

Neurobiology of OCD & Novel Treatment options

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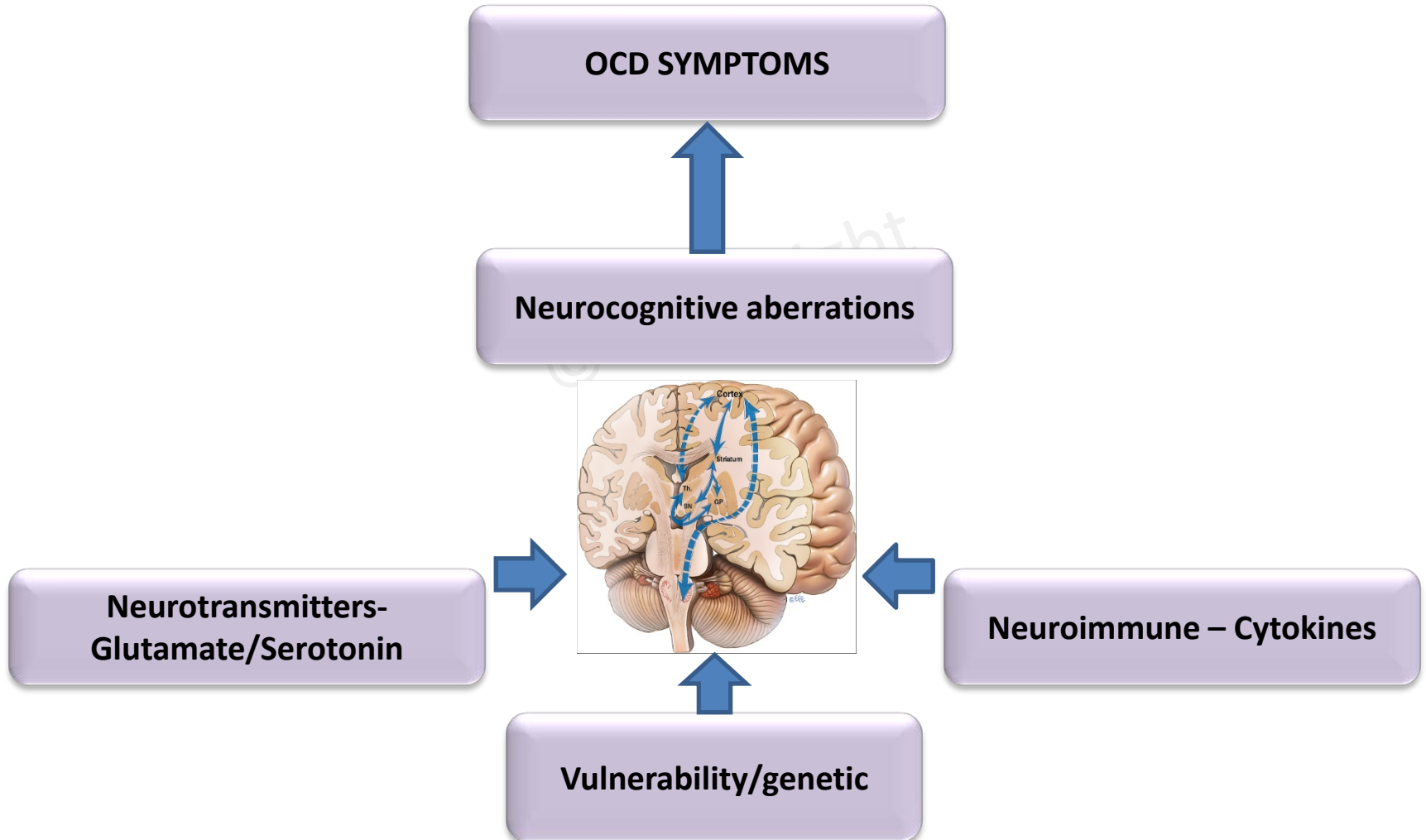
Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry

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Bangalore

Outline

- Snapshots on Etiology and Pathophysiology
- Cognitive deficits of OCD
- Circuitry Models and Compulsivity
- OCD and the role of anxiety
- Cortical-Subcortical interaction studies
- Neuromodulation: working on the interacting brain networks

NEUROBIOLOGY OF OCD



Neurocognitive deficits might form a basis and a template for symptoms

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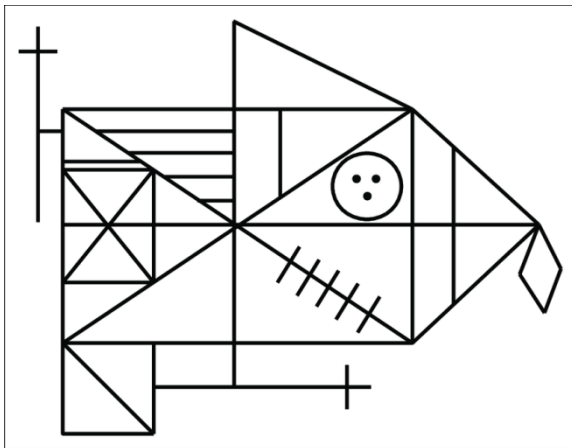
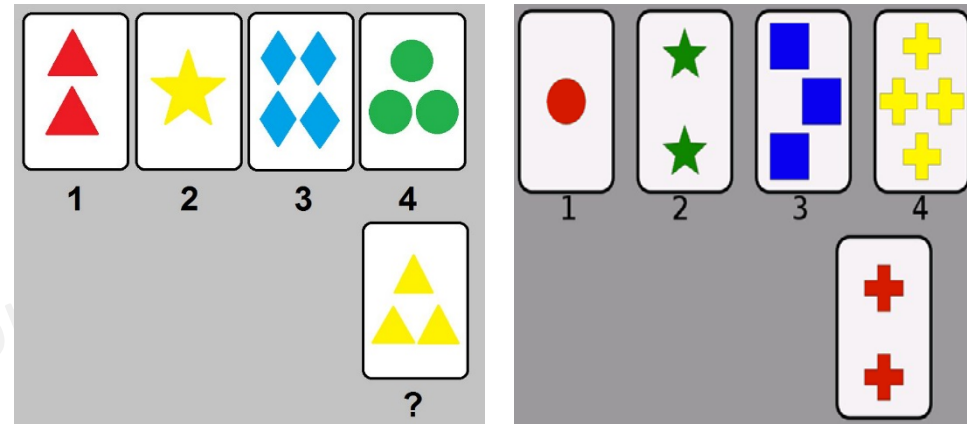
SALIENT NEUROCOGNITIVE DEFICITS IN OCD

- Stroop task

Say the COLOR, not the word:

PURPLE	ORANGE	BLUE
BLUE	RED	PURPLE
BLACK	GREEN	YELLOW
GREEN	BLUE	RED
ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN

- Wisconsin Card Sorting Test



Complex figure test

SALIENT NEUROCOGNITIVE DEFICITS IN OCD

- Overactive conflict and error detection (cause of obsessions)
 - Stroop task
- Response inhibition/Motor output suppression
 - Go/No-Go, Stop Signal Reaction Time (SSRT) (involves motor suppression in addition to conflict monitoring)
- Set shifting (cognitive inflexibility)
 - attentional switching (WCST, CANTAB ID/ED)
 - affective switching
- Decision making
 - Risk & Uncertainty (IGT)
- Non-verbal memory
 - RCFT
 - Intact copying, poor recall because of executive failure of organizational strategies during encoding

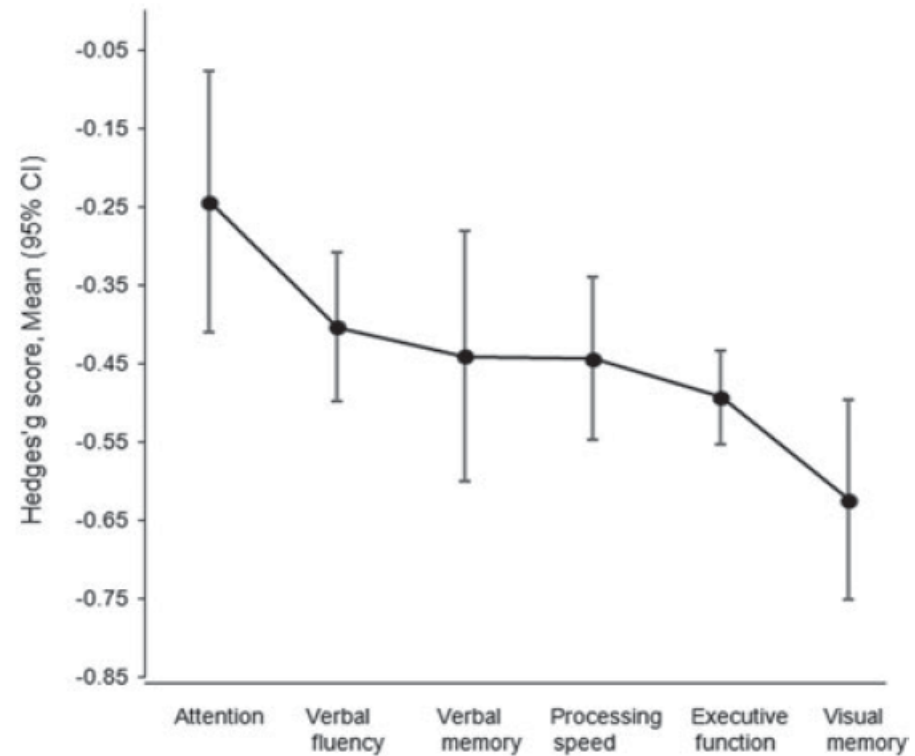
Kuelz , 2004; Nakao 2014

Neuropsychological Deficits in OCD

Meta-analysis – Mean effect sizes (Cohen's d)

- **Non verbal memory** -0.76
- **Response inhibition** -0.49
- **Set shifting** -0.51

Abramovitch et al. 2013



Shin et al. Psychological Medicine 2014

Error Monitoring - Electrophysiology



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Psychiatry Research

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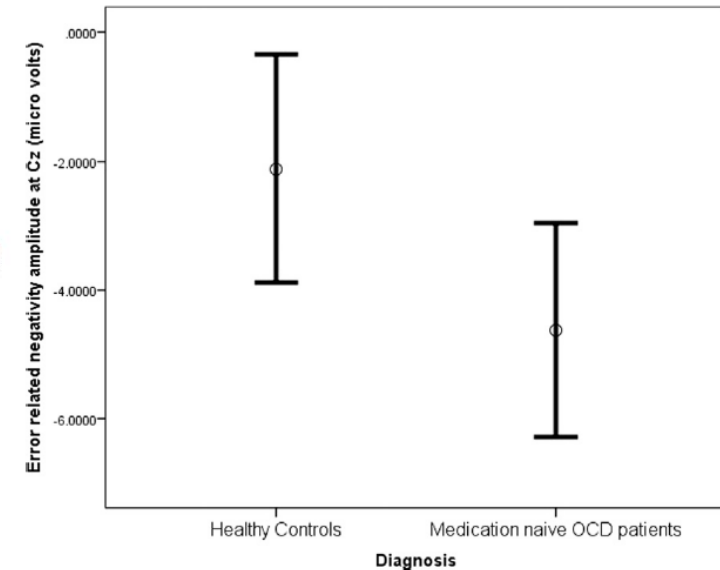
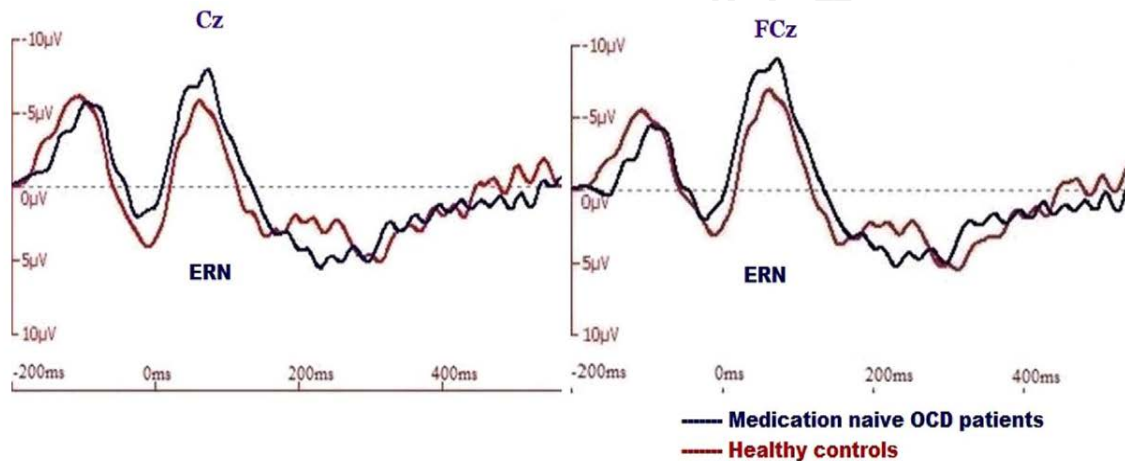


