

Original Research Article

Detecting Visuoperceptive Defects in Adult Disabled Readers with the TETRA Analyzer™. Normative Data and Test-Retest Reliability.

Aims: To collect normative data in adult readers with the TETRA Analyzer™, a tool developed to detect the visuoperceptive alterations supposedly involved in dyslexia.

Study design: Epidemiological study.

Place and Duration of Study: Service of Neuro-Ophthalmology, University of Turin, Italy, between June 2015 and March 2016.

Methodology: We enrolled 95 normal adolescent and adult readers (34 males, 61 females; age 12-26 years), with BCVA 60/60 and satisfying academic achievement. In the recruited subjects three visuoperceptive functions believed to play a major role in reading have been examined with the TETRA Analyzer™. The instrument is made up of three exams suitable to evaluate ocular dominance (Domitest-M), spatial relationship perception (Eidomorphometry), and interocular sensory pattern (Domitest-S). In case one or more of these functions were found abnormal, a fourth exam (REPORT) checks their effective involvement in the reading disability. In addition, retest reliability has been estimated.

Results: The prevalence of strong, stable dominance in the sample was 86.3%; the remaining 13.7% showed dominance instability to a variable degree. Mean spatial relationship anisotropy was 1.32% ($\pm 2.5\%$). The binocular sensory pattern was overall balanced. In fact, almost one third (30.8%) of the sample did not show asymmetry of the visual input. The distribution of the interocular inhibition was weak, with median interocular inhibition index (an index of interocular suppression ranging from 0 to 2) = 0.10 (IQR: 0.3). Reading rate was insensitive to interletter spacing (words: $R^2=0.12$, $p=.29$; non words: $R^2=0.01$, $P=.72$). Reliability was overall satisfying in all the exams.

Conclusion: Considering the role impaired visuoperceptive functions can have not only in children but even in adult dyslexics, the collection of normative data, so far only available for school age pupils, has been extended to adolescents and adults, with the aim to allow future investigations in this type of patients.

Keywords: Adults; Spatial Relationship Perception; Crowding; Dyslexia; Interocular Inhibition; Ocular Dominance, TETRA Analyzer™.

1. INTRODUCTION

Developmental dyslexia is a specific reading disability that affects subjects with adequate instruction and education, normal intellectual capacities and socio-cultural situation and normal visual acuity in absence of psychiatric pathologies [1]. Even if it is basically a phonological and neuropsychiatric condition, over the last three decades mounting evidence suggests that an impairment of the visual system may play a causal role as well. Even if the nature of this deficiency is not clear, it has been theorized to involve both the visuomotor and sensory domain. In particular, a strand of research supports that fixation instability due to unstable ocular dominance may have a causal role in the so-called “visual dyslexics”, accounting for delayed reading rate, frequent omissions of letters and positional changes of syllables. [2-8]. Indeed, the dyslexic patients considered in aforementioned studies were children; so far as we know, to date the stability of ocular dominance in adult dyslexics have not been measured. To achieve this goal, normative estimates of dominance stability in adult readers need to be collected.

In addition to unstable ocular dominance, a subgroup of disabled readers suffers from a reinforcement of crowding, so that the enhanced reciprocal interference occurring between adjoining letters, hampers the readability of the text [[9-17].

As we have suggested, reinforced crowding depends on increased spatial relationship anisotropy, that leads to a perceptual contraction of the visual space along the horizontal axis [16,17]: it follows that in visual dyslexics the reading rate is expected to improve by widening the space between the letters, while non-visual dyslexics (as well as normal readers) would be insensitive to this perceptive modification. Evidence to this hypothesis, indeed, has been recently provided [16-18]. In a previous study we showed that spatial relationship perception of school-age disabled readers (3rd-5th grade) is abnormal, with SRP-related anisotropy (SRA) almost double compared to normal age-matched subjects. Moreover, as expected, positive correlation between interletter spacing and reading rate is found significant in the dyslexic sample, but not in controls [16]. Whether abnormal SRA depends on retarded maturation or on a primitive impairment of the function is an issue worth to be studied. In this respect, spatial relationship perception in adolescent and adult dyslexics should be investigated, comparing their level of anisotropy with that of age-matched normal readers. To do this, evidently, normative data are needed.

Finally, the alteration of the binocular sensory input, namely abnormal inhibitory interaction, could be an additional factor that affects the reading function in dyslexics: in fact, inhibitory binocular interaction is the basis of those selection processes involved in image segmentation and grouping [19]. Moreover, the reciprocal interocular inhibitory effect documented during dichoptic rapid serial visual presentation paradigms (RSVP) can be regarded under a visuoattentive perspective and could therefore play a role in determining the reading disability. As a matter of fact, the occurrence of “attentional blinks” when subjects perform multiple-task RSVPs has been documented [20-23]. In a previous investigation we suggested that based on a similar mechanism the suppressive effect of the target presented to one eye affects to a variable degree the next stimulus presented to the fellow eye. This might have a relevance when dealing with sequential scanning of reading strings, since it could lead to reduced reading rate and errors for defective positional encoding [24]. In a previous study we found that the distribution of the interocular inhibition in normal children (we have referred to as “immature readers”) is bimodal, with a cluster of observations of strong interocular inhibition and a second cluster showing weak interocular inhibitory interference [24]. It is worthwhile to investigate whether the distribution of the interocular inhibitory pattern in the “mature readers” (i.e. adults) lacks the strong inhibitory cluster and subsequently, in case, if it persists in adult dyslexics.

