

1 **Neural dynamics of illusory tactile pulling sensations**

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8 **Abstract**

9 The sensation of directional forces and their associated sensorimotor commands are
10 inextricably intertwined, complicating the identification of brain circuits responsible for
11 tactile pulling sensations. One hypothesis is that, like tactile frequency discrimination,
12 pulling sensations are generated by early sensory-frontal activity. Alternatively, they may
13 be generated later in the somatosensory association cortex. To dissociate these accounts
14 and uncouple the pulling sensation from unrelated but correlated sensory and motor
15 processing, we combined high-density EEG with an oddball paradigm and asymmetric
16 vibration, which creates an illusory sensation of the hand being directionally pulled.
17 Oddballs that created a pulling sensation in the opposite direction to common stimuli were
18 compared to the same oddballs in the context of neutral common stimuli (symmetric
19 vibration) and to neutral oddballs. Brain responses to having directional pulling
20 expectations violated by directional stimuli were therefore isolated. Contrary to the
21 sensory-frontal account, frontal N140 brain activity was actually larger for neutral than
22 pulling oddballs. Instead, pulling sensations were associated with amplitude and latency
23 modulations of midline P200 and P3b potentials, and specifically, to contralateral parietal
24 lobe activity 280ms post-stimulus. The timing of this activity suggested pulling sensations
25 involve spatial processing, such as tactile remapping between coordinate frames. Source
26 localization showed this activity to be centered on the postcentral sulcus, superior parietal
27 lobule and intraparietal sulcus, suggesting that pulling sensations arise via the processing
28 of body position, tactile orientation and peripersonal space. Our results demonstrate how
29 tactile illusions can uniquely disambiguate parietal contributions to somatosensation by
30 removing unrelated sensory processing.

31 **Significance statement**

32 The neural mechanisms of tactile pulling sensations are poorly understood. Competing
33 early sensory-frontal and later somatosensory association cortex accounts are hard to
34 dissociate due to confounding sensory and motor signals present when forces are applied
35 to the skin. Here, we used EEG and a novel asymmetric vibration approach to induce an
36 illusory pulling sensation, which circumvents these issues. We found that pulling
37 sensations were associated with parietal lobe activity 280ms post-stimulus and
38 modulations of the P200. The timing and location of this activity suggested that pulling
39 sensations necessitate spatial processing and supported a somatosensory association
40 cortex account of the pulling sensation.

41 **Keywords:** asymmetric vibration, somatosensory, SEP, N140, P200, P3b, tactile illusion,
42 parietal lobe, tangential force

43 Introduction

44 The sensation of directional force is vital in everyday life, allowing us to, for
45 example, know our dance partner's intention, or quickly learn the physical properties of a
46 touched object (Johansson and Flanagan, 2009). Despite much progress in understanding
47 peripheral tactile processing (Johansson et al., 1992a; Panarese and Edin, 2011;
48 Pruszynski and Johansson, 2014; Pruszynski et al., 2018), little is known about how
49 pulling sensations arise in the human brain. Research using monkeys shows that
50 tangential forces are processed rapidly (~50ms post-stimulus) in the primary
51 somatosensory cortex (SI) (Salimi et al., 1999; Fortier-Poisson and Smith, 2016; Fortier-
52 Poisson et al., 2016). However, it is unclear if such processing is sufficient to give rise to
53 directional pulling sensations.

54 Pulling sensations likely require activity beyond SI. A circuit involving SI, SII and
55 the prefrontal cortex (PFC) has been demonstrated to underpin the perception of tactile
56 frequency (Romo and Salinas, 2003; de Lafuente and Romo, 2006; Hernández et al.,
57 2010). If the discrimination of directional pulling sensations requires only the accessing
58 and comparing of stored patterns of activity in SI and SII, then these, or closely related,
59 sensory-frontal circuits may be sufficient. If, however, directional pulling sensations
60 necessitate spatial processing (Badde and Heed, 2016), then the parietal cortex may play
61 an important role. On this account, activity in superior parietal lobule (SPL) and
62 intraparietal sulcus (IPS) combine body position information with information about the
63 spatial direction of the force to generate a directional pulling sensation (Ehrsson et al.,
64 2003; Van Boven et al., 2005; Sack, 2009).

65 Determining precisely when pulling sensations emerge will constrain mechanistic
66 accounts. Pulling sensations are assumed to depend on force vector extraction. If this
67 extraction occurs during initial feedforward processing in SI and SII, early neural correlates,
68 such as N140 enhancement, are expected. The N140 originates in SII and the PFC
69 (Desmedt and Tomberg, 1989; Frot et al., 1999). It is a reliable marker for tactile
70 awareness (Aukstulewicz et al., 2012; Schröder et al., 2021) and texture processing
71 (Genna et al., 2018). Further, the N140 is modified by exogenous and endogenous
72 attention (Nakajima and Imamura, 2000), so if pulling sensations emerge upstream,
73 indirect, attention-related N140 enhancement should be observed. Conversely, if pulling
74 sensations require later spatial processing, then the P200 or P3b instead will be enhanced.
75 The pulling sensation may depend on mapping the force vector from skin centered to
76 external coordinates, known as tactile remapping (Driver and Spence, 1998; Heed et al.,
77 2015). Tactile remapping occurs after initial somatosensory processing and has been
78 linked to the P200 (Longo et al., 2012; Bufalari et al., 2014).

79 Determining the neural mechanisms of pulling sensations has been difficult
80 because traditional stimuli, such as active touch, sudden loads applied to held objects or
81 tangential forces applied passively to the skin, are accompanied by correlated but
82 unrelated motor and sensory processing (Johansson et al., 1992b; Birznieks et al., 2001).
83 To disambiguate pure sensations of pulling from their conjoined sensory and motor
84 processes, we here use an asymmetric vibration approach, which creates a strong, illusory

85 sensation of being pulled in a particular direction via a small handheld device, without
86 active movement (Amemiya et al., 2005; Amemiya and Maeda, 2008; Tappeiner et al.,
87 2009; Amemiya and Gomi, 2014, 2016; Tanabe et al., 2018; Gomi et al., 2019). Symmetric
88 vibration can be used as a control stimulus, which is closely matched in terms of stimulus
89 complexity, but does not induce an illusory pulling sensation.

90 We recorded high-density EEG while participants performed a tactile oddball task
91 in which uncommon target stimuli must be detected from a stream of common stimuli
92 (Shinozaki et al., 1998; Kida et al., 2003; Spackman et al., 2007). Oddballs that created an
93 illusory pulling sensation in the opposite direction to the common stimuli (asymmetric
94 vibration) were compared to the same oddballs in the context of neutral common stimuli
95 (symmetric vibration), and also to neutral oddball stimuli. These relative oddball effects
96 meant we could isolate the brain activity specific to having directional expectations
97 contradicted by directional stimuli, and therefore determine when and where the pulling
98 sensation emerges in the brain, helping to dissociate spatial, parietal cortex accounts from
99 non-spatial sensory-frontal accounts.

100

101 **Methods**

102 *Equipment*

103 Participants were seated at a table approximately 40cm from a computer monitor
104 with their right forearm resting on an adjustable arm rest (Fig. 1D.). View of the right arm
105 was obscured by a dividing screen. Symmetric and asymmetric vibration stimuli were
106 delivered by a small, coin-sized device (Amemiya et al., 2005; Amemiya and Gomi, 2014)
107 covered with grip tape (sandpaper grit density = #400) that was held between index finger
108 and thumb in a pinch grip (Fig. 1B.). An accelerometer (356A03, PCB Piezotronics, Inc.,
109 New York, USA; sampling frequency = 4000Hz) was attached to the device.
110 Accelerometer signals were displayed to the experimenter via an oscilloscope (TDS2004C,
111 Tektronix, Inc., Oregon, USA), for the purposes of checking that the correct conditions
112 were being administered at all times. Accelerometer signals were also recorded so that
113 the precise stimulus onset time could be determined for every trial. Participants wore
114 earplugs throughout the experiment to prevent auditory cues relating to the vibration
115 conditions. Vibration onset timing, accelerometer recording, task instructions and fixation
116 crosses were controlled via MATLAB (2017a) and Psychtoolbox (Brainard, 1997). Visual
117 stimuli were displayed via a flat screen monitor (27-inch LCD, 1902 x 1080 pixels, 60 Hz
118 refresh rate). EEG data were acquired via a 129 electrode net (HydroCel GES 300,
119 MagstimEGI, Oregon, USA). Data were acquired at 1000Hz and Net Station EEG software
120 (Magstim EGI, Oregon, USA).

