



The combination of visual and vestibular cues observe an optimal rule of integration



# Weights



The weights are biased towards the vestibular cue



# Introduction of a Prior

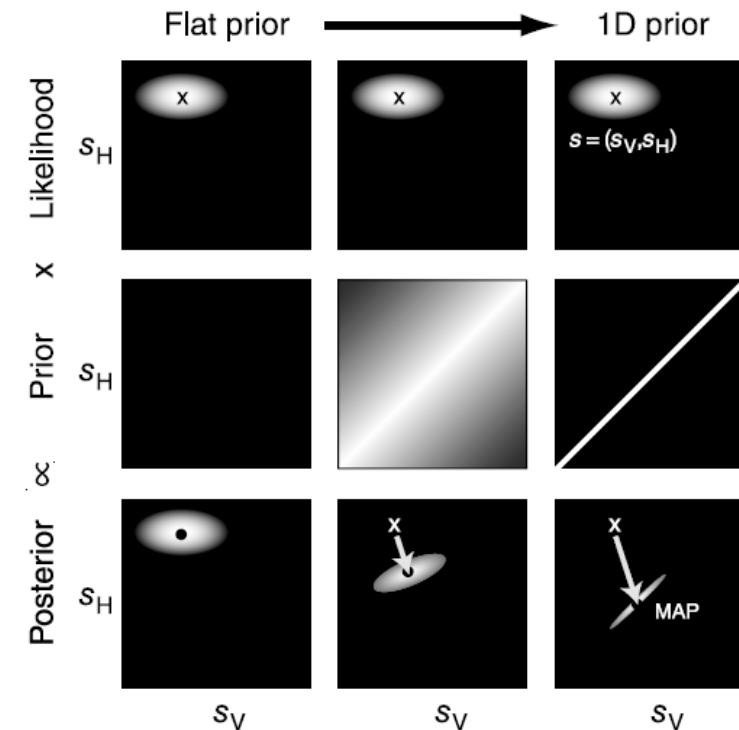
$$\hat{S}_{Vis-Vest} = w_{Vis} \hat{S}_{Vis} + w_{Vest} \hat{S}_{Vest} + w_{Prior} \hat{S}_{Prior}$$

$$JND_{Vis-Vest}^2 = \frac{1}{1/JND_{Vis}^2 + 1/JND_{Vest}^2 + 1/JND_{Prior}^2}$$

$$w_{Vis} = \frac{1/JND_{Vis}^2}{1/JND_{Vis}^2 + 1/JND_{Vest}^2 + 1/JND_{Prior}^2}$$