In order to detect unstable ocular dominance, significant SRA, as well as abnormal interocular inhibitory pattern and the effect of these variables on the reading performance a diagnostic tool has been developed, the TETRA Analyzer™. The TETRA Analyzer™ is a set of four exams, we have called:

- Domitest-M: to quantify and characterize the stability of ocular dominance (ocular motor dominance)
- Eidomorphometry: to estimate SRA
- Domitest-S: to evaluate the interocular inhibitory pattern in terms both of overall strength and of degree of right/left input asymmetry (ocular sensory dominance).
- Reading Performance Test (REPORT), that checks whether positive correlation exists between interletter spacing and reading rate in case one or more of the visuoperceptive functions supposedly affecting reading were found abnormal: evidently, positive correlation is a marker of visual dyslexia.

In previous investigations [17, 24, 25] normative data for the exams that make up the TETRA have been collected for scholars aged 8-10 (3rd-5th grade). Compared to normal readers, a subpopulation of school age disabled readers has been found to suffer from increased spatial relationship-related anisotropy, showing a positive correlation between reading rate and interletter spacing [16]. In addition, a consistent proportion of the dyslexic population showed increased interocular inhibition (Aleci & Belcastro, University of Turin, personal communication).

The present report extends the normative data in subjects from 11 years till the adult age (26 years old).

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

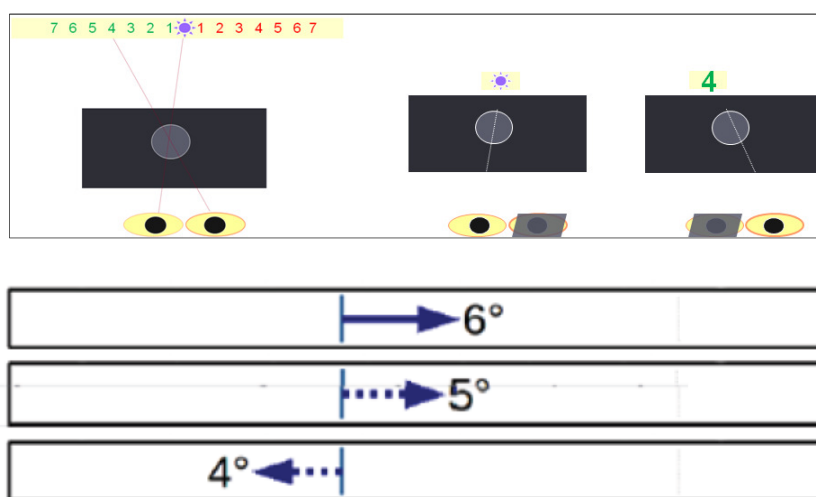
2.1 The TETRA Analyzer

75 The exams making up the TETRA platform have been described in detail in our previous works [16,17,
76 24, 25]. Here only a brief summary is provided.

77 **2.1.1 Domitest M**

78 The Domitest M is a modified version of the pinhole test [26]. The observer is asked to look binocularly at
79 a target displayed on a background through a hole in a cardboard placed in from of his/her face. the
80 target is flanked at each side by a graduated scale (figure 1, upper panel). Occluding alternatively one or
81 the other eye:

- 82 a) the observer continues to perceive the target: the open eye is the dominant one.
83 b) The target disappears and the observer perceives a number on the graduated scale: the open eye is
84 the dominated one. The degree of dominance lateralization is expressed by the angular value the
85 observers report when their dominant eye is occluded. By repeating the procedure 5 times and
86 considering the number of univocal responses (5 left, 0 right; 4 left, 1 right, 3 left, 2 right or vice versa),
87 dominance stability can be graded as stable, partly stable, and unstable (figure 1, lower panels).
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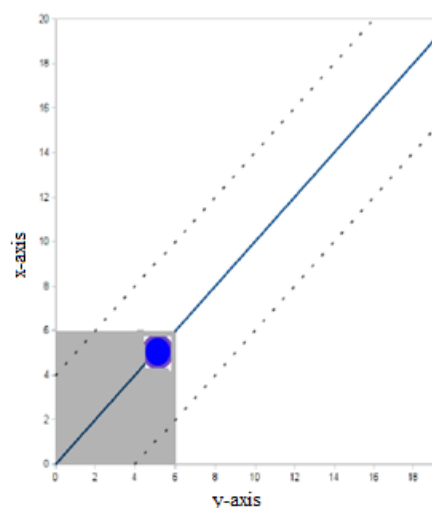
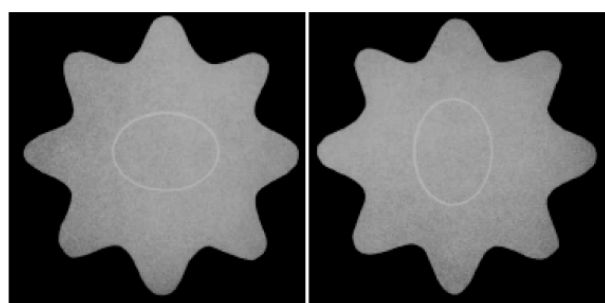
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92
93 **Fig. 1. Domitest M. Upper panel: example of left dominance, lateralization 4 degrees, Lower**
94 **panels: examples of graphical representations. Top: stable and well lateralized right ocular**
95 **dominance; middle: unstable right ocular dominance; bottom: even more unstable left ocular**
96 **dominance.**

97 **2.1.2 Eidomorphometry**

99 The Eidomorphometry [16, 17, 25] is a psychophysical test developed to measure spatial relationship
100 perception (SRP). SRP is defined as the function able to detect the difference in the extent of a
101 bidimensional shape along the x/y cardinal coordinates. The test makes use of a staircase
102 psychophysical algorithm to estimate the discrimination threshold between circles and ellipses
103 horizontally- or vertically-oriented (figure 2, left panel). The threshold is expressed as Interaxis Ratio (IR),
104 that is the difference in percentage between the focal axis and the perpendicular axis (See Aleci et al,
105 2010 [25] for details).