121

122 *Participants*

123 We recruited 15 participants (10 males, 5 females, mean age = 33.33 yrs, SD =
124 7.33 yrs). All participants were right handed. The sample size was chosen based on
125 previous asymmetric vibration and somatosensory oddball EEG studies (Akatsuka et al.,
126 2007; Spackman et al., 2007; Restuccia et al., 2009; Amemiya and Gomi, 2016).
127 Experiments were undertaken with the understanding and written consent of each
128 participant in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association
129 (Declaration of Helsinki), and with the NTT Communication Science Laboratories
130 Research Ethics Committee approval.

131

132 *Procedure*

133 Vibration stimuli were generated by a solenoid actuator within a small device held
134 in a pinch grip. Vibration is generated by a magnet anchored between a pair springs
135 surrounded by a pair of solenoids (Fig. 1B.). The magnet oscillated (58.8Hz) left and right
136 in response to current passing through the solenoids. Leftward acceleration of the solenoid
137 means the fingers receive a rightwards force (and vice versa). By varying the current in the
138 solenoids we generated either symmetric or asymmetric left-right acceleration profiles.
139 Under conditions of asymmetry, one force direction is rendered large and brief, while the
140 other is small and prolonged. Due to nonlinearity in the perceptual system, only the larger
141 of the forces is perceived despite the temporally-integrated forces in each direction being
142 approximately equal (Amemiya et al., 2005; Amemiya and Gomi, 2014). When symmetric
143 vibration is used both forces are equal and cancel each other out. Three forms of vibration
144 were used throughout the experiment; asymmetric left (left pull), asymmetric right (right
145 pull) and symmetric vibration, which is referred to as 'Neutral'.

146 First, an accuracy test was administered, in which participants received 100ms
147 bursts of vibration and had to discriminate asymmetric (pulling) from symmetric (neutral)
148 vibrations in a two alternative forced choice task. Responses were given with the left hand
149 via keypad. Left and right pulling stimuli were tested in separate blocks (50 randomized
150 trials per block, 25 per condition; block order counterbalanced). A subset of participants (n
151 = 9) were also required to discriminate between left and right pulling stimuli under the
152 same task conditions.

153 The main oddball task consisted of vibration stimuli delivered with a randomized ISI
154 of 800ms-1100ms (Fig. 1A.). Vibration stimulus duration was always 100ms. In each block,
155 one vibration pattern (Left, Right or Neutral) was the common stimulus (80% of trials) and
156 the other two were the oddballs (each 10% of trials; total oddball = 20%). Trials were
157 pseudorandomized, such that the first trial of every block was a common stimulus and that
158 every oddball was followed by a common stimulus. Each block consisted of 200 trials
159 (common = 160, oddball A = 20, oddball B = 20). There were 15 blocks in total which were
160 randomized and counterbalanced across participants (5 blocks for each of the 3 block
161 types, defined according to the common stimulus, i.e. Left, Right and Neutral). Thus, in

162 total there were 9 conditions, composed of three common stimuli conditions (Left, Right,
163 Neutral, 800 trials per condition) and 6 oddball stimuli conditions (120 trials per condition).
164 Oddball conditions were grouped into three conditions (Fig. 1C.): ‘Opposite pull oddballs’
165 (Right oddballs during Left common and Left oddballs during Right common), ‘Pull oddball
166 after neutral’ (Right oddballs during Neutral common and Left oddballs during Neutral
167 common), and ‘Neutral oddball’ (Neutral oddballs during Left common and Neutral
168 oddballs during Right common).

169 Participants were informed at the start of each block which stimulus was the
170 common and which two were the oddball. They were instructed to pay attention to all
171 stimuli and silently count the number of oddballs. At the end of each block they reported
172 their estimate for the number of oddballs by responding to options presented on screen.
173 Thus, they always simultaneously responded to two oddball conditions, helping to ensure
174 that their effort levels were well controlled across conditions. Participants were naive to the
175 purpose of the experiment when asked directly at the end of testing. The experiment
176 lasted ~2.5 hours.

177 *Analysis*

178 **Behavioral data**

179 Accuracy on the pre-test pulling direction discrimination task was determined for
180 each participant by taking the sum of correctly identified pulling and neutral stimuli as a
181 percentage of the total number of trials. Left and Right pulling conditions were calculated
182 separately and compared via paired sample t-test. In the subset of participants ($n = 9$) who
183 also completed a Left vs. Right pull discrimination block, we calculated the percentage
184 correct in the same manner and compared this value to the mean of the Left vs. Neutral
185 and Right vs. Neutral values via paired sample t-test. Oddball counting error was
186 calculated for each block of the main task by taking the absolute of the estimated number
187 of oddballs minus the actual number of oddballs. Oddball counting error was compared
188 across participants via Wilcoxon signed-rank test. We compared blocks where the left pull
189 was the common stimulus to blocks where right pull was the common stimulus, and we
190 compared the average of these two blocks to blocks in which neutral was the common
191 stimulus.

192 From the two behavioral tasks we extracted 4 variables that were to be used in
193 covariate analyses with the EEG data: pre-test Pull vs Neutral discrimination (mean of left
194 vs neutral and right vs neutral block), mean oddball counting error (i.e. across all blocks),
195 Left/right common oddball counting error (mean of performance on blocks where left and
196 right pull were the common stimulus), and Neutral common oddball counting error.

197 **EEG pre-processing**

198 EEG data were pre-processed using EEGLab (Delorme and Makeig, 2004) and
199 custom Matlab (2017a) scripts. The data were down sampled to 250Hz for storage
200 purposes. We re-referenced the data to the left and right mastoid electrodes and applied a
201 bandpass (FIR 0.1 – 90Hz) and notch filter (48-52Hz). ICA components reflecting blinks,
202 eye movements, heart, large EMG and electrical artefacts were then removed. Epochs
203 were extracted (-200 – 700ms) and baselined (-100 – 0ms) for each participant. Electrodes
204 from the face and side of the head below the ear were removed due to muscle activity
205 artifacts in some participants, leaving a total of 93 electrodes, covering the entire scalp
206 (Fig. 1E.). We removed trials still displaying artefacts via whole brain threshold (+/-80 μ V)
207 and by applying the ERPLab step function algorithm to frontal electrodes (window size =
208 200ms, step size = 50ms, threshold = 50 μ V). The mean percentage of trials rejected per
209 participant was 9.62%. ERPs were averaged across conditions and smoothed using a low
210 pass filter (second order Butterworth, cutoff 30Hz).

211 **EEG analysis in surface space using SPM**

212 We analyzed the EEG data in two ways. Firstly, to avoid the bias inherent to
213 picking electrodes and time windows, we used SPM 12 for M/EEG (Litvak et al., 2011) to
214 analyze scalp data across the response window and then to perform source
215 reconstructions of scalp activity. SPM controls for multiple comparisons using Random
216 Field Theory (RFT), which is effective because of the temporal and spatial smoothness of
217 EEG data (Kilner and Friston, 2010). Statistical parametric maps were created for each
218 participant in each condition by interpolating from all electrodes into two-dimensional
219 sensor space across the response window (0-500ms post stimulus onset), thus creating a
220 3D characterization of the ERP (16mm x 16mm x 0ms smoothing).

221 To determine if 'Opposite pull oddball' produced a larger response than the 'Pull
222 oddball after neutral' conditions, it was only necessary to perform a paired t-test (1-tailed)
223 because both oddball conditions used the same common stimulus condition (i.e. common
224 pull). We also ran the same t-contrast using our behavioral variables as covariates.
225 However, we also wanted to check if there were any differences between the 'Neutral
226 oddball' condition and the other two oddball conditions, for which we needed to use a
227 partitioned error approach (random effects analysis), combined with two separate 2x2
228 within-subject's ANOVAs with factors of oddball condition (Neutral oddball vs Opposite pull
229 oddball or Pull oddball after neutral) and stimulus type (oddball vs common). For these
230 analyses image files (SPM maps; NIFTI) were transformed into four sets of differential
231 effects (overall effect, main effect of condition, main effect of type, condition x type
232 interaction) for each participant (1st level contrasts), which were then entered into four
233 separate one-sample t-tests (2nd level contrasts; for details see Franz et al., 2020). Of
234 these contrasts, only the condition x type interaction was of interest because this contrast
235 showed the effect of the oddball condition, whilst controlling for the common stimulus. For

236 all scalp activity contrasts we used a threshold of $p < 0.001$ uncorrected and clusters were
237 only included if they met the more stringent $p < 0.05$ family-wise cluster threshold.

