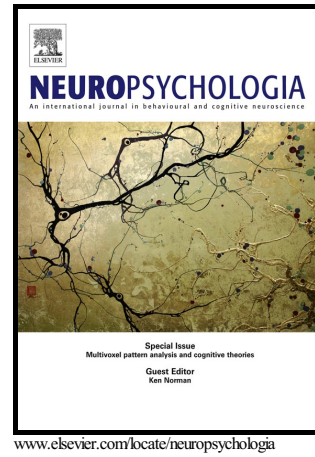


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Expectations May Influence the Effects of Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation

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Abstract

Growing interest surrounds transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) as a safe and inexpensive method for improving cognitive functions and mood. Nevertheless, tDCS studies rarely examine psychological factors such as expectations of outcomes, which may influence tDCS responsiveness through placebo-like effects. Here we sought to evaluate the potential influence of expectations on tDCS intervention outcomes. We assessed expectations of tDCS outcomes in 88 healthy young adults on three occasions: i) at baseline; ii) after reading information implying either high or low effectiveness of stimulation; and iii) after a single-session of sham-controlled anodal tDCS applied to the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, during working memory (WM) training. Participants were largely uncertain about the effectiveness of stimulation in improving cognitive function at baseline. High or low expectation priming using

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