

HYBRID
NEURO

MU filters and hdEMG processing pipelines

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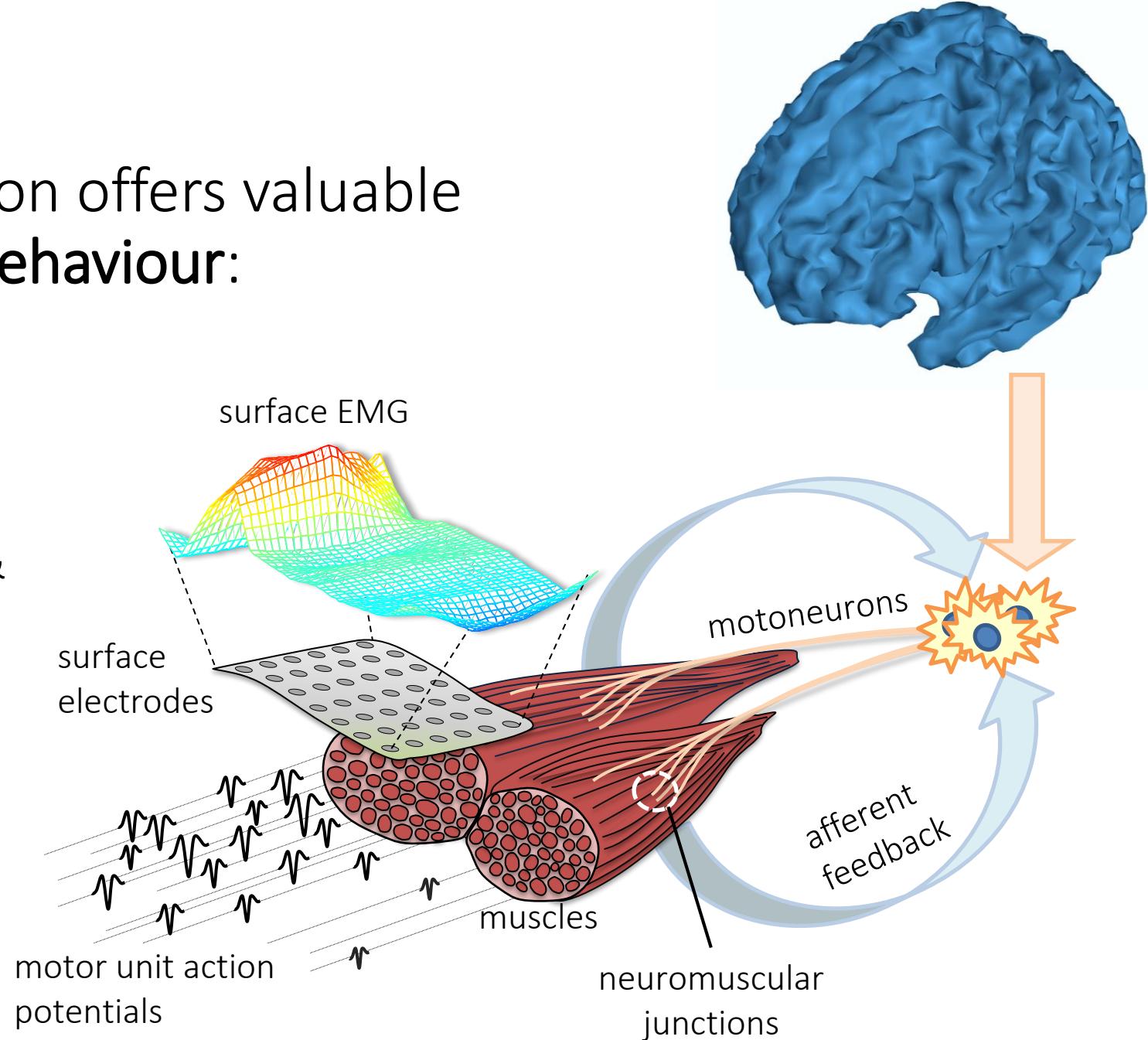
Imperial College
London

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MOTIVATION

Motor Unit (MU) identification offers valuable insight into **neural codes & behaviour**:

- In non-fatiguing voluntary contractions MUs fire **asynchronously**
- Pathologies change the MU firing & synchronization patterns
- In elicited contractions, MU firings are highly (but not completely) **synchronised**
- MU firing pattern is always sparse.



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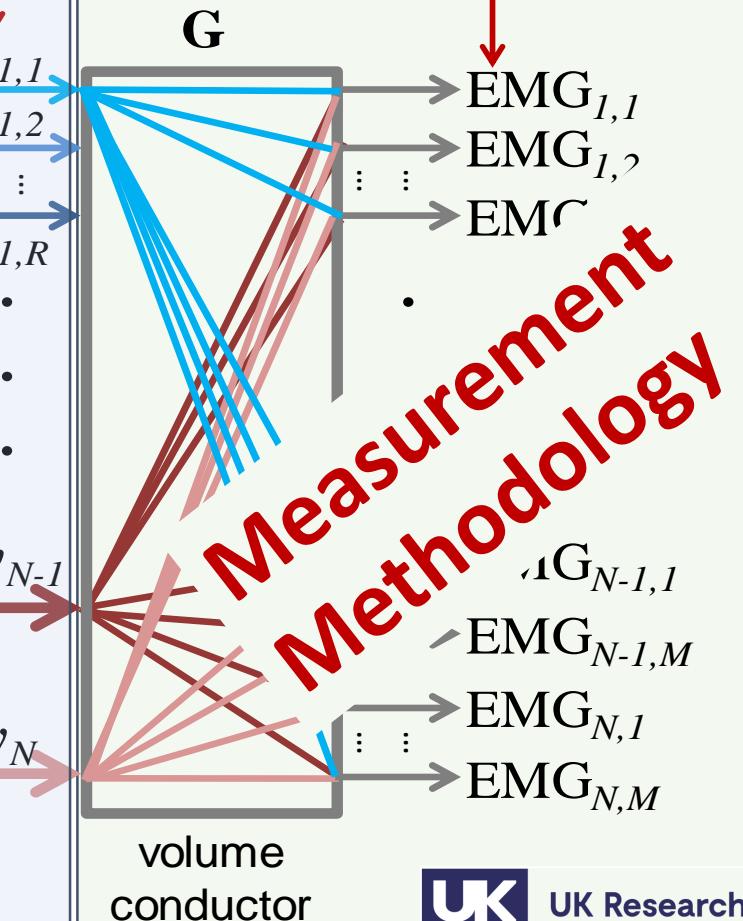
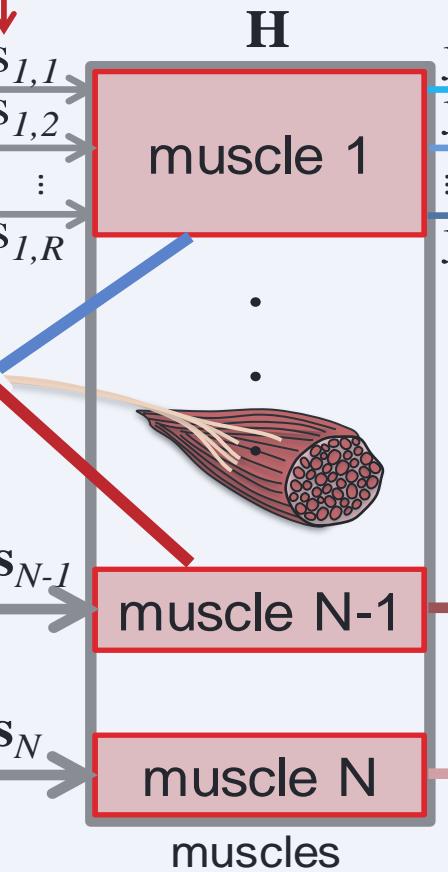
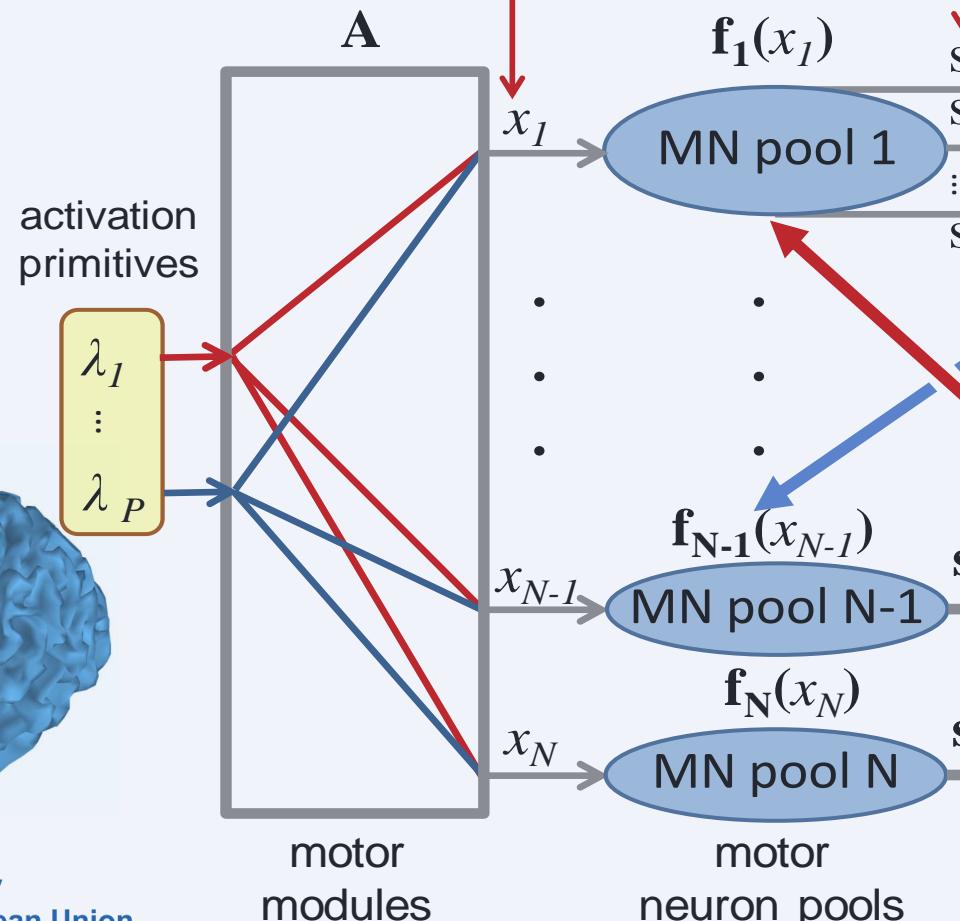
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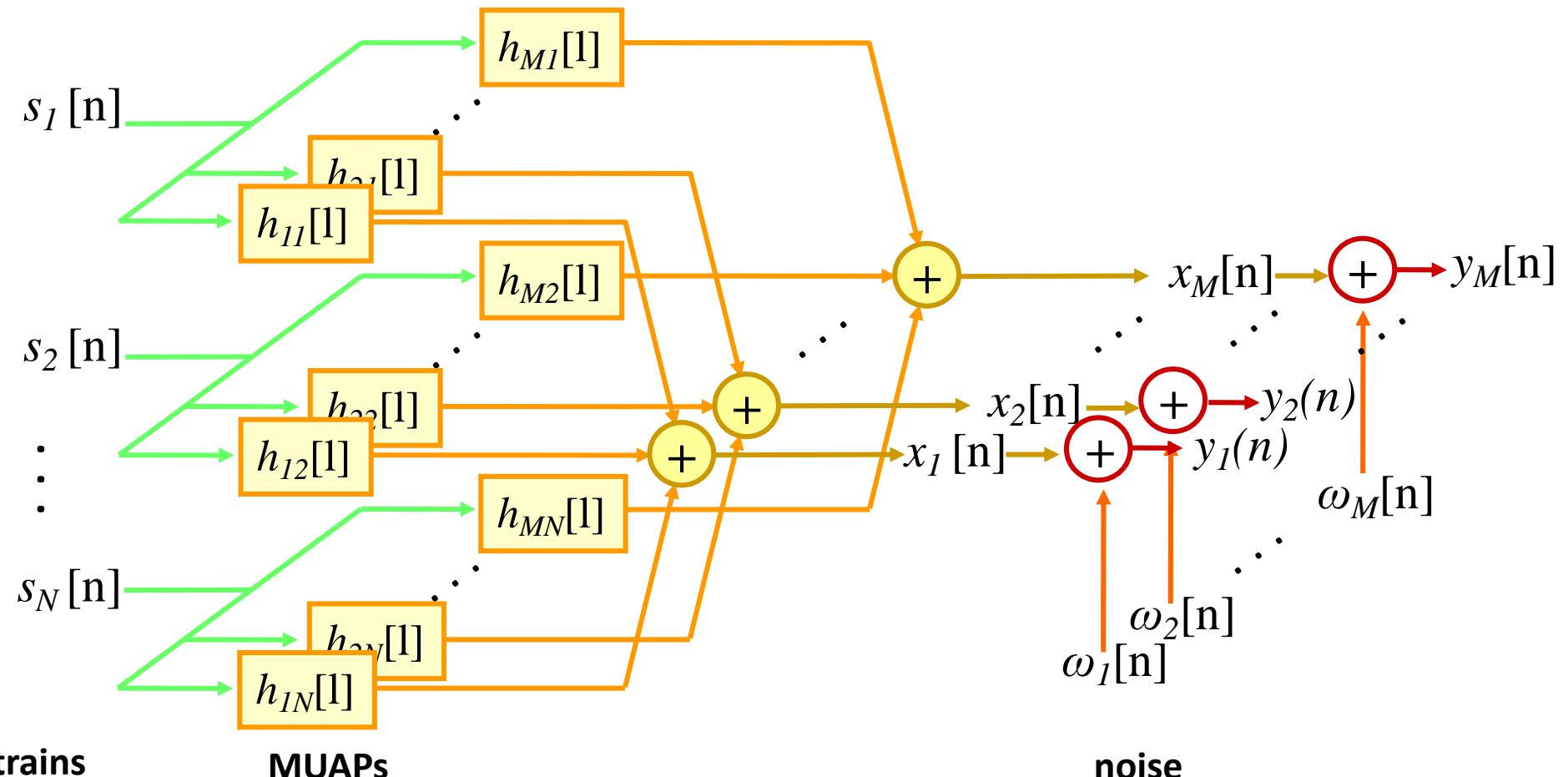
Surface EMG mixing models: signal-based approach