238 **EEG source localization**

239 To locate the possible cortical origins of activity detected on the scalp we ran SPM
240 3-D source reconstruction, using a group inversion approach (COH, 0-500ms, Hanning
241 taper, 0-256Hz) to compensate for head anatomy and sensor noise variation (Litvak and
242 Friston, 2008). An MNI template was used to construct the mesh, coregistration used the
243 nasion and bilateral preauricular points as fiducials, and a forward model was created with
244 the Boundary Elements Model (BEM). NIFTI (source-level) images (8mm smoothing) were
245 extracted using a time window derived from the 'Opposite pull oddball' vs 'Pull oddball
246 after neutral' scalp analysis (264-320ms). To better refine the location of the activity, NIFTI
247 images were subjected to a paired sample t-test with a general threshold set at $P < 0.05$
248 uncorrected, and selected the top cluster of activity (i.e. the cluster that contained the
249 highest peak t-values). Due to the problem of circularity, this statistical test was used
250 purely to better locate the already observed scalp effect (Oh et al., 2020), and to negate
251 the issue of central attraction during source analysis, whereby at the group-level sources
252 can tend to accumulate in biologically implausible central regions of the brain.

253 To better understand the location of our cluster of pulling related activity, we
254 compared it to the origin of the P50 generated in response to the Neutral common stimuli
255 (an ERP independent of the main 'Opposite pull oddball' vs 'Pull oddball after neutral'
256 comparison), since the P50 is known to originate in SI (Allison et al., 1992). For this
257 visualization we ran the same SPM group inversion but using a window of -100-100ms and
258 contrasted (paired sample t-test) the baseline period (-100-0ms) with the P50 window (40-
259 64ms) in the Neutral common condition, threshold at $P < 0.0006$ uncorrected. The
260 threshold was chosen so that the top cluster contained approximately the same number of
261 voxels (2018 voxels) as the 'pulling related activity' cluster (2012 voxels).

262 The location of these clusters of brain activity was compared using the SPM
263 anatomy toolbox (Eickhoff et al., 2005), which provides a list of brain areas ranked
264 according to the likelihood that the observed activity originates within their probabilistically
265 defined boundaries. We considered the top five areas to be representative of the cluster
266 origin, given the spatial limitations of EEG. Ratios (Table 1) are calculated automatically by
267 the toolbox for each area by dividing the mean probability at cluster location by the mean
268 probability across the entire probability map of the brain. Higher values indicate location
269 more towards the center of the area.

270 **Traditional ERP analysis**

271 We also used a traditional ERP approach using ERPLab (Lopez-Calderon and Luck,
272 2014), in which we selected electrode locations and time windows based on previous

273 research (Allison et al., 1992; Kekoni et al., 1997; Akatsuka et al., 2005; Shen et al., 2018),
274 wide ERP windows were favored to avoid biasing conditions where the ERPs were
275 flattened due to greater onset variability (Luck, 2014). Epochs were averaged for each of
276 the 9 conditions and oddball difference waves were calculated by subtracting the activity of
277 each stimulus when it was acting as the common stimulus from the activity of the same
278 stimulus when it was acting as an oddball (Pulvermüller et al., 2006). Left and right
279 directional versions of each oddball difference wave were averaged together to give the
280 final experimental condition (Opposite pull oddball), and two other oddball conditions ('Pull
281 oddball after neutral' and 'Neutral oddball'), oddball difference waves.

282 Mean amplitude of the P50 (30 - 70ms), N140 (100 - 150ms), P200 (150 – 250ms)
283 and P3b (250 – 500ms) event related potentials (ERPs) were quantified from the epoched
284 and difference wave data for each condition. We calculated the onset latency of all ERPs
285 by calculating the point where the signal reached 50% of the peak value within each time
286 window. In line with previous literature, P50 analysis was based on the 6 electrodes
287 surrounding P3, N140 analysis was based on the 5 electrodes surrounding F3, while P200
288 and P3b analysis was based on the 5 electrodes surrounding Cz. ERP measures were
289 compared across conditions via paired sample t-tests. Our main comparison concerned
290 the ERP responses in the 'Opposite pull oddball' condition compared to the 'Pull oddball
291 after neutral' condition, however we also compared the 'Opposite pull oddball' condition to
292 the 'Neutral oddball' condition and compared the 'Pull oddball after neutral' condition to the
293 'Neutral oddball' condition.

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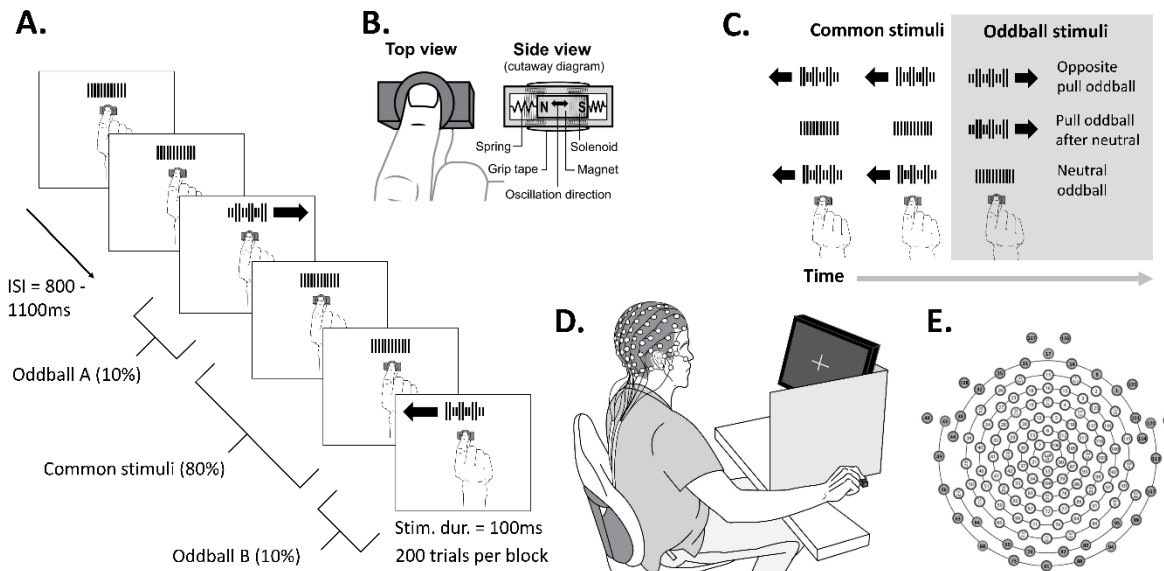
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308 **Figure 1: Task design and experimental setup.**

309 **A.** Task design showing a single block in which Neutral (symmetric vibration) is the common
310 stimulus and Left and Right pull (asymmetric vibration) are the randomly appearing Oddballs. Note
311 that there were two other types of blocks, in which the Left and Right pulling stimuli acted as the
312 common stimuli, with the oddballs being Neutral and Right, and Neutral and Left respectively.
313 Participants had to silently count all oddballs and report their count at the end of the block.

314 **B.** Close up of the device used to generate asymmetric and symmetric vibration, showing top and
315 cutaway view. Different acceleration profiles of the oscillating magnet were created by varying the
316 current in the solenoids.

317 **C.** The three oddball conditions consisted of the 'Opposite pull oddball' condition (Right pull
318 oddballs after Left pull common and Left pull oddballs after Right pull common), the 'Pull oddball
319 after neutral' condition (Left and Right pull oddballs after Neutral common), and the 'Neutral oddball'
320 condition (Neutral oddballs after Left and Right common).

321 **D.** Experimental setup showing participant holding the unattached vibrating device in their right
322 hand using a pinch grip whilst high-density EEG was recorded.

