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## MACS – a new SPM toolbox for model assessment, comparison and selection

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#### Abstract

*Background:* In cognitive neuroscience, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data are widely analyzed using general linear models (GLMs). However, model quality of GLMs for fMRI is rarely assessed, in part due to the lack of formal measures for statistical model inference.

*New Method:* We introduce a new SPM toolbox for model assessment, comparison and selection (MACS) of GLMs applied to fMRI data. MACS includes classical, information-theoretic and Bayesian methods of model assessment previously applied to GLMs for fMRI as well as recent methodological developments of model selection and model averaging in fMRI data analysis.

*Results:* The toolbox – which is freely available from GitHub – directly builds on the Statistical Parametric Mapping (SPM) software package and is easy-to-use, general-purpose, modular, readable and extendable. We validate the toolbox by reproducing model selection and model averaging results from earlier publications.

*Comparison with Existing Methods:* A previous toolbox for model diagnosis in fMRI has been discontinued and other approaches to model comparison between GLMs have not been translated into reusable computational resources in the past.

*Conclusions:* Increased attention on model quality will lead to lower false-positive rates in cognitive neuroscience and increased application of the MACS toolbox will increase the reproducibility of GLM analyses and is likely to increase the replicability of fMRI studies.

#### Keywords

fMRI-based neuroimaging, mass-univariate GLM, SPM toolbox, analysis pipelines, model assessment, model comparison, model selection, model averaging

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