Enhanced error related negativity amplitude in medication-naïve, comorbidity-free obsessive compulsive disorder

Hema Nawani^b, Janardhanan.C. Narayanaswamy^{a,b,*}, Shrinivasa Basavaraju^{a,b}, Anushree Bose^b, Sri Mahavir Agarwal^b, Ganesan Venkatasubramanian^{a,b}, Y.C. Janardhan Reddy^a

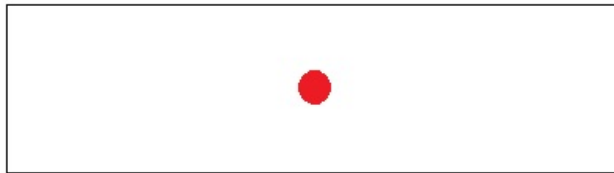
^a Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Clinic, Department of Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health And Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, India

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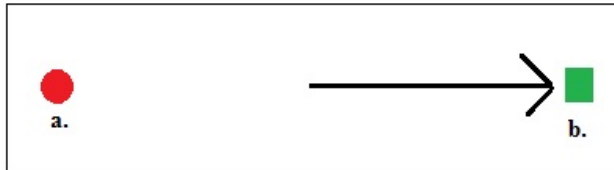


Error monitoring and oculomotor functions

1. Target in the centre of the screen. Eye is looking at target.



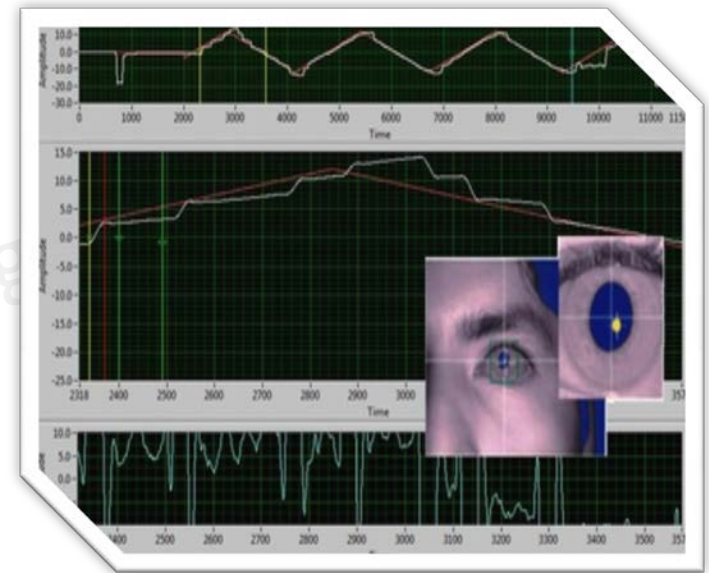
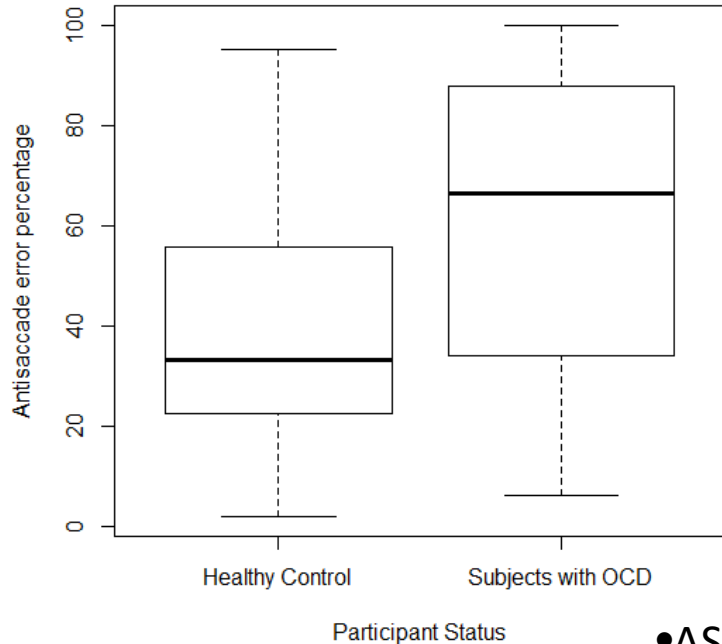
2. Target moves from centre to one side of the screen. Eye should move an equal distance from the centre to the opposite side (mirror image location - direction of arrow).



a - position of the target on the screen
b - correct eye position during an antisaccade



Error monitoring and oculomotor functions



- AS error describes an oculomotor paradigm designed to evaluate the inhibitory capacity of the brain.
- Subjects with OCD made greater number of antisaccade errors which could reflect the fronto-striatal abnormality seen in this condition.
(Narayanaswamy JC, under review)

Neurobiological Models to understand OCD



OCD as a compulsive (impulsive) disorder

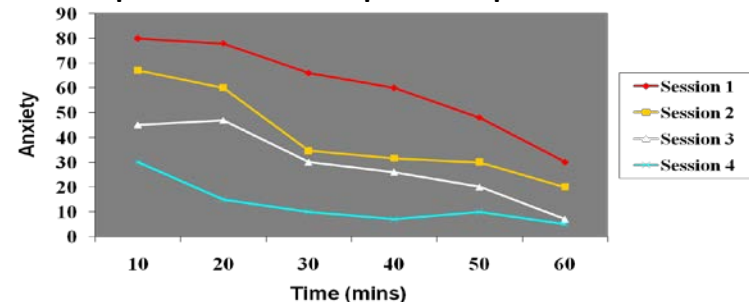
- repetitive behaviour
- impaired response inhibition
- impaired cognitive 'top-down' control
- **Decreased function of frontal-striatal circuits**



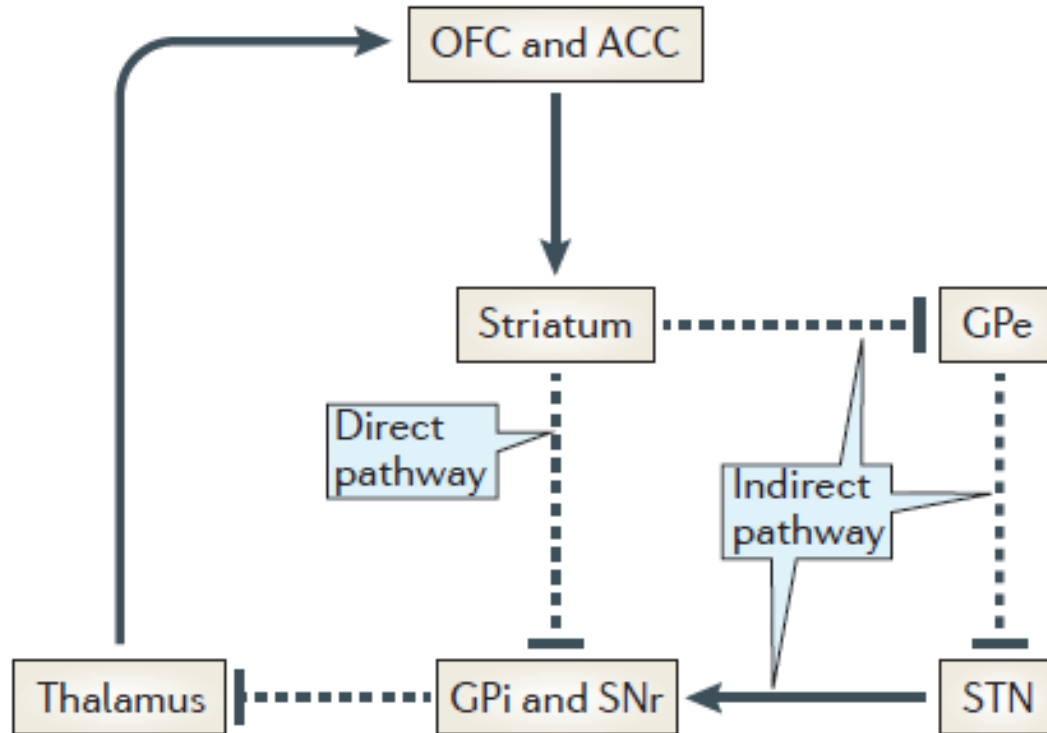
OCD as an anxiety disorder

- harm avoidance / doubt / uncertainty
- anxiety / stress
- **Hyper-responsive limbic circuit**

Exposure & response prevention



Cortico-Striatal circuitry



Pauls et al, Nature Neuroscience Reviews, 2014

Affective and reward processing

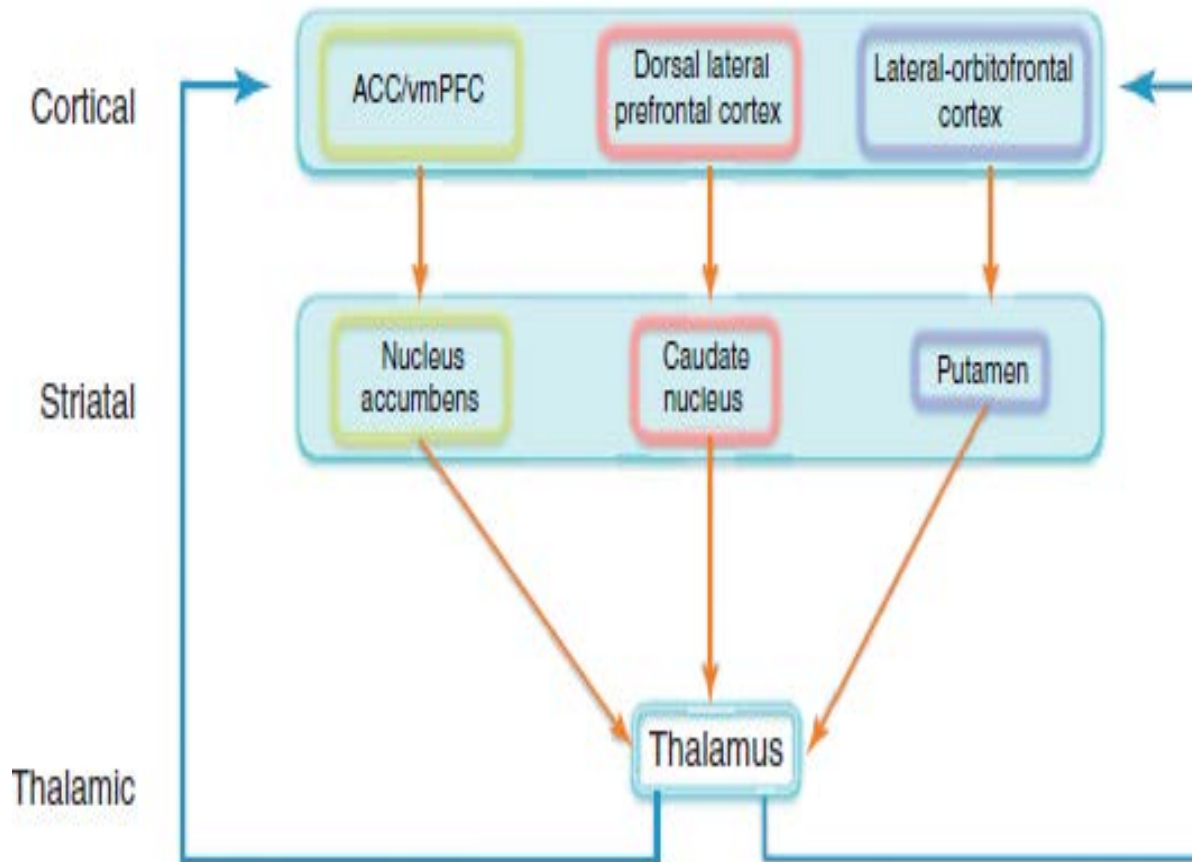
Executive functions-
working memory/planning

