

# 视觉诱发电位视力客观检查技术的研究进展

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**摘要:** 视觉诱发电位(VEP)是视觉受刺激后,在大脑视觉皮质所产生的电信号,可通过在头皮上的电极进行采集并进行信号分析。VEP为视力检查,尤其是不能说话的婴儿、智力低下或装病的成年人以及患有各种视觉障碍的患者的视力检查,提供了客观且定量的方法。针对VEP视力检查技术,从脑电设备平台、视觉刺激范式、实验参数设置、视力阈值判定算法和临床应用等方面对相关文献进行了综述比较,并且发现:在脑电设备平台方面,目前研究几乎全部采用只能在实验室环境下使用的专用脑机接口系统,缺失可面向广泛用户使用的临床设备;在刺激范式方面,相对于传统的光栅和棋盘格图案,振荡收缩扩张的同心环刺激范式显示了优异的抗疲劳性和低对比敏感性;在实验参数设置方面,7.5 Hz和1 Hz的稳态和瞬态VEP时间频率、中度数值的亮度和对比度、3~30周/(°)的空间频率范围更多地被采用;在视力阈值判定算法方面,最常用的是线性外推法和最小尺寸法;在临床应用方面,VEP技术主要应用于儿童视力发育评估和多种视觉疾病的视力客观检查。文献综述表明:VEP视力检测技术急需制定一个统一的规范标准,使其能有更广泛、更快速的应用,使VEP乃至电生理学在视觉功能检测与诊断方面的研究更加深入。

**关键词:** 脑机接口;视觉诱发电位;视力检查;刺激范式;阈值判定

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## Research Progress in Objective Visual Acuity Examination Technology Based on Visual Evoked Potential

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**Abstract:** Visual evoked potential (VEP) is electrical signal induced by visual stimulation and generated in the visual cortex of the brain, which can be collected and analyzed by electrodes on the scalp. VEP provides an objective and quantitative method for visual acuity estimation, especially in non-verbal infants, adults with low intellectual abilities or malingering, and patients with various visual impairments. Aiming at the VEP visual acuity examination technology, this paper reviewed and compared the relevant literature from the aspects of electroencephalogram (EEG) equipment platform, visual stimulation paradigm, experimental parameter setting, visual acuity threshold determination algorithm and clinical application. It is found that in the EEG equipment platform, the current researches almost depend on the dedicated brain-computer

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interface (BCI) systems, lacking commercial equipment. In terms of stimulation paradigm, compared with the traditional grating and checkerboard patterns, the concentric-ring stimulation paradigm of oscillating contraction and expansion shows its excellent anti-fatigue performance and low contrast sensitivity. According to the experimental parameter setting, the temporal frequencies of 7.5 Hz and 1 Hz of steady-state and transient VEP, medium-value of luminance and contrast, and the spatial frequency range of 3–30 cycles/(°) are mostly adopted. In threshold determination algorithm, the most commonly used strategies are linear extrapolation method and minimum size method. In clinical application, VEP technology is mainly used in the assessment of children's visual acuity development and the objective visual acuity evaluation in various visual diseases. This review shows that VEP visual acuity assessment technology urgently needs a unified standard, so that it can be expected to have wider and faster applications and excites the research on VEP and even electrophysiology in vision function detection and diagnosis at higher level.

**Keywords:** brain-computer interface; visual evoked potential; visual acuity examination; stimulation paradigm; threshold determination

人类在认识世界及感知事物时,约 80%的信息是通过视觉获取的。由此可见,视觉在感知外界事物的过程中一直扮演着至关重要的角色。然而,世界上现有 22 亿人患有某种形式的视觉损伤,而且人口增长和老龄化更会加剧这个风险<sup>[1-2]</sup>。视力检查作为视觉功能检查最基本的测试之一,反映的是眼睛分辨细小或遥远的物体及细微部分的能力。视力检查方法分为主观方法和客观方法,主观视力检查方法应用“E 型”、Sloan 字母等视力检查表,视标大小按照对数级数增减,视力表可以远近移动而不影响测量值,便于临床应用和统计分析,且其简单直观,但不能应用于婴幼儿、伪盲者和癔症等患者<sup>[3-5]</sup>。

