

Journal of Neurotherapy: Investigations in Neuromodulation, Neurofeedback and Applied Neuroscience

Abstract

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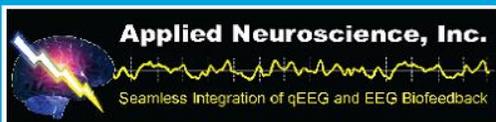
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Malingering and Sustained Attention

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Malingering is, “The deliberate exaggeration of psychological and/or physical complaints for purposes of tangible gain (monetary rewards, etc.)” It is a difficult problem in health care. Head injuries frequently cause problems in attention and memory. Tests of attention capacity require the subject to make reasonable effort. This makes them easier to fake than most medical evaluations. The purpose of the experiment was to determine if behavioral observations or a mathematical decision rule could identify malingering on a test of sustained auditory and visual vigilance. The hypothesis was that subjects attempting to mangle would respond in a way that was clearly different than when they were instructed to try their best.

Thirteen adult volunteers took a computer-administered test of attention on two separate occasions. On the first testing half the subjects, chosen at random, were told to do their best. The other subjects were instructed to fake an attention problem as cleverly as they could. On the second round, each subject was given the instruction he/she had not received in the first trial. Behavioral observation identified persons attempting to mangle 31% of the time. Analysis of test scores showed five variables of attention to change greatly under the malingering condition. When these were added together for each subject, the summary score separated the malingering subjects from those told to try hard with 100% accuracy, on both testing trials. On cross-validation, a modified decision rule classified all brain injured and Attention Deficit Disorder subjects as making satisfactory effort.

Can Audio Visual Entrainment Enhance Neurofeedback Training?

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The issues surrounding this question are complex and full of unexpected caveats. In using these two technologies in our office we have found intriguing patterns emerging. Clients report qualitative differences between the two technologies. At times AVE appears to enhance performance and at other times to impede it. Results seem to vary predictably based on baseline profiles, but unusual exceptions consistently occur. In addition, the effect of AVE also appears to vary over the