Holobar & Farina, *Physiol Measur* 2014

Physiology



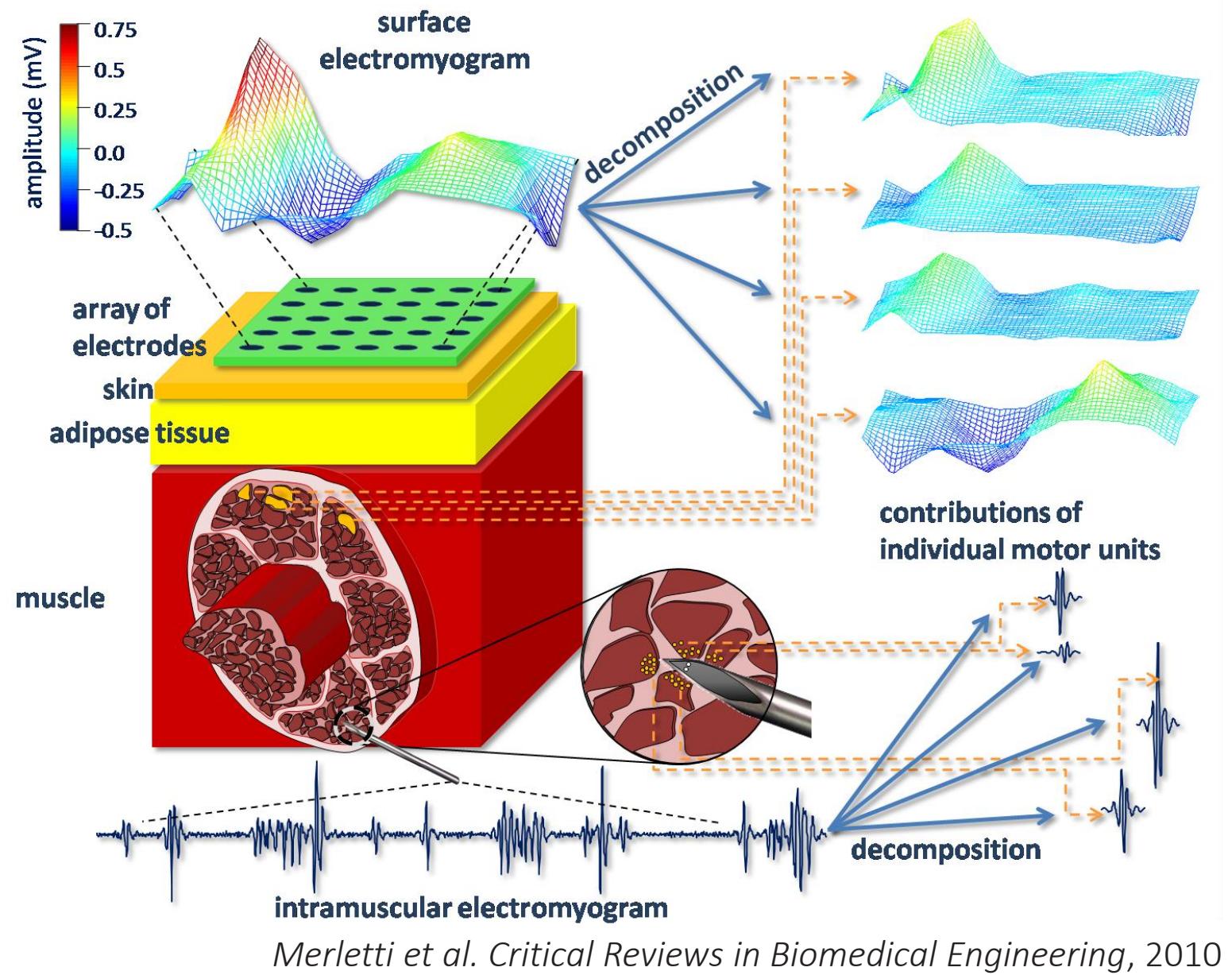
Isometric HDEMG model: Convulsive



Intramuscular vs. surface EMG



- **Surface EMG:** 0-500 Hz, several tens of MUs
- **Intramuscular EMG:** 0-5000 Hz, low number of MUs
- **Surface MUAPs:** smooth (low-frequency) & longer (15 ms)
- **Intramuscular MUAPs:** sharper & shorter (5 ms)



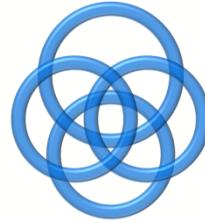
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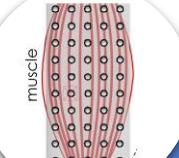
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Processing pipelines

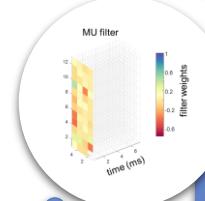
Know-how & details matter



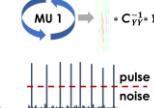
**HDEMG
acquisition**



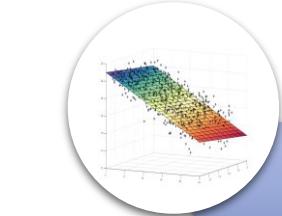
**HDEMG channel
selection**



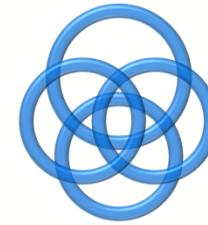
**BSS-based MU
filter estimation**



**Physiological
assessment**



**MU filter
optimisation &
MU firing
segmentation**



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Isometric voluntary contractions – surface HDEMG

Asynchronous MU firings, stationary MUAPs

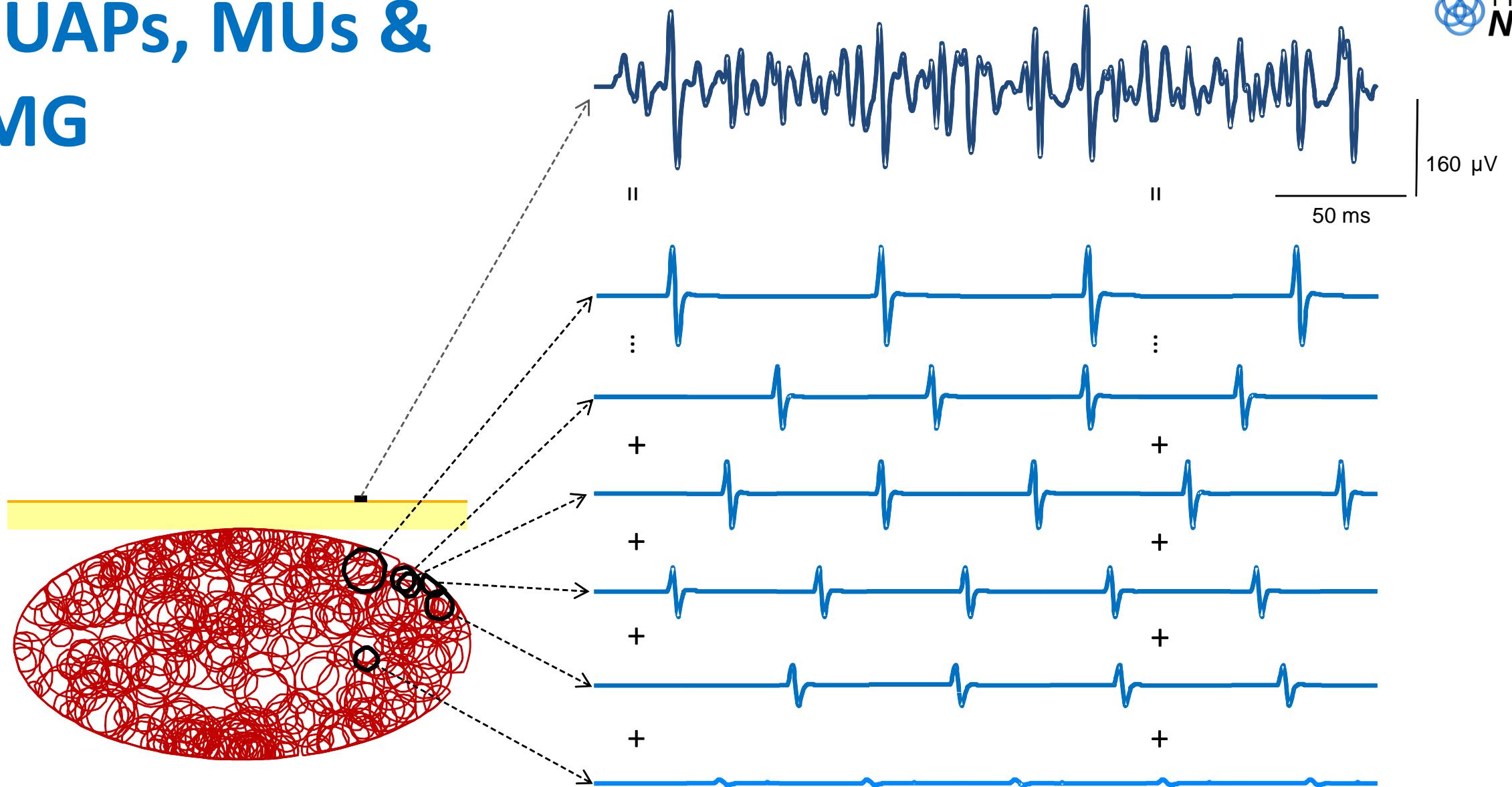


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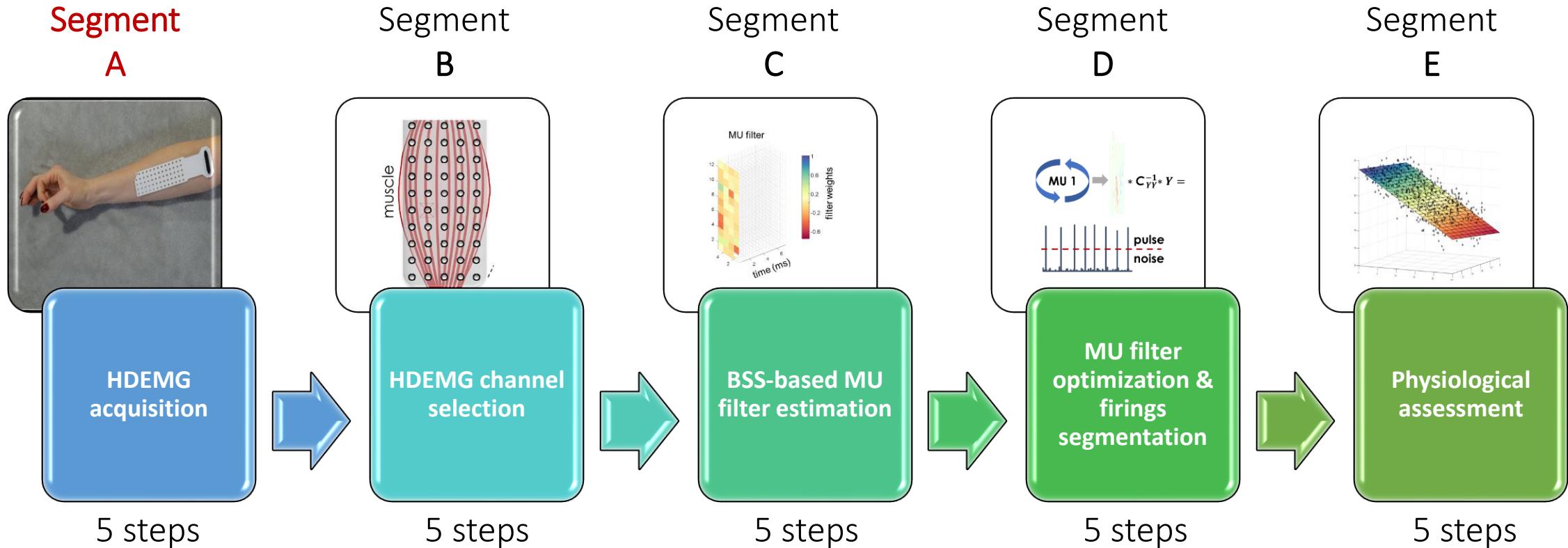


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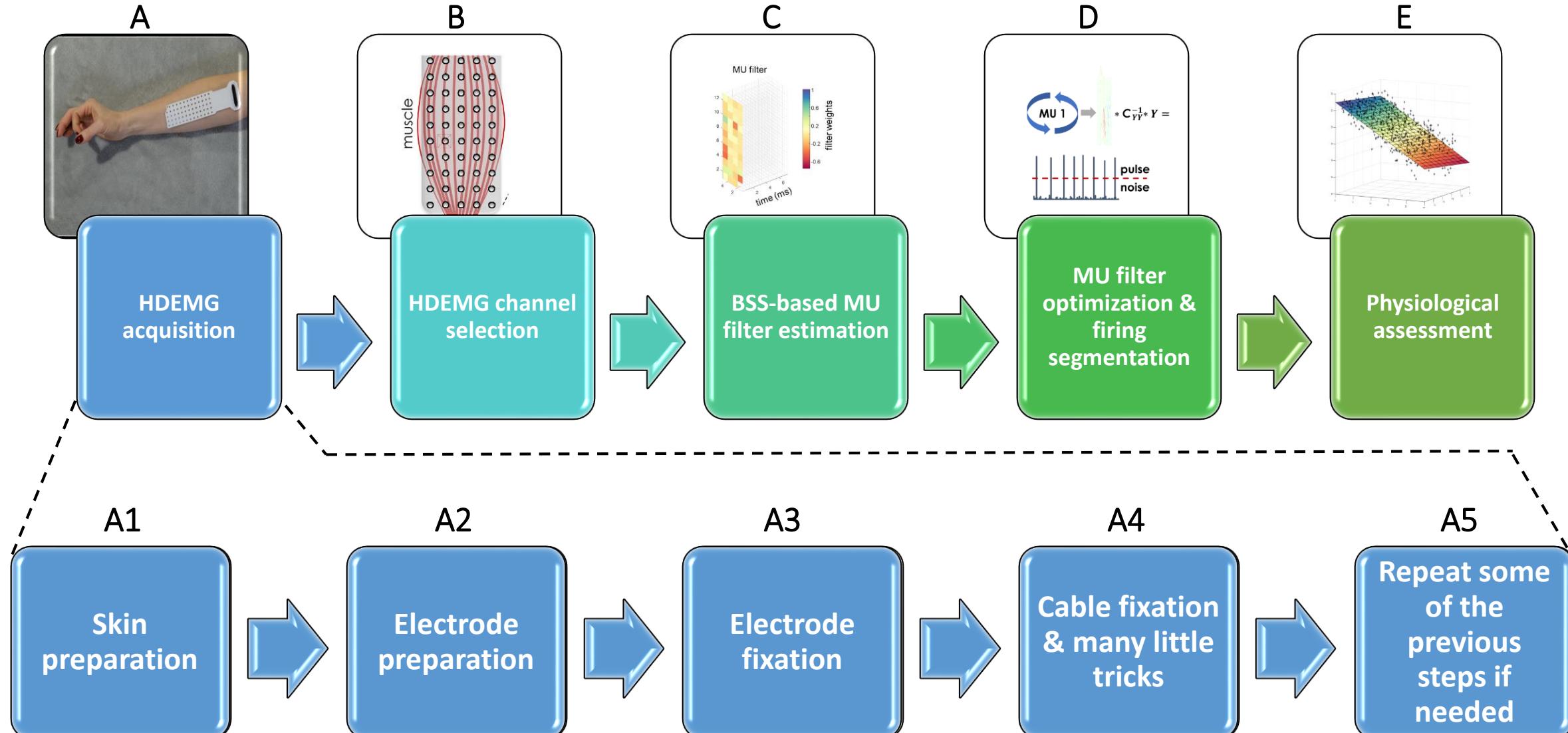
MUAPs, MUs & EMG