随着研究技术的不断发展,应用视觉诱发电位 (VEP) 等电生理方法客观评估视觉功能成为视光学领域的研究热点<sup>[6]</sup>。VEP 反映了从视网膜到 V1 纹状区视觉通路的生物电活动,眼球、视网膜、视神经、视路和视觉初级皮层的异常都可以通过 VEP 进行客观检查。VEP 视觉功能检查通过设置可表征不同视觉功能的视觉刺激参数,并诱发脑电响应,应用信号处理方法分析脑电信号,提取脑电特征指标,构建视觉刺激参数与视觉功能脑电特征指标关系模型,基本原理如图 1 所示。从 20 世纪 70 年代至今,VEP 视力的客观检查技术已发展成为研究范围最广、最成熟的眼科学电生理客观检查方法之一<sup>[6-9]</sup>, VEP 视力检查技术已成为法医学客观视觉功能鉴定、婴幼儿早期视觉评估等方面的重要手段<sup>[10]</sup>。基于此,本文首先对 VEP 视力检查方法进行概述,进而从不同方面分析比较现有的研究发展,然后对未

来的研究进行展望。

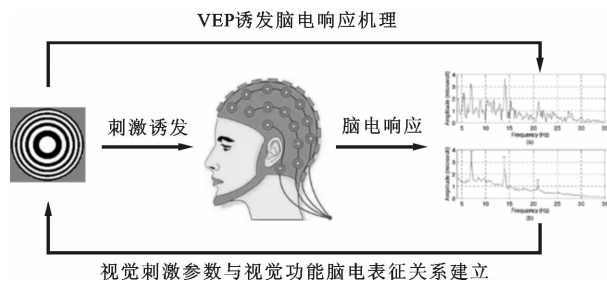


图 1 VEP 视觉功能检查原理示意

## 1 视觉诱发电位视力检查概述

视觉诱发电位是视觉受刺激后,在大脑视觉皮质所产生的电信号,可通过在头皮上的电极进行采集并进行信号分析<sup>[11]</sup>。因为 VEP 不仅反映视觉皮质的功能,也具有反映眼球、视网膜和视神经到视皮质的传递通道的功能,且信号记录不依赖于人的主观评断,故而可应用于视力的客观检查<sup>[12]</sup>。

### 1.1 VEP 视力检查理论基础

对应于视力检查表不同视角间隔的“E 型”“C 型”或 Sloan 字母等视标,VEP 视力检查通过改变视觉刺激的空间频率,分析不同的空间频率刺激诱发的电位信号。当视觉刺激清晰可见时,会诱发产生信噪比高、幅值大的 VEP 信号;当视觉刺激模糊或眼睛对刺激变化不可见时,不能诱发出稳定且有规律的脑电信号<sup>[13]</sup>。VEP 视力值可根据诱发的脑电信号进行判定,通过信号分析找出 VEP 产生与否的临界情况,该临界情况所对应刺激的空间频率即

为 VEP 检查出的视力值。

1.2 VEP 视力检查分类

根据视觉刺激时间频率的不同,VEP 可分为瞬态视觉诱发电位(TVEP)和稳态视觉诱发电位(SS-VEP)。当视觉刺激时间频率小于 3 Hz 时,前一个刺激诱发的脑电响应不会对当前刺激诱发的信号产生影响,故而每个刺激都会产生一个相似的包含正波和负波的波形,称为 TVEP。当视觉刺激时间频率大于 3 Hz 时,刺激频率足够快,故上一个刺激诱发的脑电响应还未完全消失,下一个刺激引起的响应已经出现,最终形成具有节律性正弦波性质的 SSVEP 信号<sup>[4,14-17]</sup>。