Motor preparation
and response inhibition

Affective

Dorsal cognitive

Ventral cognitive



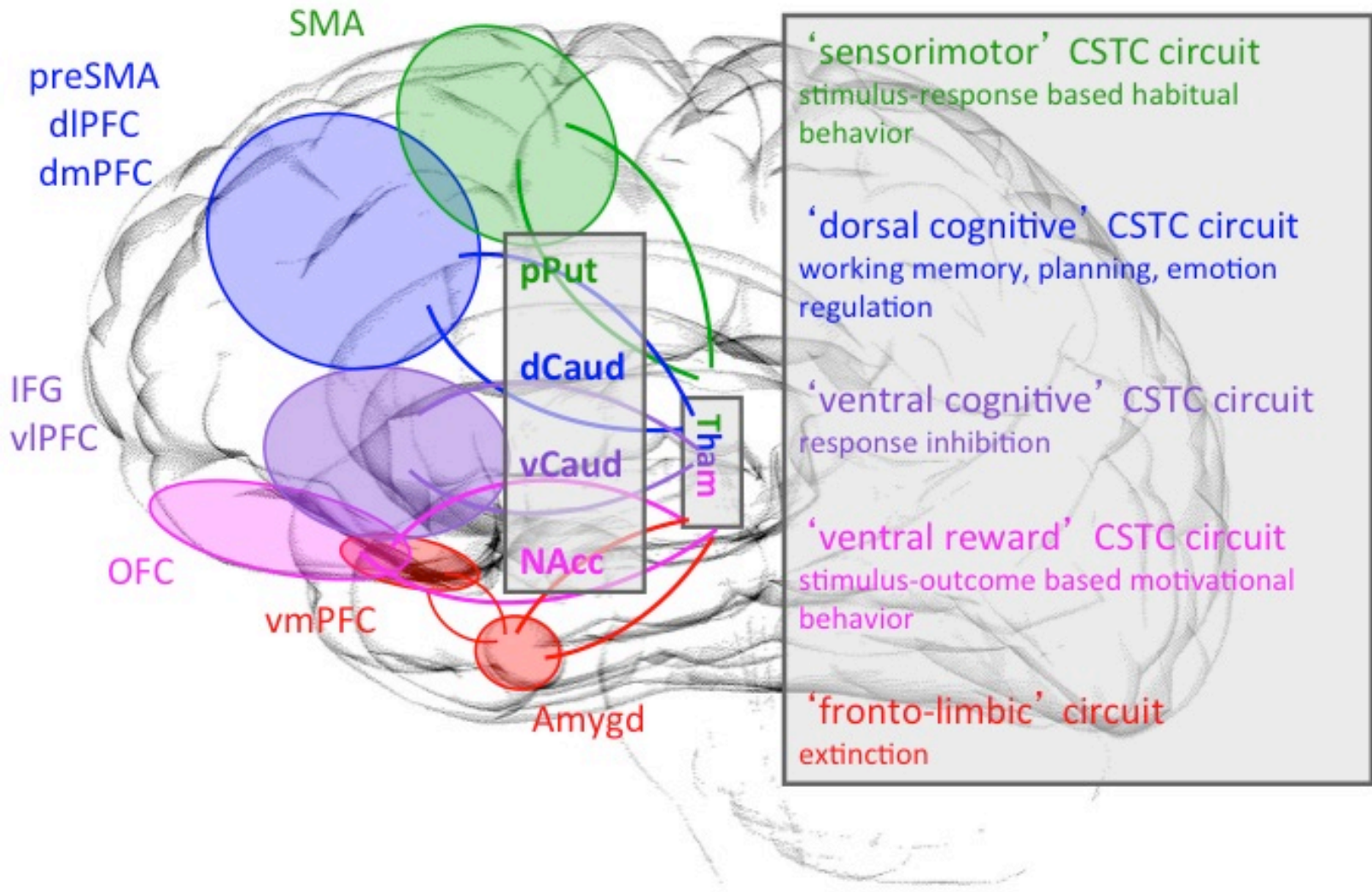
Milad and Rauch, 2012;
Menzies, 2008

Partially segregated circuits

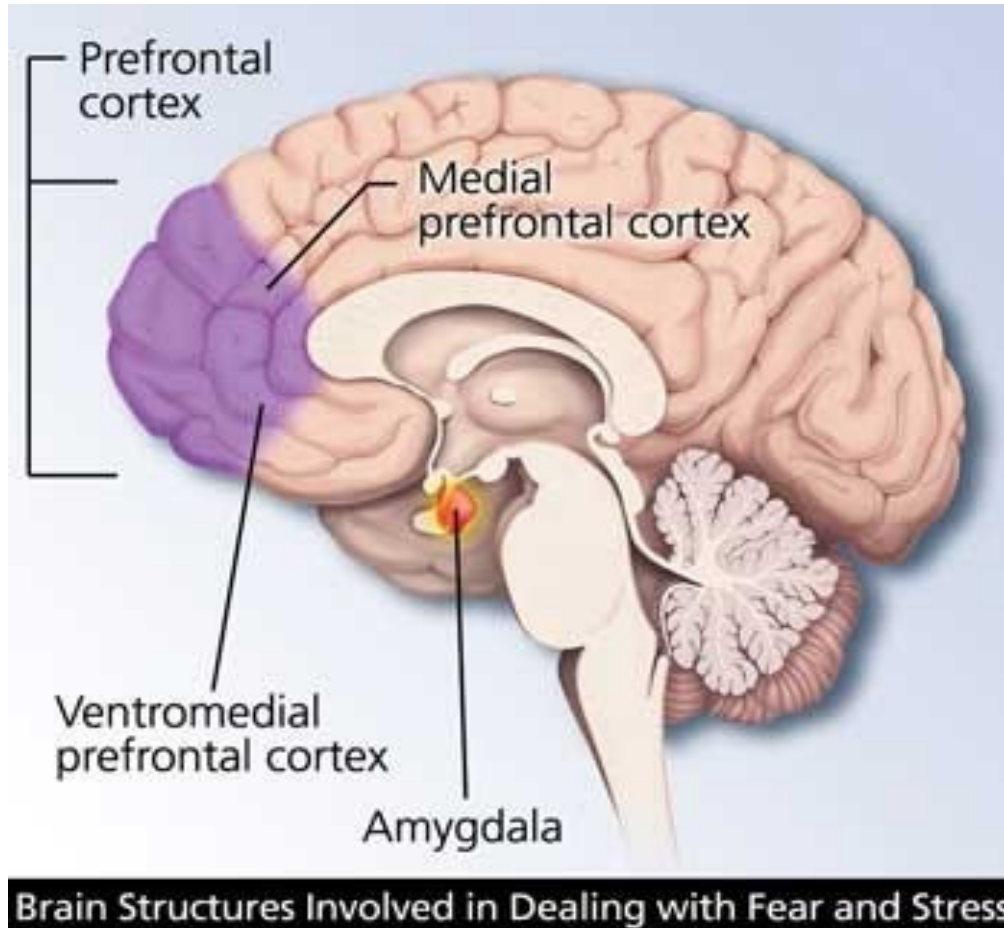
- **Hyperactive ventral – emotional/motivational circuit** - increased anxiety and repetitive behaviors
- **Hypoactive dorsal executive circuit** -cognitive control deficits and inability to modulate emotional and behavioral responses

(Phillips et al., 2003; Mataix Cols & van den Heuvel, 2006)

OCD : CSTC CIRCUITS



Anxiety in OCD



DISEASE SPECIFIC STIMULI

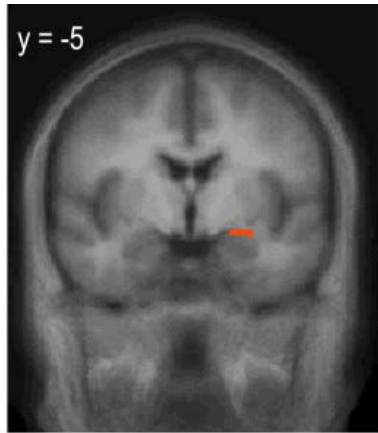
OCD



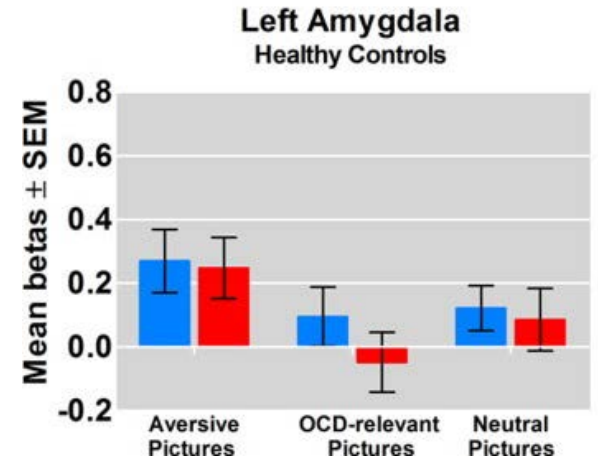
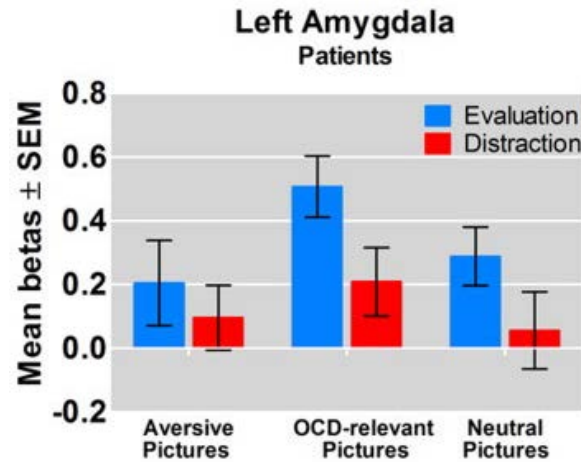
PHOBIA



OCD – SYMPTOM PROVOCATION

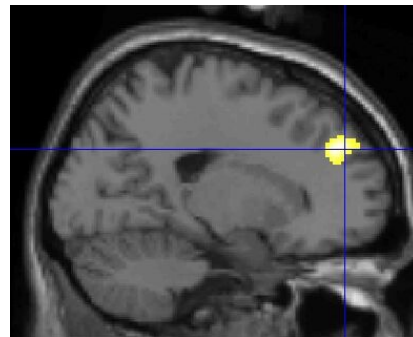
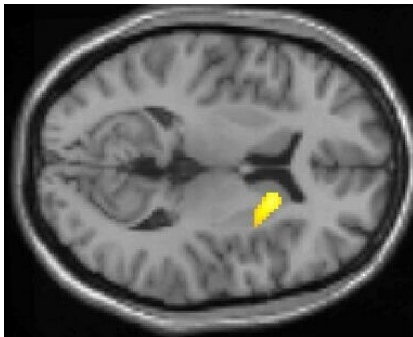


Left Amygdala



[Simon et al, Neuroimage Clin. 2014](#)

controls > OCD: activation dorsal system



OCD > controls :
activation limbic system

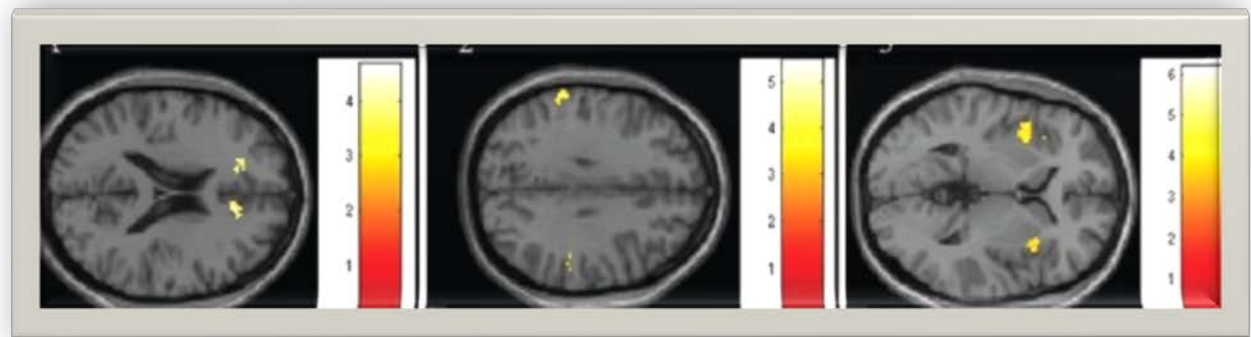
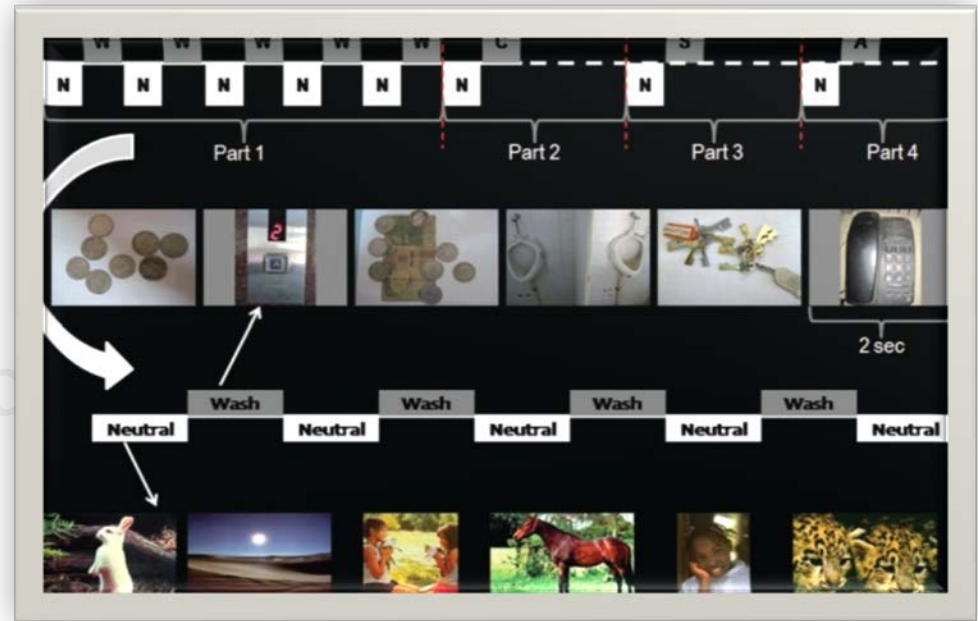