106 If the recognition threshold is the same irrespective of the orientation of the ellipse, the spatial relationship
107 perception is isotropic. Otherwise, the visual system of the observer is affected by SRA, whose severity is
108 computed as the difference between the discrimination threshold of horizontal and vertical ellipses
109 (Horizontal Threshold, HT and Vertical Threshold, VT, respectively): the higher this difference, the higher
110 the SRA (figure 2, right panel). Since, according to our hypothesis, abnormal SRA would lead to an

111 illusory contraction of the horizontal extent of the visual space, reduced interletter spacing thereby
 112 increased crowding between adjoining letters would make reading more demanding.



113

114 **Fig. 2. Left: example of the elliptical targets as displayed to the subject.* Right: graphical**
 115 **representation of the SRP patter in a normal subject. Grey area: normality range. Dotted line:**
 116 **normal limit of anisotropy in the normal pediatric population.**
 117 **From Aleci et al, 2010.*

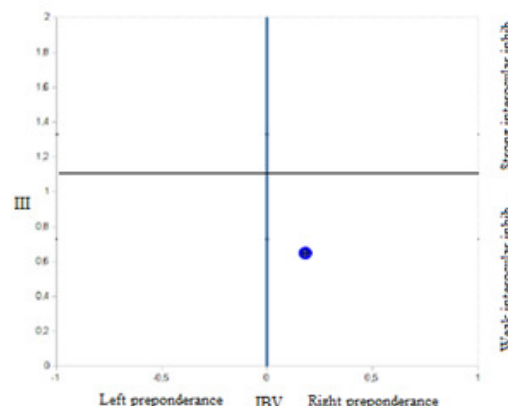
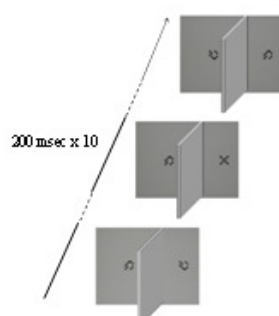
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119 2.1.3 Domitest S

121 The Domitest S [24] is based on the paradigm called rapid serial visual presentation (RSVP) [21]. In the
 122 RSVP a sequence of different stimuli is displayed tachistoscopically in the same position. In the domitest
 123 S two streams of stimuli are presented dichoptically: within each sequence the null stimuli are
 124 checkerboard-like patterns, whereas the target is a checkerboard pattern whose matrices are arranged so
 125 as to form a "X". The observer is asked time after time to report the target embedded in the left or right
 126 stream, and the interocular inhibitory pattern is assessed based on the proportion of left/right correct
 127 responses as well as on the overall correct responses.

128 The Imbalance Value (IBV, ranging from -1 to +1) quantifies the asymmetry between the left/right input
 129 based on the proportion of correct responses.

130 In turn, the Inhibitory Interocular Index (III, ranging from 0 to 2) would quantify the reciprocal inhibition of
 131 the two eyes (figure 3).



132

Fig. 3. Left: the last three presentations of a stream of stimuli in the dichoptic RSVP technique used in the experiment. Right: graphical representation of a case of overall balanced sensory input, with low interocular inhibition (normal subject).

See text for explanation. Left panel from Aleci et al, 2014.

2.1.4 Reading Performance Test (REPORT)

Finally, the Reading Performance Test [REPORT™] checks the effect of the three variables on reading. Words and non-words samples are randomly presented at different values of interletter spacing (from 0.2 50 0.51 deg at a reading distance of 40 cm) and the reading rate as well as the number of errors is computed. The REPORT computes the correlation coefficient r between reading rate and interletter spacing.

In summary, the parameters considered as potential markers of visuoperceptive impairment during reading, therefore of “visual dyslexia”, are reported in table 1:

Table 1. The parameters considered as potential markers of visuoperceptive impairment during reading. See text for explanation

Visuoperceptive function	Related test	Marker
<i>Spatial Relationship Percept.</i>	Eidomorphometry™	-Abnormal Spat Relationship Anisotropy [SRA]
<i>Ocular Dominance</i>	Domitest-M™	-Unstable dominance -Abnormal dominance lateralization
<i>Binocular Sensory Input</i>	Domitest-S™	-Abnormal Imbalance Value [BV] -Increased Interocular Inhibitory Index [III]
<i>Presumed involvement of the three variables in the lexical task</i>	REPORT™	-Positive Correlation between reading rate and interletter spacing ($p < .05$)

2.2 Participants

Ninety-five normal subjects (34 males, 61 females) have been recruited from the Department of Ophthalmology, University of Turin. Median age was 19 years (range 12-26 years, IQR: 8 years). The recruited subjects were in good health, not affected by ophthalmological or systemic diseases. The learning performance of all the subjects was satisfying. In all cases BCVA was 60/60 and spherical refraction ranged from -4 to +4 diopters with astigmatism defect, when present, lower than 2 diopters. In order to rule out potential learning effect, each exam has been repeated (time interval: 15 minutes) and the normative data have been collected from the results recorded after the second administration. In addition, comparison between the two examinations has been performed to estimate the test-retest reliability.