对应地,VEP 视力检查可分为 TVEP 视力检查和 SSVEP 视力检查。TVEP 视力检查中,不同空间频率所诱发的脑电信号通过多次叠加平均,得到 P100 波的振幅和潜伏期,观察 P100 波的振幅大小和潜伏期时长。研究发现,随着视觉刺激空间频率的升高,P100 波的潜伏期延长,幅值降低<sup>[14]</sup>。在 SSVEP 视力检查中,通过傅里叶变换将脑电信号在频域进行分析,观察不同空间频率刺激对应的 SS-VEP 幅值变化。研究发现,随着视觉刺激空间频率升高,SSVEP 振幅有降低的趋势<sup>[14]</sup>。

1.3 VEP 视力检测系统组成

VEP 视力检查系统包括硬件设备和软件系统两部分。硬件设备主要包括视觉刺激器、脑电采集平台和计算机主控制器等,如图 2 所示。软件系统包括视觉刺激范式生成算法、脑电信号处理算法和视力阈值判定算法等。

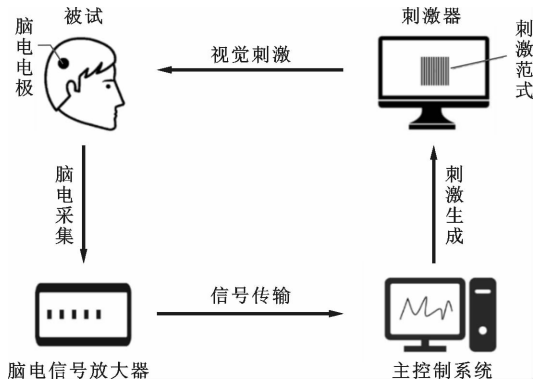


图 2 VEP 视力检查系统组成

1.3.1 视觉刺激器 视觉刺激器是用来显示刺激范式的设备,视觉诱发电位脑机接口中多使用性能较高的显示器,常用的显示器类型包括阴极射线显像管(CRT)、液晶显示器(LCD)和发光二极管显示器(LED)。与 LCD 和 LED 相比,CRT 很容易满足

视觉刺激呈现时刺激屏的平均亮度必须恒定的要求。但是,随着技术的发展,低辐射、低功耗的 LCD 和 LED 在市场上越来越普及。

1.3.2 脑电采集平台 脑电采集平台一般由脑电采集电极、生物信号放大器与数据传输系统组成。其中,脑电电极多采用 Ag、AgCl、Au 等材料制作而成,依据国际 10-20 电极标准和国际临床电生理和视觉学会(ISCEV)电极标准布置<sup>[18-19]</sup>,记录电极多放于枕区  $O_z$  处,参考电极多置于  $F_z$ 、 $C_z$  和  $F_{pz}$  等头部左右对称的中线处,而接地电极多置于耳垂、前额等处。记录到的信号经过信号放大器放大后传输至主控制器,由主控制器进行数据存储与处理<sup>[20]</sup>。

2 视觉刺激范式

2.1 刺激范式类型

常用于 VEP 视力检测的刺激范式有 3 种:正弦光栅、方波光栅以及棋盘格,如图 3 所示。正弦光栅与方波光栅以黑白条纹在单位角度内出现的周期数作为空间频率,棋盘格以  $45^\circ$  对角线的黑白方格在单位角度内出现的周期数作为空间频率,通过刺激范式生成算法调节参数,可改变不同刺激范式的空间频率,并通过模式翻转的刺激方式进行范式呈现。此外,本课题组最近的研究设计了一种振荡收缩扩张的同心环刺激范式,相对于上述的 3 种刺激范式,具有低视觉疲劳、低对比敏感性的特性<sup>[3,21-24]</sup>,其刺激呈现过程如图 4 所示。