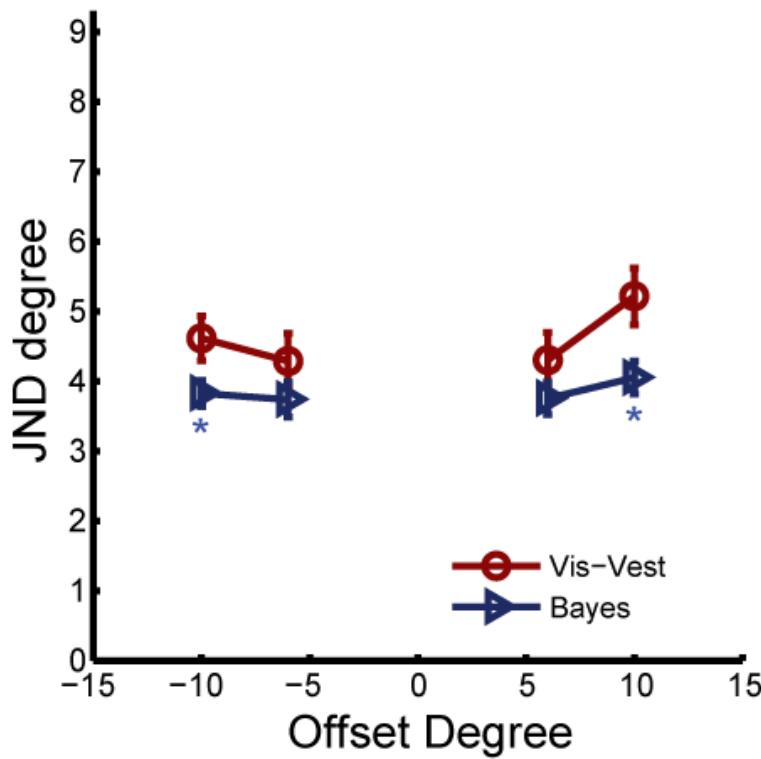
*Journal of Vision* (2007) 7(5):7, 1–14

Ernst

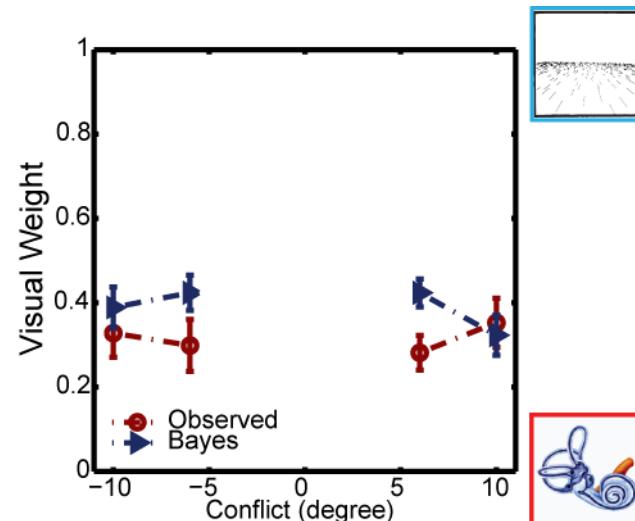


# Bayesian Model

## ACCURACY



## WEIGHTS



# Summary results

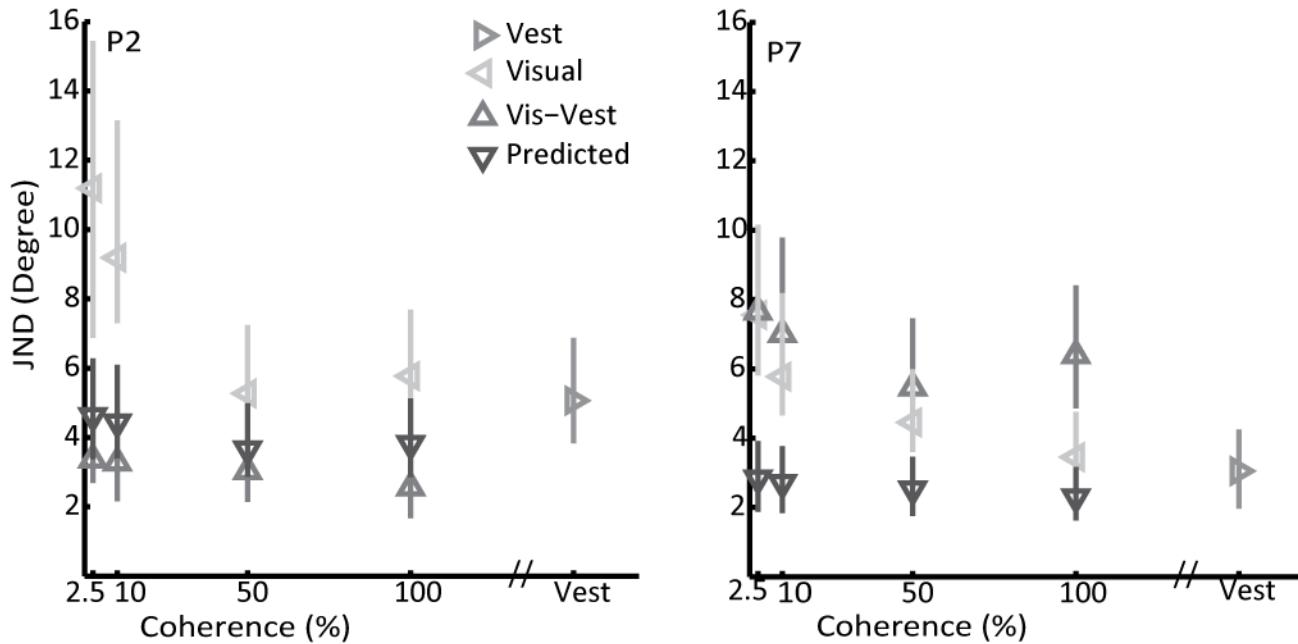
- Participants exhibited a statistically optimal reduction of variance under combined cue conditions.
- Performances in the unimodal conditions did not predict the weights in the combined cue conditions.
- Therefore, we conclude that visual and vestibular cue combination is not predicted solely by the reliability of each individual cue but rather, there is a prior which leads to a higher weighting of vestibular information in this task.