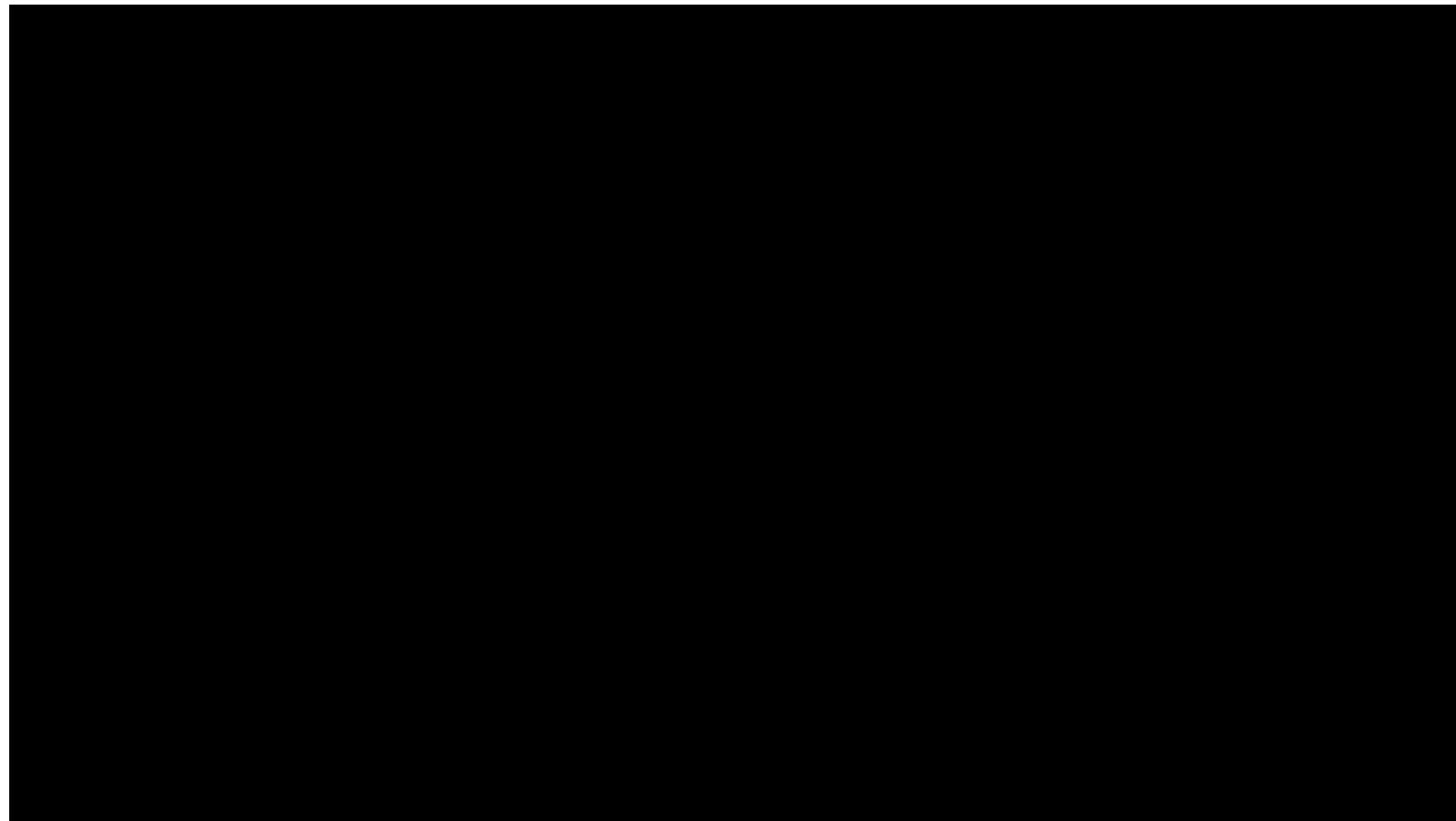
Processing pipeline



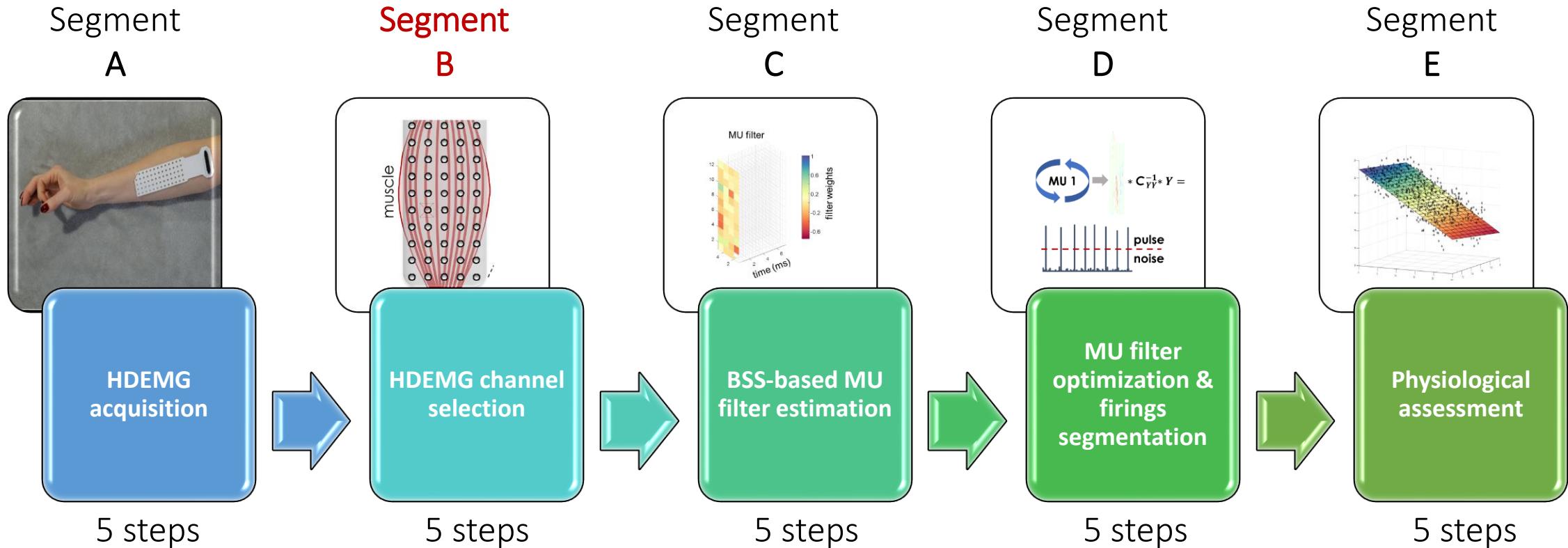
Processing pipeline: Segment A



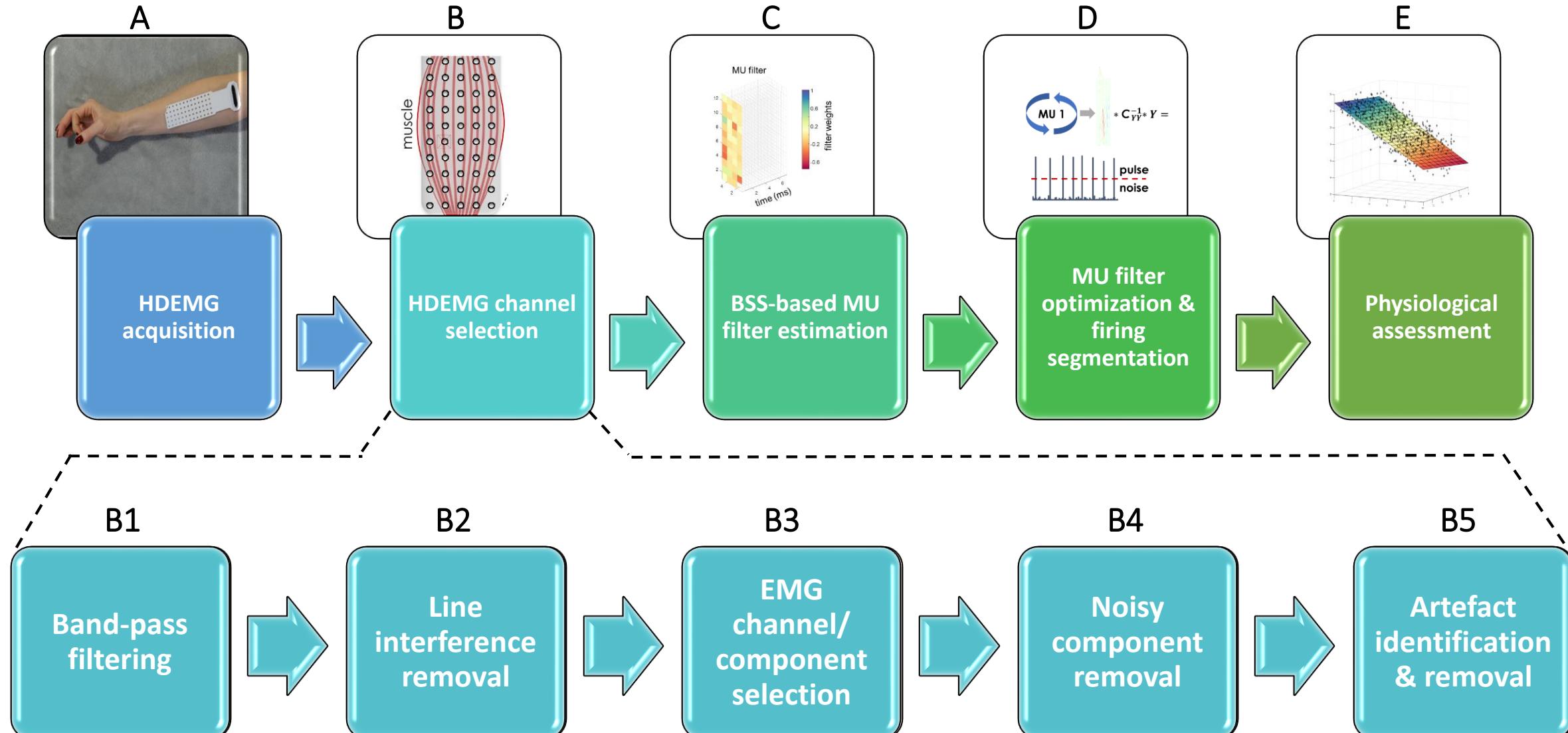
HDEMG acquisition – electrode fixation



Processing pipeline



Processing pipeline: Segment B



Nonlinear transformations of EMG are forbidden



- Nonlinear transformations are forbidden!
 - They destroy the linear superimposition of MUAPs (i.e. linear mixing model)
- Nonlinear transformations are forbidden!
 - They introduce additional crossterms (i.e., cross spike trains between any pair of active MUs)
 - $(a + b)^2 \neq a^2 + b^2$
 - a - spike train 1
 - b - spike train 2
 - $2ab$ -crossterm between spike train 1 and 2
- Nonlinear transformations are really bad idea!
- And they are forbidden!



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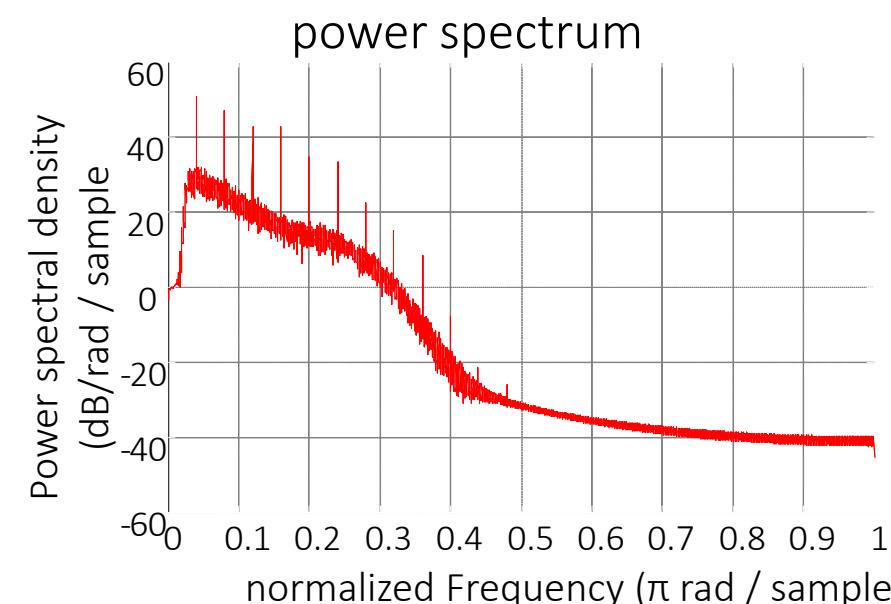
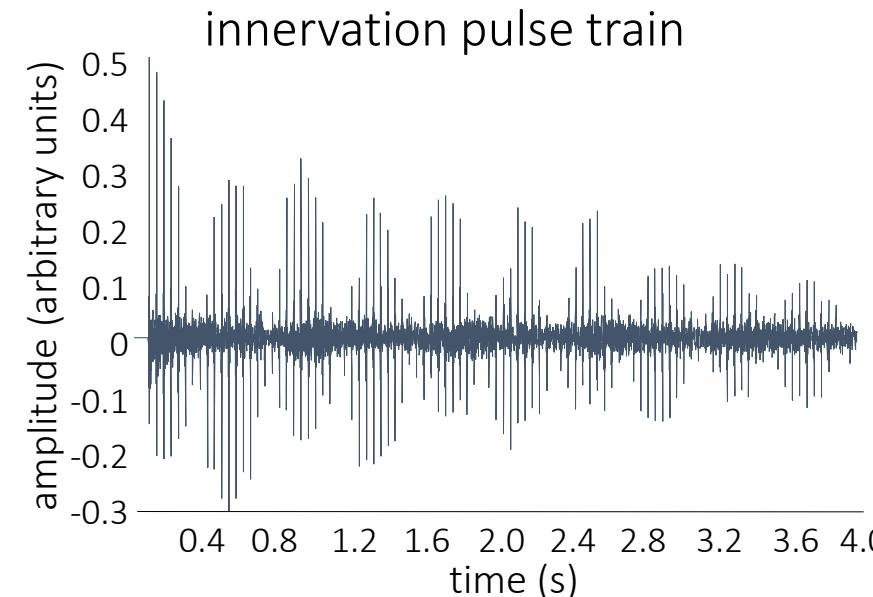
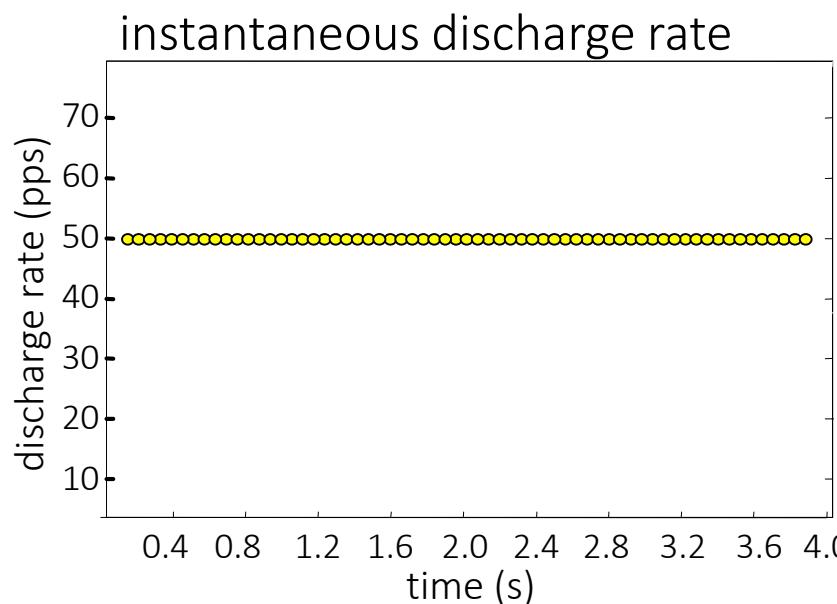
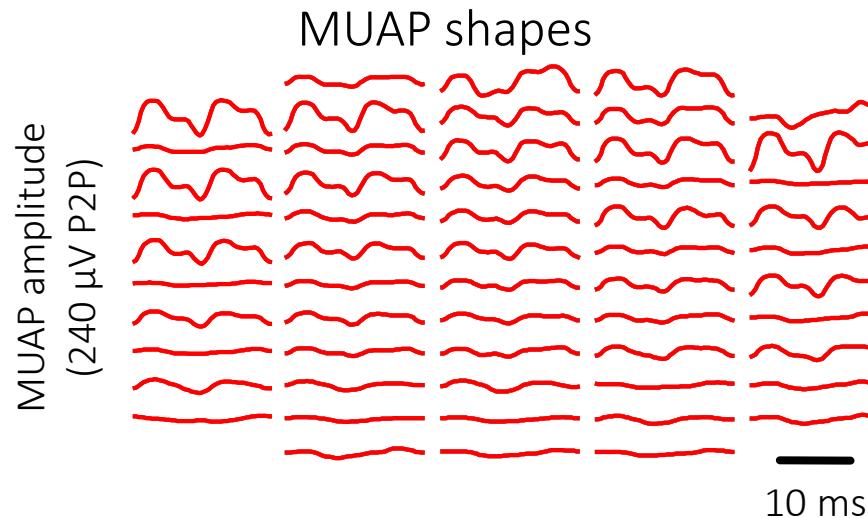
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B2 - Line interference: zero-phase filtering or...