图 3 常用的 3 种 VEP 视力检查刺激范式

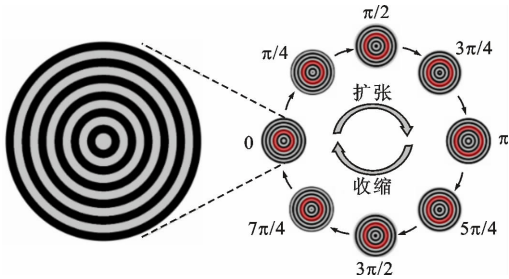


图 4 同心环收缩-扩张运动刺激范式

2.2 刺激范式参数

2.2.1 时间频率 TVEP 视力检查的刺激时间频率多为 2 Hz<sup>[14,25]</sup>和 1 Hz<sup>[26]</sup>,有些研究也会有其他

时间频率,例如 0.29 Hz(40 ms 刺激,300 ms 间隔)<sup>[27]</sup>,1.67 Hz(600 ms 刺激)<sup>[28]</sup>。但是,1 Hz 的刺激频率在 TVEP 视力检查中是最常用的。SS-VEP 视力检查的刺激时间频率多位于 4~20 Hz 之间,其中 7.5 Hz 最为常见<sup>[29-32]</sup>,但也有其他时间频率,例如 17<sup>[33]</sup>、10<sup>[34]</sup>、6 Hz<sup>[35-36]</sup>。Almoqbel 等对不同时间频率的 VEP 视力检查做了类比分析,建议在 SSVEP 视力检查中,刺激的时间频率使用 7.5 Hz 最佳<sup>[30]</sup>。

**2.2.2 亮度** 亮度是指刺激范式显示过程中的背景亮度,由亮度计测量得到。为了避免亮度伪迹(显示器的液晶分子在一个方向上的速度变化与在相反方向上的速度变化并不相同,这种从白色到黑色和从黑色到白色的转变时间上的差异导致的光脉冲)的影响,一般情况下,刺激范式的平均亮度与背景亮度相同<sup>[19]</sup>。大多数的研究中,亮度集中于 50<sup>[37-38]</sup>~100 cd/m<sup>2</sup><sup>[29,35,39]</sup>之间,与 ISCEV 推荐的亮度标准 50 cd/m<sup>2</sup> 相同<sup>[12,19]</sup>。

**2.2.3 对比度** 刺激范式的对比度是指 Michelson 对比度<sup>[19]</sup>,由白色和黑色条纹的亮度所决定。最常用的对比度为 80%<sup>[12,29,39-41]</sup>,这与 ISCEV 推荐的对比度相一致<sup>[19]</sup>。Bach 等推荐了一个比较低的对比度,只有 40%<sup>[32,42-44]</sup>。他们认为由于 VEP 随着对比度的变化函数在早期就已饱和,因此中等对比度就足以诱发全振幅的 VEP<sup>[45]</sup>,而且当对比度较低时,显示器的伽玛校正(即显示器的 RGB 参数与显示亮度之间的非线性关系)很容易实现<sup>[46-47]</sup>。

**2.2.4 空间频率** 刺激范式的空间频率是 VEP 视力检测最重要的参数。空间频率通俗而言,是指刺激范式黑白条纹的疏密程度,以每度视角内出现的黑白周期数(周/(°))为单位。为了得到更好的 VEP 视力检查结果,一般情况下,大多数的空间频率对于被试应该设置为可见。依据前期研究,一般空间频率范围都在 3~30 周/(°)<sup>[34,36,48-50]</sup>,与小数视力标准的 1.0~0.1 相对应,这也是通常的主观检查的视力范围。另外,在被试为婴幼儿的研究中,空间频率范围偏向于较低的空间频率,并且随着婴儿的年龄增长而变大,这是因为婴幼儿的视觉功能是随着时间的推移而不断发育的<sup>[40-41,51-53]</sup>。对于视力损伤的被试,空间频率范围也会相应比正常值低<sup>[32,41-42,54-55]</sup>。