# Reproducible nature of result

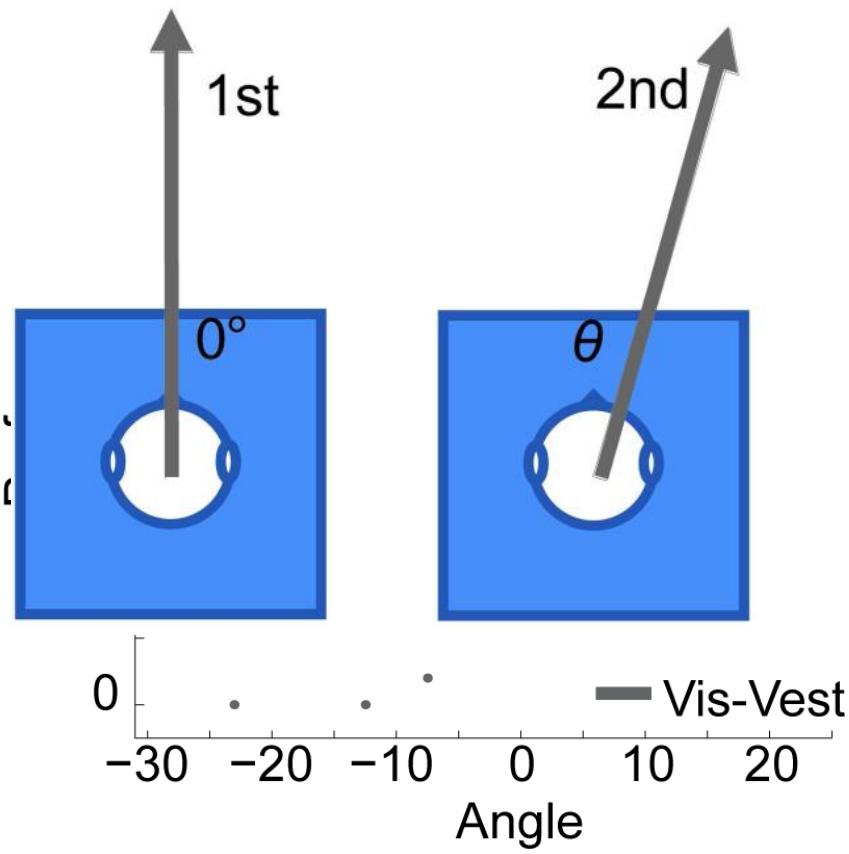


Binocular Coherence Condition

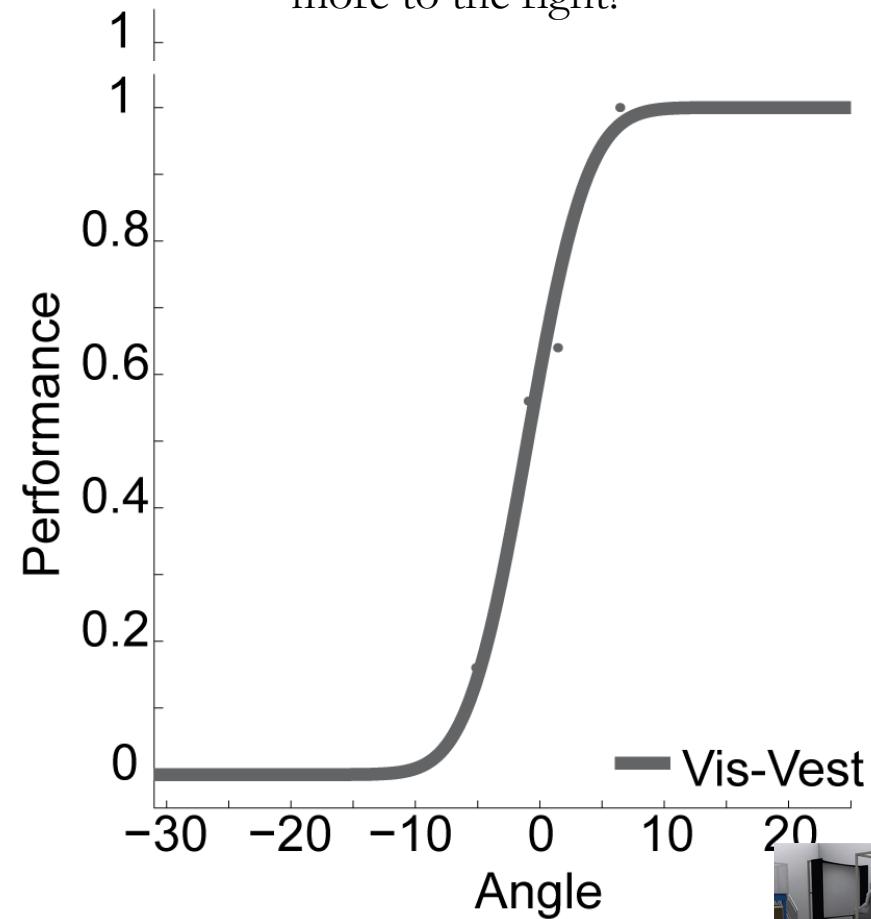


# Reliability

Congruent