[van den Heuvel et al., 2004 Psych Res](#)

OCD- Symptom Provocation fMRI -Washers

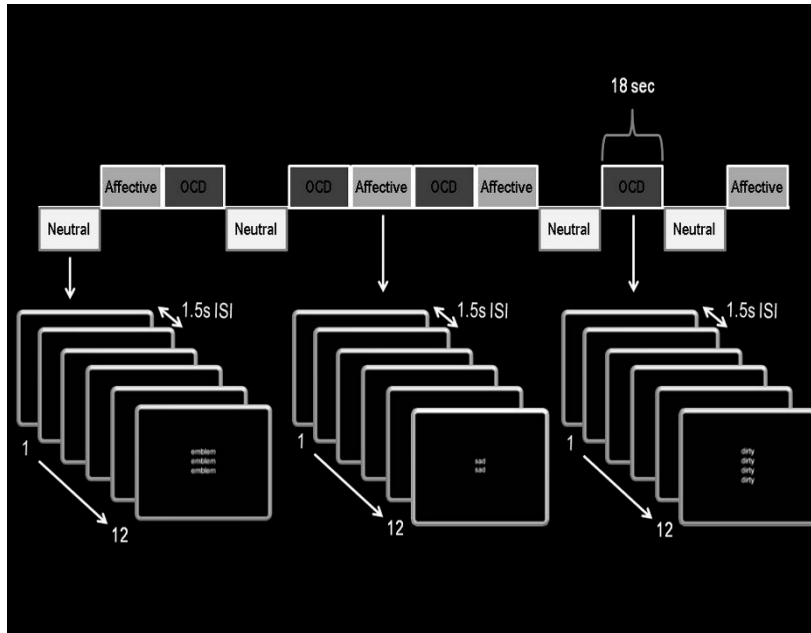
Patients were found to have deficient activation in the following areas -

bilateral anterior prefrontal, dorsolateral prefrontal, orbitofrontal, anterior cingulate, insular and parietal cortices, precuneus, and caudate.

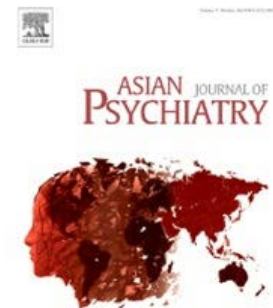
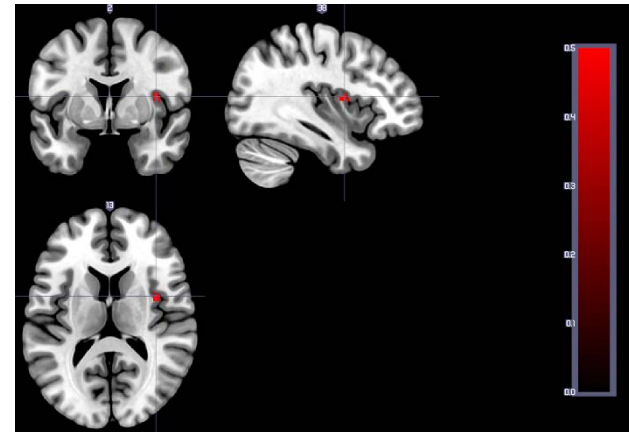


Agarwal SM, 2012

Emotional interference and error monitoring



- Emotional interference is observed in OCD
- This fMRI study examines endophenotype status of emotional interference
- Prefrontal and insular BOLD changes during the task might be an endophenotype



Janardhanan Narayanaswamy et al,
Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 2018

Key Neuroimaging findings on Brain Structure in OCD

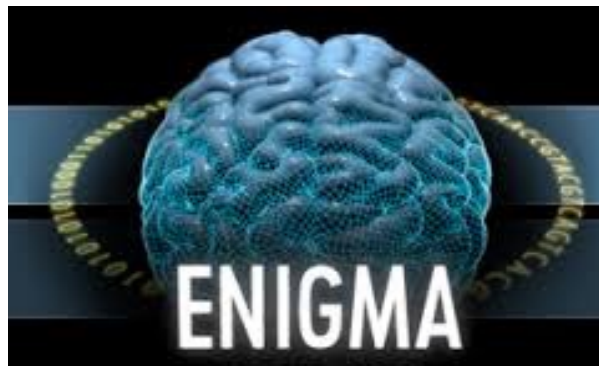
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ENIGMA-OCD working group

PI's: Odile van den Heuvel / Dan Stein / co-PI: Premika Boedhoe

<http://enigma.ini.usc.edu/>





Distinct subcortical volume alterations in pediatric and adult OCD: *A worldwide meta- and mega-analysis*

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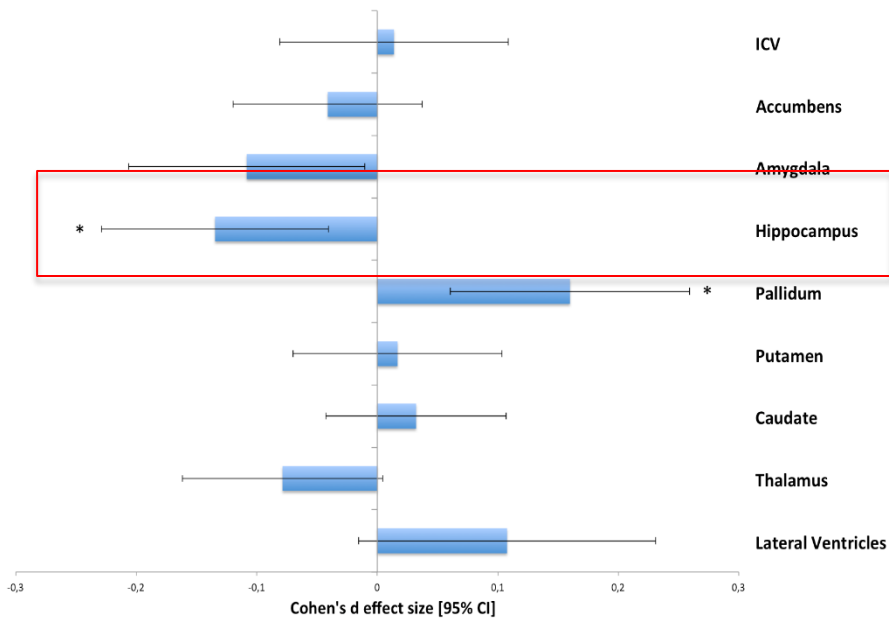
the American Journal of Psychiatry (January 2017)

1,830 OCD patients (N=335 children, N=1,495 adults) and 1,759 controls (N=287 children, N=1,472 adults)

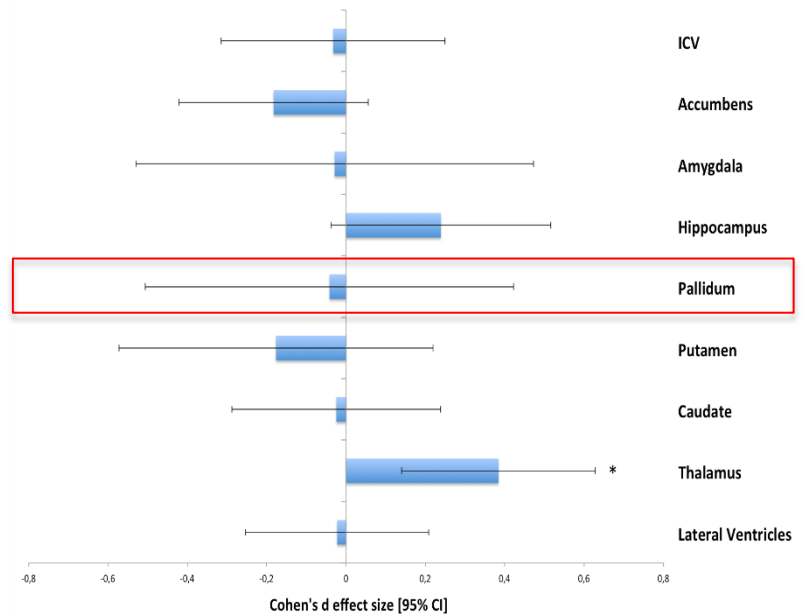
Distinct Subcortical volume alterations in Pediatric and Adult OCD

Boedhoe et al. 2017 (Am J Psych)

Subcortical volume differences OCD patients versus controls



Subcortical volume differences unmedicated pediatric OCD patients versus controls



Adult OCD vs HC:

- Smaller hippocampus
(could be related to comorbid depression)
- Larger pallidum
(related to early disease onset - chronicity)

Juvenile OCD vs HC:

- Larger thalamus
(unmedicated kids)

CORTICAL ABNORMALITIES

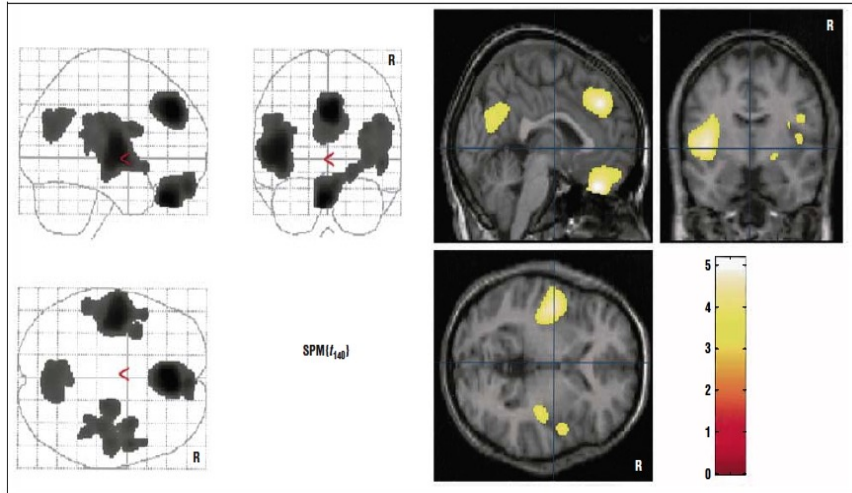


Figure 1. Statistical parametric t map ($SPM(t_{10})$) of gray matter volume reduction in obsessive-compulsive disorder. Clusters of more than 1000 voxels showing uncorrected $P < .001$ are displayed. The 3 orthogonal planes on the left side represent a typical maximum intensity projection "glass brain," and the set of images on the right side illustrate results superimposed on normalized structural images in selected planes. R indicates the right hemisphere, and the color bar represents the t score. Significant voxels were found in the orbitofrontal cortex, medial frontal gyrus, and left insulo-opercular region (corrected $P < .05$). Note that right insular and retrosplenial changes, showing a tendency toward significance, are also displayed.

Decreased gray matter volume

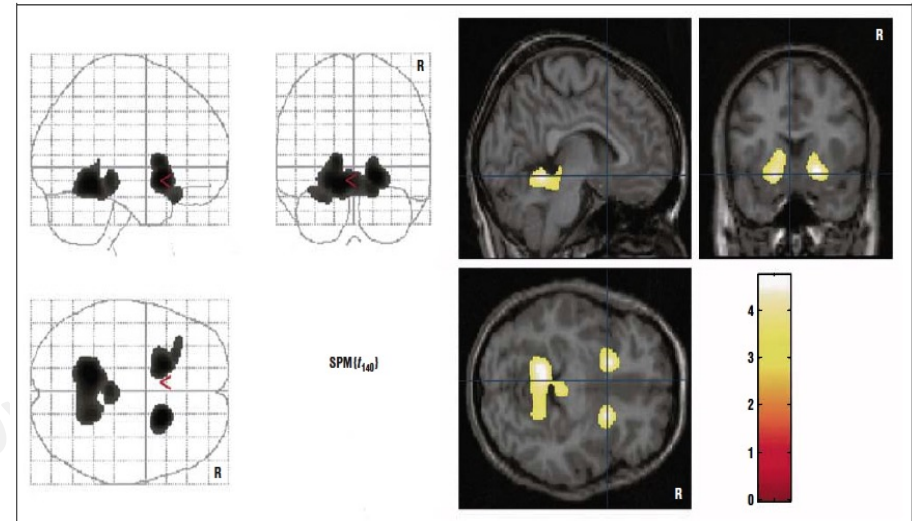


Figure 2. Statistical parametric t map ($SPM(t_{10})$) showing relative increases in gray matter volume in obsessive-compulsive disorder. Clusters of more than 1000 voxels at $P < .001$ are displayed. R indicates the right hemisphere, and the color bar represents the t score. Significant voxels were found in the ventral part of the striatum, including the ventral striatum proper area, and in the anterior cerebellum (corrected $P < .05$).