323 **E.** Diagram showing relative location of the 129 electrodes. Electrodes from face, ears and neck
324 (shown in grey) were excluded from main analysis due to artefacts.

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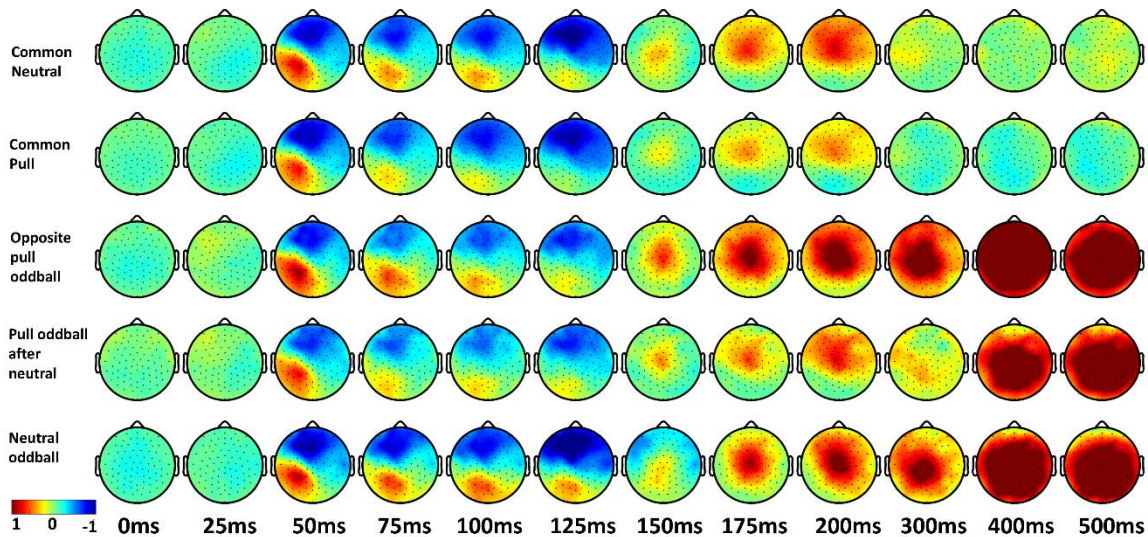
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329 Results

330 Pulling related activity 280ms post-stimulus over the parietal lobe

331 We combined a tactile oddball task, in which uncommon target stimuli must be
332 detected from a stream of common stimuli, with asymmetric (left/right pulling) and
333 symmetric vibration (neutral) stimuli (Fig. 1.). ERPs from all conditions can be seen in
334 Figure 2. The purpose of our main contrast, comparing the 'Opposite pull oddball'
335 condition and 'Pull oddball after neutral' condition (Fig. 1C.) was to find brain activity
336 specific to having a directional pulling expectation violated by a different directional pull (i.e.
337 expect left but get right pull). We analyzed the entire response window for significant
338 clusters in an unbiased manner. This revealed a cluster of significant activity (264-320ms)
339 that peaked over the left parietal cortex (280ms post-stimulus onset) and extended
340 anteriorly to cover part of the left frontal lobe by ~300ms post-stimulus onset (Figs. 5A- 5C).



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342

343 **Figure 2. Instantaneous ERP amplitude across conditions.** The amplitude (μV) of
344 scalp activity across time in the two common stimulus conditions: 'Common neutral' and
345 'Common pull' (mean of Left and Right common), and in the three Oddball conditions:
346 'Opposite pull oddball' (mean of Left oddball after right common and Right oddball after
347 Left common), 'Pull oddball after neutral' (mean of Left oddball after Neutral common and
348 Right oddball after Neutral common), and 'Neutral oddball' (mean of Neutral oddball after
349 Left common and Neutral oddball after Right common).

350

351

352 **Pulling related activity is spatiotemporally distinct from early processing in sensory**
353 **and frontal regions**

354 An early sensory-frontal account of the pulling sensation predicts pulling-related
355 amplitude enhancements of the N140. However, the reverse was observed and we did not
356 find evidence that the N140 indexes the pulling sensation. (Fig. 3C-3D; Tables 2 & 3). If
357 the N140 indexed the pulling sensation it should have been present in the ‘Opposite pull
358 oddballs’ condition difference waves (Fig. 3D; red line) and larger than the other two
359 oddball conditions (i.e. more negative). In fact, the mean difference wave from
360 contralateral frontal sites was slightly *positive* in the ‘Opposite pull oddballs’ condition and
361 did not differ from that seen in the ‘Pull oddball after neutral’ condition (0.19 μ V vs 0.19 μ V; t
362 (14) = -0.099, p = 0.923, Cohen’s d = -0.02). Indeed, only in the ‘Neutral oddball’ condition
363 was the difference wave negative during the N140 window, with the N140 being
364 significantly larger than that observed for the ‘Opposite pull oddballs’ condition (-0.17 μ V vs
365 0.19 μ V; t (14) = 2.595, p = 0.021, Cohen’s d = 0.84) and the ‘Pull oddball after neutral’
366 condition (-0.17 μ V vs 0.19 μ V; t (14) = 2.599, p = 0.021, Cohen’s d = 0.98). There were no
367 differences in N140 onset latency across conditions (Tables 2 & 3).

368 We did not observe any differences in the P50 amplitude or latency across oddball
369 conditions (Fig. 3B.; Tables 2 & 3). An early, sensory-frontal account predicts higher
370 feedforward activity in SI, which we did not observe. Nevertheless, it is difficult to conclude
371 anything from this null result, which could simply be due to noise in the data.

372 Next, we sought to determine whether pulling related activity was spatially distinct
373 from early sensory activity. The results must be interpreted cautiously owing to the inverse
374 problem and poor spatial acuity of the EEG signal (Grech et al., 2008). Group inversion of
375 the pulling-related scalp activity (Fig. 5D, red and green patches; Table 1) suggested an
376 origin in the left parietal cortex, corresponding to the postcentral sulcus, superior parietal
377 lobule (SPL) and the intraparietal sulcus (IPS). The SPM anatomy toolkit indicated that the
378 cluster was centered on the IPS (Fig. 5.; Table 1).

379 For comparison we analyzed the approximate location of SI using the Neutral
380 common condition P50 activity, since the P50 has been shown to have its main origin
381 inside SI (Allison et al., 1992). This cluster was found to be located somewhat anterior,
382 though partially overlapping with, our pulling related cluster of activity (Fig. 5D, blue and
383 green patches; Table 1). The SPM anatomy toolkit indicated there was some P50 activity
384 in the postcentral sulcus and SPL, as with the pulling related activity. However, unlike the
385 pulling related activity, the P50 cluster was not strongly represented in the IPS, and
386 instead was represented in the postcentral gyrus, consistent with the approximate location
387 of the SI hand area (Holmes et al., 2019).

388 Taken together the results argue against an early sensory-frontal account of the
389 pulling sensation. The N140 was, contrary to the sensory-frontal account, attenuated for
390 pulling oddballs and enhanced for neutral oddballs. Pulling related activity occurred later
391 (280ms; see also P200 and P3b results below) and was centered on the parietal

392 association cortex, overlapping with, but spatially distinct from the site of early sensory
393 activity.

394 **Lack of significant activity when comparing to neutral oddballs**

395 We did not observe any significant clusters of activity when the 'Neutral oddball'
396 condition was compared to either of the other two oddball conditions using the SPM scalp
397 analysis. This may in part have been due to the large P3b generated by Neutral oddballs
398 (Fig. 4.) which obscured any differences between the 'Neutral oddball' and 'Opposite pull
399 oddball' conditions (*see below and discussion*).

400 **Pulling related activity associated with earlier and larger P200 and P3b responses**

401 The 'Opposite pull oddball' condition was associated with larger amplitude P200
402 responses than the 'Pull oddball after neutral' condition ($0.68\mu\text{V}$ vs $0.27\mu\text{V}$; $t(14) = 2.818$,
403 $p = 0.014$, Cohen's $d = 0.72$; Fig 4; Tables 2 & 3) and the 'Neutral oddball' condition
404 ($0.68\mu\text{V}$ vs $0.18\mu\text{V}$; $t(14) = 2.24$, $p = 0.042$, Cohen's $d = 0.79$). P200 latency was also
405 shorter for the 'Opposite pull oddball' condition compared to the 'Pull oddball after neutral'
406 condition (173.03ms vs 193.91ms ; $t(12) = -2.388$, $p = 0.034$, Cohen's $d = -0.85$), but not
407 when the Opposite pull oddball' condition was compared to the 'Neutral oddball condition'
408 ($t(13) = -0.799$, $p = 0.439$).

