Behavioral induction of a high beta state leads to movement slowing

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AIM and MOTIVATION

To probe the functional role of sensorimotor beta oscillations using a novel behavioral paradigm. **Beta rhythm** (~13 to 30 Hz) is a prominent electrophysiological observation over sensorimotor regions.

Better understanding the functional significance of this beta rhythm is important for both healthy functioning and disease states.

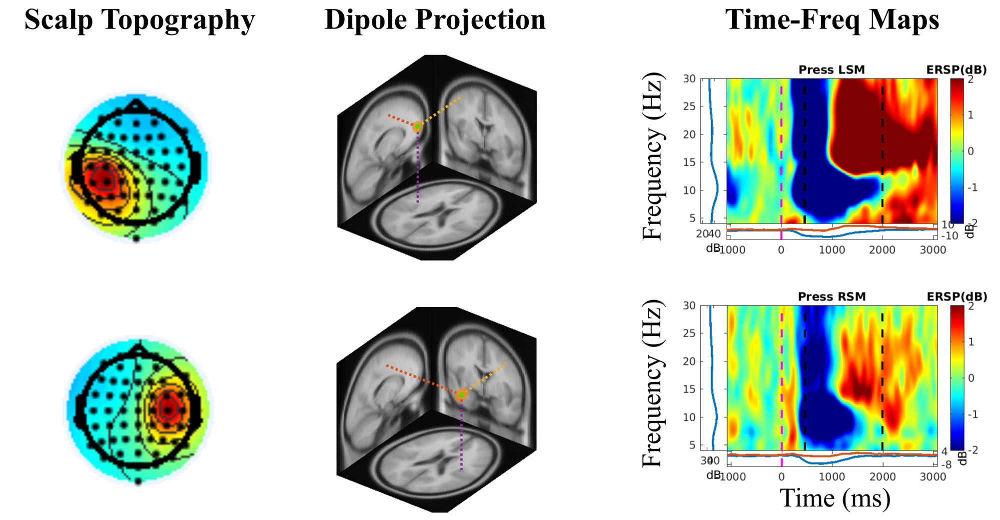
- Sorting the multiple theories of the functional significance of sensorimotor beta, requires a need protocols in humans that manipulate/induce beta oscillations and test their putative effects on concurrent behavior.
- Straightforward behavioral route to achieve this goal.

INTRODUCTION

- We developed a **novel behavioral paradigm** where a participant made a primary movement, leading to a strong beta state (**post-movement beta rebound, PMBR**) in the contralateral sensorimotor cortex.
- Within the time-frame of that state we required a **rapid secondary movement**.
- Rationale for using **PMBR**
  - Robust increase in beta power
  - Lateralization of the rebound
  - Test the idea that PMBR could be functionally suppressive, as there is evidence that corticospinal excitability is reduced[1] during this period and positive relationship to the GABA levels in sensorimotor regions[2].