Increased gray matter volume

72 OCD Vs. 72 HC

Pujol et al. 2004; Arch Gen Psych

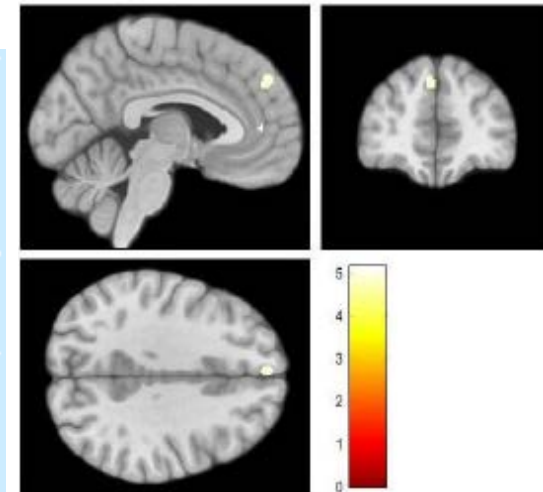
CORTICAL ABNORMALITIES

Data from OCD Clinic, NIMHANS (Unpublished):

221 DSM-IV OCD patients with the Y-BOCS ≥ 16 [Unmedicated = 142 (drug-naive =94, drug-free for at least 2 months = 48)] and 194 HC

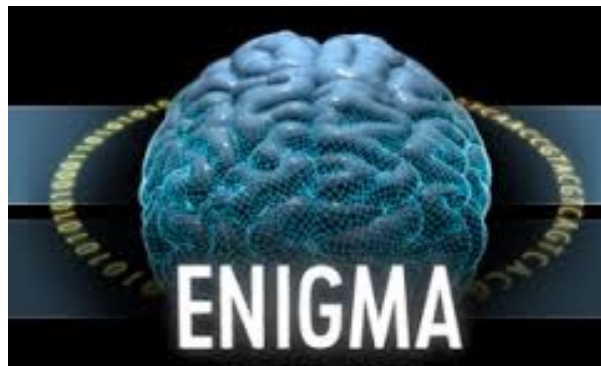
1.

Contrast	MNI Coordinate	Cluster Extent (K_F)	T	P_{FWE}	Region
Healthy Controls > Medicated OCD Patients	-8 44 6	50	5.03	0.006	Left ACC (Brodmann area 32)
	-5 48 36	91	5	0.011	Left Medial Frontal Gyrus (Brodmann area 8)



2.

Unmedicated OCD vs. HC = No differences



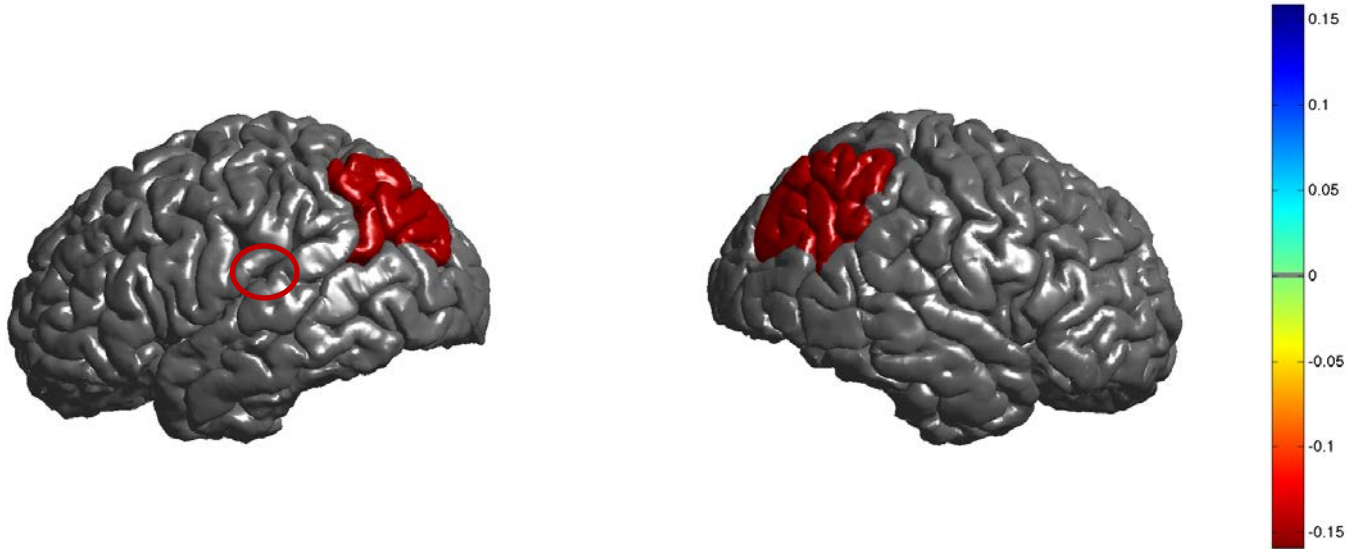
Cortical Abnormalities Associated With Pediatric and Adult Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: Findings From the ENIGMA Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Working Group.

[Boedhoe PSW¹](#), [Schmaal L¹](#), [Abe Y¹](#), [Alonso P¹](#), [Ameis SH¹](#), [Anticevic A¹](#), [Arnold PD¹](#), [Batistuzzo MC¹](#), [Benedetti F¹](#), [Beucke JC¹](#), [Bollettini I¹](#), [Bose A¹](#), [Brem S¹](#), [Calvo A¹](#), [Calvo R¹](#), [Cheng Y¹](#), [Cho KIK¹](#), [Ciullo V¹](#), [Dallaspezia S¹](#), [Denys D¹](#), [Feusner JD¹](#), [Fitzgerald KD¹](#), [Fouche JP¹](#), [Fridgeirsson EA¹](#), [Gruner P¹](#), [Hanna GL¹](#), [Hibar DP¹](#), [Hoexter MQ¹](#), [Hu H¹](#), [Huyser C¹](#), [Jahanshad N¹](#), [James A¹](#), [Kathmann N¹](#), [Kaufmann C¹](#), [Koch K¹](#), [Kwon JS¹](#), [Lazaro L¹](#), [Lochner C¹](#), [Marsh R¹](#), [Martínez-Zalacaín I¹](#), [Mataix-Cols D¹](#), [Menchón JM¹](#), [Minuzzi L¹](#), [Morer A¹](#), [Nakamae T¹](#), [Nakao T¹](#), [Narayanaswamy JC¹](#), [Nishida S¹](#), [Nurmi E¹](#), [O'Neill J¹](#), [Piacentini J¹](#), [Piras F¹](#), [Piras F¹](#), [Reddy YCJ¹](#), [Reess TJ¹](#), [Sakai Y¹](#), [Sato JR¹](#), [Simpson HB¹](#), [Soreni N¹](#), [Soriano-Mas C¹](#), [Spalletta G¹](#), [Stevens MC¹](#), [Szeszko PR¹](#), [Tolin DF¹](#), [van Wingen GA¹](#), [Venkatasubramanian G¹](#), [Walitza S¹](#), [Wang Z¹](#), [Yun JY¹](#); [ENIGMA-OCD Working Group¹](#), [Thompson PM¹](#), [Stein DJ¹](#), [van den Heuvel OA¹](#); [ENIGMA OCD Working Group.](#)

American Journal of Psychiatry, 2018

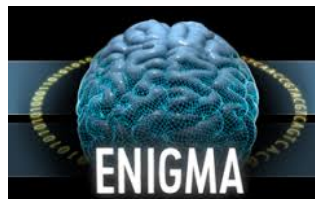
ENIGMA-OCD Cortical Analysis

adult OCD (N=1498) vs HC (N=1436)

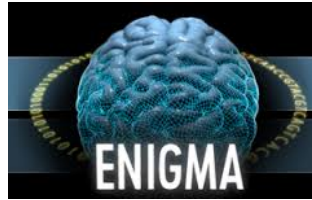


↓ cortical thickness of bilateral inferior parietal cortex

↓ surface area of left transverse temporal cortex



Bodhoo et al., 2018



SUMMARY

Boedhoe et al., 2018

Cortical:

- smaller volume in dorsomedial PFC, bilateral insula, and parietal cortex
- bigger volume in cerebellum
- cortical effects seem to be dependent on medication status

Subcortical:

- bigger pallidum in adults, mostly in case of disease chronicity
- smaller hippocampus in adults, mostly related to comorbid depression
- bigger thalamus in (unmedicated) children, not in adults

Changes due to chronic compulsivity? Due to medication?

CORTICAL – SUBCORTICAL REGULATORY EFFECTS?

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Cognitive Appraisal during Symptom Provocation