409 For the P3b the 'Opposite pull oddball' condition was also associated with larger
410 amplitude ($2.07\mu\text{V}$ vs $1.25\mu\text{V}$; $t(14) = 2.499$, $p = 0.026$, Cohen's $d = 0.62$; Fig. 4; Tables 2
411 & 3) and shorter latency (335.42ms vs 382.84ms ; $t(14) = -3.84$, $p = 0.002$, Cohen's $d = -$
412 1.07) responses compared to the 'Pull oddball after neutral' condition. No significant
413 differences in P3b amplitude or latency were observed when comparing the 'Opposite pull
414 oddball' condition with the 'Neutral oddball' condition (Fig. 4; Tables 2 & 3.). This was likely
415 because the P3b was larger than expected in the 'Neutral oddball' condition. Indeed, for
416 the P3b, compared to the 'Pull after neutral oddball' condition, the 'Neutral oddball'
417 condition was associated with earlier ERP onset latencies ($t(14) = 5.221$, $p < 0.001$,
418 Cohen's $d = 0.93$) and a trend towards larger mean amplitudes ($t(14) = -2.118$, $p = 0.053$,
419 Cohen's $d = 0.34$; Fig. 4; Tables 2 & 3.).

420

421 **Opposite direction pulls easier to discriminate behaviorally**

422 We tested participants' ability to discriminate between the three different types of
423 stimuli (Left/Right pulls and Neutral). All participants were able to clearly feel the pulling
424 sensation (Fig. 3A). A subset of tested participants was better at discriminating Left vs.
425 Right than discriminating Left/Right vs Neutral (93.78% (SD = 7.03) vs. 86.22% (SD =
426 6.83); $t(8) = -2.591$, $p = 0.032$, Cohen's $d = 1.09$; Fig. 3A. right panel). This finding was
427 expected, given that Left/Right discrimination is similar to the 'Opposite pull oddball'
428 condition, which was associated with the strongest brain response across conditions. We
429 did not find any difference in pre-test pulling discrimination accuracy when comparing Left
430 vs. Neutral to Right vs. Neutral (85.33% (SD = 7.62) vs. 81.45% (SD = 14.9); $t(14) = -$

431 1.439, $p = 0.172$; Fig. 3A. left panel). When asked, participants reported that neutral stimuli
 432 (symmetric vibration) were subjectively similar to asymmetric vibration, aside from the
 433 absence of the pulling sensation.

434 Responses were not biased to the left or right. Participants did not differ in their
 435 propensity to respond left as opposed to neutral (47.6% vs. 52.4%; $t(14) = 1.103$, $p =$
 436 0.288) or right as opposed to neutral (53.07% vs. 46.93%; $t(14) = -1.667$, $p = 0.118$) during
 437 the pre-test discrimination task. Likewise, there was no difference when left and right were
 438 compared directly, either using the discrimination from neutral conditions ($t(14) = 0.544$, p
 439 $= 0.595$) or when left and right pulling sensations were discriminated from one another
 440 directly (52.22% vs 47.78%; $t(8) = -0.989$, $p = 0.352$).

441 During the main task, oddball counting error did not differ when comparing Left
 442 Common to Right Common blocks (5.49 (SD = 3.23) vs 4.73 (SD = 2.51); $Z = -0.483$, $p =$
 443 0.631) or when comparing mean Left/Right common blocks to Neutral common blocks
 444 (5.11 (SD = 2.34) vs 5.73 (SD = 2.34); $Z = 1.079$, $p = 0.28$). This lack of difference
 445 suggests there were no major differences in performance level, effort or attention across
 446 block types, which, if present, could have confounded our interpretation of the EEG results.

447 The behavioral measures were added as covariates in our SPM analyses, but the
 448 results did not substantially change (Table 4), ruling out the possibility that our clusters of
 449 significant activity were artefacts of extremes of task performance.

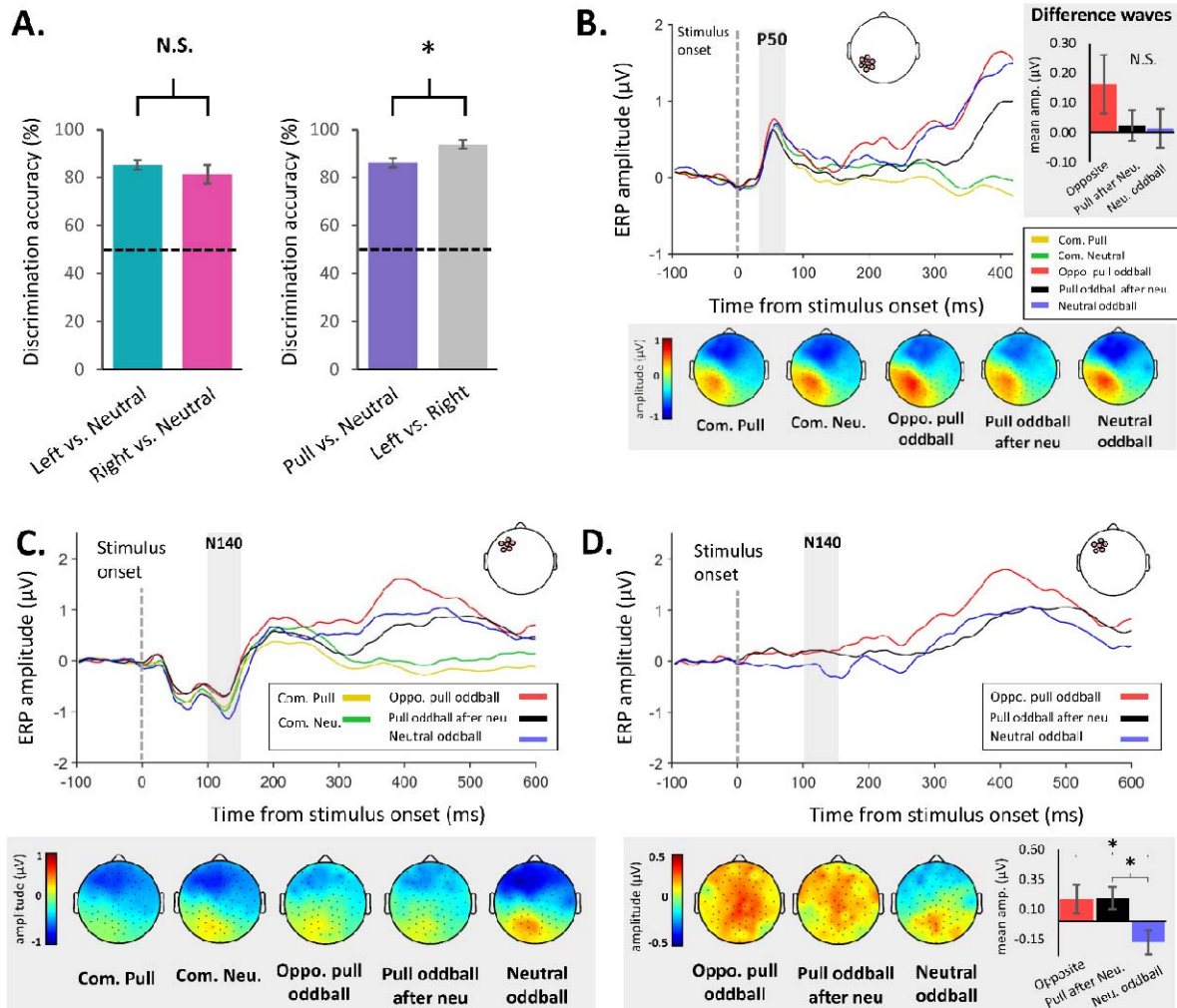
450 **Table 1:** Cluster locations for pull related activity (Opposite pull oddballs vs Pull oddball
 451 after neutral) and Neutral common P50 activity, based on maximum probability maps.
 452 Estimates of activated areas were based on clusters of 2012 ($p < 0.05$) and 2018 ($p <$
 453 0.0006) voxels respectively. Only the five areas calculated to be the most likely origin for
 454 activity area shown, sorted according to percent of the cluster volume found in each area.
 455 Note that high ratio values indicate higher probabilities that the cluster had an origin in the
 456 specific brain area (see methods for details).