Avoid nonlinear techniques in filtering or preprocessing!



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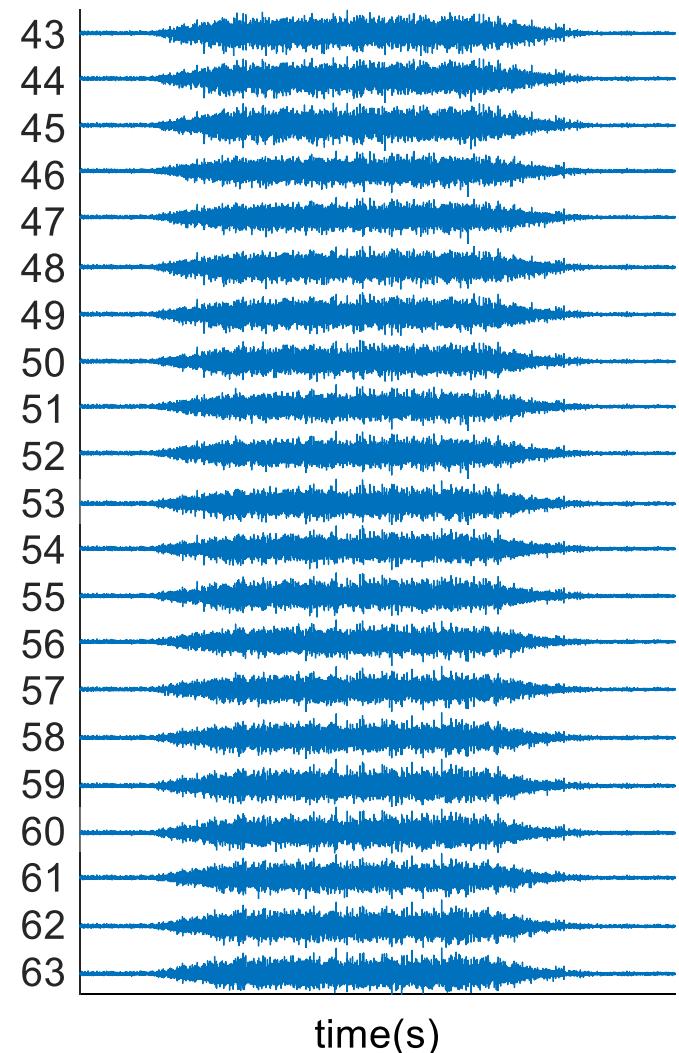
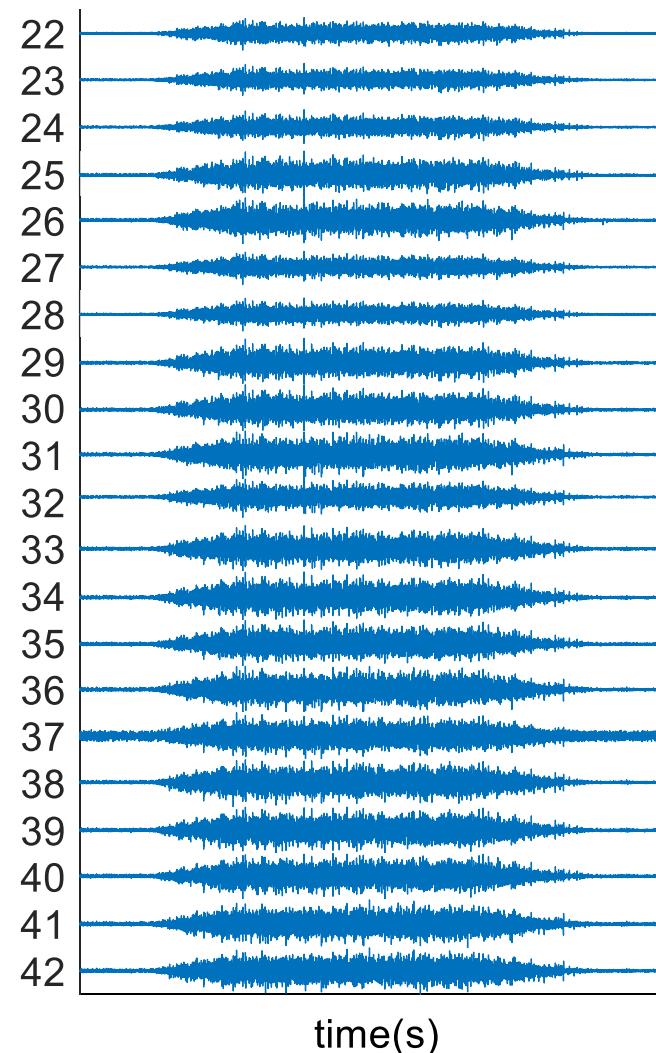
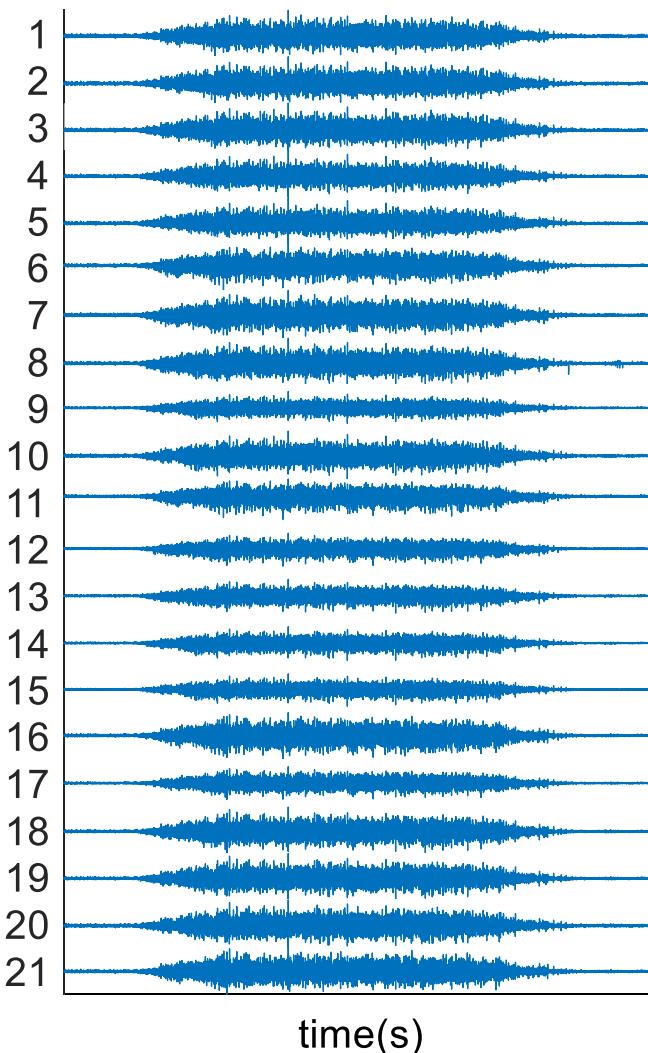


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B3 – EMG channels (VL muscle)



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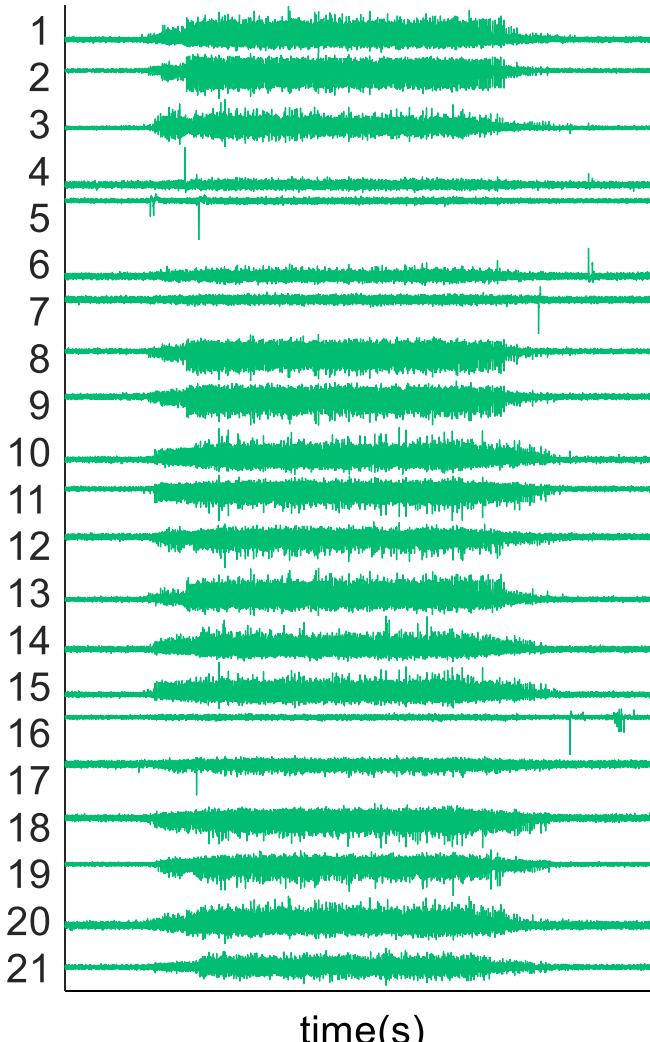


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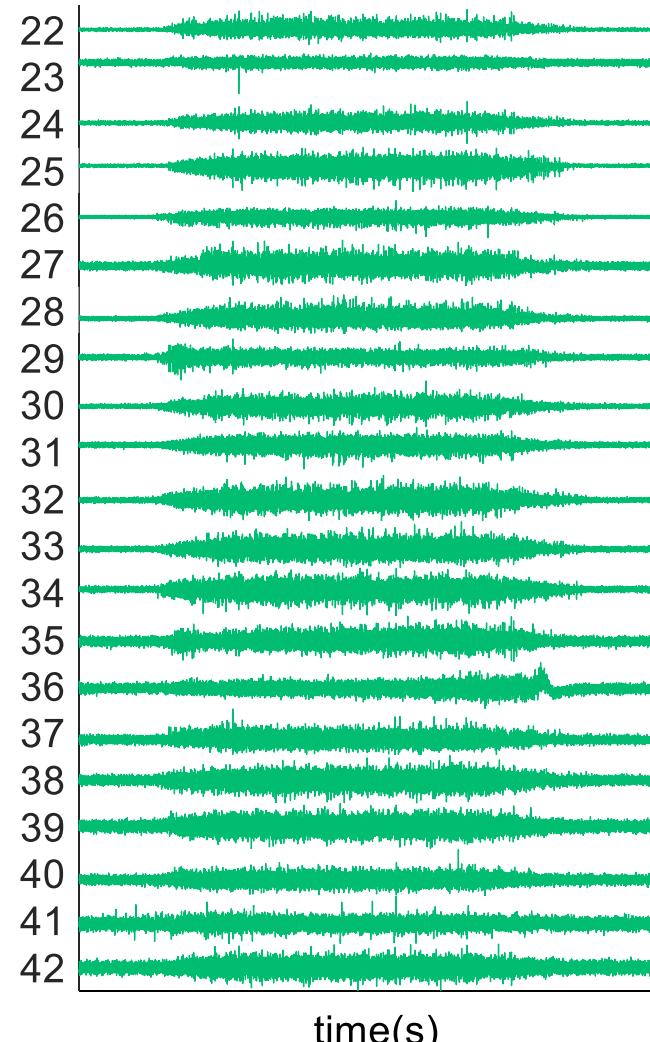
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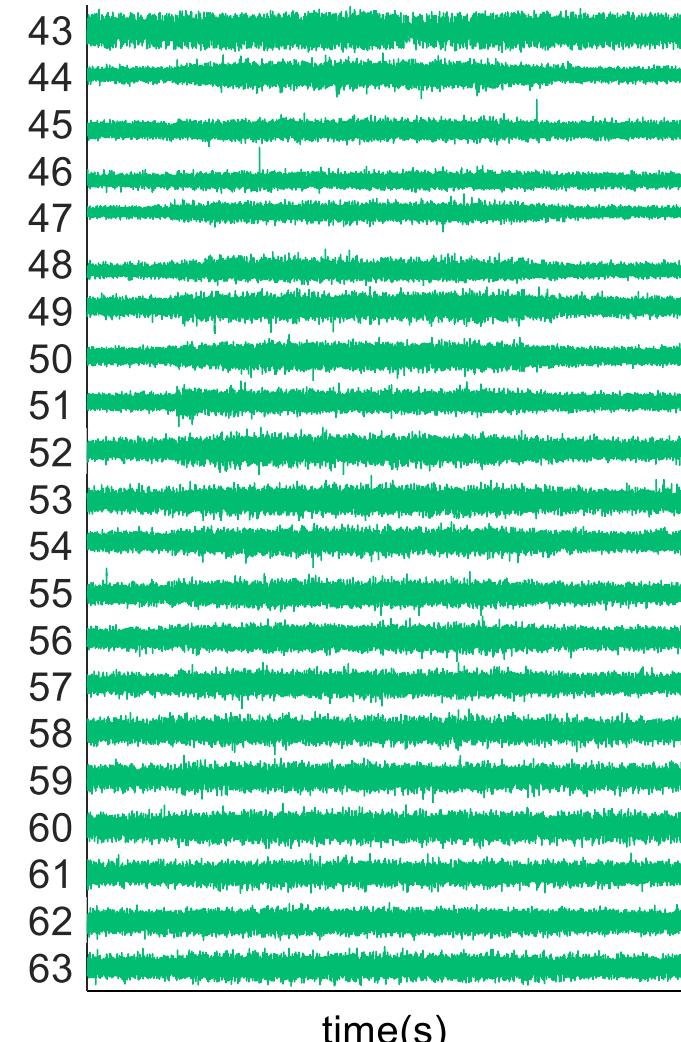
B1 – ICA components (VL muscle)



time(s)



time(s)



time(s)