### 3 视力阈值判定算法

视力阈值判定算法通过不同空间频率刺激范式的 VEP 响应来估计客观视力阈值。表 1 总结了常

用的几种视力阈值判定算法。

表 1 常用的视力阈值判定算法

| 算法      | 相关描述                                                                |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 线性外推法   | 作 VEP 振幅-空间频率直线回归方程,从 VEP 振幅峰值线性外推至 0 $\mu$ V 基线,取空间频率轴截距为 VEP 视力值。 |
| 最小尺寸法   | 诱发显著性响应的 VEP 信号所对应刺激范式的最高空间频率作为 VEP 视力值。                            |
| 逐步启发式算法 | 通过一系列 VEP 振幅和噪声估计规则,找到噪声校正 VEP 振幅与对数空间频率回归的最优范围。                    |
| 其他算法    | 最佳拟合二次曲线方程;二阶多项式函数;改进的 Ricker 模型;机器学习。                              |

线性外推法是 VEP 视力检查最广泛使用的阈值判定算法。该算法由 Tyler 等提出<sup>[56]</sup>,在很多研究中得到了广泛应用<sup>[51,53,57-59]</sup>,并且至今仍有应用<sup>[36,41,60-61]</sup>。线性外推法绘制 VEP 响应振幅和空间频率散点图,线性外推 VEP 振幅峰值至 0  $\mu$ V(空间频率轴),拟合线与空间频率轴的交点对应的空间频率即为 VEP 估计的视力值。当存在多个 VEP 幅值峰值时,选择最后的峰值作为外推的起点。随着空间频率的增加,VEP 相位一般是恒定的或逐渐滞后的,这是因为 VEP 潜伏期随空间频率的增加而增加<sup>[13,30,62]</sup>。一些研究对线性外推法进行了改进,例如,将 VEP 振幅峰值外推到平均噪声水平对应的空间频率作为 VEP 视力值<sup>[29,31,57,63-64]</sup>。

最小尺寸法是一种更为直接和快速的视力阈值判定算法。该算法将引起显著性响应的 VEP 所对应刺激范式的最高空间频率作为 VEP 视力值<sup>[65-68]</sup>。Mackay 等使用逐次逼近算法来控制刺激呈现,当 VEP 响应对 3 个连续减小的检查结果评分为“检测到”“检测到”“未检测到”时,进行评分,从而定义视力阈值<sup>[69]</sup>。Hemptinne 等定义视力阈值为最后一个有显著性响应的视觉刺激所对应的空间频率,并且在此之前的 4 次 VEP 响应中至少有 3 次响应是显著的<sup>[34]</sup>。

Bach 等提出了一种逐步启发式算法,可以有效地避免中间检查尺寸所出现的“下陷”<sup>[32]</sup>。该算法通过一系列 VEP 振幅和噪声估计规则,找到噪声校正 VEP 振幅与对数空间频率回归的最优范围,得出 VEP 视力阈值<sup>[43-44,70-71]</sup>。Jenkins 等将最佳拟合二次方程的曲线函数外推到零振幅,定义外推截距的

视觉刺激空间频率为 VEP 视力阈值<sup>[72]</sup>。Kurtenbach 等绘制 VEP 振幅与空间频率的关系图,用二阶多项式函数和手动设置游标的方法对数据点进行拟合,从与横轴的截距计算出临界空间频率阈值<sup>[14]</sup>。Strasser 等采用二阶多项式的多元线性回归方法和改进的 Ricker 模型非线性回归方法拟合 VEP 峰值振幅和空间频率,发现二阶多项式模型和改进的 Ricker 模型在预测 VEP 视力方面都有很好的效果<sup>[27]</sup>。

最近,Bach 等在 108 个案例上使用机器学习的算法将相应 VEP 信号转化为视力值,总共测试了 100 多种不同的算法,发现基于规则和多元回归的算法表现最好<sup>[73]</sup>。