457

Contrast	Assignment based on Maximum Probability Map	Percent of Cluster volume in Area	Percent of Area activated by Cluster	Ratio
Pull related activity	Area 7A (SPL)	11.6	13.5	1.13
	Area 2	8	15.5	1.01
	Area hIP2 (IPS)	7.2	25.7	1.77
	Area hIP6 (IPS)	5.9	15.4	1.33
	Area hIP3 (IPS)	4.6	11	0.81
Neutral common P50	Area 2	15.8	30.6	1.23
	Area 3b	11.7	16.6	1.28
	Area 7A (SPL)	9.3	10.9	1.48
	Area 4p	6.6	24.9	1.55
	Area 3a	5.2	23.8	1.37

458

459



460

461 **Figure 3. Behavioral, P50 and N140 ERP results**

462 **A.** Group mean pre-test pulling discrimination accuracy was high in all conditions,
 463 indicating that all experimental stimuli could clearly be perceived. There was no difference
 464 in participants' ability to discriminate Left and Right pulls (asymmetric vibration) from
 465 Neutral stimuli (symmetric vibration), but performance was better in a subset (n = 9) when
 466 discriminating Left from Right pulls as opposed from discriminating either of the pulling
 467 stimuli from the Neutral stimulus. * $p < 0.05$, N.S. = Not Significant.

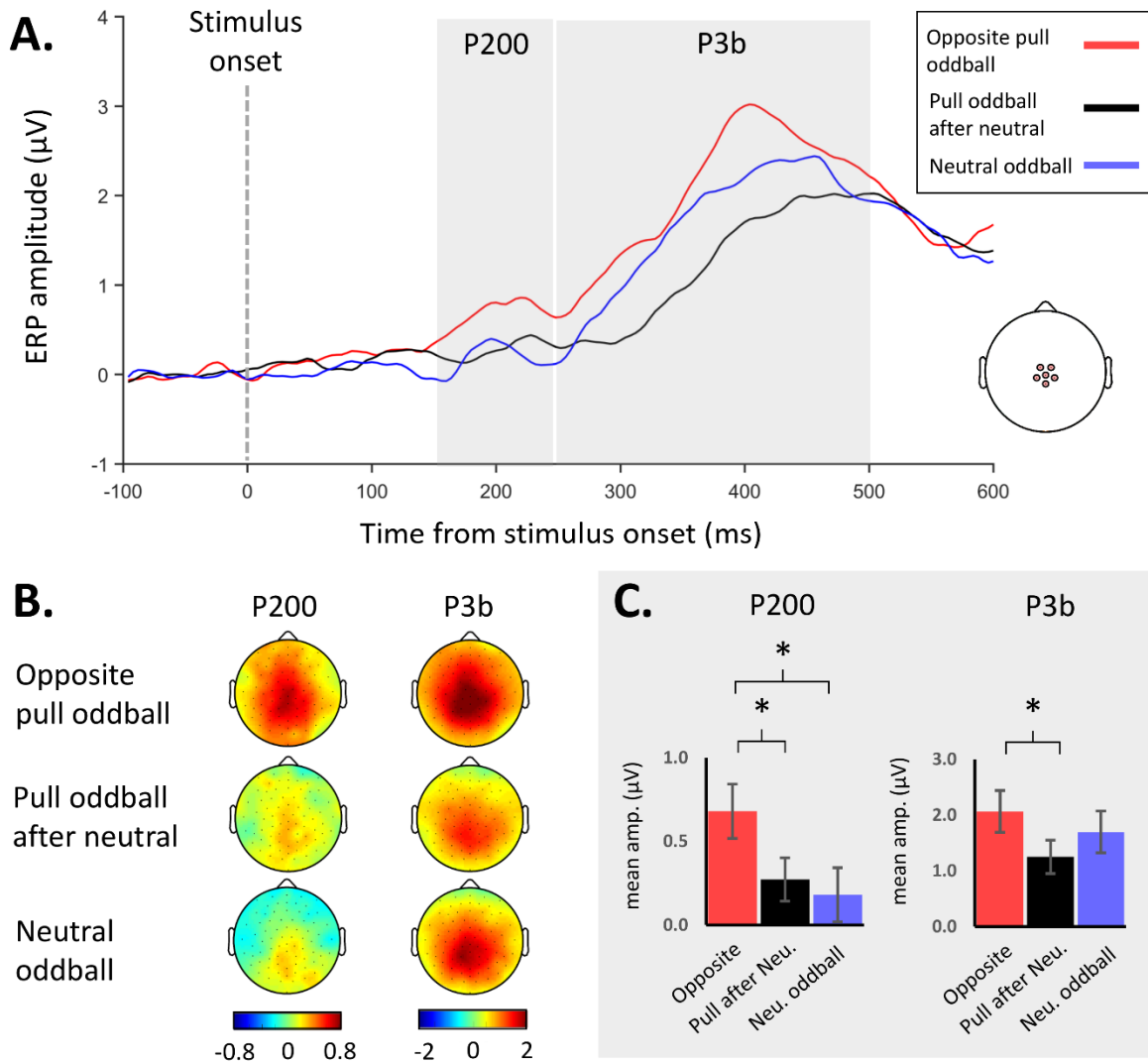
468 **B.** Group mean P50 amplitude and scalp maps (30-70ms) for all conditions. When
 469 comparing difference waves across the three oddball conditions over the contralateral
 470 parietal cortex there was no difference in mean amplitude. N.S. = Not Significant.

471 **C.** Group mean N140 amplitude and scalp maps (100-150ms) for all conditions.

472 **D.** Difference waves from contralateral frontal electrodes showing larger N140 for the
473 'Neutral oddball' condition compared to the 'Opposite pull oddball' and Pull oddball after
474 neutral' condition. * $p < 0.05$, N.S. = Not Significant.

475

476



477

478 **Figure 4. P200 and P3b oddball effects across conditions.**

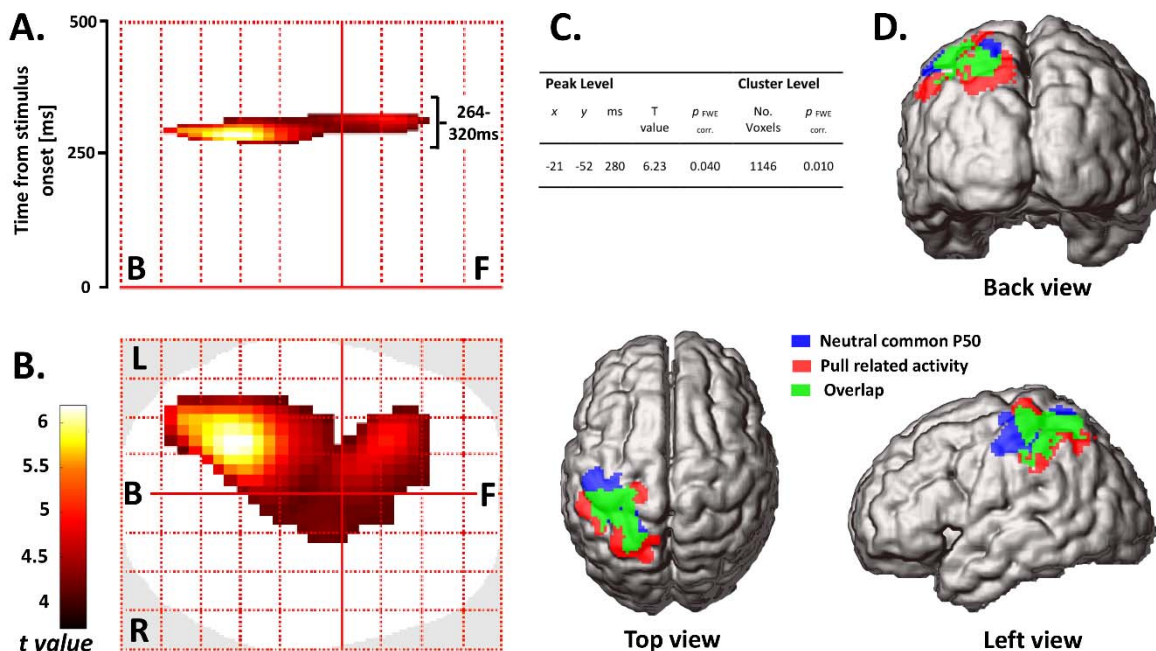
479 **A.** Group average ERP oddball difference waves (subtraction of activity related to common
480 stimuli) from central electrodes shown for the three oddball conditions. P200 (150-250ms)
481 and P3b (250-500ms) windows shown in grey.