Before carrying out the descriptive statistical analysis, each series of data has been tested with the Generalized Extreme Studentized Deviate (ESD) test [27] for outliers detection.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Ocular dominance

In the adult sample the proportion of right motor dominants is slightly higher compared to the left, being respectively 51.5% and 44.2%. The remaining 4.2% of subjects did not show any dominance laterality. The prevalence of strong, stable dominance in the sample was 86.3%; the remaining 13.7% showed dominance instability to a variable degree.

Descriptive statistics referred to the median value of dominance in the left and right dominant subjects is reported in the table below (table 2).

Table 2. Motor dominance in the normal population

	Proportion	Median	IQR	Mean	SD
RIGHT dominants	51.5%	5	2	5.38	± 2.67
LEFT dominants	44.2%	-6.50	-3	-7.28	± 3.44

The frequency distribution of the value of dominance in the adult population departed from normality (KS=0.17, $P<.001$: figure 4, left panel). The nonparametric distribution of the value of motor dominance in the normal adult population is even more evident when considering the value of dominance as an absolute value KS: 0.20, $P<.001$: figure 4, right panel). The median absolute value of dominance is 6.00 (IQR: 3). The variability of this parameter in the population is evidenced by the wide span of values (from -16 to 10).

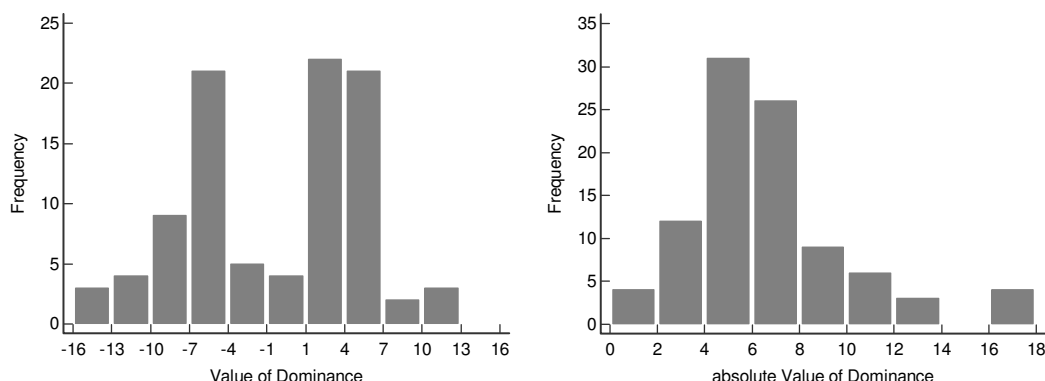


Fig. 4. Left: Frequency distribution of dominance lateralization (value of dominance) in the adult population.

In the left panel: negative values refer to left dominance, positive values express right dominance.

3.2 Spatial relationship perception

Of the 95 examinations, 6 (6.3%) have been identified as outliers and removed. Mean spatial relationship anisotropy is 1.32 (± 2.5). Considering the individual cases, no anisotropy higher than 5% has been estimated in the sample (apart in one case: 7%). This means that in average the difference between the discrimination threshold along the x, y coordinate in the adult normal population is a little more than 1%, that is to say negligible. To be noted that a consistent proportion of the sample shows opposite anisotropic orientation, as indicated by the negative value: this means these subjects reveal a perceptual "stretching" (rather than a perceptual "shrinking") of the visual space along the x-axis (figure 5). No correlation is found between spatial relationship anisotropy and age in the observed adult sample ($R^2=0.00095$, $P=.77$).

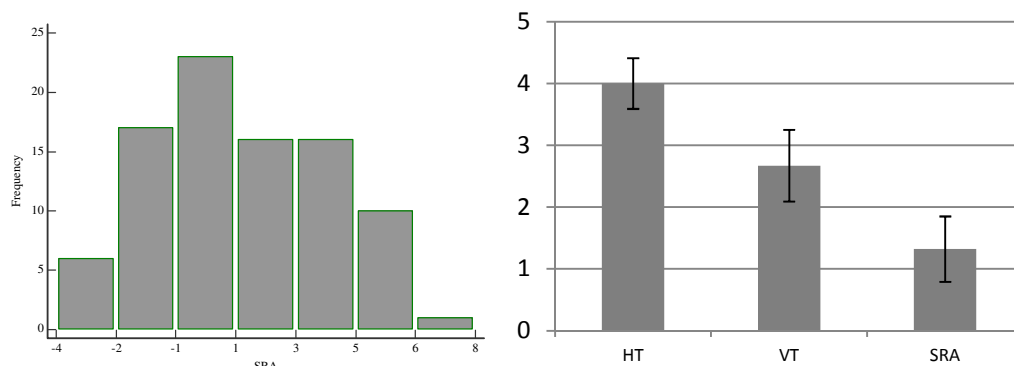


Fig. 5. Left: frequency distribution of SRA in the adult population. Right: discrimination threshold along the x-axis (horizontal threshold, HT), along the y-axis (Vertical threshold, VT), and relative difference (SRA).

Threshold and SRA are expressed as Interaxis Ratio (IR%). Bars refer to the confidence interval (CI 95%).

3.3 Binocular sensory interaction

In the adult population the binocular sensory pattern is overall balanced. In fact, almost one third (30.8%) of the sample did not show asymmetry of the visual input, and in the remaining proportion of subjects it is negligible, with most of the cases showing IBV less or equal than 0.2.