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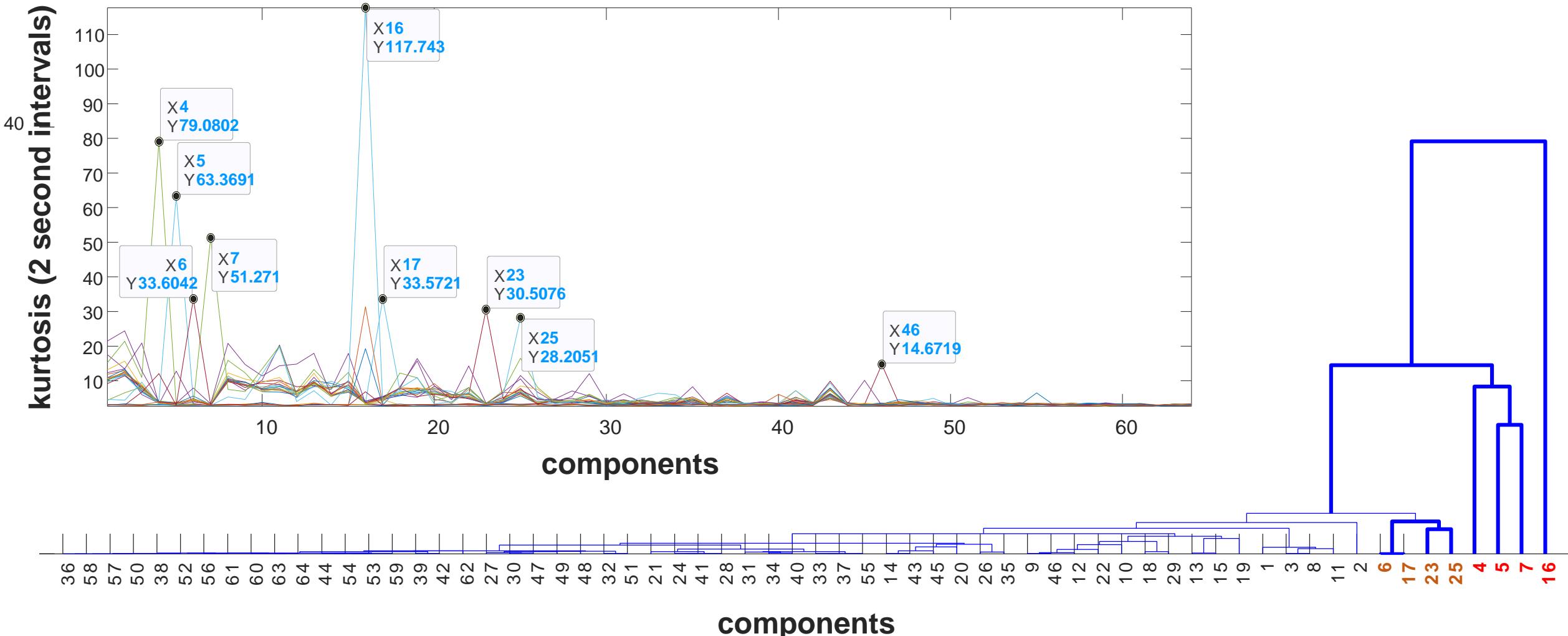


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B2 – Noisy component removal



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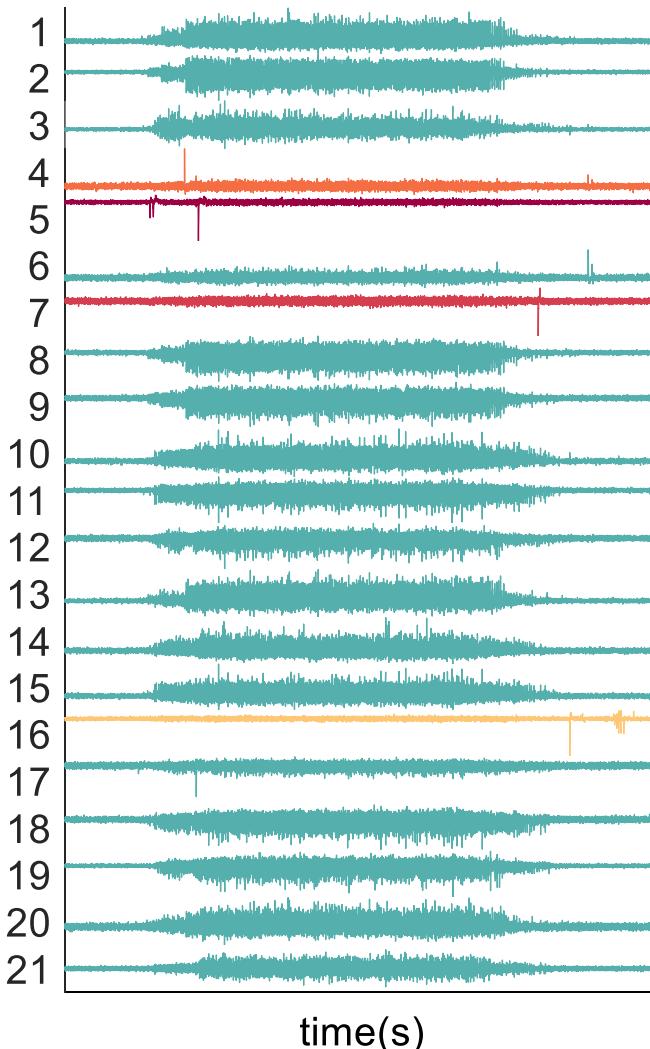


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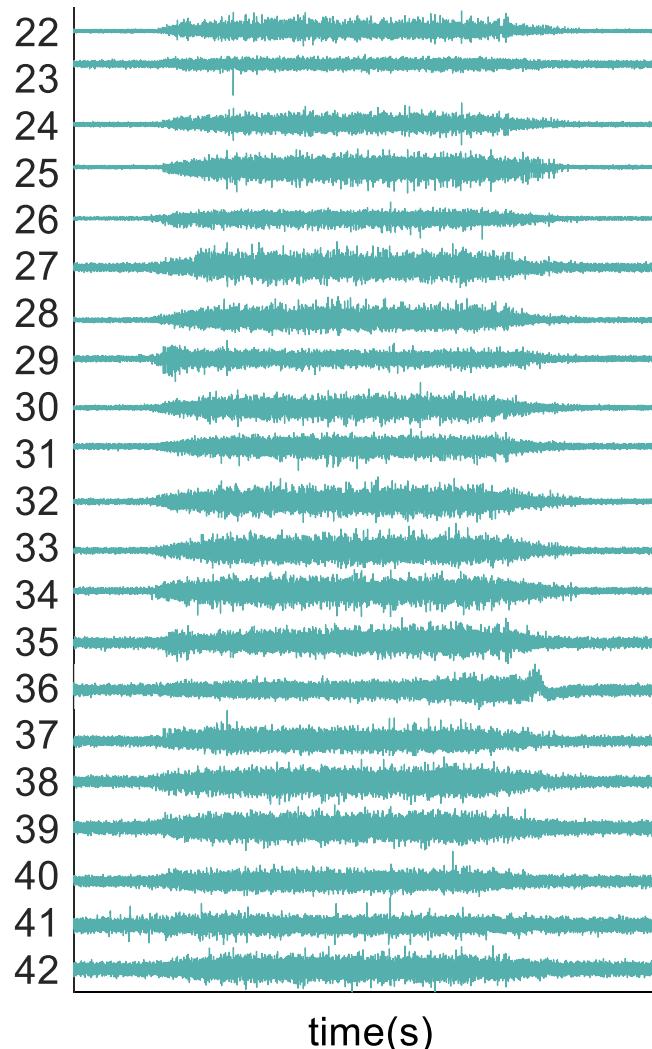
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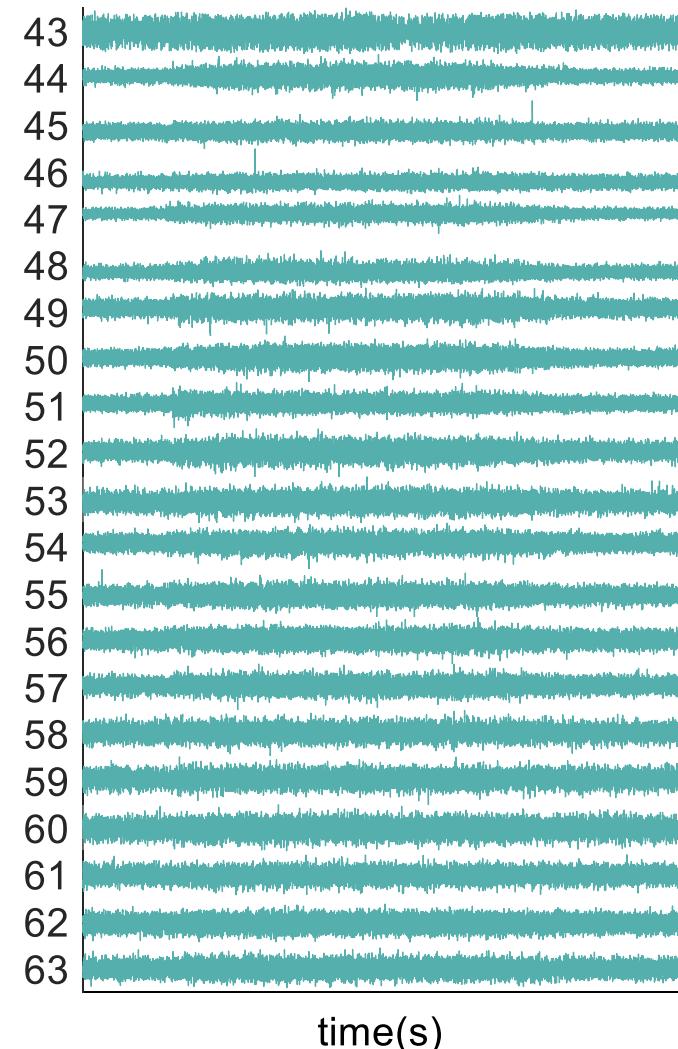
B2 – Noisy component removal



time(s)



time(s)



time(s)



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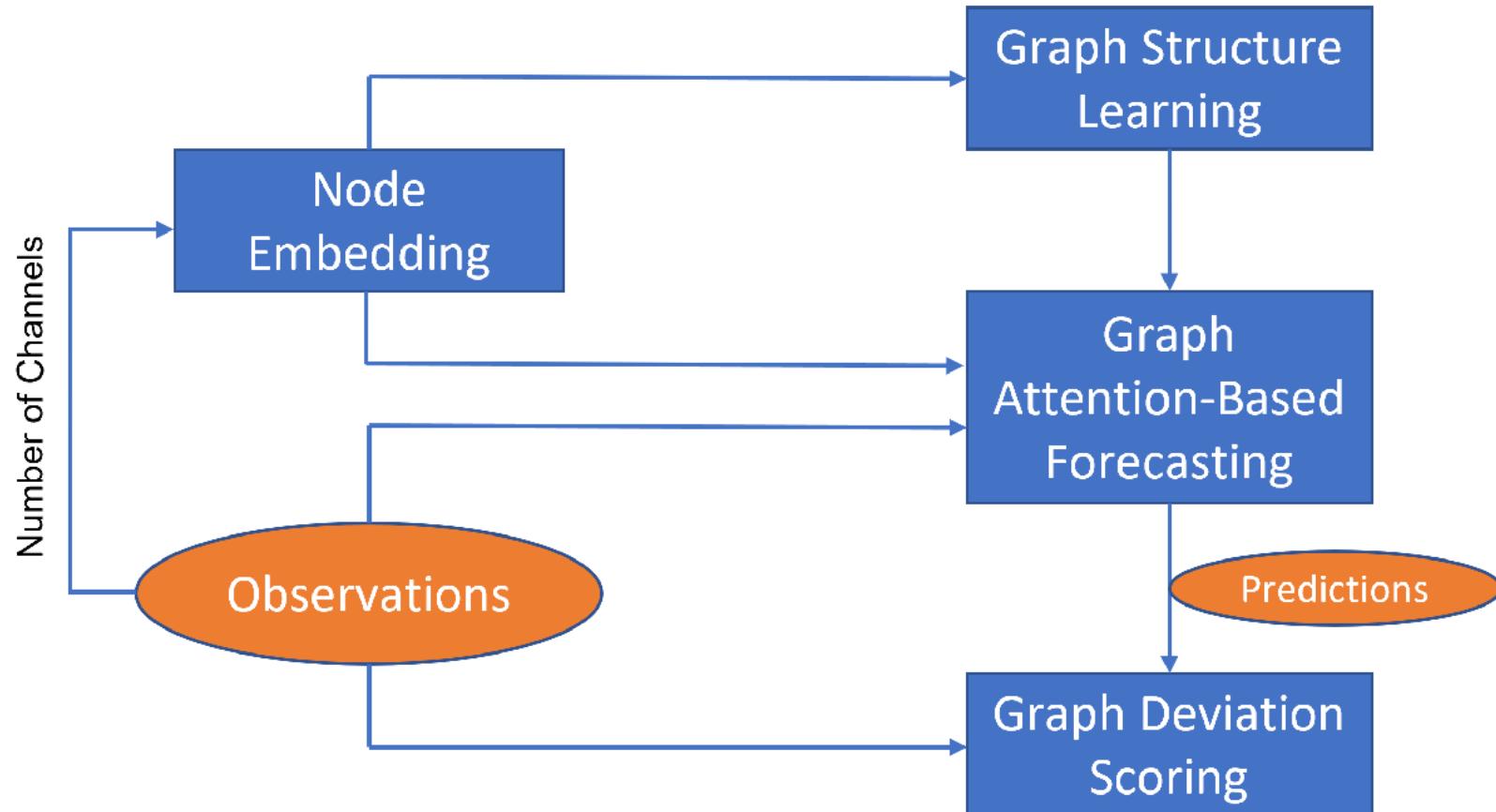