482 **B.** Group average difference wave scalp activity for the P200 and P3b in each of the three
483 oddball conditions.

484 **C.** Group average P200 amplitude was significantly larger in the ‘Opposite pull oddball’
485 condition than both the other two oddball conditions, while P3b activity was larger in the
486 ‘Opposite pull oddball’ condition than the ‘Pull oddball after neutral’ condition. * $p < 0.05$.

487

488



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490

491 **Figure 5. Brain activity associated with the pulling sensation.**

492 **A-C.** Results of SPM topographical analysis in sensor space when contrasting the
493 ‘Opposite pull oddball’ and ‘Pull oddball after neutral’ conditions. A cluster of significant
494 activity ($p < 0.001$ uncorrected, $p < 0.05$ FWE cluster threshold) was observed (264-320ms
495 after stimulus onset), peaking at 280ms over the left parietal cortex and extending
496 anteriorly. In table, x position is positive-going left to right, y position is positive-going from
497 posterior to anterior.

498 **D.** Group inversion ($p < 0.05$ uncorrected) suggested the significant scalp activity
499 originated from the left parietal cortex. To clarify the location of this activity we conducted a
500 separate group inversion using the Neutral common condition, in the P50 time window (40-
501 64ms). This was overlaid on the previously identified pulling related activity, and showed a
502 more anterior distribution, close to the SI hand area.

503

504

505

506 **Table 2:** Onset latency and mean amplitude for P50, N140, P200 and P3b ERPs derived
 507 from difference waves for the three oddball conditions. Group (n=15) mean and (SD)
 508 values shown. Note that the onset could not always be identified when using difference
 509 waves. So for P50 onset latency n = 13 in the Opposite oddball condition and n = 14 in the
 510 Neutral oddball condition, for N140 onset latency n = 13 in the Opposite oddball condition
 511 and n = 11 in the Pull after Neutral condition, and for P200 onset latency n = 13 in the Pull
 512 oddball after neutral condition and n = 14 in the Neutral oddball condition.

Condition	Latency (ms)				Mean amplitude (μ V)			
	P50	N140	P200	P3b	P50	N140	P200	P3b
Opposite oddball	42.68 (10.9)	118.77 (12.1)	173.03 (23.88)	335.42 (40.43)	0.16 (0.38)	0.19 (0.46)	0.68 (0.63)	2.07 (1.45)
Pull oddball after neutral	38.02 (12.2)	115.49 (16.32)	193.91 (25.19)	382.84 (47.87)	0.02 (0.2)	0.19 (0.36)	0.27 (0.5)	1.25 (1.17)
Neutral Oddball	45.96 (9.96)	110.41 (15.87)	179.31 (19.91)	338.76 (47.16)	0.01 (0.25)	-0.17 (0.39)	0.18 (0.63)	1.7 (1.45)

513

514

515 **Table 3:** Statistical comparison using paired sample t-test of onset latency and mean
 516 amplitude for P50, N140, P200 and P3b ERPs comparing the three oddball conditions.
 517 Shown are t-values, with p-values in parenthesis (* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001).
 518 DF = 14, except when onset latency could not be identified. P50 latency DF = 12 for Oppo.
 519 vs. Pull after neu. and DF = 13 for other two comparisons. N140 latency DF = 8 for Oppo.
 520 vs. Pull after neu., DF = 12 for Oppo. vs. Neu. Oddball, and DF = 10 for Pull after neu. vs.
 521 Neu. Oddball. P200 latency DF = 12 for Oppo. vs. Pull after neu., DF = 13 for Oppo. vs.
 522 Neu. Oddball, DF = 11 for Pull after neu. vs. Neu. Oddball.

523

Comparison	Latency				Mean amplitude			
	P50	N140	P200	P3b	P50	N140	P200	P3b
Oppo. vs. Pull after neu.	0.874 (0.399)	0.172 (0.867)	-2.388 (0.034*)	-3.84 (0.002**)	1.455 (0.168)	-0.099 (0.923)	2.818 (0.014*)	2.499 (0.026*)
Oppo. vs. Neu. Oddball	-0.296 (0.773)	1.024 (0.326)	-0.799 (0.439)	-0.412 (0.686)	1.164 (0.264)	2.595 (0.021*)	2.240 (0.042*)	1.104 (0.288)
Pull after neu. vs. Neu. Oddball	-1.496 (0.158)	0.531 (0.607)	1.684 (0.120)	5.221 (<0.001***)	0.143 (0.889)	2.599 (0.021*)	0.479 (0.639)	-2.118 (0.053)

524

525

526 **Table 4:** Results of the SPM sensor space contrast comparing the ‘Opposite pull oddball
527 condition’ and ‘Pull oddball after neutral’ condition, using behavioral measures as
528 covariates. Threshold was set at $p < 0.001$ uncorrected and only clusters that passed
529 family-wise (FWE) cluster threshold of $p < 0.1$ were included, x position is positive-going
530 left to right, y position is positive-going from posterior to anterior.

531

Behavioral covariate	Peak Level			T value	$p_{\text{FWE corr.}}$	Cluster Level	
	x	y	ms			No. Voxels	$p_{\text{FWE corr.}}$
Pull vs Neutral discrimination	-21	-52	280	6.59	0.036	757	0.030
Mean oddball count error	-21	-52	280	6.01	0.067	537	0.061
Left/Right common, oddball count error	-21	-52	280	6.10	0.062	568	0.055
Neutral common, oddball count error	-21	-46	280	6.41	0.043	897	0.020

532

533 Discussion

534 Research using monkeys (Salimi et al., 1999; Backlund Wasling et al., 2008;
535 Fortier-Poisson et al., 2016) and work addressing peripheral tactile processing in humans
536 (Birznieks et al., 2001; Pruszynski and Johansson, 2014) suggested that the rapid
537 extraction of force vectors is possible. Drawing on this, and work detailing the SI, SII and
538 PFC circuitry involved in tactile frequency discrimination (Romo and Salinas, 2003), we
539 formulated a sensory-frontal account of the pulling sensation. This account holds that
540 spatial processing is not necessary for pulling sensations, and that directional pulls can be
541 identified with reference to stored patterns of activity. In contrast, a spatial account argues
542 that such processing is not sufficient, and that activity in the somatosensory association
543 cortex is instead required for the pulling sensation to emerge. We used high-density EEG,
544 combined with an illusory pulling sensation embedded within an oddball task, and found
545 evidence that supported this latter, somatosensory association cortex account.

546 Evidence against an early sensory-frontal account of pulling sensations

547 The sensory-frontal account predicted that pulling sensations should enhance the
548 N140, either directly, because of shared underlying mechanisms, or indirectly because of
549 the redirection of attention. Direct enhancement was suggested by the fact that the N140
550 generators overlap with the SII and PFC circuitry involved in tactile frequency
551 discrimination (Allison et al., 1992; Frot et al., 1999; Valeriani et al., 2001; de Lafuente and

552 Romo, 2006), and because the N140 indexes somatosensory awareness (Aukstulewicz
553 et al., 2012; Aukstulewicz and Blankenburg, 2013; Forschack et al., 2020; Schröder et al.,
554 2021) and texture perception (Genna et al., 2018), processes closely related to the pulling
555 sensation. Indirectly, the N140 is implicated in the detection of oddballs (Kekoni et al.,
556 1997; Andrew et al., 2020), and with both endogenous and exogenous tactile attention
557 (Nakajima and Imamura, 2000). As such, if the pulling sensation emerged upstream of
558 N140 generators, greater attention should have been directed towards the stimulus,
559 resulting in downstream N140 enhancement (Forster and Eimer, 2004).