Summary descriptive statistics referred to the IBV in the left and right dominant subjects is reported in the table below (table 3).

Table 3. Summary statistics of the Balance Value in the adult normal population

	Proportion	IBV Median	IQR
RIGHT asymmetry	37.2%	0.10	0.10
LEFT asymmetry	31.9%	-0.10	0.10
No asymmetry	30.8%		

Like the value of motor dominance, also the frequency distribution of the BV in the adult population departed from normality (KS=0.23, $P<.001$: figure 6, left panel). Nonparametric distribution of the asymmetry of the binocular input in the normal adult population is even more evident when considering the BV as an absolute value KS=0.34, $P<.001$: figure 6, right panel). The median absolute BV is 0.10 (IQR: 0.0-0.10). Compared to the value of motor dominance, the variability of BV is lower, with almost 90% (89.4%) of the observations falling between -0.2 and +0.2 (figure 6, upper panels).

The distribution of the interocular inhibition index in the adult population is positively skewed, with median III= 0.10 (IQR: 0.3). Interestingly, despite in the overall sample the interocular inhibitory effect does not correlate with age ($R^2= 0.0005$, $P=.82$) it is found to decrease in the subgroup of subjects aged 12-14 years ($R^2= 0.158$, $P=.04$, figure 6, lower panels).

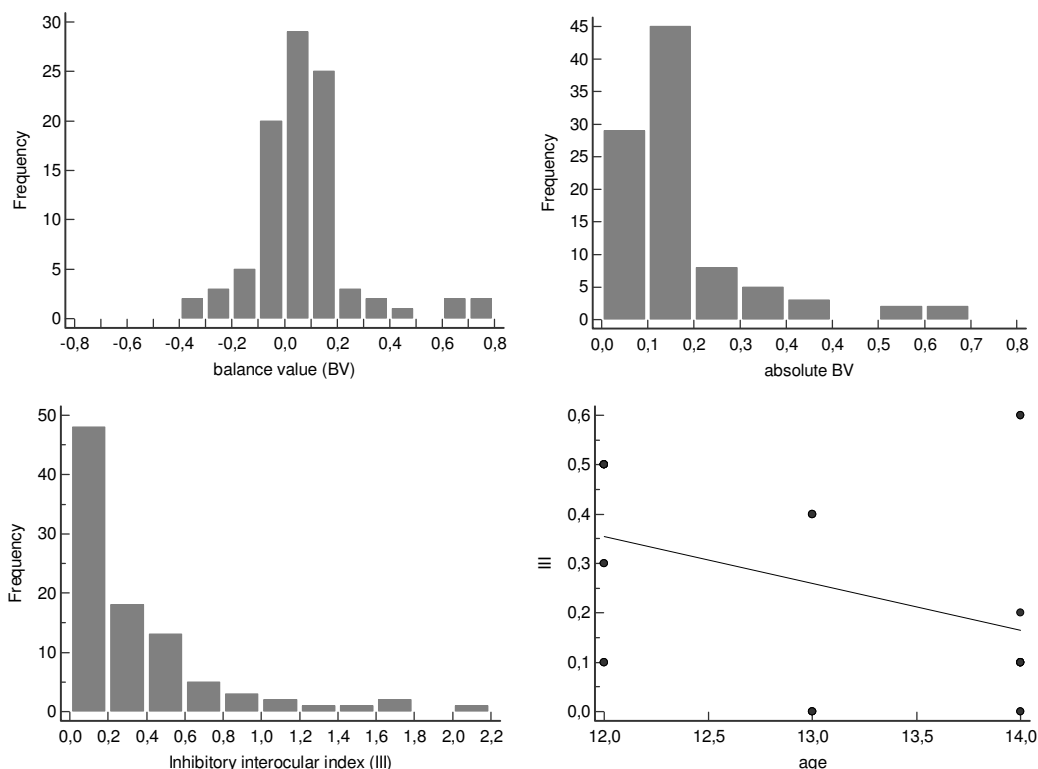


Fig. 6. Upper panels: asymmetry of the binocular sensory input. Lower panels: the interocular inhibitory index.

Upper Left: frequency distribution of BV in the adult population. Negative values refer to left dominants; upper right: absolute values.

Lower left frequency distribution; lower right: correlation with age in subjects less than 15 years.

3.4 Reading performance

Mean reading rate was higher for words compared to non-words (6.36 syl/sec (± 0.75) vs 4.08 syl/sec (± 0.76 , figure 7, upper panels).

No correlation was found between age and reading rate for words ($R^2 = 0.00001$, $P = 0.97$). In turn, the coefficient of determination was significant when non-words were administered ($R^2 = 0.13$, $P = .0002$, figure 7, middle panels). A further analysis of the linear model for different age cutoffs reveals that cumulative reading rate increases with age till 14 years ($R^2 = 0.40$, $P = .0007$), while in the older sample the relationship is lost ($R^2 = 0.03$, $P = .13$; figure 7, lower panels).