Psychological Medicine

cambridge.org/psm

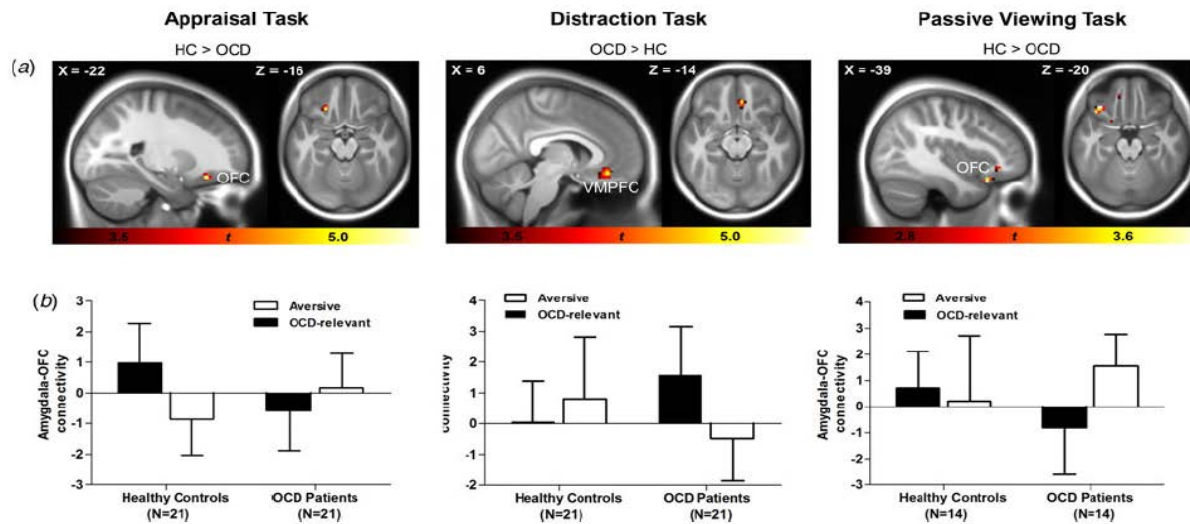
2017

Original Article

*Stephan Heinzel is now at the Department of

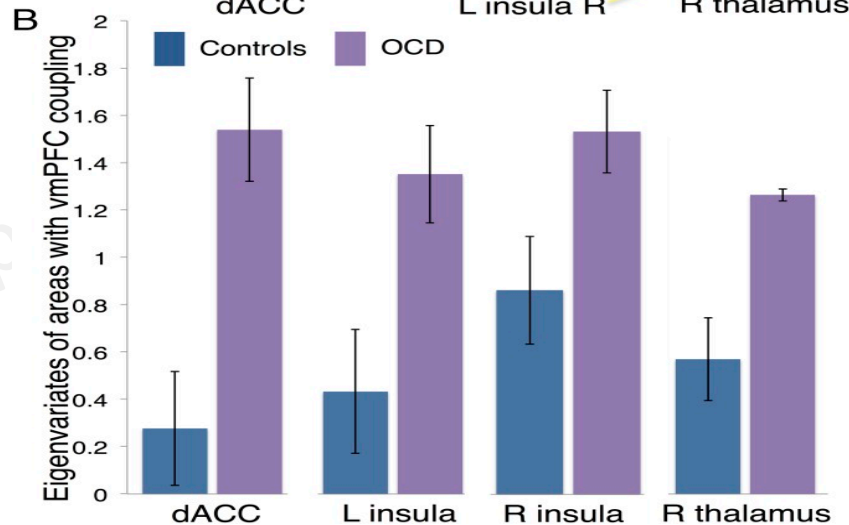
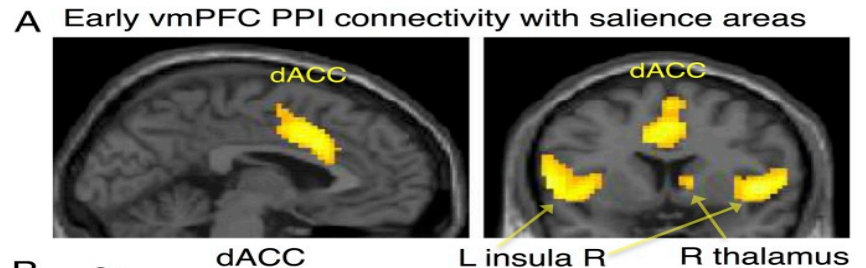
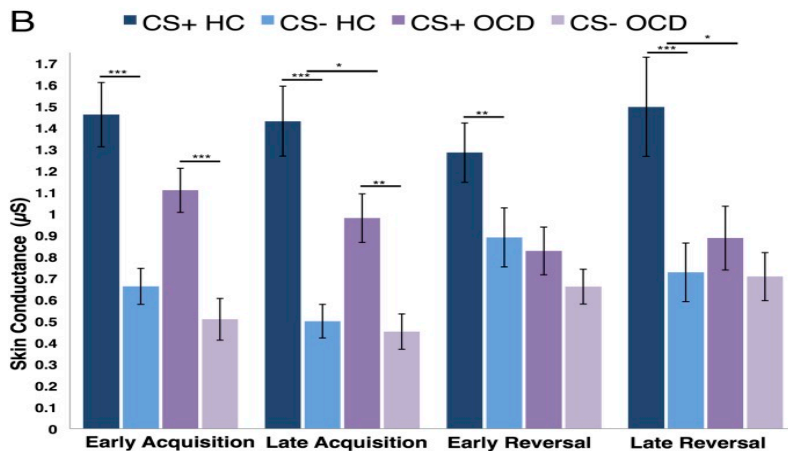
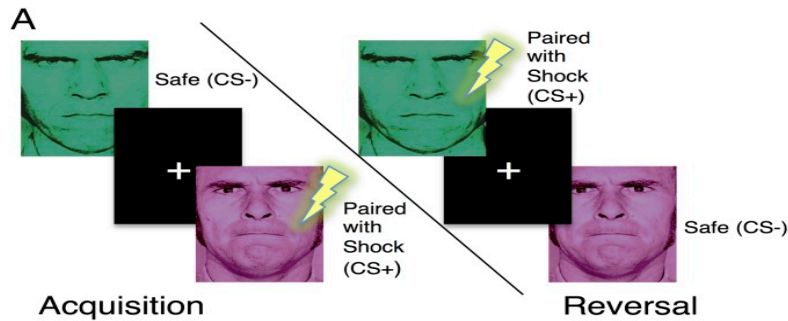
Amygdala–prefrontal connectivity during appraisal of symptom-related stimuli in obsessive–compulsive disorder

Sandra Paul¹, Jan C. Beucke^{1,2}, Christian Kaufmann¹, Anna Mersov³,
Stephan Heinzel^{1,*}, Norbert Kathmann¹ and Daniela Simon¹



- During symptom provocation ---- Reductions in positive coupling between amygdala and orbitofrontal cortex were observed in OCD patients relative to healthy control participants
- During appraisal and passive viewing of OCD-relevant stimuli - abnormally high Amygdala-ventromedial prefrontal cortex coupling was found when appraisal was distracted by a secondary task.
- No group differences in amygdala connectivity at rest.

Fear Extinction Paradigm



Fear reversal paradigm:

Maladaptive vmPFC combined with increased connectivity with areas involved in salience processing undermines accurate safety learning in OCD patients, resulting in inflexible threat beliefs.

Identifying reproducible bio-signatures of OCD

Aim #1: To identify neuroimaging signatures using data-driven approaches.

Aim #2: To link these signatures to neurocognitive function and clinical dimensions.



R01 MH113250 – PI- Prof. Blair Simpson (USA)

Role of neuroplasticity in treatment – Modulating effect of glutamate

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Evidence for glutamatergic abnormalities in OCD

- Elevated CSF glutamate
- In vivo studies – MRS
- Genetic studies

Evidence for glutamatergic abnormalities in OCD

Elevated CSF glutamate

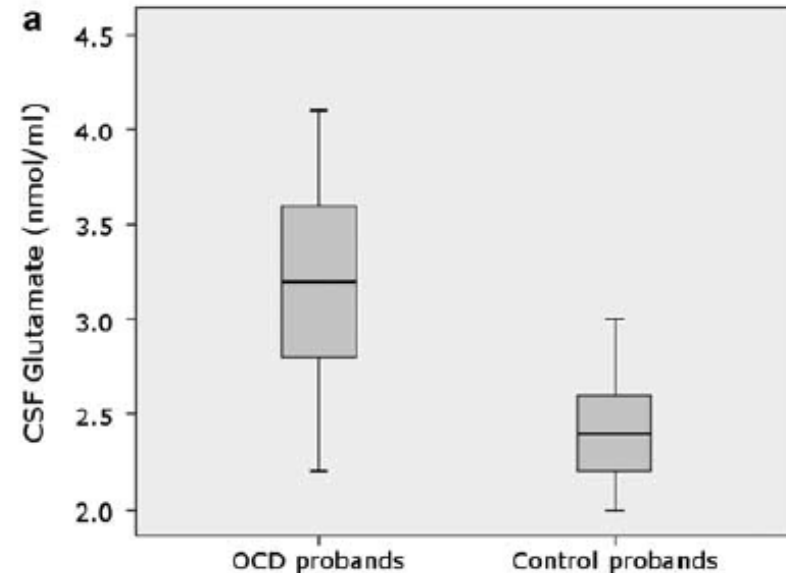
Neuropsychopharmacology (2009) 34, 2489–2496
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www.neuropsychopharmacology.org



Anti-Brain Autoantibodies and Altered Excitatory Neurotransmitters in Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder

Sagnik Bhattacharyya^{1,*}, Sumant Khanna², Koushik Chakrabarty³, Anita Mahadevan⁴, Rita Christopher⁵ and SK Shankar⁴

- In a subset of OCD patients – excessive glutamate in CSF
(Chakrabarty et al, 2005; Bhattacharya et al., 2009)
- Only a subset of cases of OCD ?
- Global / region specific alterations ?



Evidence for glutamatergic abnormalities in OCD

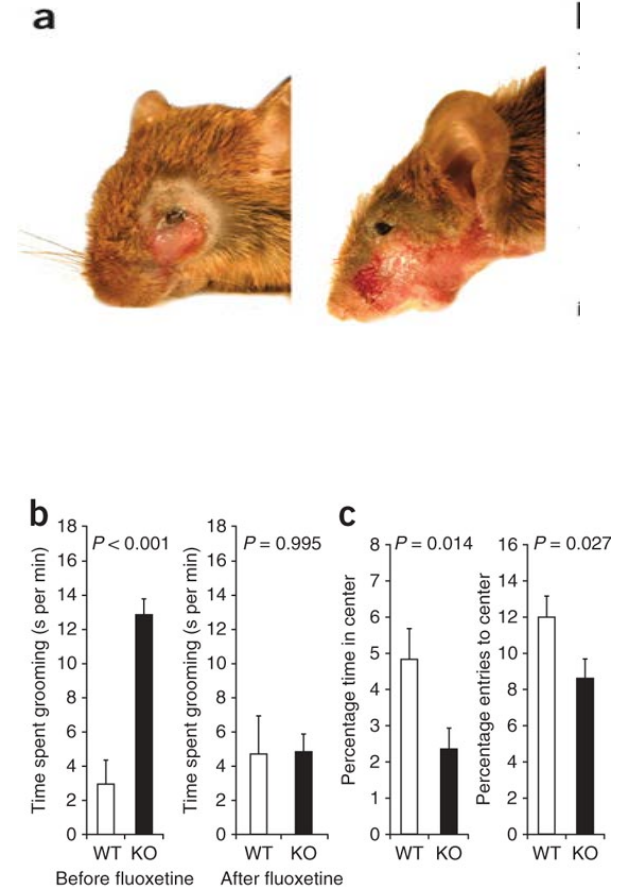
Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy Studies

- Early MRS studies in unmedicated pediatric OCD - glutamate and related compounds elevated in the basal ganglia ; reduced in the ACC (Rosenberg et al., 2000 & 2004)
- Recent studies have reported variable results, with the majority reporting no significant differences between patients and controls (review - Brennan et al., 2013)

Evidence for glutamatergic abnormalities in OCD

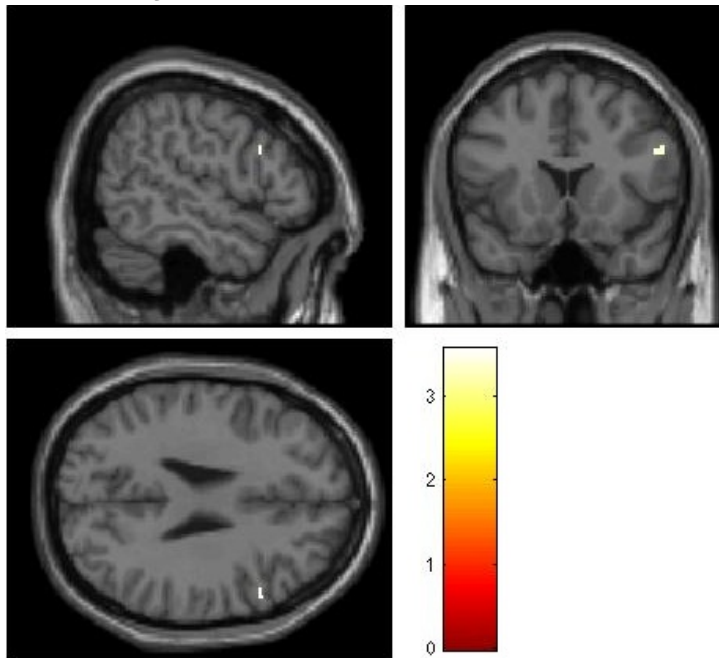
Genetics

- Attempts to demonstrate etiological role for glutamate dysregulation in OCD
- Slc1a1, which encodes the principle neuronal glutamate transporter, EAAT3
- **Recent focus of interest :**
- Genes that are highly expressed in cortico-striatal circuits
- Sapap3 knockout mouse (Welch 2007) ;
Slitrk5 knockout mouse (Shmelkov, Nat Med 2014)
- Key components of the postsynaptic complex that anchors and spatially organizes glutamate receptors



Glutamatergic – genetics & imaging

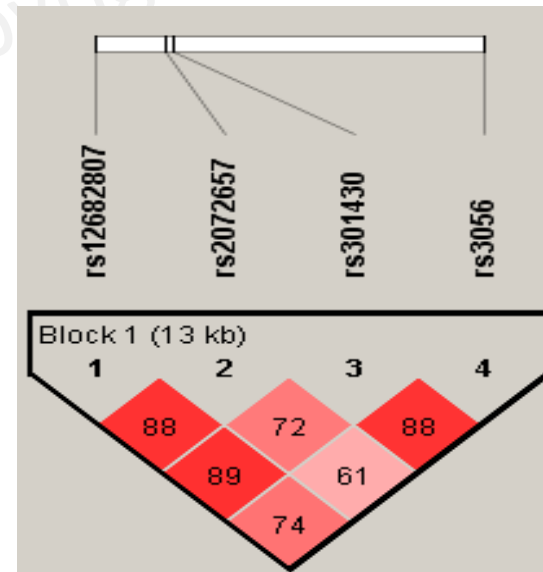
Comparison between regional gray matter volume in OCD patients and Healthy controls : Modulated By SLC1A1 rs3056 (A/G) Genotype (N=160) and healthy controls (N=152)



MNI co-ordinates: (X= 54 Y= 17 Z=27); T=3.57;BA =9; $P_{\text{svc-fwe}} < 0.05$)

Significantly less gray matter volume in Right Middle Frontal Gyrus in G allele carriers in patients

SLC1A1
[rs12682807,2072657,301430,3056] Single marker and Haplotype association with Patients and Controls