TASK DESIGN AND METHODS

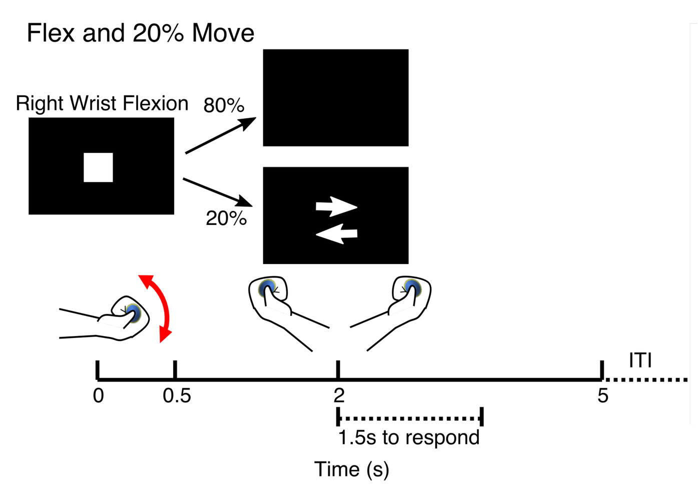
- We conducted two Experiments (1 and 2), where 64 channel EEG data were collected.
- Participants were given an primary cue to move the right arm followed by a subsequent movement of the right or the left side in a subset of trials (20%).
- Expt 1: Primary Movt – right-hand wrist Flexion, secondary movement – right/left thumb press. Recorded thumb press RTs and EMG for wrist and thumb flexors.
- Expt 2: Primary Movt – right-hand index finger button press, secondary movement – right/left center-out movement.Recorded RTs for primary button press and continuous joystick displacement for the secondary movements.
- EEG data was preprocessed, band-passed 2-55Hz, noisy channels were removed and other sources of noise were subtracted (including eye-blinks and muscle noise) using ASR, and noisy strectches were removed.
- To look at sensorimotor beta, we performed ICA to extract a left sensorimotor (LSM) and a right sensorimotor (RSM) IC for each subject.



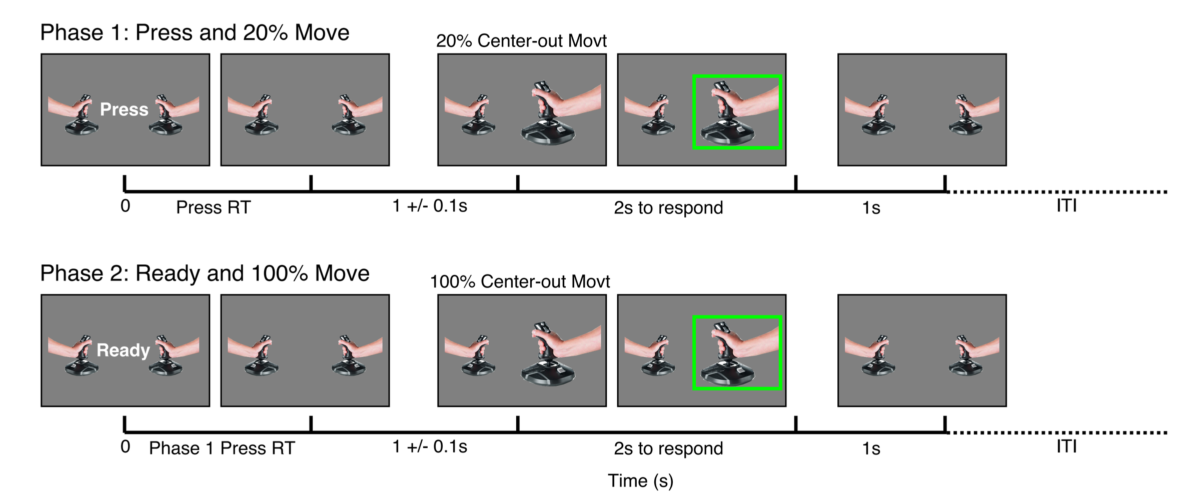
EXPERIMENT SETUP AND RESULTS

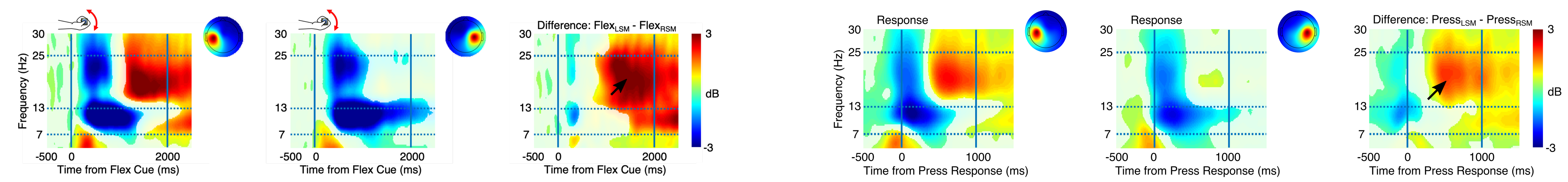
Task Setup and stronger contralateral beta rebound (LSM > RSM)