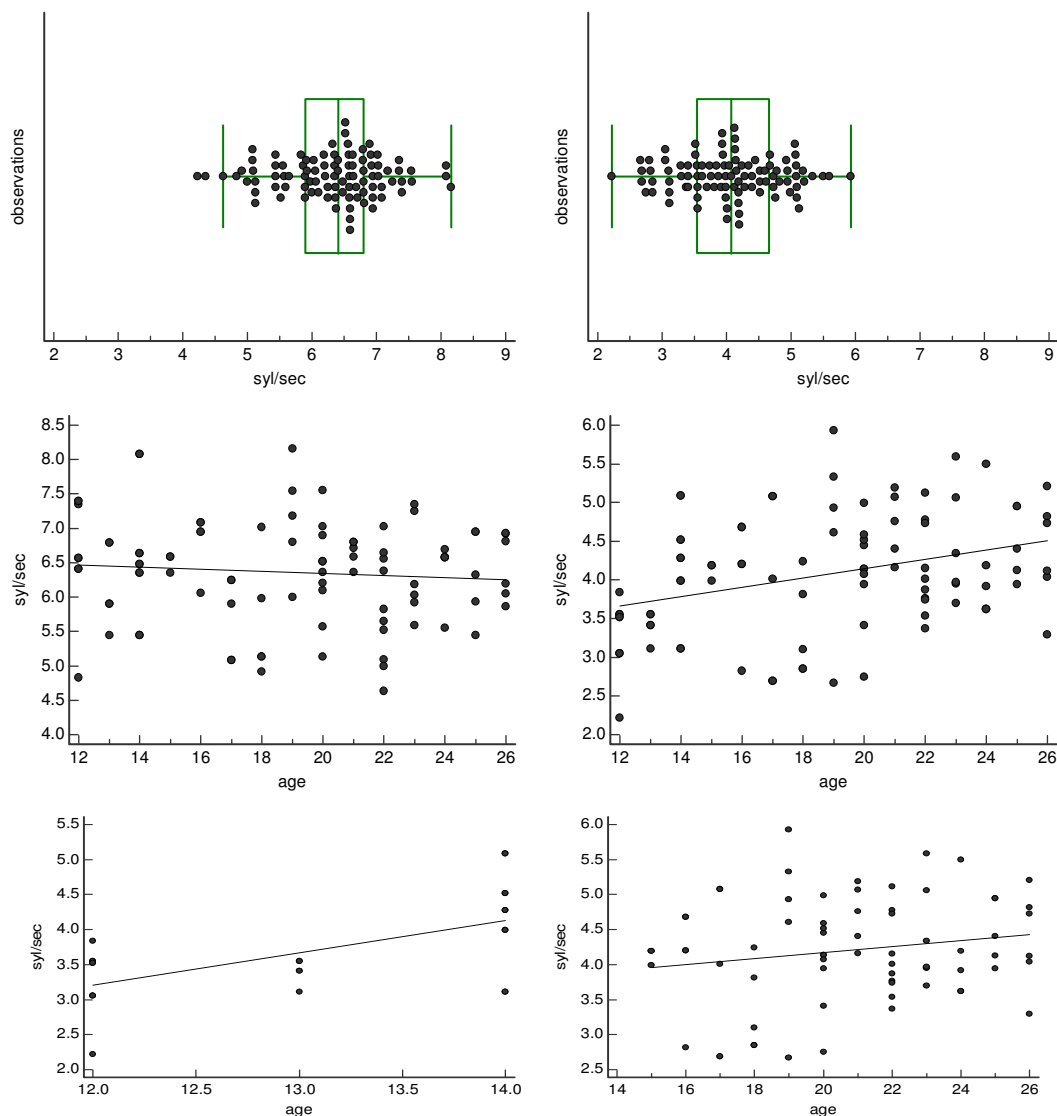


Fig. 7. Top: distribution of the reading rate. Middle: reading rate as a function of age in the whole adult population.

Left: words; right: non words. Bottom: reading rate of non-words as a function of age in subjects aged 12-14 years (left), and >14 years (right).

To confirm what reported in the introduction, in adult normal readers reading rate is insensitive to the interletter spacing when both words and non-words are administered (words: $R^2=0.12$, $P=.29$; non words: $R^2=0.01$, $P=.72$).

As matter of fact, correlation between interletter spacing and reading rate was found just in 4.2% (words) and in 5.2% of cases (non words).

Even if no overall significant correlation has been found between the lexical performance and the interletter intervals, it is presumable that a significant local difference along the spectrum of spacing may be indicative of the extent of the critical spacing during reading [17]. At words, repeated measures analysis of variance showed statistical difference between reading rate at 0.2, 0.27 and 0.36 deg, that is lower, and reading rate at 0.4 deg, that is higher ($F=2.76$, $P=.005$, Tukey-Kramer [$q_{4.55}$]: 6.77, $P<.001$,

4.69, $P=.05$, and 4.68, $P=.05$ respectively). We therefore hypothesize that the limit of crowding in normal adult readers during the lexical task is 0.36 deg.

3.6 Test-retest reliability

As a novel procedure, reliability of the estimations provided by the four exams making up the TETRA analyzer need to be verified. To assess test-retest reliability, during the same session each subject has been retested 15 minute after the first examination.

3.6.1 Domitest M

The L/R dominance of all but two subjects (one right, the other left dominant) has been confirmed at the re-test.

All fully stable and unstable cases have been confirmed at the re-test, while the majority of subjects (64%) who were classified as partly stable at the first examination have been confirmed after being retested.

Finally, the correlation between the values of dominance obtained at the first and second examination is significant ($r=0.56$, $P<.001$).

3.6.2 Eidomorphometry

The main issue to be considered when evaluating test-retest reliability of the Eidomorphometry is that the estimate of spatial relationship perception is affected by a consistent learning effect. In fact, in the adult normative sample, both the discrimination threshold along the x- and y-axis were lower at the retest (median x-threshold at the first examination vs second examination: 5.0 vs 4.0, Wilcoxon: $P=.001$; median y-threshold at the first examination vs second examination: 4.0 vs 2.0, Wilcoxon: $P<.001$). However, the proportional reduction of the x-, y- thresholds does not lead to significant variation of the measured anisotropy ($P=.96$).