综上所述,VEP 视力通常由线性外推 VEP 振幅峰值至 0  $\mu\text{V}$  来确定。当外推法由于中间检查尺寸所出现的“下陷”而无法确定 VEP 视力阈值时,最小尺寸法或逐步启发式算法可以作为替代算法。

## 4 临床应用

### 4.1 儿童视力发育研究

VEP 也被用于对婴幼儿视力发育的研究。一些研究给出了随着年龄增长视力的增长值,例如,视力从 2 月龄时的 20/150 发育到 6 月龄时的 20/20<sup>[74]</sup>,从 1 月龄的平均 4.5 周/(°)到 8~13 月龄的 20 周/(°)左右<sup>[62]</sup>,从 2~10 周龄的 6 周/(°)到 20~30 周龄的 14 周/(°)<sup>[75]</sup>,从 4 月龄的 9.61 周/(°)到 8 月龄的 10.39 周/(°)<sup>[76]</sup>。另外,一些研究比较了婴幼儿的 VEP 视力与主观视力,Sokol 等发现 VEP 和优先注视法(PL)视力差异由 2 月龄时的 2.0 行变为 12 月龄时的 0.5 行,VEP 和 PL 视力以不同的速度发育,在 12 月龄时几乎达到相同的水平<sup>[77-78]</sup>。Allen 等发现 VEP 视力比 PL 视力稍高<sup>[52]</sup>。Riddell 等对婴儿的 VEP 和 Teller 检查卡(TAC)视力进行测试,发现 VEP 视力普遍高于 TAC 视力,但 TAC 视力的发育速度比 VEP 视力更快,在 14 月龄时二者达到相同水平<sup>[57]</sup>。

### 4.2 视觉疾病中的视力检查

VEP 不仅可为正常视觉的视力检查提供一种可替代的客观方法,而且为视觉疾病中的视力检查提供了有效途径。经过 40 余年的发展,科学家已经应用 VEP 检查技术对皮质性视损伤(CVI)<sup>[41,79-82]</sup>、弱视<sup>[7,43,61,66,71]</sup>、脑瘫<sup>[83-85]</sup>、白内障<sup>[86-88]</sup>、青光眼<sup>[54,88]</sup>、白化病<sup>[59]</sup>、糖尿病<sup>[38]</sup>、唐氏综合症<sup>[89]</sup>等可对视觉功能造成影响的疾病以及其他黄斑病

变<sup>[59,90-91]</sup>、视网膜病变<sup>[90,92-94]</sup>、视神经损伤<sup>[90,95-97]</sup>、眼球器质性变异<sup>[64,95]</sup>和眼科外伤<sup>[92,96,98]</sup>等病症进行了临床研究。通过这些研究:①验证了 VEP 视力检查可作为一种客观方法,为低智商人(如脑瘫、唐氏综合征等)的视力检测提供有效的手段<sup>[83-85]</sup>;②验证了 VEP 可为眼科疾病(如白内障、青光眼等)术后的视力恢复提供预测手段<sup>[86,88]</sup>;③ VEP 可为非器质性视觉损伤(如 CVI、弱视等)的视力检查和康复训练视力监控提供客观方法<sup>[7,61,66]</sup>。

## 5 总结与展望

VEP 已被用作客观评估视力的一种方法,尤其是在智力低下的非言语婴儿、装病或癔症的成人中。本文从脑电设备平台、视觉刺激范式、实验参数设置、视力阈值判定算法和临床应用等方面综述了 VEP 视力检查技术。对于研究者和临床医生,为 VEP 视力测试技术制定一个共同的标准是非常重要的,这是因为在测试系统的构建、实验测试以及数据处理和分析的过程中,必须考虑到许多的参数设置。这一通用标准可以使该技术得到更广泛和快速的应用,使 VEP 乃至电生理学研究在视觉功能的检测与诊断方面更加深入。VEP 可为视力检查提供早检测的方法,进而进行早干预和早治疗,从而缓解世界上近视和视力障碍日益严峻的境况。

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