Experiment 1



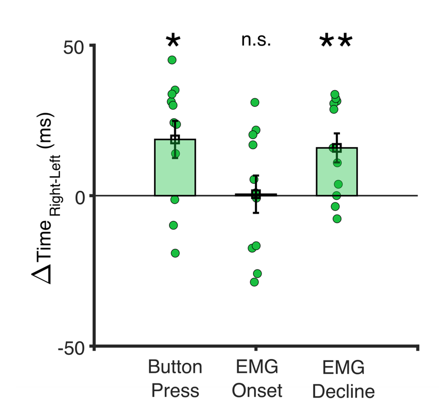
Experiment 2



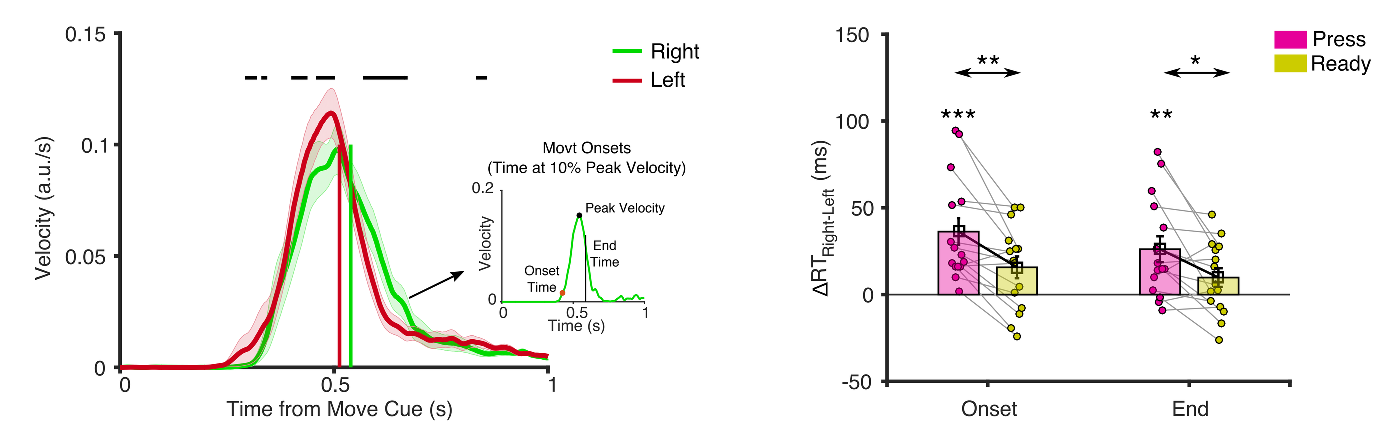


Stronger left-SM beta leads to slower subsequent secondary movement

Experiment 1: Thumb RTs and EMG

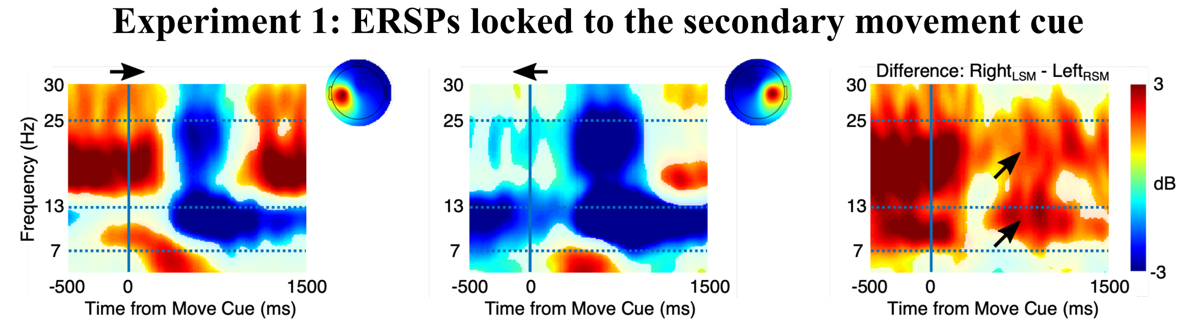


Experiment 2: Velocity profiles and movement times for the center-out movements

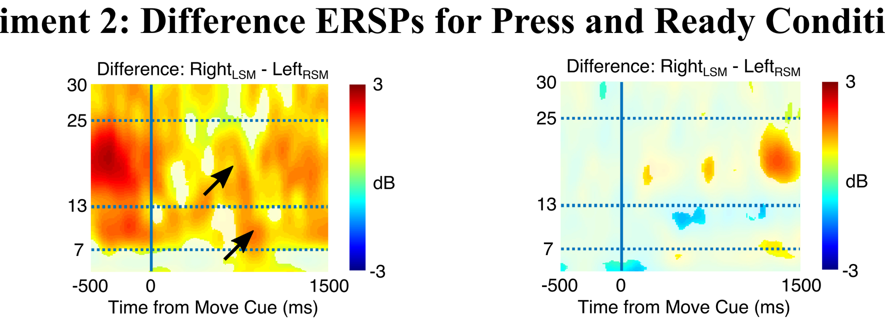


Beta rebound influences the neural signature of the secondary movement (mu/beta desync)