In summary, in order to improve the reliability of the estimate of the spatial relationship perception the subject should be allowed to get accustomed to the task, two trials should be carried out, and the first examination should be discarded.

3.6.3 Domitest S

third level heading. After defining as "sensorially balanced" those cases who showed $IBV \leq \pm 0.2$, 97.5% of the sensorially balanced subjects and 67% of the remaining (unbalanced) observations have been confirmed at the re-test. The correlation between the IBV measured at the first and second examination is significant ($r=0.64$, $P<.001$).

Left/right binocular sensory asymmetry has been confirmed at the second examination just in 49% and 42% of the observations, respectively. Considering that the majority of the subjects (87.3%) in the recruited sample were sensorially balanced, this result, indeed, is not unexpected. In fact, as hypothesized in a previous investigation performed on children [Aleci et al, 2014 [24]], subjects with the lowest IBVs are those whose sensorial input is less lateralized, therefore less stable: it is therefore predictable that their prevalent input tends to switch from left to right unstable dominants tend to switch their preferred eye when performing the task in different sessions, making the inter-test results variable. In support of this explanation, the concordance correlation coefficient computed on the sensorially asymmetric observations (i.e. after the sensorially balanced cases have been ruled out) is 0. 80 (precision:0.86, accuracy: 0.92).

Figure 8 shows the agreement between the Interocular Inhibitory Index measured at the first and at the second examination. The concordance of the results at retest is overall satisfying (intraclass correlation coefficient= 0.81, $P<.001$).

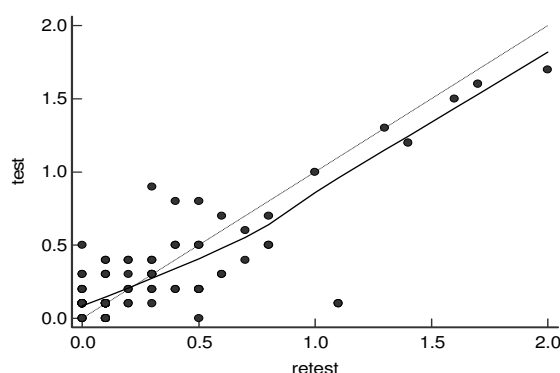


Fig. 8. Interocular Inhibitory Index (III). Test-retest reliability.

3.6.4 REPORT

A mild, albeit statistically significant increase of reading rate for both words and non-words at the second examination suggests the presence of a learning effect referred to the lexical performance (mean reading rate difference at words: 0.43 syl/sec, t-test: $P<.005$; mean reading rate difference at non-words: 0.28 syl/sec, t-test: $P<.01$). At non-words the learning effect seems stronger in the faster readers. In both experimental conditions the intra-subject concordance in reading rate between first and second examination is satisfying (words: precision: 0.80, accuracy: 0.93; non-words: precision=0.86, accuracy: 0.91: figure 9).

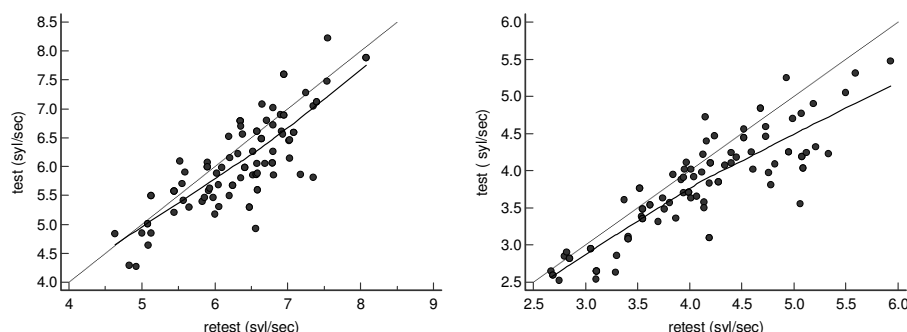


Fig. 9. Concordance of reading rate between the first and second examination. Left: words, right: non-words. To be noted the mild learning effect as indicated by the trend line set below the line of perfect agreement, and that at non-words the learning effect seems stronger in the faster readers.

3.7 Discussion

In dyslexic subjects visuoperceptive signs are commonly found and visuoperceptive symptoms are often reported. Even if they are clinically normal at the orthoptic and ophthalmological examination, it has been hypothesized they are affected by subtle visuoperceptual impairments, requiring a specific diagnostic approach for their detection. More specifically, unstable dominance and reinforced crowding has been advanced to have a causal role in the so-called “visual dyslexics”. In addition, there is reason to believe that abnormal interocular inhibitory pattern is involved to a certain amount, as well. On this basis, the TETRA protocol has been devised, specifically aimed for detecting such alterations, when present. The normative data for children aged 8-11 years old have already been reported in previous publications [16,

17, 24]. In this report the normative data in adult subjects have been collected, and test-retest reliability of the tests making up the TETRA analyzer, have been evaluated.

