Stroke

Oral communications

CO01-001-e
Positive effects of tDCS cortical stimulation on the walking performance of chronic hemiplegic patients

E. Ojardias *, O. Aze, D. Luneau, J. Mednieks (Dr), A. Condemine (Dr), P. Giraux (Prof)
Service de MPR adulte, hôtel Bellevue, CHU de Saint-Étienne, Saint-Étienne, France
*Corresponding author.
E-mail address: ojardiasetienne@hotmail.fr (E. Ojardias)

Objective To evaluate the effect of a single session of stimulation of the primary motor cortex (M1) with tDCS versus placebo (SHAM) on the walking performance of hemiplegic patients at a chronic stage.

Patients and methods Randomized, cross-over, double-blind study. Eighteen patients (6 women, 12 men, mean age: 60 years) were included. They suffered an initially complete hemiplegia due to a single stroke older than 6 months (min: 14 months, max: 11 years). Each patient participated in a single anodal stimulation session (2 mA, 20 minutes) of the area of the lower limb ipsilesional M1 (STIM condition) and a pseudo-stimulation session (SHAM condition). The order of the two sessions was randomly assigned, with an 11-day interval between the two sessions. The anode electrode was positioned on the hotspot previously identified with TMS. The cathode was placed above the contralateral orbit. The walking performances were evaluated with the Wade Test and the 6-Minute Walking Test (6MWT). These tests were performed during the stimulation and after 1 h, and 2 days before and 10 days after each session.

Results The Wade Test and 6MWT showed a linear progression from the first pre-stimulation evaluation until the last evaluation (Wade average + 20% + 21% average 6MWT). To overcome this progression, comparisons were based on the linearly corrected data of each patient. The comparison between the 6MWT under STIM versus SHAM conditions demonstrated a significant positive effect of the stimulation by 11% during stimulation (Wilcoxon matched pairs, P < 0.019) and 6% 1 hour after stimulation (Wilcoxon matched pairs, P = 0.025). There is no significant difference regarding the Wade Test.

Discussion These results show a significant positive effect of a single session of anodal tDCS of the M1 ipsilesional area of the lower limb in chronic hemiplegic patients. This improvement affects the endurance (6MWT) but not the walking speed (Wade Test). This proof of principle study supports a follow-up study assessing the training of walking under iterative tDCS stimulation.

CO01-002-e
Ipsilateral M1 transcranial direct current stimulation increases excitability of the contralateral M1 during an active motor task: Implications for stroke rehabilitation

W.P. Teo (Dr) a, M. Muthalib (Dr) b, *, D. Kidgell (Dr) c, A. Frazer a, A. Hendy (Dr) d, A. Goodwill e, S. Perrey (Prof) f
a Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia
b University of Montpellier, Montpellier, France
c La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia
*Corresponding author.
E-mail address: makii.muthalib@univmontp1.fr (M. Muthalib)

Introduction Anodal transcranial direct current stimulation (a-tDCS) of the primary motor cortex (M1) elicits an increase in cortical excitability that outlasts the period of stimulation. However, little is known about effects of a-tDCS on the contralateral M1 during and after ipsilateral M1 stimulation. Therefore, we investigated the changes in corticospinal excitability and inhibition of the left M1 during and after 20 min of a-tDCS to the right M1.

Material and methods Eight healthy participants received real (2 mA) and SHAM a-tDCS to the right M1 randomized across 2 testing sessions. Single- and paired-pulse transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) was applied to the left M1 to measure changes motor-evoked potential (MEP) amplitude from the right extensor carpi radialis (ECR) at 130% of resting and active motor threshold, cortical silent period (CSP) and short-interval cortical inhibition (SICI). Active motor threshold was measured during a wrist extension contraction that was less than 5% of maximal electromyographic activation of the ECR. TMS measurements were recorded at baseline, every 5 min for 20 min during and 10 min after a-tDCS.