Experiment 1: ERSPs locked to the secondary movement cue

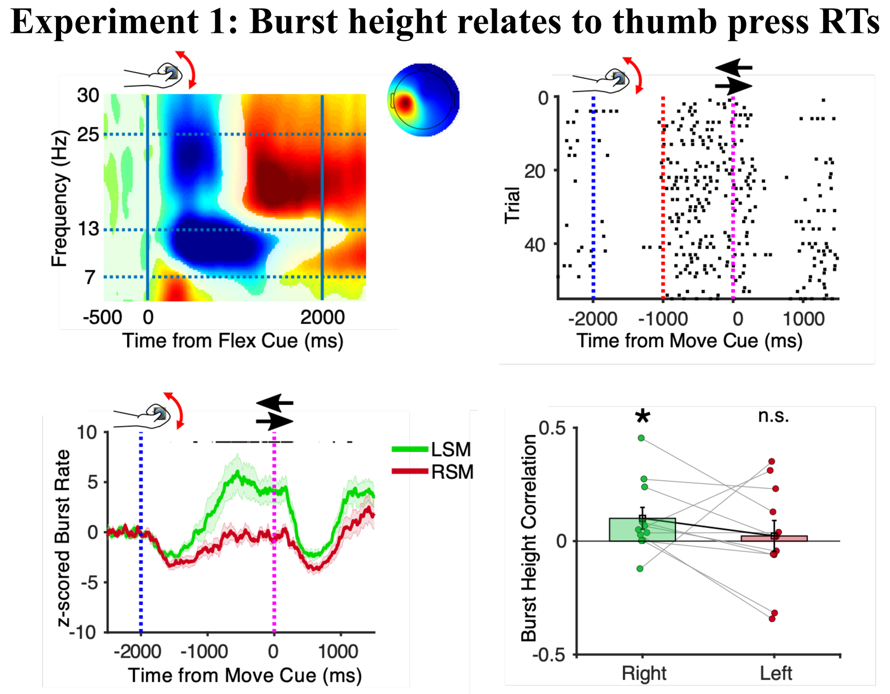


Experiment 2: Difference ERSPs for Press and Ready Condition

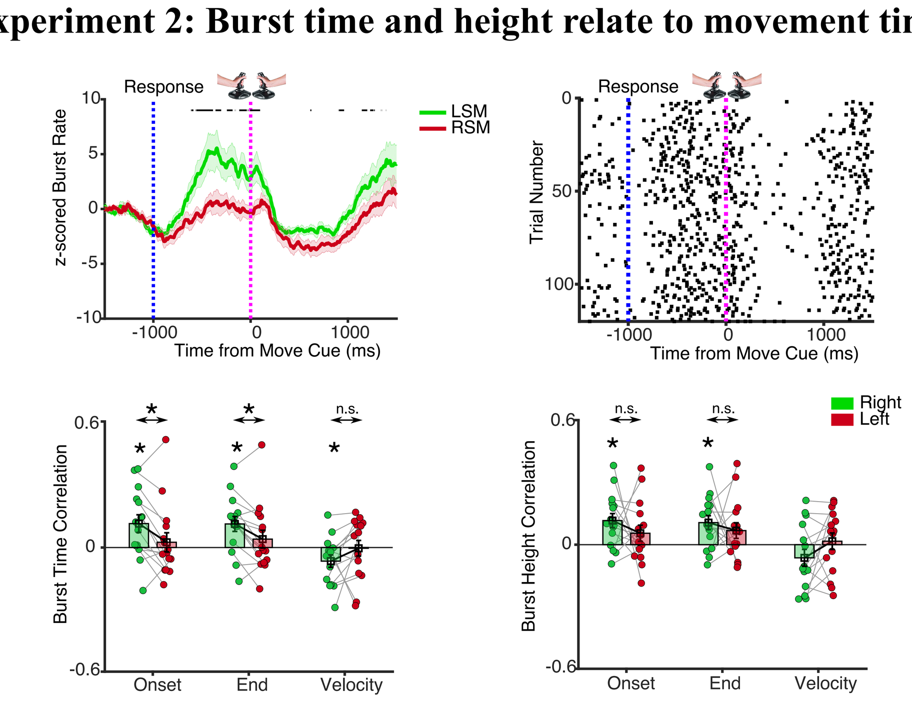


Timing and the amplitude of LSM beta bursts in the rebound period relate to the slowing

Experiment 1: Burst height relates to thumb press RTs



Experiment 2: Burst time and height relate to movement times



MAIN FINDINGS

- **PMBR slows down subsequent movement:** In both experiments we saw that the strong beta rebound over the left-SM cortex slowed down subsequent right side movement compared to the left.
- **PMBR state influences neural processing**: There was lower mu-beta desynchronization in the hemisphere preceded by a strong beta rebound, the LSM compared to the RSM.
- **Transient beta bursts related to the degree of slowing**: The timing and the the amplitude of the beta bursts just before the secondary movement cue related to the degree of movement slowing and were specific to the effector that was slowed.

DISCUSSION

- **Proactive instantiation of a retardive state**: Our study is novel because it provides an instruction to participant to voluntarily induce/create a high beta state.
- **Clinical Applications:** There are ways in which PMBR could be modulated, for e.g. the amount of force[3], briskness of movement[4]. So there might be ways to train people to better and more strongly achieve a retardive state.
- **Theoretical Implications**: Our findings seems to suggests that beta in part could be a functional "suppressive state". This fit the existing ideas of beta where it signals "status quo"[5], maintaining the current action plan, or possibly an active inhibition of the motor network[6], thus leading to slowing down or delaying responses during this period.
- **Limitations:** Study could have been more balanced with another condition (press left). Fatigue could still have played a role although we were able to minimize its effect in Experiment 2. We don't know how our results extend to other forms of sensorimotor beta (pre-movement beta).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- **Apply ideas to domains other than movement**: If PMBR indeed represents a functional suppressive state, then we could embed in there cues which test its role in sensory perception. Studies have shown increased endogenous sensorimotor beta bursts affect sensory processing[7].
- **Neurofeedback:** There could ways of achieving a strong beta state through neurofeedback. Beta rebound is also seen after imagined movements, so there might be ways to get a state which is most effective.

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