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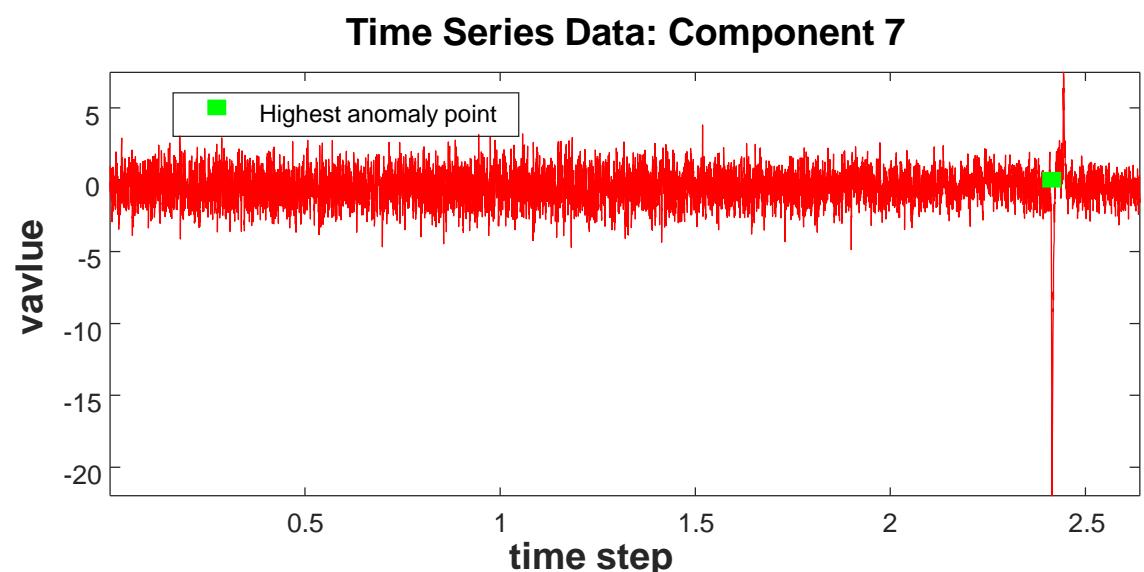
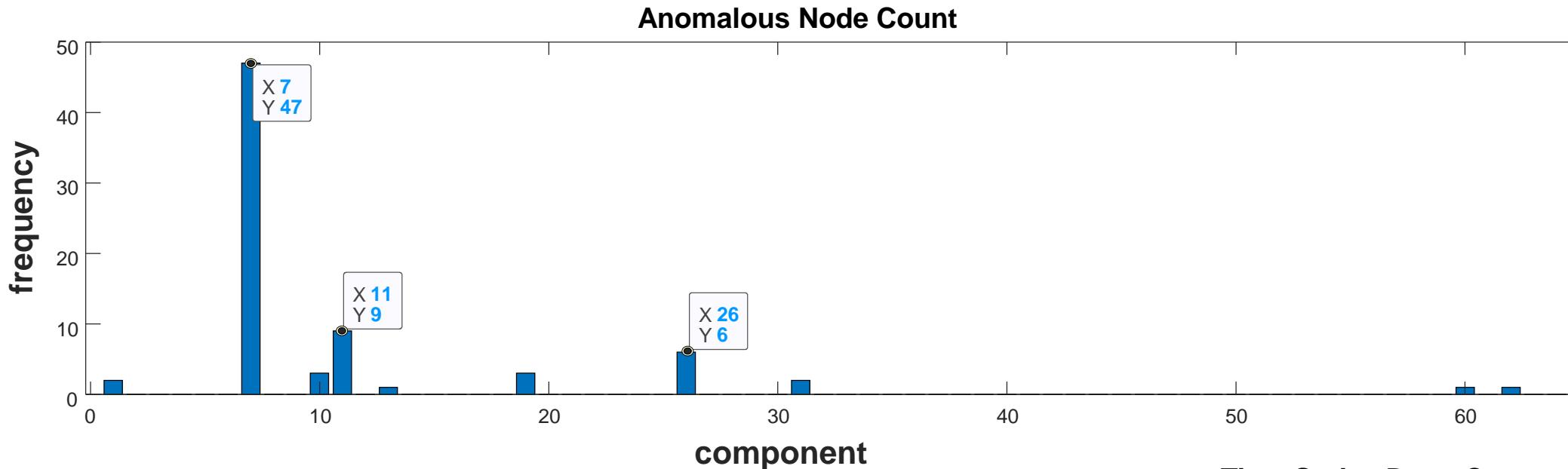
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B3 – Artefact removal: Multivariate Time Series Anomaly Detection Using Graph Neural Network (MATLAB)



B3 – Artefact removal



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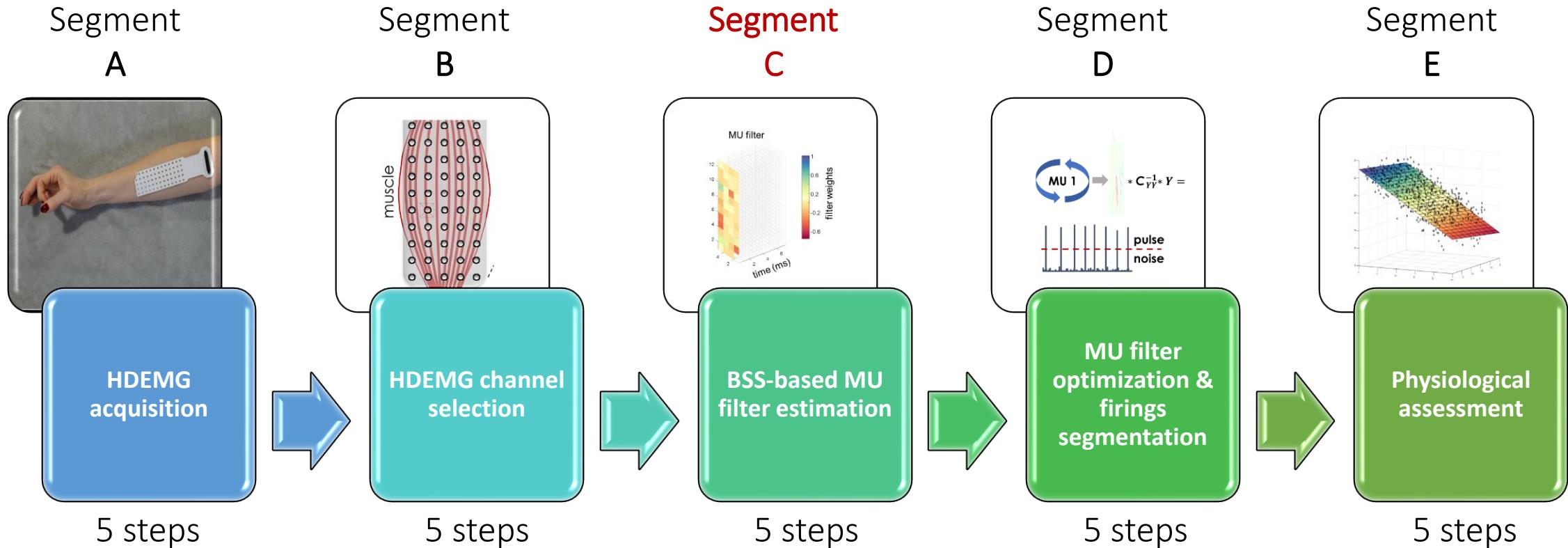


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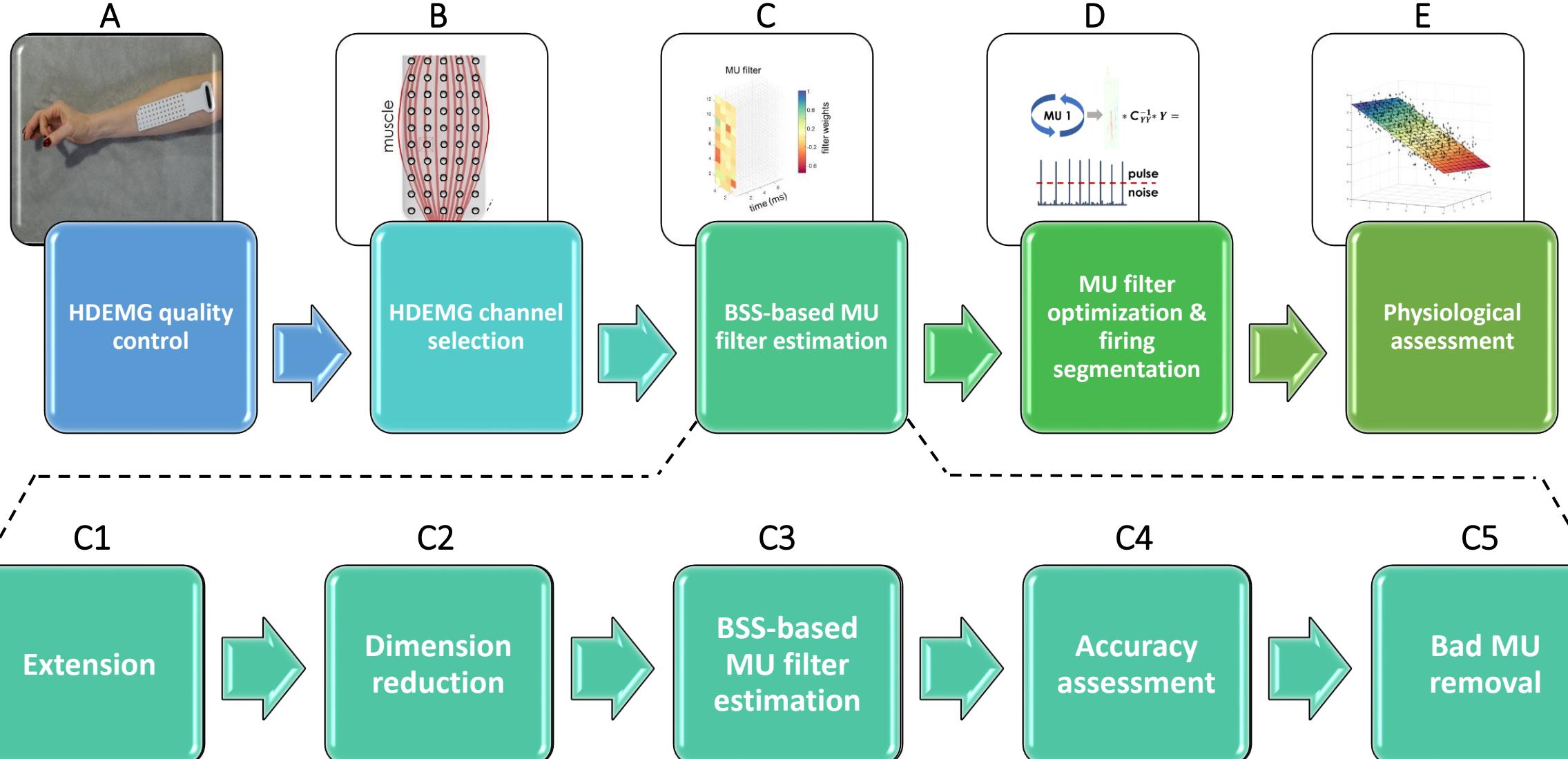
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Processing pipeline