560 However, we did not find any such pulling-related enhancements of the N140. We
561 observed the opposite: pulling sensations slightly attenuated the N140, while neutral
562 oddball stimuli actually produced a larger N140 than pulling oddballs. This result suggests
563 that the sensory-frontal account is unlikely to be correct and that pulling sensations
564 emerged via alternate mechanisms. Conversely, neutral oddballs (symmetric vibration),
565 which participants reported being subjectively similar to asymmetric vibration aside from
566 the absence of the pulling sensation, were apparently processed in a manner more similar
567 to how vibration frequency is discriminated.

568 Our N140 findings constrain theoretical accounts, since they suggest that the
569 pulling sensation does not emerge during the initial stages of somatosensory processing.
570 Consistent with this, we did not observe any pulling-related P50 effects, although little can
571 be concluded from this null result. Indeed, our results do not contradict earlier research
572 involving monkeys that reported rapid SI processing of tangential forces (Salimi et al.,
573 1999). Early processing in SI is undoubtedly necessary, but as our results show, likely not
574 sufficient for the pulling sensation to emerge. Moreover, we found that later pulling-related
575 activity (264-320ms) did overlap with the posterior portion of SI. SI may contribute to
576 awareness of the pulling sensation via reentrant activity from the parietal lobe
577 (Aukstulewicz et al., 2012; Meador et al., 2017).

578 **A somatosensory association cortex account of the pulling sensation**

579 Pulling related activity occurred 264-320ms post-stimulus, beginning and peaking
580 (280ms) over the contralateral parietal lobe. Source localization indicated an origin in the
581 postcentral sulcus, SPL, and IPS, posterior to an independent localization of SI. This
582 pattern of activity is consistent with a spatial account of the pulling sensation, specifically
583 that feeling a directional tactile pull depends on the integration of body location processing
584 with processing of the force vector orientation and direction in space.

585 Unlike other bodily illusions involving illusory external forces (De Havas et al., 2017,
586 2018), asymmetric vibration produces a clear sensation that the hand is being pulled yet is
587 stationary. The brain therefore needs to determine that the hand is not moving despite an
588 apparent external force. The postcentral sulcus may contribute to the pulling sensation by

589 providing input regarding hand position, since this is a key somatosensory area for
590 proprioception (Soechting and Flanders, 1989; Cohen and Andersen, 2002; London and
591 Miller, 2013; Chowdhury et al., 2020) and is involved in generating vibration-based
592 proprioceptive body illusions (Ehrsson et al., 2005).

593 Our parietal cluster of pulling-related activity was centered on the IPS, which may
594 contribute to the pulling sensation by extracting the orientation of the illusory force vector,
595 as with the orientation of graspable objects (Hadjikhani and Roland, 1998; Frey et al.,
596 2005; Van Boven et al., 2005; Wacker et al., 2011; Leoné et al., 2015). IPS activity might
597 also be related to anticipatory grip control (Ehrsson et al., 2003; van Polanen et al., 2020),
598 indicating that such control can be decoupled from the actual need to adjust grip strength.

599 The SPL is involved in spatial cognition (Colby and Goldberg, 1999; Sack, 2009),
600 body location processing (Graziano et al., 2000; Felician et al., 2004) and transformations
601 into body centered reference frames (Lacquaniti et al., 1995; Gallivan et al., 2009). To
602 determine where a pull is directed, and to dissociate pulls from merely moving tactile
603 stimuli (Lin and Kajola, 2003; Oh et al., 2017), processes in the SPL could map an
604 extracted force vector in hand or externally-centered coordinates.

605 The poor spatial acuity of EEG means we cannot be certain which of these brain
606 areas represent the true loci of pulling related activity. Nevertheless, we can be confident
607 about the temporal evolution of the pulling sensation, which emerged 280ms post-stimulus
608 and modified the P200. Pulling-related activity can therefore be temporally dissociated
609 from the predominantly feedforward processing in SI and SII (< 70ms), as well as from the
610 initial engagement of the parietal cortex (70-100ms), which, during oddball tasks, is likely
611 related to identifying the unusualness of the stimulus (Huang et al., 2005). Instead, the
612 timing of the pulling related activity is similar to other somatosensory illusions, such as the
613 rubber hand illusion, which has recently been found to be associated with parietal and
614 frontal activity 200-300ms post-stimulus (Rao and Kayser, 2017; Guterstam et al., 2019).
615 Of more direct relevance, the temporal characteristics of the pulling sensation are
616 consistent with tactile remapping. Tactile remapping, whereby a force vector is
617 transformed into bodily centered coordinate system, depends on activity in the SPL and
618 IPS (Azañón et al., 2010; Ritterband-Rosenbaum et al., 2014; Heed et al., 2015), takes
619 place after initial somatosensory processing has been completed, and is closely
620 associated with the P200 (Longo et al., 2012; Bufalari et al., 2014). Thus, converging lines
621 of evidence point towards a spatial, parietal cortex account of the pulling sensation.

622 **Processing related to the violation and updating of sensory expectations**

623 Comparing opposite direction oddballs to the same oddballs after neutral stimuli
624 was designed to isolate activity specific to having directional pulling expectations violated
625 by directional pulling sensations. We are therefore acknowledging an inherently predictive

626 account of perception (Berthoz, 2000; Friston, 2005). However, it is difficult to exclude
627 activity related to the process of comparison itself (Garrido et al., 2009; Camalier et al.,
628 2019).

629 Two caveats must be addressed. Firstly, within a Bayesian framework, our main
630 result, that opposite pull oddballs produced larger parietal activity than the same oddballs
631 in the context of neutral common stimuli, could be argued to be due to neutral common
632 stimuli forming weaker priors than pulling stimuli, which in turn would produce a smaller
633 response when the priors were confounded by the oddball. This argument, however, is not
634 wholly convincing because opposite pull oddballs produced a larger P200 response than
635 neutral oddballs, despite having matched common stimuli, and thus the same priors.
636 Additionally, neutral common stimuli produced slightly larger ERPs than pulling common
637 stimuli, suggesting comparable or greater salience, and rendering weaker priors doubtful.

638 A second, related caveat, is that the parietal lobe activity we observed might reflect
639 the contradiction of an expected pulling direction by *any* tactile stimulus, since we did not
640 observe the same pattern of activity when contrasting opposite pull oddballs with neutral
641 oddballs. This result was likely due to the inherent uncertainty of the neutral stimulus when
642 acting as an oddball, a factor known to amplify long-latency ERPs (Stern et al., 2010; Furl
643 and Averbeck, 2011; Kopp et al., 2016), and explaining the large P3b found in the Neutral
644 oddball condition.

645 After the pulling sensation has been generated and its direction determined,
646 stimulus classification and memory updating processes can begin; processes indexed by
647 the P3b (Polich, 2007). Earlier and larger P3b responses for opposite direction oddballs
648 were probably observed because the extracted oddball pulling direction was maximally
649 different from the common stimulus extracted direction (Miltner et al., 1989; Nakajima and
650 Imamura, 2000).

651 **Conclusion**

652 Our findings suggest the sensation of being pulled emerges through parietal lobe
653 activity 280ms post-stimulus, related to processing proprioception, tactile orientation and
654 peripersonal space. This first step towards a spatiotemporally precise account of the
655 pulling sensation will aid the development of handheld vibration devices for gaming,
656 navigation and guiding the visually impaired (Amemiya and Sugiyama, 2010; Takamuku et
657 al., 2016; Gomi et al., 2019) and may shed light on the role of pulling sensations in parent-
658 infant communication and developmental disorders characterized by somatosensory
659 deficits (Cascio, 2010). Understanding the neural mechanisms of the pulling sensation
660 delineates its commonalities and differences with other sensorimotor processes, such as
661 tactile motion detection, grasping control and bodily awareness, furthering a more
662 complete account of parietal lobe function.

663

664 **Acknowledgements**

665 This work was supported by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (JP16H06566) from
666 Japan Society for the Promotion of Science to HG, and by a research contract between
667 NTT and UCL.

668

669 **Author contributions**

670 JDH, SI and HG conceived the study and designed the experiments. JDH and SI collected
671 the data. JDH, SB and HG conceived the data analysis. JDH analyzed the data. JDH, SB
672 and HG wrote the manuscript. All authors provided comments and approved the
673 manuscript.

674 **Declaration of interests**

675 The authors declare no competing interests.

676

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