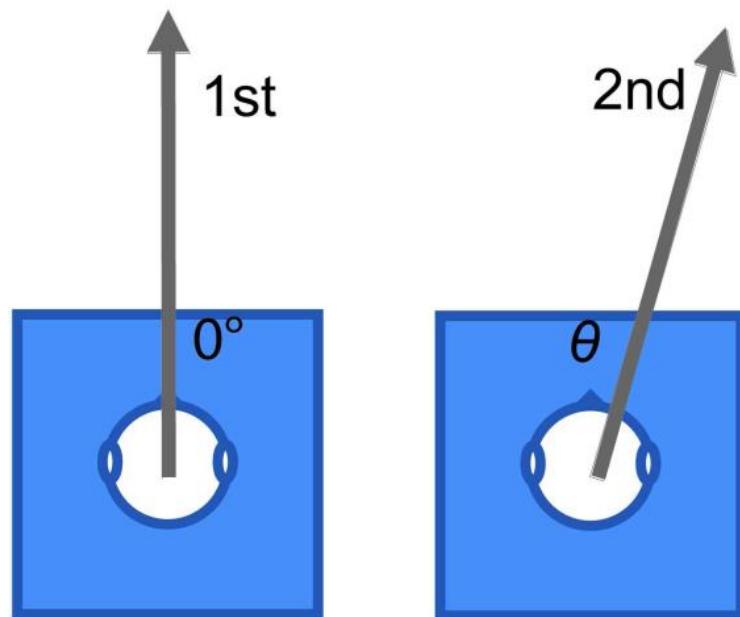


Was the second movement  
more to the right?



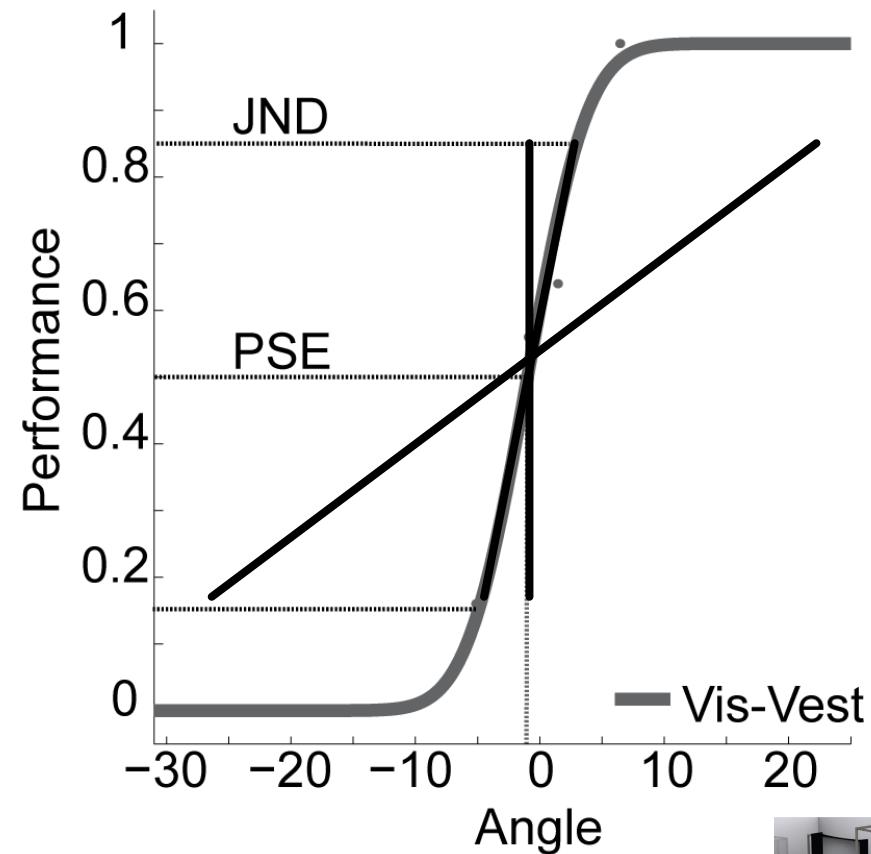
# Reliability

Congruent



Just Noticeable Difference (JND)