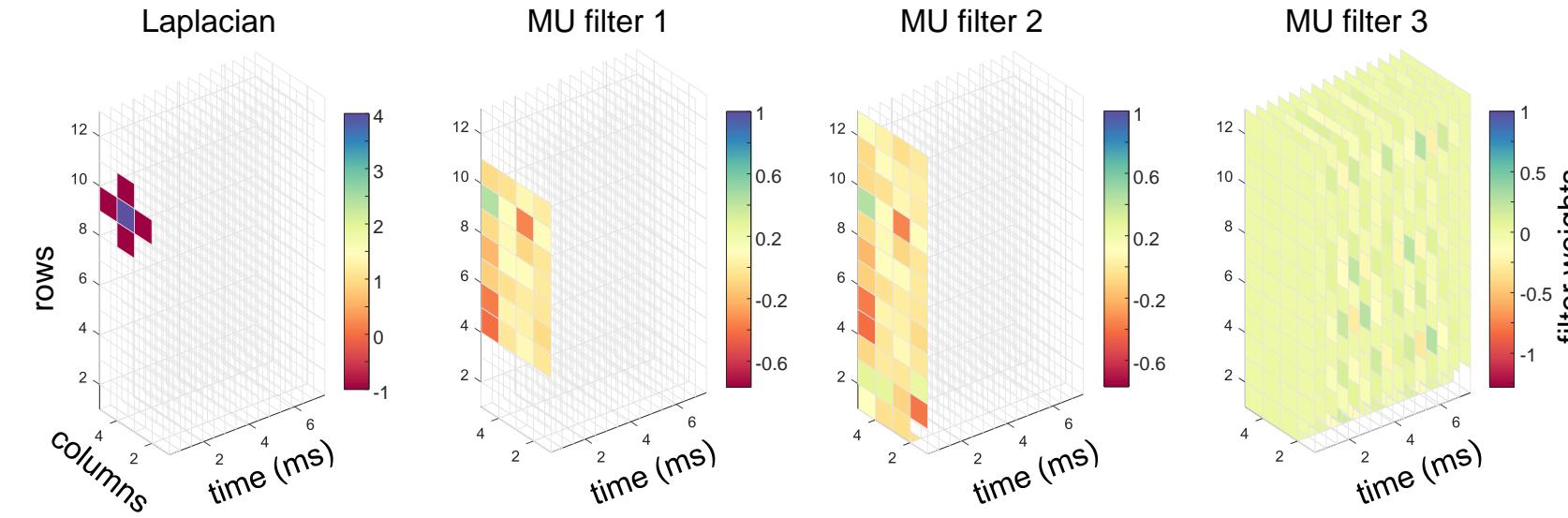
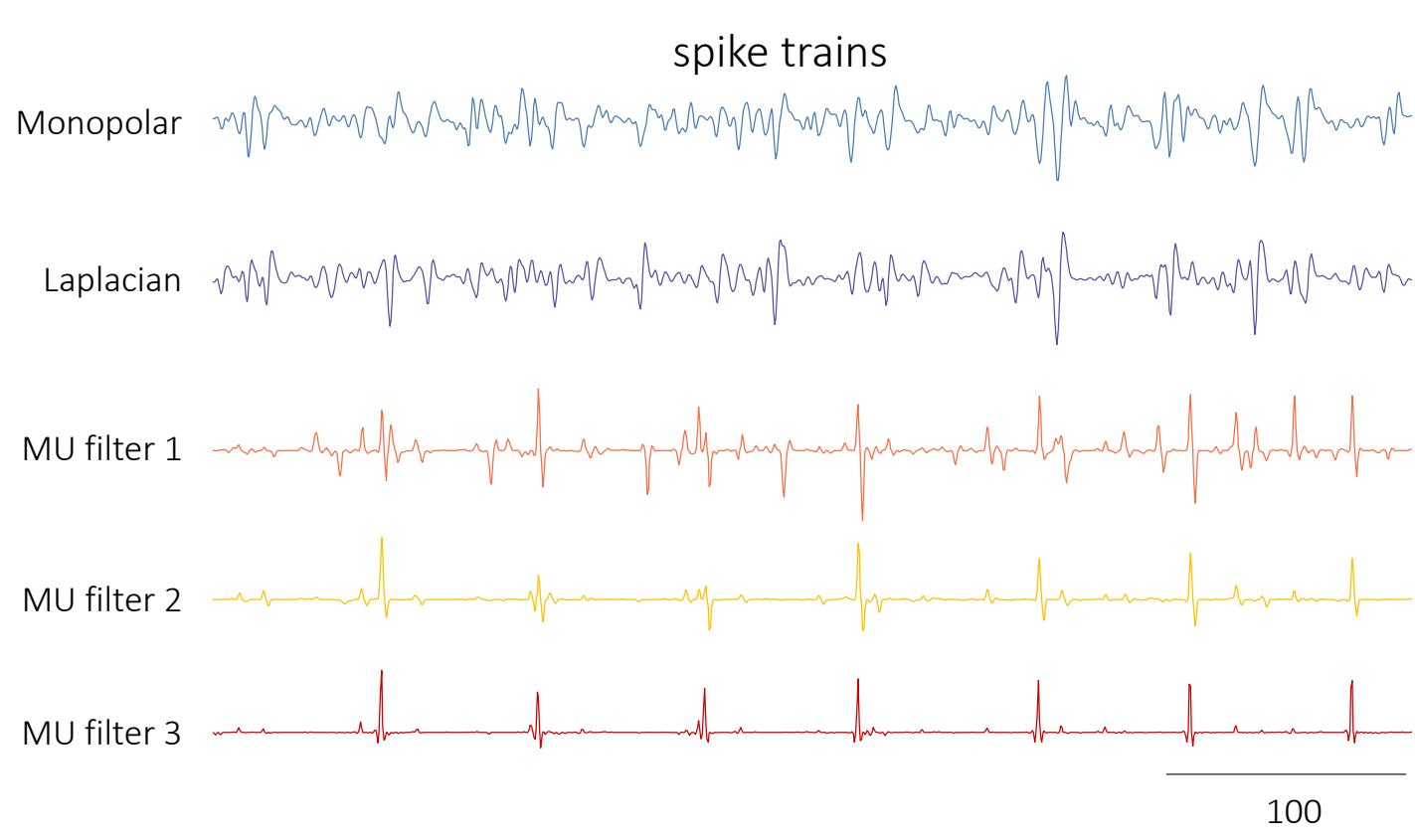
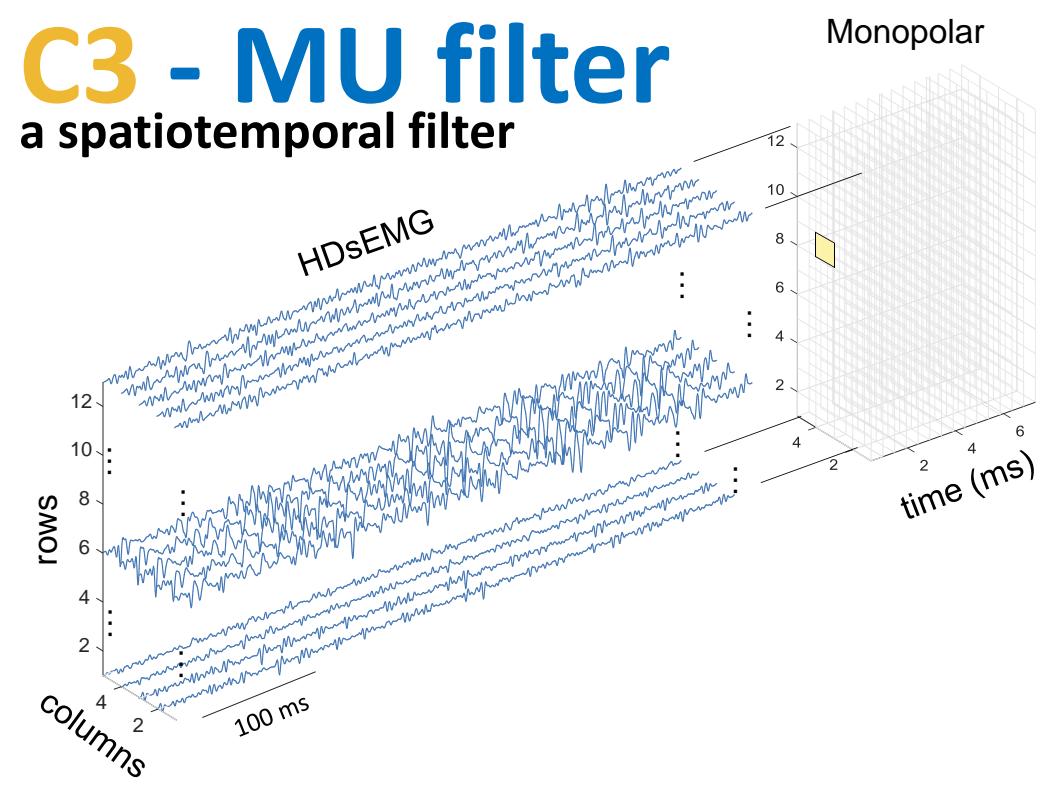


Processing pipeline: Segment C



C3 - MU filter

a spatiotemporal filter



Škarabot et al. The Journal
of Physiology, 2023

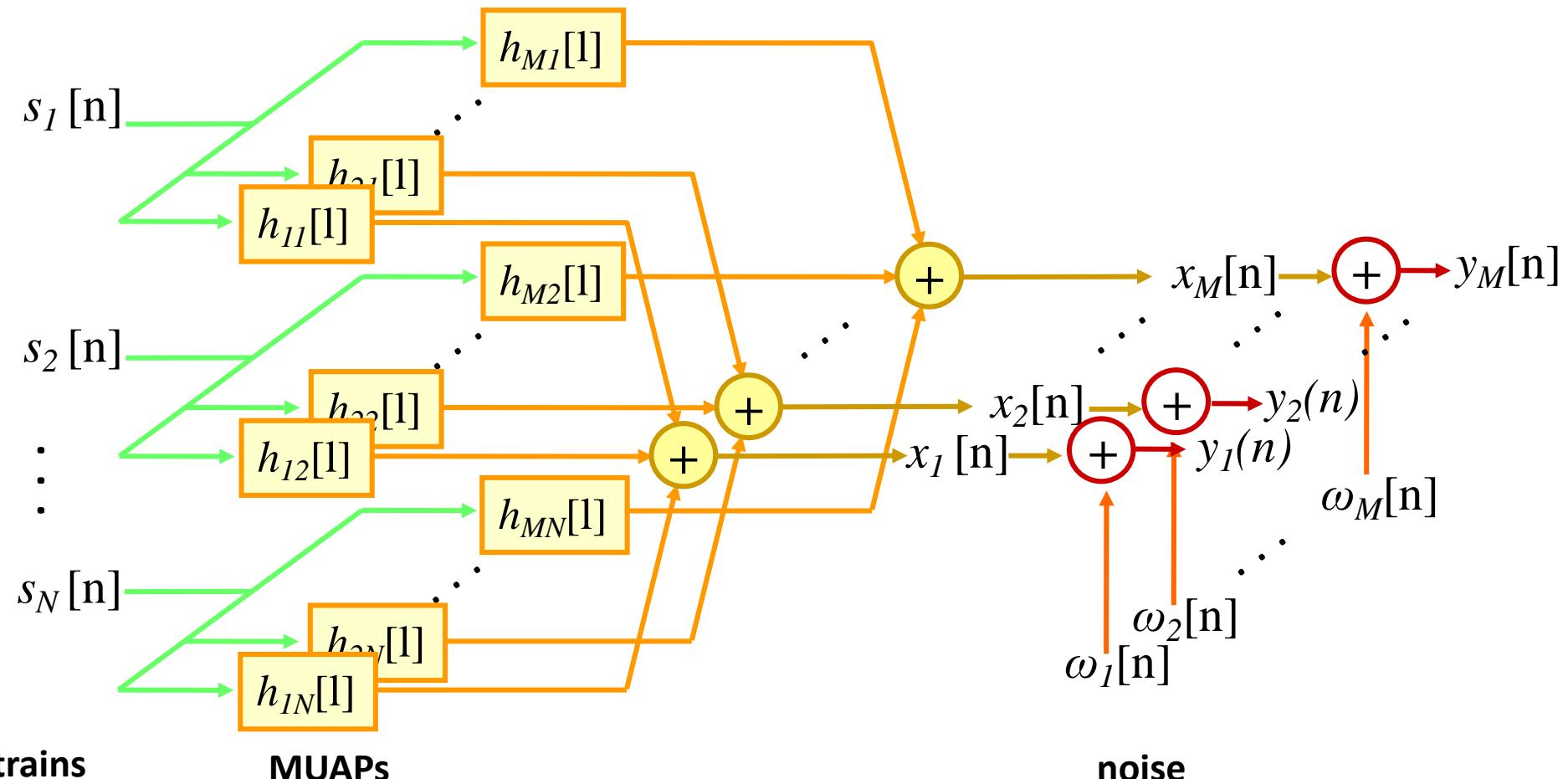


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Isometric HDEMG model: Convulsive

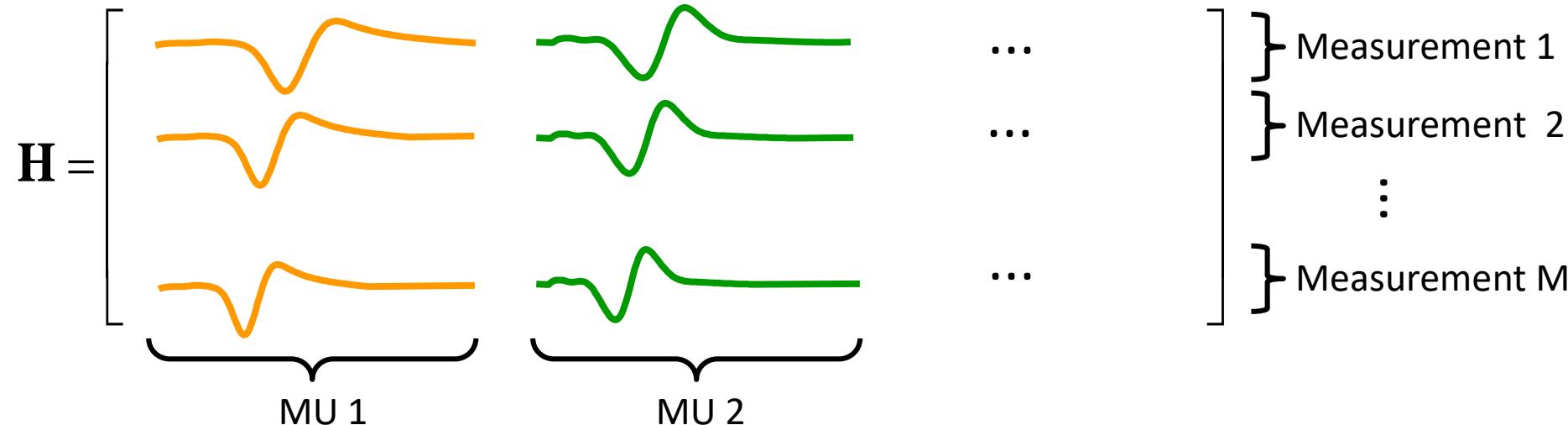


Data model: matrix form

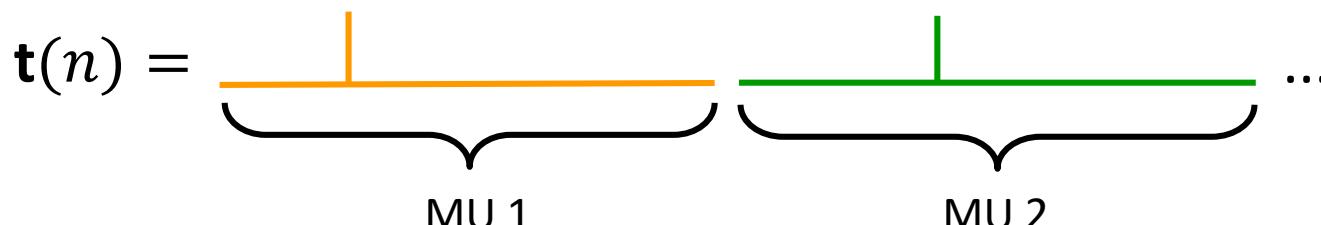
$$y(n) = Ht(n) + \omega(n)$$



- Mixing matrix of convolution kernels (MUAPs):



- Extended vector of pulse sources:



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Convolution Kernel Compensation (CKC)



hdEMG model: $\mathbf{y}(n) = \mathbf{H}\mathbf{t}(n) + \boldsymbol{\omega}(n)$

MU spike trains: $t_j(n) = \sum_k \delta(n - \tau_j(k))$, $j=1\dots N$

MUAPs: $\bar{\mathbf{H}} = [\bar{\mathbf{H}_1} \dots \bar{\mathbf{H}_N}]$

$$\bar{\mathbf{H}_j} = \begin{bmatrix} \overline{h_{1j}}(0) & \dots & \overline{h_{1j}}(L) \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \overline{h_{Mj}}(0) & \dots & \overline{h_{Mj}}(L) \end{bmatrix}$$

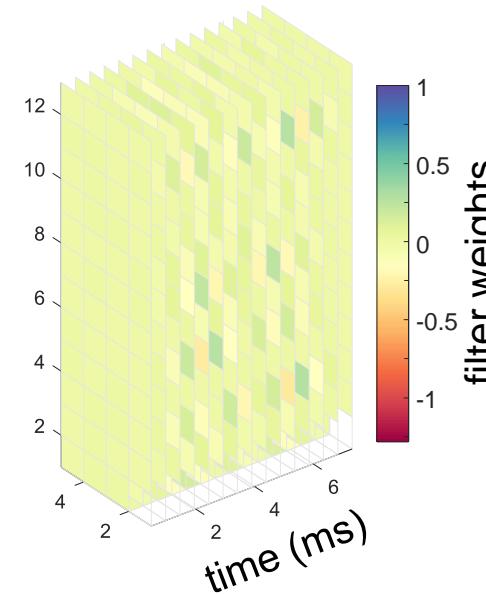
CKC: $\hat{t}_j(n) = \mathbf{c}_{t_j y}^T \mathbf{C}_y^{-1} \mathbf{y}(n) = \mathbf{c}_{t_j t}^T \boxed{\mathbf{H}^T \mathbf{H}^{-T}} \mathbf{C}_t^{-1} \boxed{\mathbf{H} \mathbf{H}^{-1}} \mathbf{t}(n) \approx \mathbf{c}_{t_j t}^T \mathbf{C}_t^{-1} \mathbf{t}(n)$

