



Visiting Speaker

Gábor P. Háden

Postdoctoral Fellow

Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience and Psychology
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Beat affects sound processing at birth

Regularly timed, alternating strong and weak pulses form the basis of the simplest rhythm, which is arguably already automatically processed at birth. Rhythm perception is necessary for synchronizing movements, taking part in music or conversation. In the current experiment we have tested whether newborn infants use contextual cues inferred from the stress pattern to modify processing of different types of deviant stimuli.

Event-related potentials were recorded from sleeping infants 2-4 days after birth while they were presented with 15-27 elements long trains of alternating piano (S1) and a harpsichord (S2) tones that had the same pitch and were delivered at the constant 225 ms inter onset intervals.

The train started with either the S1 or S2 sound (50-50% probability). As the first sound of a sequence are more accented (strong) this manipulation makes the S1 sound either accented (starting on S1) or unaccented (starting on S2) throughout the short train, establishing context.

S1 tones were infrequently replaced by frequency deviants (D) and S2 tones by stimulus omissions (O). The ERP responses to standard as well as deviant tones differed between the