Jose et al., unpublished

TRANSLATING EVIDENCE FROM NEURAL CIRCUITRY MODELS OF OCD

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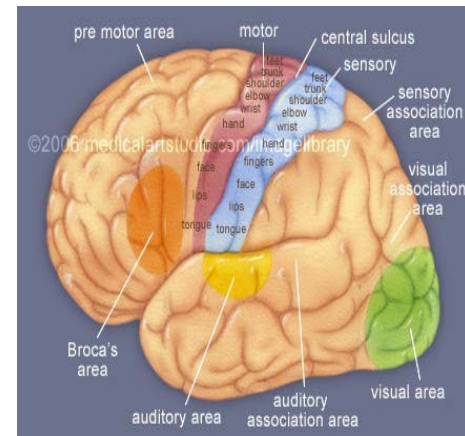
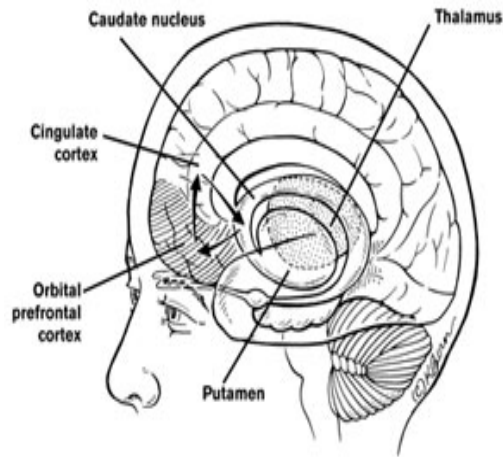
Neuromodulatory approaches

- Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS)
- Transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS)

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rTMS

- **Advantages** - More focal stimulation, non-invasive, no need for anesthesia
- **Disadvantages** - most available systems target superficial targets



High frequency –excitatory & Low frequency - inhibitory

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder- rTMS targets

Targets	Remarks
Dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: positive studies in depression and imaging studies• Inconsistent responses for both HF and LF rTMS on either side
Pre-Supplementary motor Area (Pre-SMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hyperactivity noticed in functional imaging studies• Early positive studies with LF rTMS• Later studies with larger sample size were not encouraging• Interest in high frequency – ? hyperactivity is compensatory
Orbitofrontal cortex (OFC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hyperactivity of orbitofrontal cortex- more consistently seen in OCD• Pilot studies have shown positive findings• Targets ill-defined
Dorsomedial prefrontal cortex (DMPFC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recent evidence from imaging studies• Open-label trials with both HF and LF• Needs special coils

Current evidence for rTMS in OCD

- Most meta-analyses have demonstrated significant short term efficacy in comparison to placebo
 - 18 RCTs with Hedge's g of 0.79 (0.43 – 1.15)
 - Pre-SMA generally showing the best response

[Rehn et al, 2018](#)
- However inconsistent results from recent studies
- Long term efficacy not established
- Should be considered an experimental treatment and can be tried in SSRI non-responsive patients

Transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS)

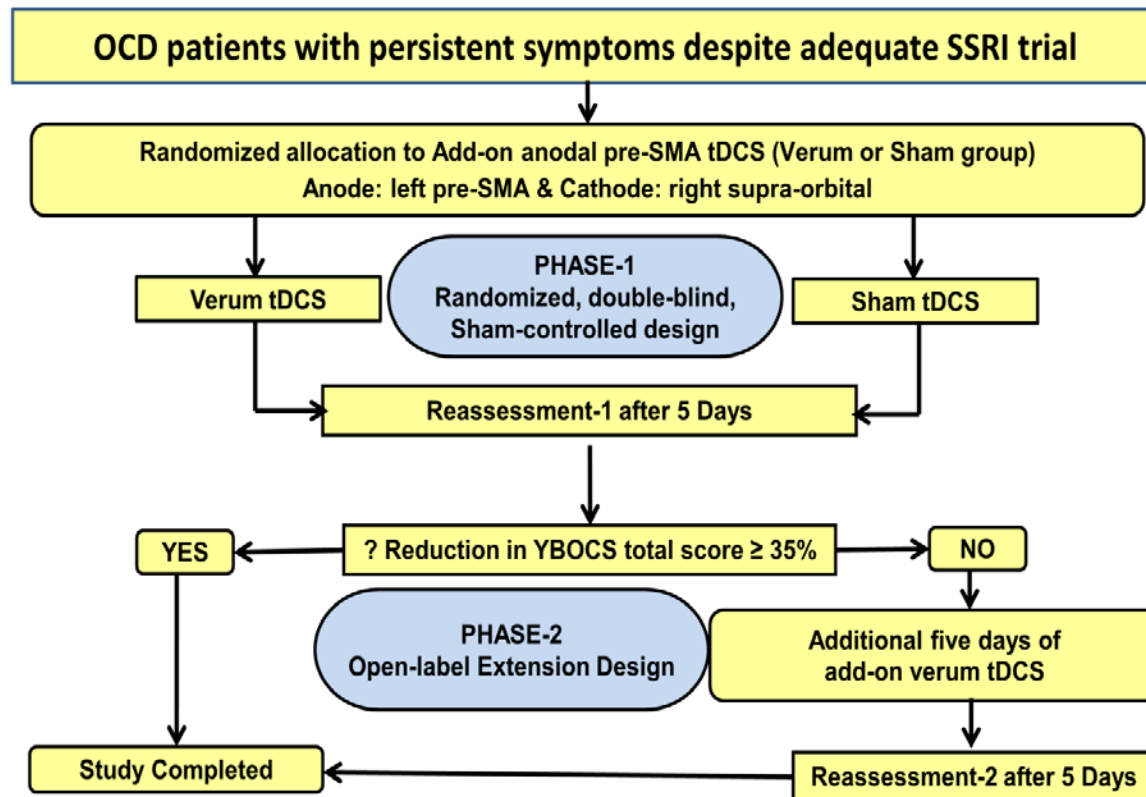
- Battery and 2 electrodes
 - weak current passed between anode and cathode
- **Anode** - increases excitability and spontaneous neural activity
- **Cathode** - decreases excitability and spontaneous neural activity
- Cheap, portable, non-invasive and minimal adverse effects

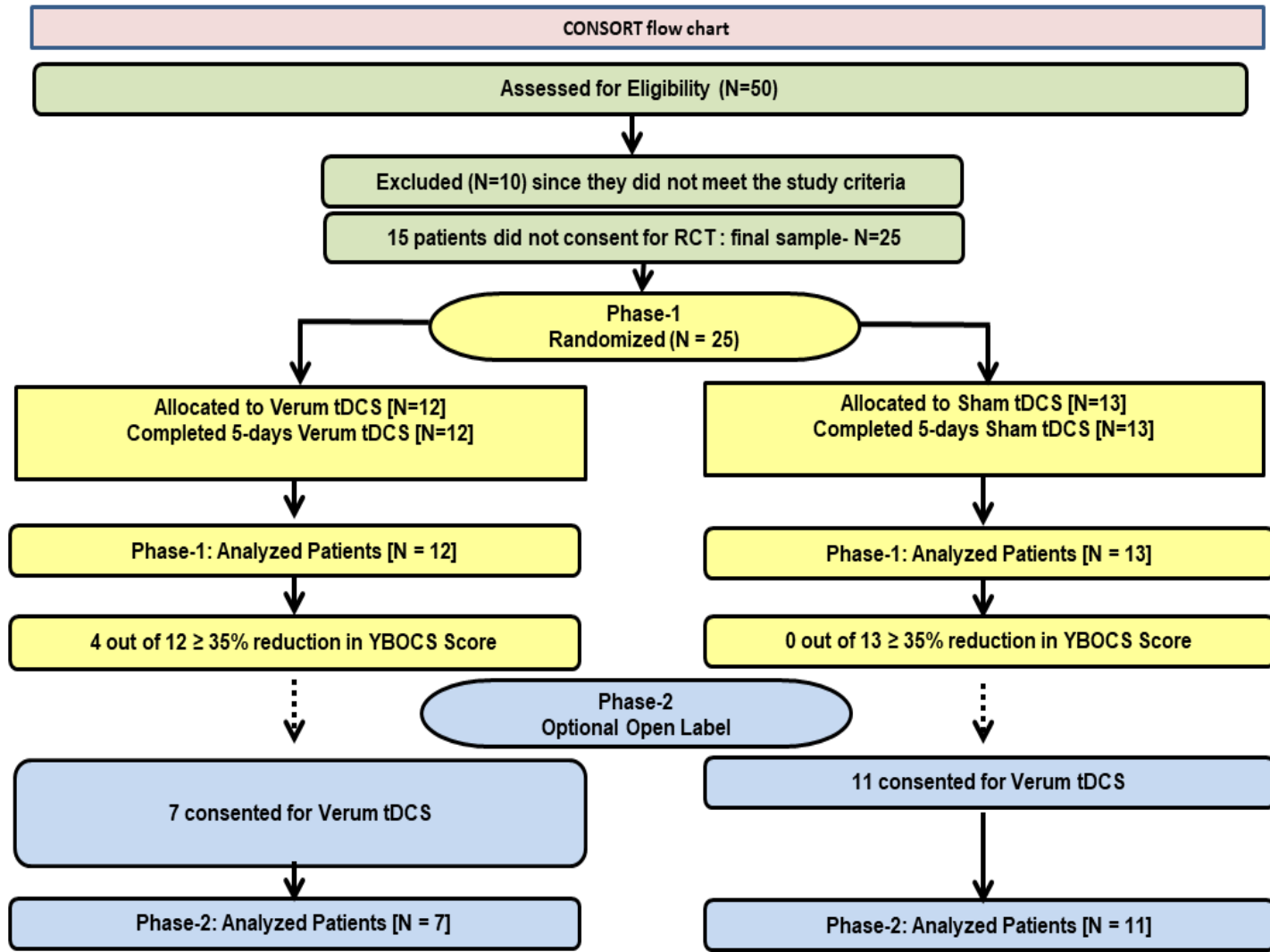


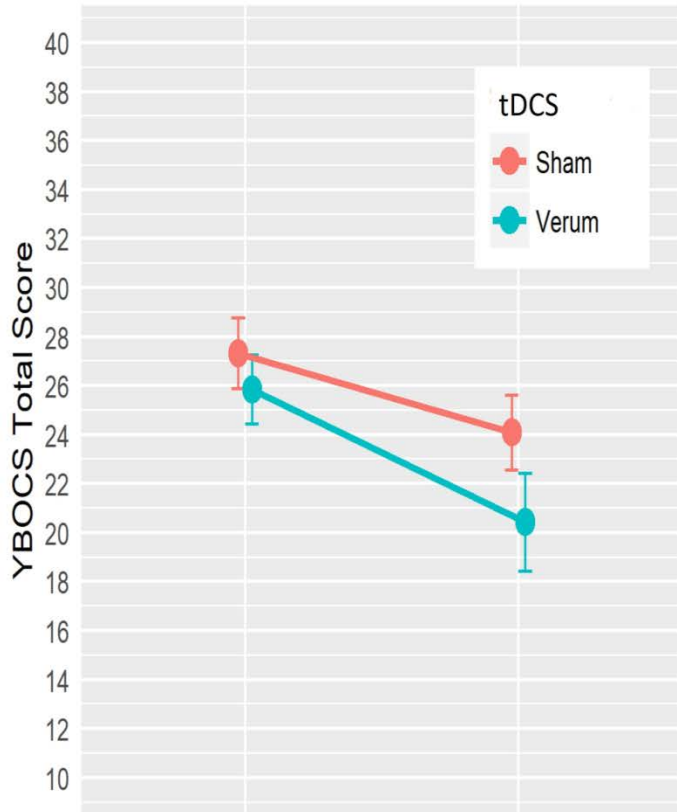
tDCS- evidence

Study	n	Anode	Cathode	Outcome
Bation et al, 2015	8	Right cerebellum	Left OFC	5/8 had $\geq 25\%$ decrease in YBOCS scores
Mondno et al, 2015	1	Right occipital	Left OFC	26% reduction in YBOCS
Narayanaswamy et al, 2015	2	Left pre-SMA	Right supra-orbital	Around 50% reduction in YBOCS
D'Urso et al, 2015	1	Deltoid	Bilateral Pre-SMA	30% reduction in YBOCS

**Efficacy of pre-supplementary motor area transcranial direct current stimulation for treatment resistant obsessive compulsive disorder:
a randomized, double blinded, sham controlled trial
(Shayanth et al, under review in Brain Stimulation)**



