Novel Methods to Clinically Quantify Suppression and Stereopsis Thresholds in Studies of Amblyopia

F.A. Vera-Diaz¹, MY. Kwon², S. Weifenbach¹, P.J. Bex³

¹New England College of Optometry, ²UAB Dept. Ophthalmology, ³NEU Dept. Psychology

Background

- Two uses of stereopsis tests in routine eye exams:
  - Establish whether binocular vision is present and evaluate its quality
  - Assess the patient’s ability to undertake a visual task that requires certain level of depth perception
- However, currently available clinical tests for stereopsis do not relate to everyday visual tasks, in fact they do not relate to each other.
- Current need for effective clinical tools to evaluate suppression and stereopsis.
- Particularly when fine (thresholds) and accurate measures (no monocular cues) are required (e.g., clinical research for new amblyopia therapy).
- Currently available research methods to evaluate suppression and stereopsis are not practical for clinical use.
- The importance of stereopsis and binocular vision is increasing with the widespread use of 3D technology.

Purpose

- The goal of this cross-sectional study was to explore the clinical feasibility of methods developed by Kwon, Wiecek, Dakin, & Bex (2015) in evaluating stereo acuity and suppression thresholds.

Subjects

- Subjects with various levels of stereopsis and suppression were evaluated:
  - n = 18 adults (18 - 32 years)
    - (n = 7 with diagnosed amblyopia / strabismus)
  - n = 6 children (10 - 17 years)
    - (n = 2 with diagnosed amblyopia / strabismus)

Vision screening:
- Ocular history
- Autorefraction and subjective refraction to determine best refractive correction
- BCVA with LogMAR computer chart
- Cover Test with best correction
- Subjects wore best refractive correction for all experimental procedures

Methods

Stereopsis and suppression thresholds were compared between the clinical and experimental tests.

1. Stereopsis clinical tests:
   - a) Random Dot 3 @ 40cm
     - Random-dot stereogram
     - 900-12.5arcsec, 17 steps
   - b) Randot® Preschool @ 40cm
     - Random-dot stereogram
     - 800-40arcsec, 6 steps
   - c) Frisby real space
     - Real depth disparities. Avoiding monocular cues.
     - 600 - 5 sec of arc (varying viewing distance)

2. Experimental stereopsis test:
   - d) Spatial frequency-dependent stereoscopic Sloan letters chart (Kwon et al, 2015)
     - Band-pass filtered Sloan letters (SF 0.5, 1.5, 2.5, 5.0 cpd) presented binocularly in 3D computer display (120Hz) and Nvidia 3D Vision 2 glasses (60Hz per eye)
     - Subjects asked which letter pops in or out “One letter will either be closer to you or further away than the other four letters”

3. Suppression clinical tests:
   - a) Worth-4 Dot light test @ 40cm & @ 6m
   - b) Bagolini Striated lenses @ 40cm
     - * With ND filters (0.3 to 1.8 log units)

4. Experimental suppression tests

Discussion

- The experimental stereo-threshold test was correlated with clinical test at mid-spatial frequencies, suggesting that these frequencies determine perception in broad-band stimuli and that stereo-function at coarser spatial scales may not be assessed by clinical tests.
- The experimental suppression tests identified small suppression levels that could not be detected with clinical tests, suggesting that this may be a more sensitive metric of suppression.
- These tests are quick and easy to administer and deliver accurate and precise estimates of binocular vision that may be used as clinical endpoints in studies of amblyopia.

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The methodology was previously presented at: Kwon, M., Wiecek, E., Dakin, S.C., & Bex, P.J. (2015). Spatial frequency dependent binocular imbalance in amblyopia. Scientific Reports, accepted subject to minor revision.

Conflict of Interest


References

- Li et al. The role of suppression in amblyopia. IOVS (2011).

Supporting Information

- Supporting information associated with this article is available online.
- Additional data and analysis provided in the supplementary materials.