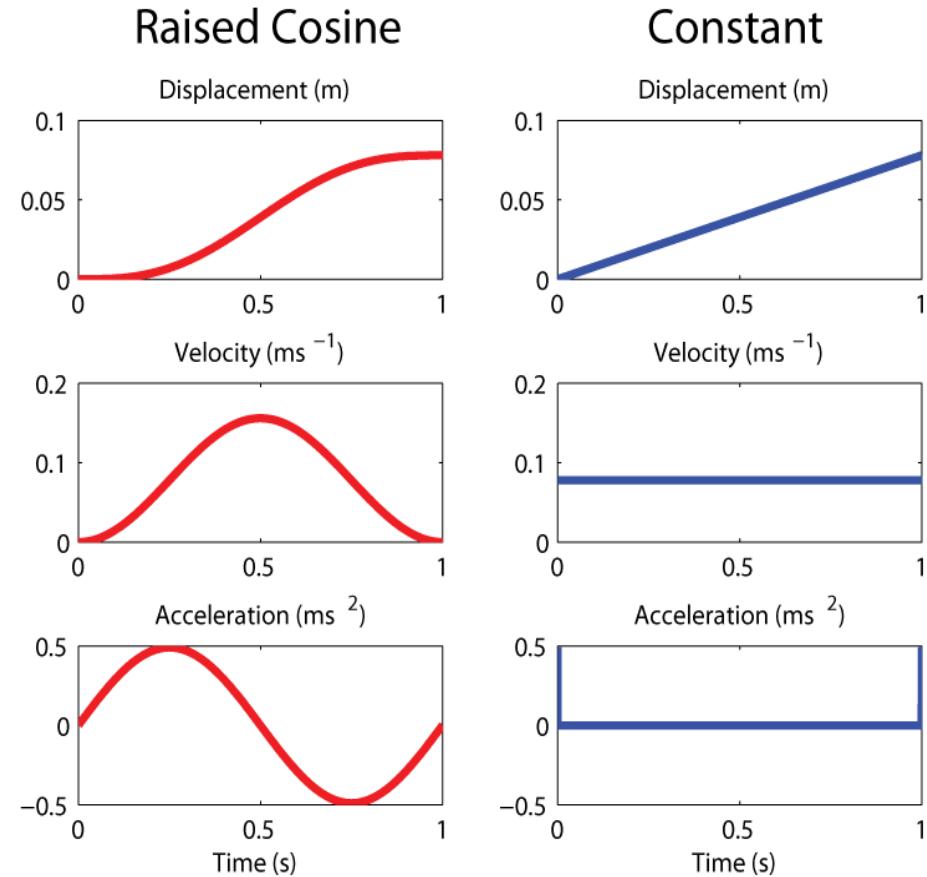
Was the second movement more to the right?



# Information Conflict

## Conditions

- Visual
  - Raised cosine
  - Constant velocity
- Vestibular
  - Raised cosine
- Visual-vestibular
  - Raised cosine velocity
  - Constant velocity (conflict)

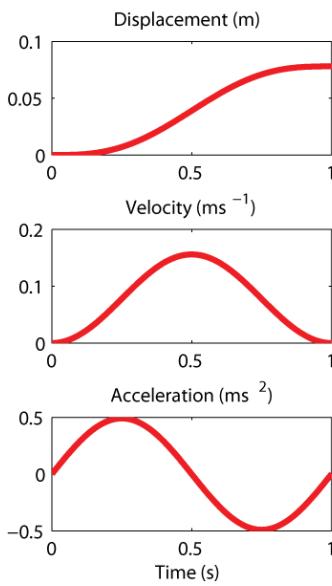


# Visual motion Profile and heading estimation

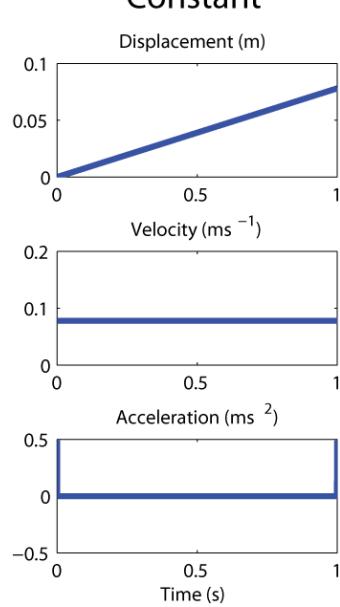
## Objective

To investigate if the velocity and acceleration play a role in visual heading discrimination

Raised Cosine



Constant



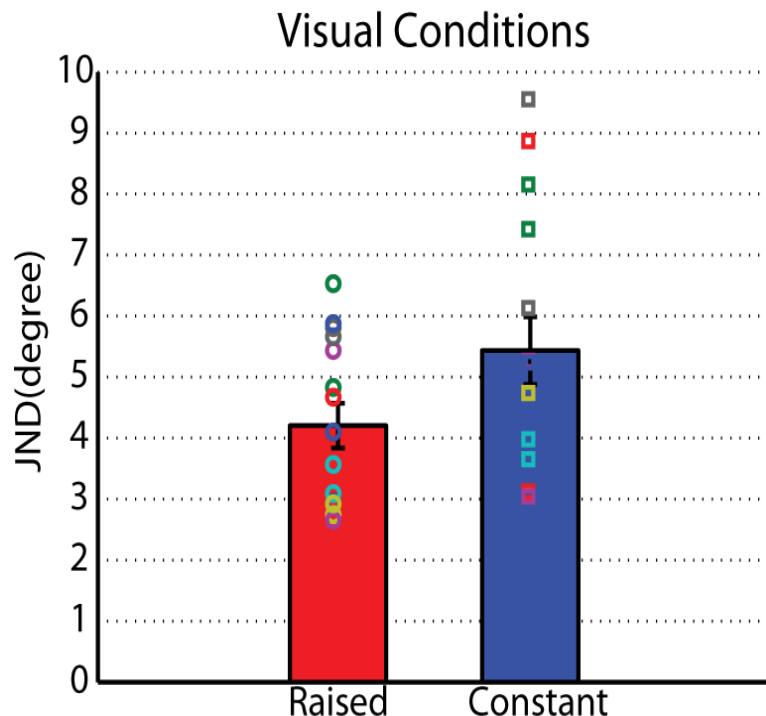
## PREDICTION 1

The constant velocity profile will give more reliable results as it is highly predictable