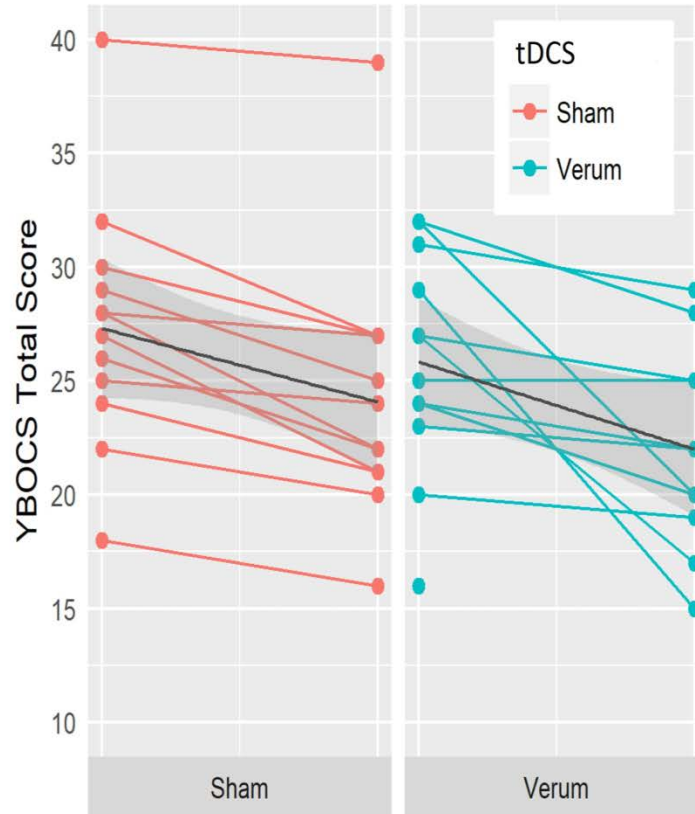




Pre --- tDCS --- Post

YBOCS: Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale

tDCS: Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation

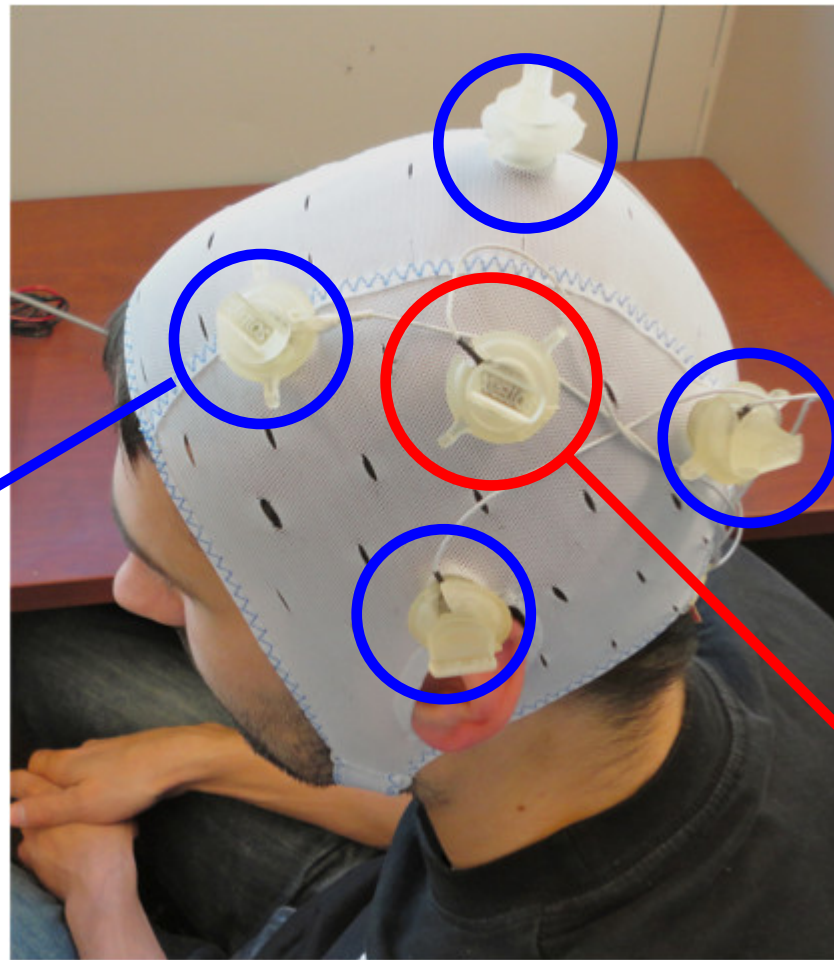


YBOCS: Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale

tDCS: Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation

High Definition tDCS (HD-tDCS)

- A technical enhancement over conventional tDCS
 - Optimized electrodes and montages configurations
 - Substantially increase in stimulation focality
 - Maintains the same low intensity of current density to the brain
-



Return Electrode
+ 0.5 mA

Central Electrode
- 2mA

Center electrode overlying the target cortical region surrounded by
four return electrodes

High Definition tDCS for OCD

- First-time application of add-on HD-tDCS in SSRI-resistant OCD patients
- 14 patients OCD having persistent symptoms despite adequate and stable treatment with SSRIs were administered HD-tDCS (anodal 2mA, right Pre-SMA).
- Two sessions of 20 minutes each per day, scheduled 20 minutes apart were administered for 5 consecutive days.
- There was a significant reduction in YBOCS total score after HD-tDCS sessions [Baseline vs. Post HD-tDCS= 27.6 ± 5.7 vs. 19.4 ± 8.0 , $t=3.9$, $p=0.002$].
- **Median percentage reduction in YBOCS total score was 25.8 and there were 8 (57.1%) responders.**

(Narayanaswamy et al., manuscript under preparation)

Neurosurgical Approaches



1. Ventral capsule/Ventral striatum (VC/VS)
2. Nucleus Accumbens (NAcc)
3. Bed nucleus of stria terminalis
4. Sub-thalamic nucleus (STN)
5. Inferior thalamic peduncle (ITP)

- 1. Capsulotomy**
- 2. Anterior Cingulotomy**
3. Subcaudate Tractotomy
4. Limbic Leucotomy

Deep Brain stimulation

3 stages

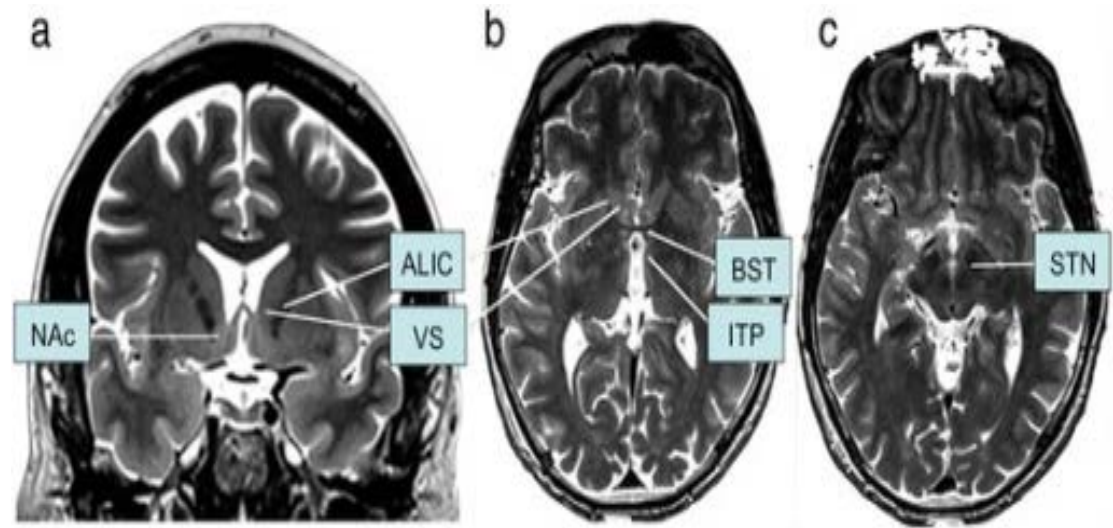
1. Image guided insertion of electrodes (1mm) inserted
2. Subdermal implantation of neurostimulator
3. Programming of electrical parameters
 - Polarity, amplitude, frequency and pulse duration

Effects observed 3-6 months post-surgery

Mechanism of action

- Functional lesion
- **Disruption of dysfunctional circuits**
- Inhibiting as well as activating network effects
- Modulates oscillatory activity

Targets in OCD



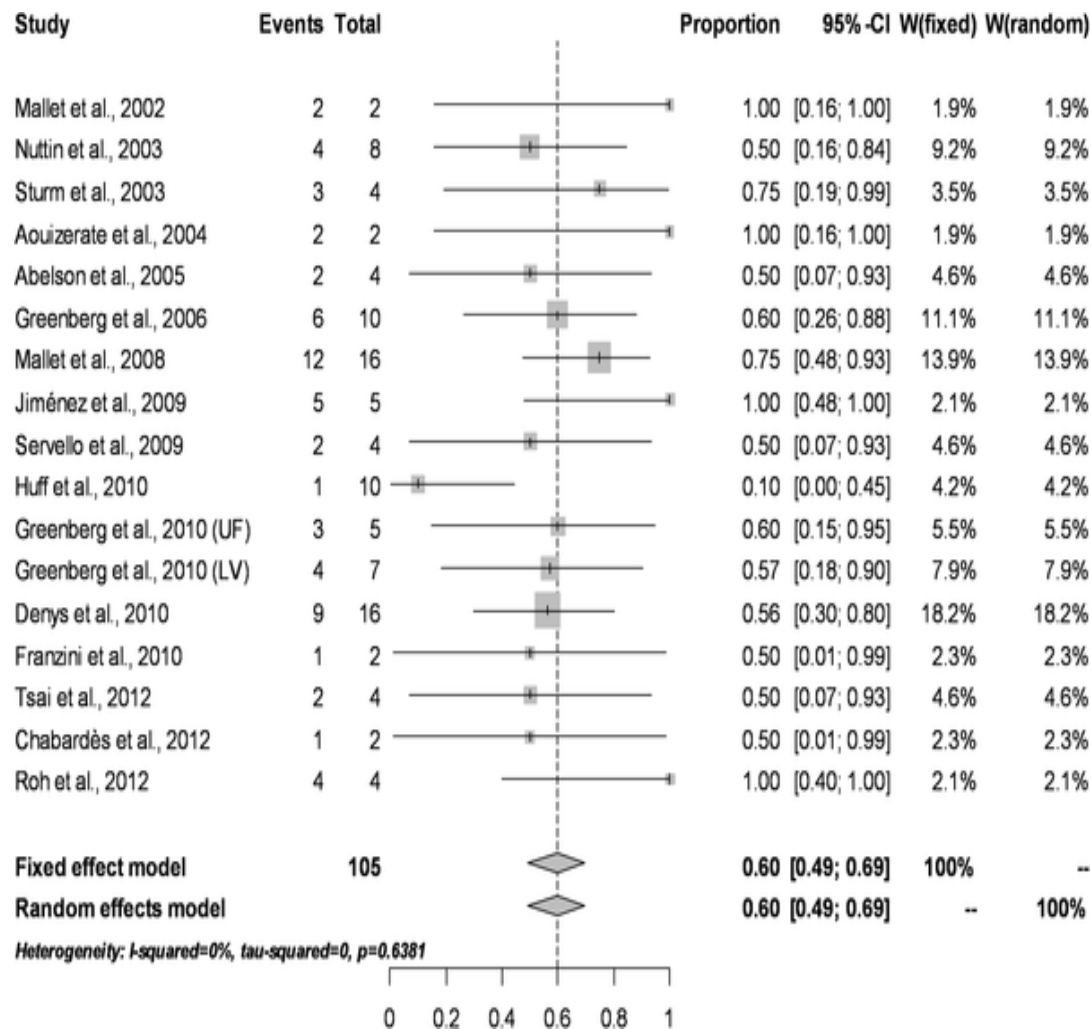
Kohl et al, 2014

- Anterior limb of the internal capsule
- **Ventral capsule/ventral striatum (VC/VS)**
- **Nucleus Accumbens**
- Bed nucleus of stria terminalis
- **Subthalamic nucleus**

Others

- Inferior thalamic peduncle

Forest Plot for percentage of responders according to standardized criteria (35% reduction in post-treatment Y-BOCS scores)



Alonso P, Cuadras D, Gabriëls L, Denys D, Goodman W, et al. (2015) Deep Brain Stimulation for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A Meta-Analysis of Treatment Outcome and Predictors of Response. PLOS ONE 10(7): e0133591. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0133591>
<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0133591>

Summary

- Neural Circuitry Models generate potential treatment strategies
- Chronicity of compulsions seem to be producing neuroplastic changes- hence need for early interventions
- Potential utility of neuromodulation to target specific domains of symptoms (eg: Disgust)
- Role of neuromodulation to aid faster fear extinction (with CBT?)
- Psychosurgical options - DBS

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Suggested references

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EDITORIAL



Obsessive-compulsive disorder: Mimicking journey of psychiatry

p. 1

Om Prakash Singh

DOI:10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_3_19

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GUEST EDITORIAL



Recent advances in obsessive compulsive and related disorders

p. 2

Janardhanan C Narayanaswamy, Shyam Sundar Arumugham, TS Jaisoorya, Y C Janardhan Reddy

DOI:10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_587_18

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