Results The results showed a significant (P < 0.05) increase in left M1 MEP amplitude and reduction in CSP duration during (10 and 15 min) and after (immediately and 10 min post) a-tDCS to the right M1, only during the active motor task. A significant reduction (P < 0.05) in SICI during the active task was also found immediately and 10 min post a-tDCS. No significant changes in MEP amplitude, CSP and SICI were observed in the resting or active task during SHAM tDCS.
Discussion The increase in left M1 MEP amplitude and reduction in CSP and SICI during and after 20 min of right M1 a-tDCS is most likely to be attributed to a reduction in interhemispheric inhibition that is modulated by a-tDCS during the performance of an active task. Our findings may have significant implications for stroke rehabilitation whereby the application of a-tDCS on the contralesional M1 during neurorehabilitation of the paretic limb may be beneficial for inducing neuroplasticity of the ipsilesional M1 to improve motor function.

Keywords Transcranial direct current stimulation; Primary motor cortex; Excitability; Transcranial magnetic stimulation; Stroke

Disclosure of interest The authors have not supplied their declaration of conflict of interest.

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**Study of motor and electrophysiological effects induced by the association of motor imagery exercises and Paired Associative Stimulation in 6 hemiplegic patients**

N. Brihat², M. Tarri², X. De Boissezon (Prof)³, P. Marque (Prof)°, I. Loubinoux², E. Castel-Lacanal (Dr)°,*

*Inserm U 825, Toulouse, France

°Service de MPR, CHU Rangueil, Toulouse, France

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: c_evelyne@yahoo.com (Castel-acanal)

**Objectives** Motor imagery (MI) is a cognitive process of imagining a movement without actually doing it. This technique has demonstrated its benefits in the rehabilitation of hemiplegic patients. Non-invasive brain stimulation (NIBS) is still at a preclinical stage but has demonstrated their adjunct effect in the learning of a motor task. In this study, we studied the motor and electrophysiological effects of a session combining Paired Associative Stimulation (PAS), a technique of NIBS and MI exercises (PAS-MI).

**Methods** A prospective, randomized cross-over study where six patients were included (4 men, age = 44.5 ± 13.7 years; 5.7 ± 7.7 months post-stroke). They randomly underwent three 15-minute sessions of stimulation, one week apart: PAS-MI, PAS alone and ShamPAS associated with MI exercises (ShamPAS-MI). The PAS intervention consisted in an electrical stimulation of the hemiplegic extensor carpi radialis (ECR) associated with cortical magnetic stimulation over the wrist motor area. In MI condition, the patient was instructed to imagine extension of his hemiplegic wrist and in ShamPAS we applied a ShamPAS probe. We compared the surface variation of the motor-evoked potential (MEP) of the ECR and the amplitude of active extension (AE) of the hemiplegic side obtained after each session.

**Results** Twenty-five minutes after the end of session PAS alone, an increase of MEP surface (+91% ± 150.3%) which reveals a higher cortical excitability associated with a slight motor improvement (AEM = 1.33 ± 3.14) was shown. A smaller facilitation was shown after sessions PAS-MI and ShamPAS-MI (+45.87 ± 134.32% and 44.85 ± 28.77%, respectively) and, in these cases, was not associated with motor improvement.

**Conclusion** The session PAS alone seems to induce motor improvement associated with increased cortical excitability not shown after the other two sessions. The combination of two types of stimuli seems to have less effect, perhaps because of the mechanisms regulating the homeostasis of brain plasticity. The results have to be confirmed on a larger sample.

**Keywords** Stroke; Transcranial magnetic stimulation; Cerebral plasticity

Disclosure of interest The authors have not supplied their declaration of conflict of interest.

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**Submental sensitive transcutaneous electrical stimulation reverses virtual lesion of the oropharyngeal cortex**

E. Cugy (Dr)°,* A.M. Leroi (Prof)°, J. Kerouac-Laplante (Dr)°, P. Dehail (Prof), P.A. Joseph (Prof)°, E. Gerardin (Prof)°, J.P. Marie (Prof)°, E. Verin (Prof)°

° Centre hospitalier Arcachon, La Teste-De-Buch, France

CHU de Rouen, Rouen, France

CHU de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: emmanuelle.cugy@chuordeaux.fr (E. Cugy)