## PREDICTION 2

The more “natural” raised cosine profile is more reliable as we are more commonly exposed to it

# Results



The raised cosine profile is gives more reliable estimates of visual heading

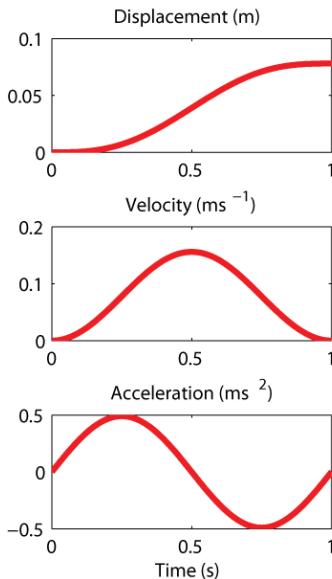
# Predictions for the discrepant condition

## Objective

To investigate the combination of visual and vestibular information under different visual motion profile conditions

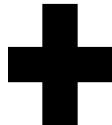
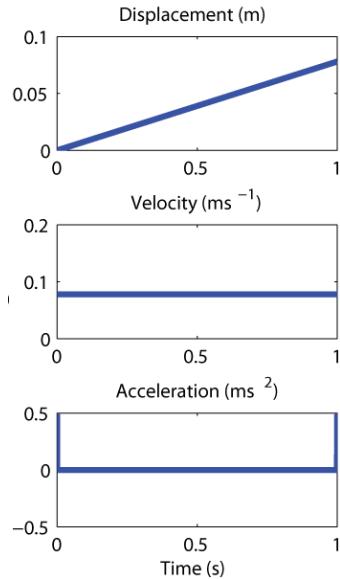
### Vestibular