3.7.1 Ocular dominance

In the adult sample the proportion of right motor dominants is slightly higher compared to left dominants (51.5 right vs 44.2 left). Seijas found no difference in right/left proportion of dominance laterality in their adult sample (aged 18-35 years); interestingly, their group of older subject (age 36-60) showed a slight preponderance of right dominants, very similar to the proportion found in our survey (50% right vs 40% left [28]). Pointer computed 71% of right dominants, but classified all the subjects of his sample as right and left dominants: thereby he did not considered the unstable cases [29]. The great majority of the sample (95.8%) showed strong, stable dominance. This finding is in line with previous studies: Zeri for example found with the hole-in-the card test (6 trials) 100% of stable dominants in his sample of 40 adult subjects [30]. Seijas, too found no cases of unstable dominance.

3.7.2 Spatial relationship perception

Compared to the values computed in a scholar population (mean age 8.4 ± 1.9 years [16]), SRA is lower in the adult sample (mean SRA: 1.32 vs 2.36, one sample t-test: $P = .002$). This finding suggests that spatial relationship perception along the x,y coordinates tends to balance with the development of the visual system. Interesting, like in the normative pediatric sample, also in the adult population spatial relationship perception, as assessed by the discrimination threshold along the x,y-axis provided by the Eidomorphometry, do not correlate with age: this finding confirms that the results of the test is not affected by cognitive or intellectual state, both in childhood and in adulthood. However, due to the learning effect, it is strongly recommended to discard the first examination and to be sure the subject to be tested is well accustomed to the task.

3.7.3 Binocular sensory interaction

In the adult sample the proportion of cases whose binocular sensory input was asymmetric to the right is found to be slightly higher compared to those asymmetric to the left; moreover, almost one third of subjects did not showed binocular input asymmetry. This proportion turns out to be three times higher in the adult population compared to scholar children (30.9% vs 9.15% [24]). Accordingly, the median absolute (i.e. irrespective of the R/L laterality) IBV in adults was lower compared to the pediatric population (0.10 vs 0.20). This finding suggests that interocular sensory processing tends to be equalized with the maturation of the visual system.

Interestingly, in children the distribution of the interocular inhibition was found to be bimodal, showing two peaks: one localized at the higher inhibition levels (stronger inter-inhibitory effect), the other localized at the lower inhibition levels (weaker inter-inhibitory effect [24]). This study shows that the bimodal pattern is lost and the distribution shows a large positive skew, with the median inhibitory effect consistently lower (0.10) than the lower peak of the bimodal distribution in children (0.73: figure 10).

In sum, compared to children in adults the binocular sensory processing looks to be more balanced and the reciprocal inter-inhibitory effect reduced.

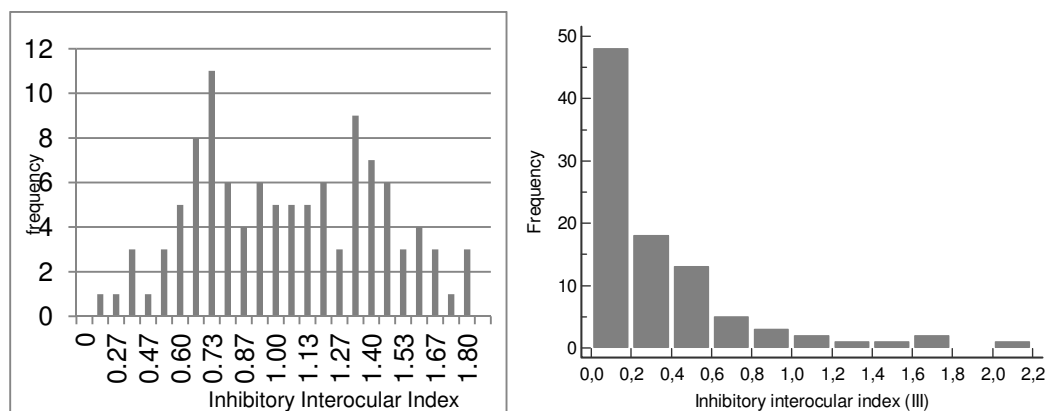


Fig. 10. Inhibitory Interocular Index. Comparison between the bimodal distribution in children* (left) and the skewed distribution in the adult population (right).

**From Aleci et al, 2014*

3.7.4 REPORT

As expected, reading rate is higher in the adult population ("mature readers") compared to what previously reported in a pediatric sample ("immature readers": age 8-10) both at words and non-words (adult: average reading rate: 6.41 and 4.07 syl/sec; children: average reading rate: from 3.27 to 4.65 syl/sec when reading words; from 1.68 to 2.57 syl/sec when reading non-words [16,17]). Like in children, also in adults reading rate is insensitive to changes of interletter spacing, suggesting that parafoveal crowding is within the normal limits. Even if no overall significant correlation has been found between the lexical performance and the interletter intervals, a significant local difference along the spectrum of spacing, presumably indicative of the extent of the critical spacing during reading, has been confirmed in the adult population. The assumed critical spacing of about 0.36 deg in adult readers is in overall agreement with the values previously found in children [17].

4. CONCLUSION

It being understood that developmental dyslexia is basically a logopedic and neuropsychiatric condition, the TETRA Analyzer proved to be a reliable tool to investigate the visuoperceptive functions presumably involved in a subtype of disabled readers (the so called "visual dyslexics"). Having acquired the normative data, it can now allow to detect and (in case) characterize the visuoperceptive impairment not only in dyslexic children but also in adult subjects.

CONSENT

All authors declare that written informed consent was obtained from the patient (or other approved parties) for publication of this paper.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study was approved by the University of Turin as part of a bachelor's thesis (ref n. 771790, registration October, 1st, 2015).

All authors hereby declare that the experiment has been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 declaration of Helsinki.

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