Raised Cosine



### Visual

Constant



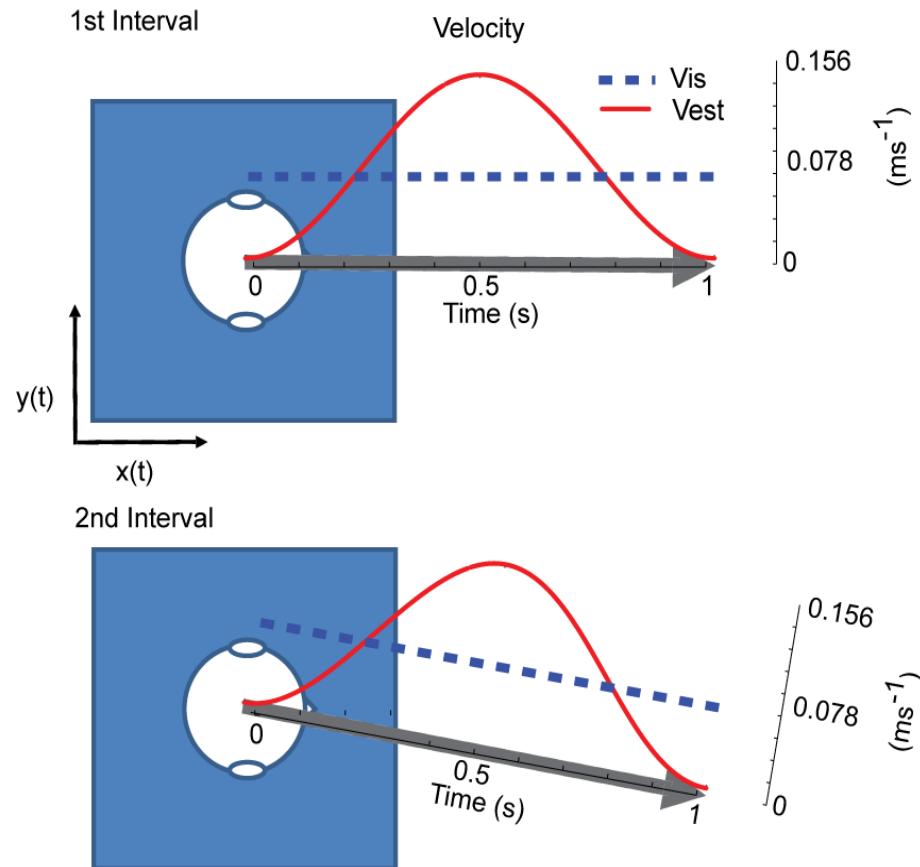
### PREDICTION 1

The visual and vestibular information do not combine in an optimal fashion

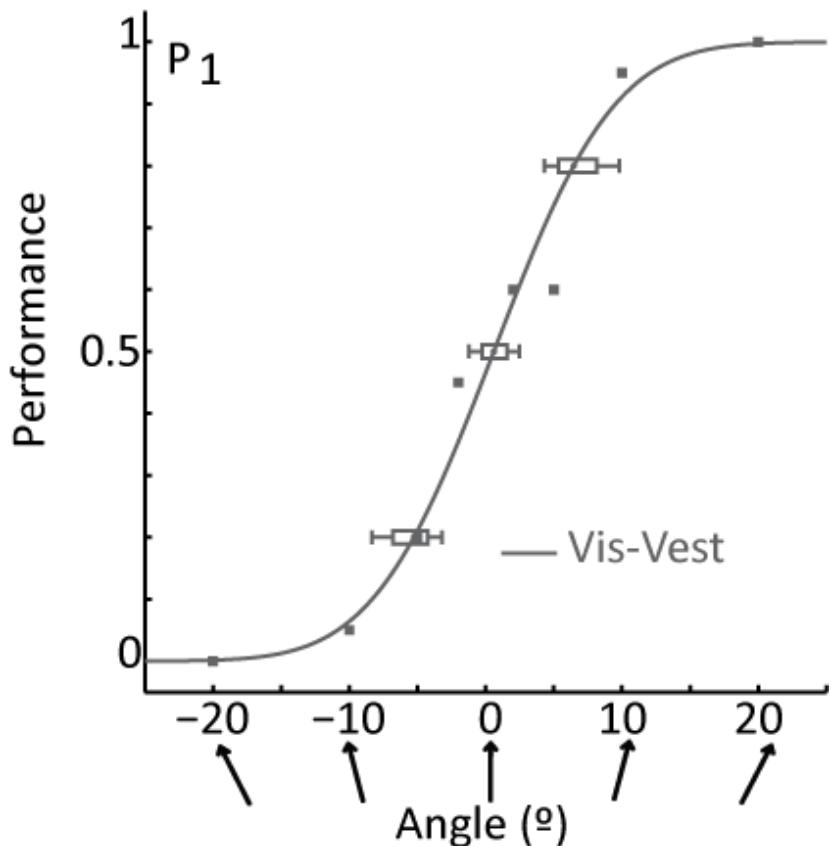
### PREDICTION 2

Combination of senses is not dependent on the motion profile

# Effect of visual motion profile on heading discrimination



# Combination of Senses



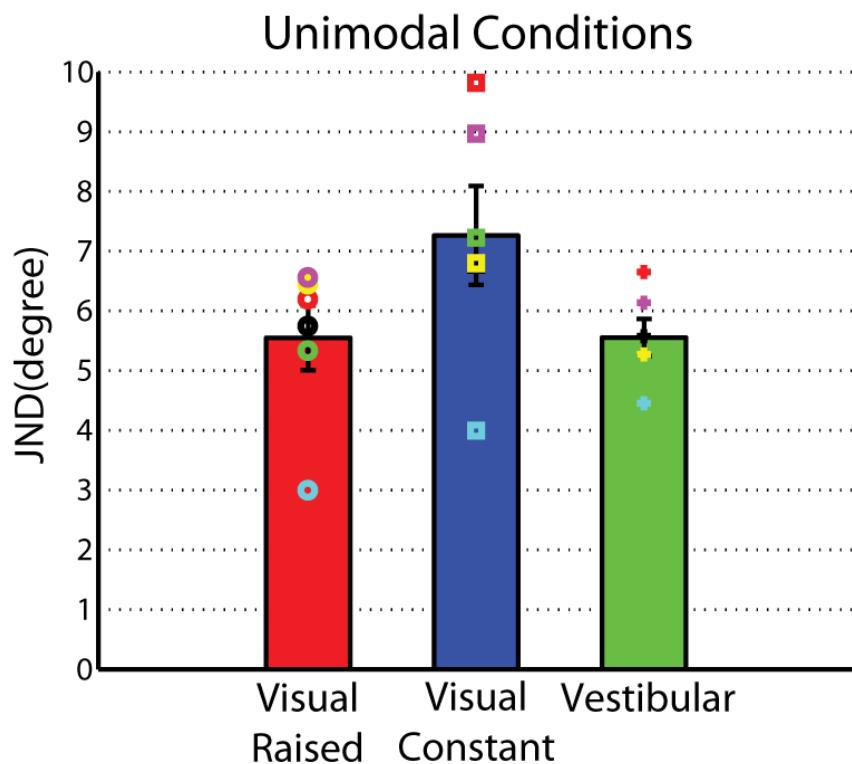
Predicted

$$JND_{Vis-Vest} \leq \min(JND_{Vis}, JND_{Vest})$$

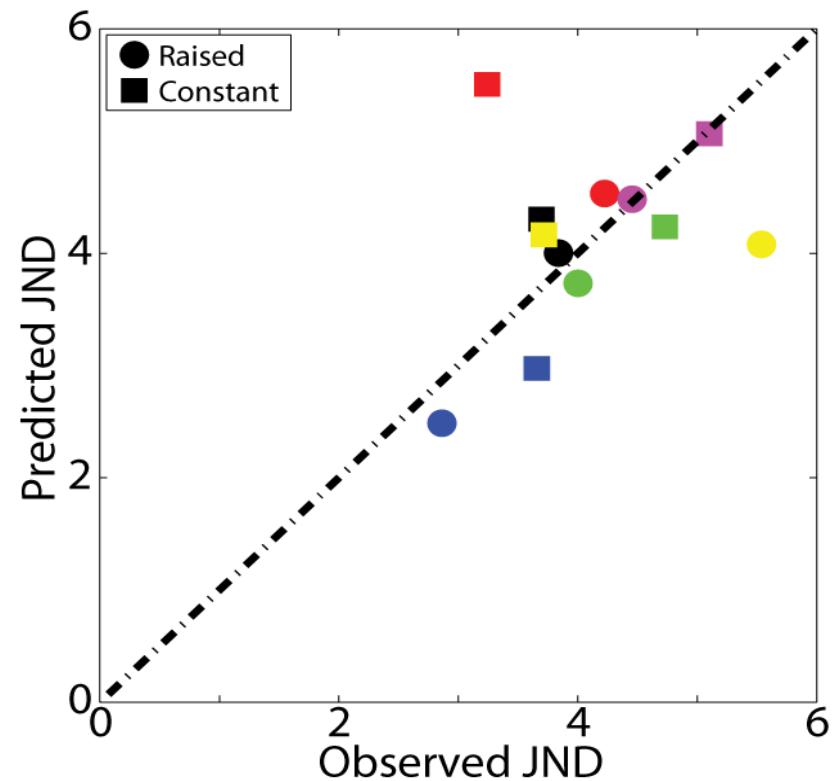
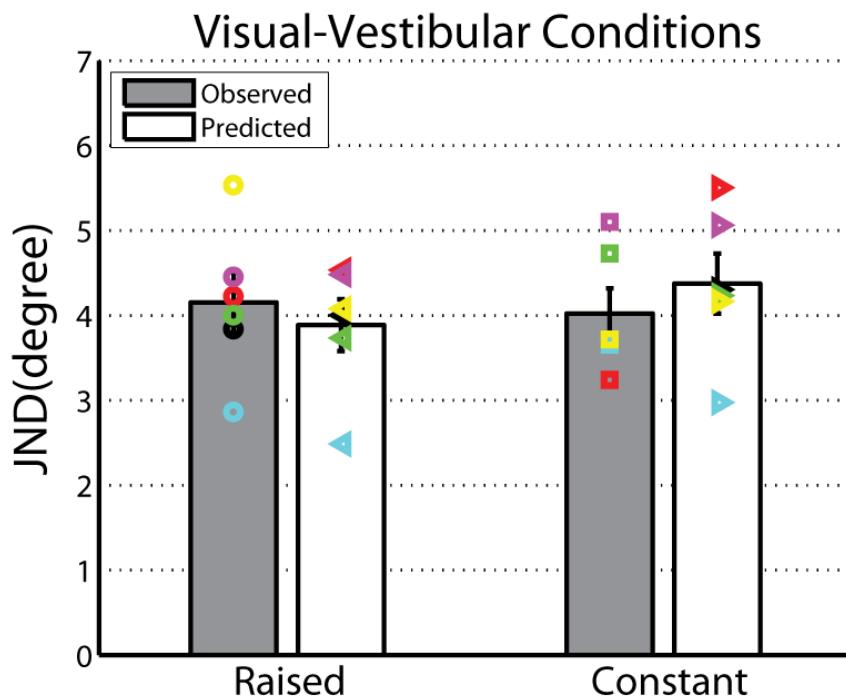
$$JND_{Vis-Vest} = \sqrt{\frac{JND_{Vis}^2 JND_{Vest}^2}{JND_{Vis}^2 + JND_{Vest}^2}}$$



# Unimodal results



# Multisensory Results



# Conclusion

- Visual motion is not just a snap shot but an accumulation of information
  - The more natural profile yielded the more accurate heading discrimination
- Visual and Vestibular cues combine in an optimal fashion even when there is an information conflict

# Visual-Vestibular Integration for Heading