MU filter $\mathbf{c}_{t_j y}^T \mathbf{C}_y^{-1}$ needs to be estimated for every motor unit

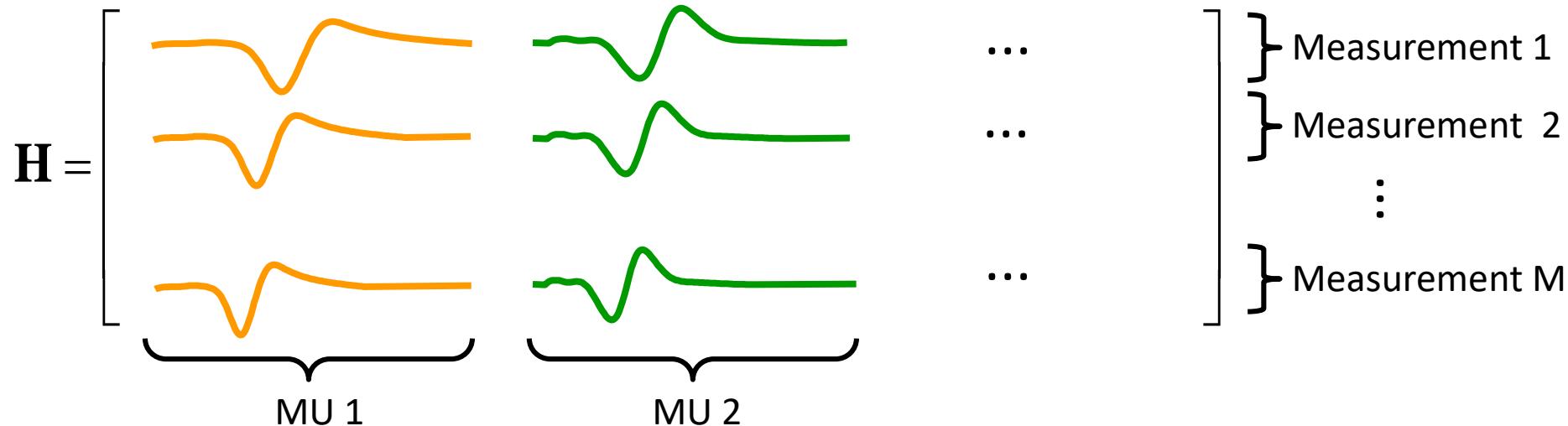
MU filter: MUAP viewpoint



Large MU filter $c_{t_jy}^T C_y^{-1}$



Portion of MUAPs considered by $c_{t_jy}^T$:



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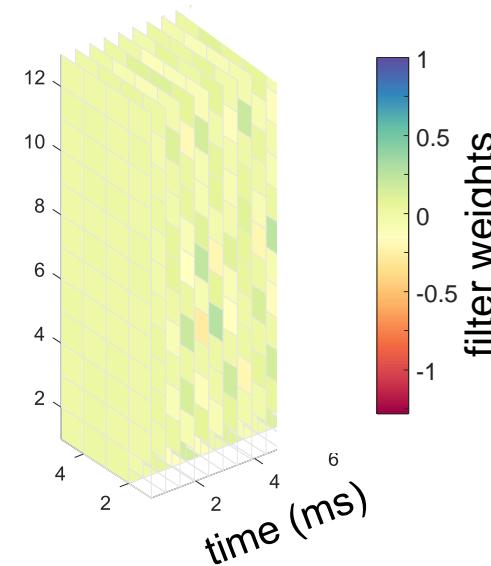
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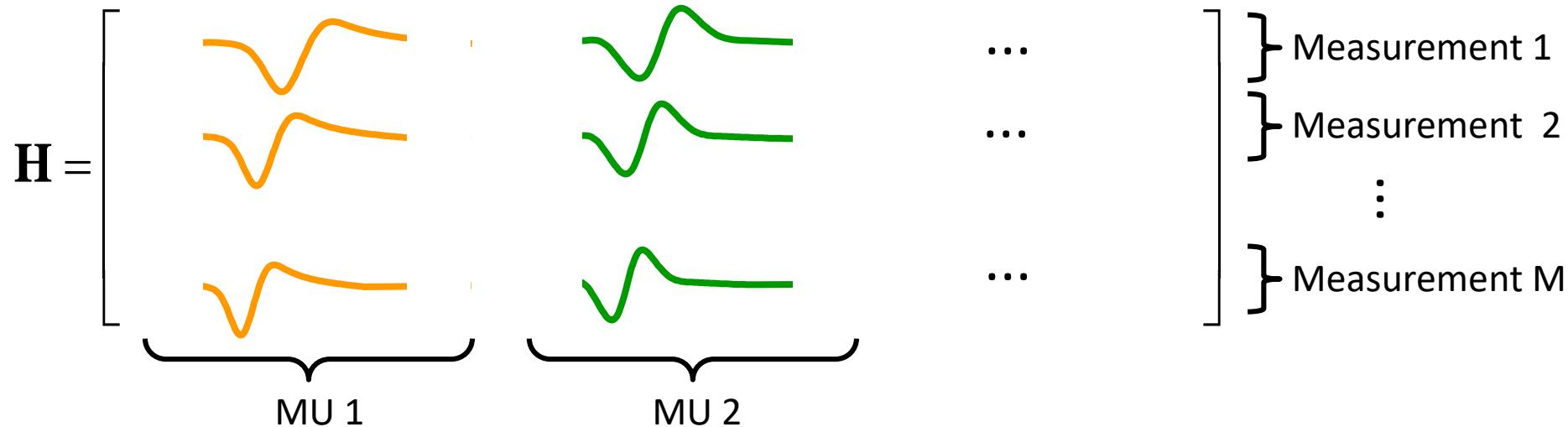
MU filter: MUAP viewpoint



Smaller MU filter $c_{t_jy}^T C_y^{-1}$



Portion of MUAPs considered by $c_{t_jy}^T$:



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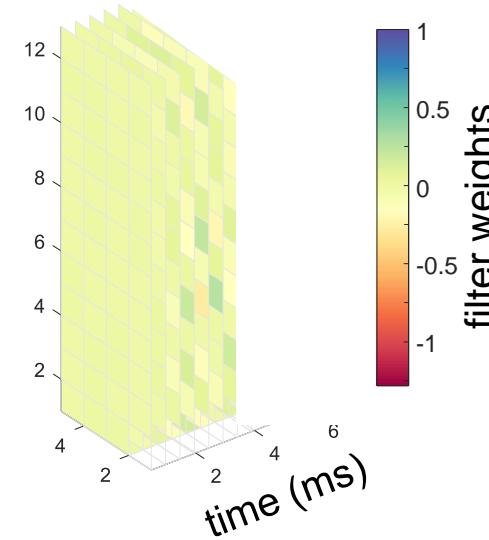
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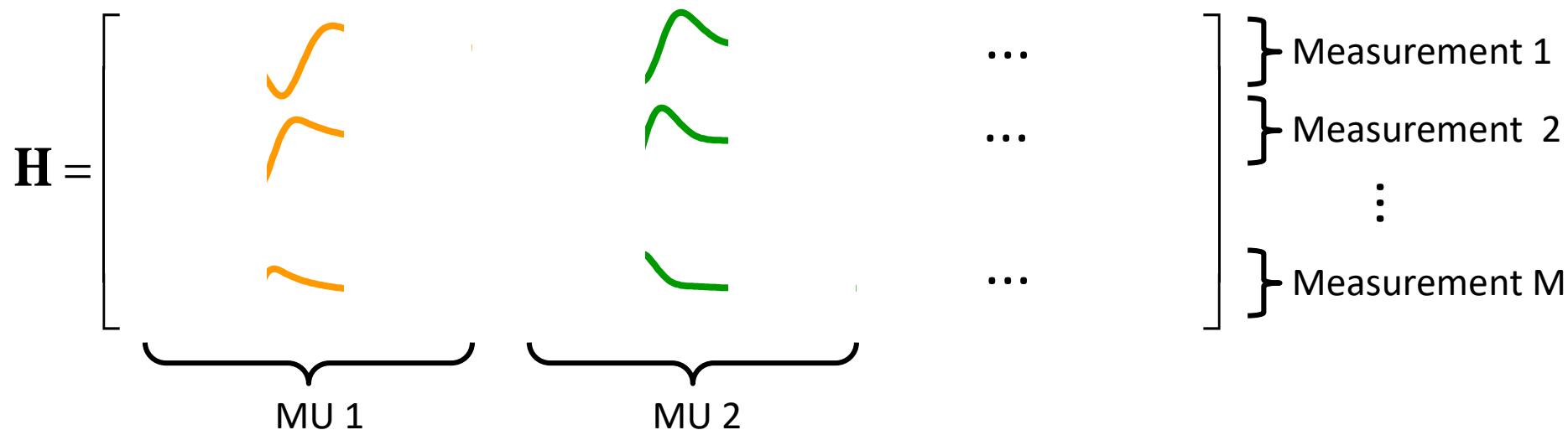
MU filter: MUAP viewpoint



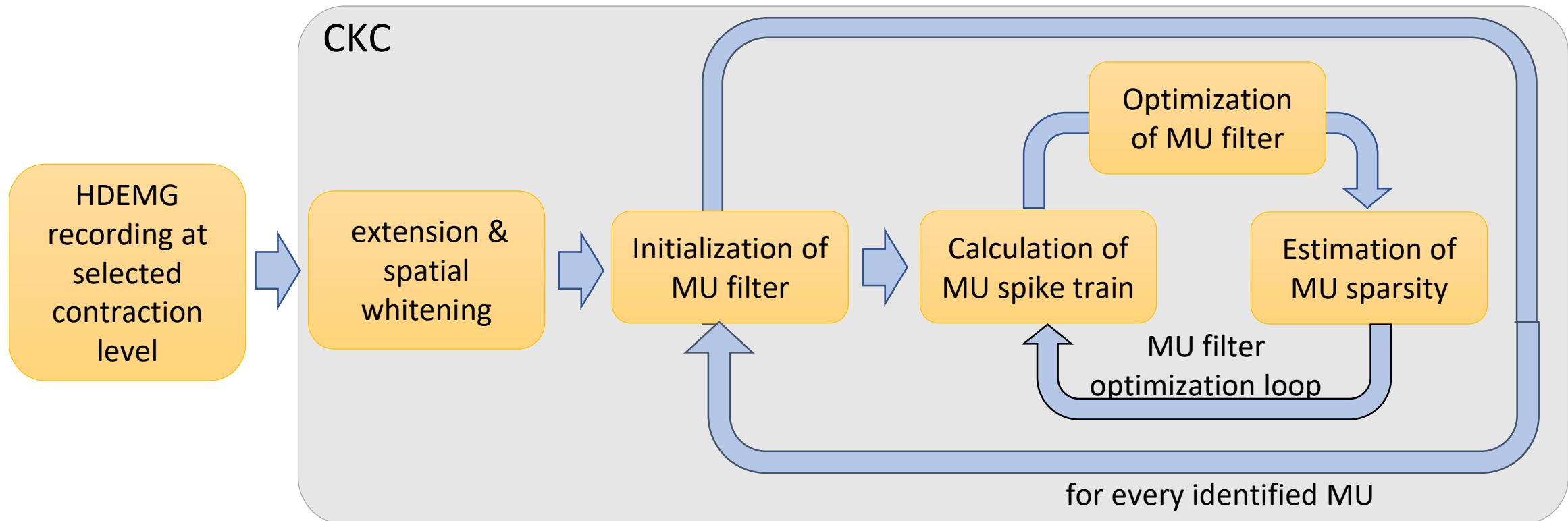
Still smaller MU filter $\mathbf{c}_{t_jy}^T \mathbf{C}_y^{-1}$



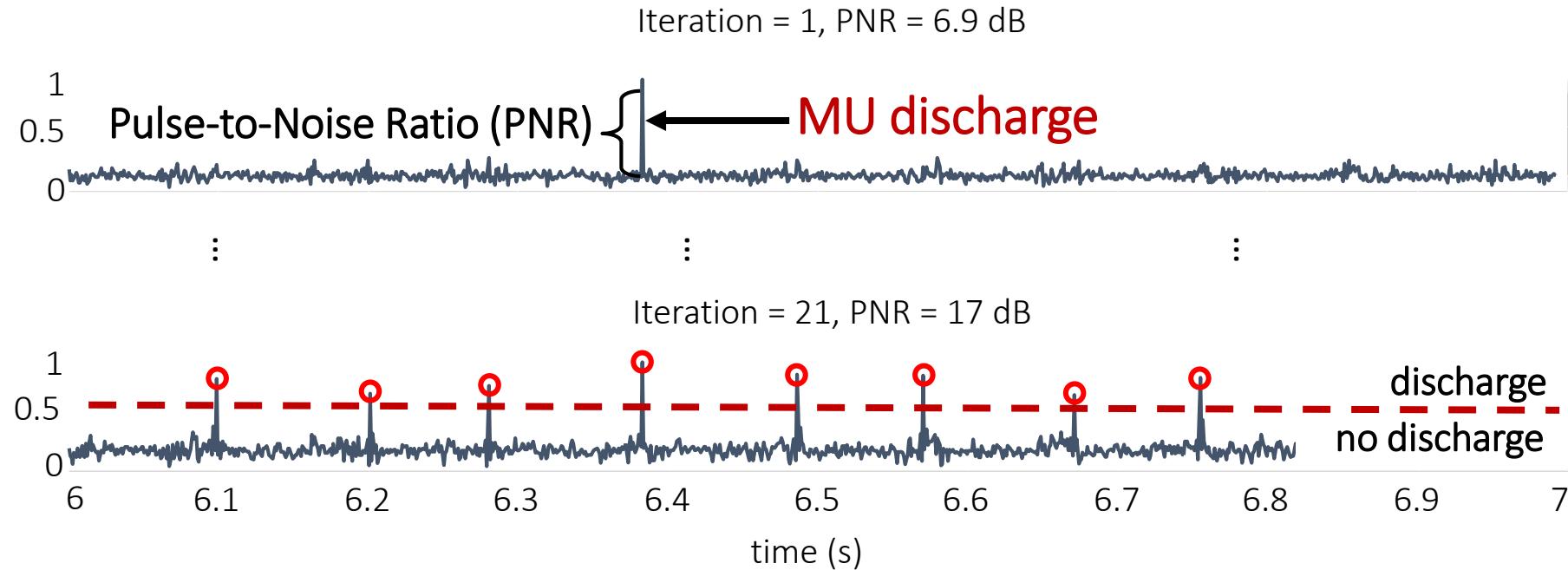
Portion of MUAPs considered by $\mathbf{c}_{t_jy}^T$:



C3 – MU filter estimation



C4 – Accuracy assessment: PNR



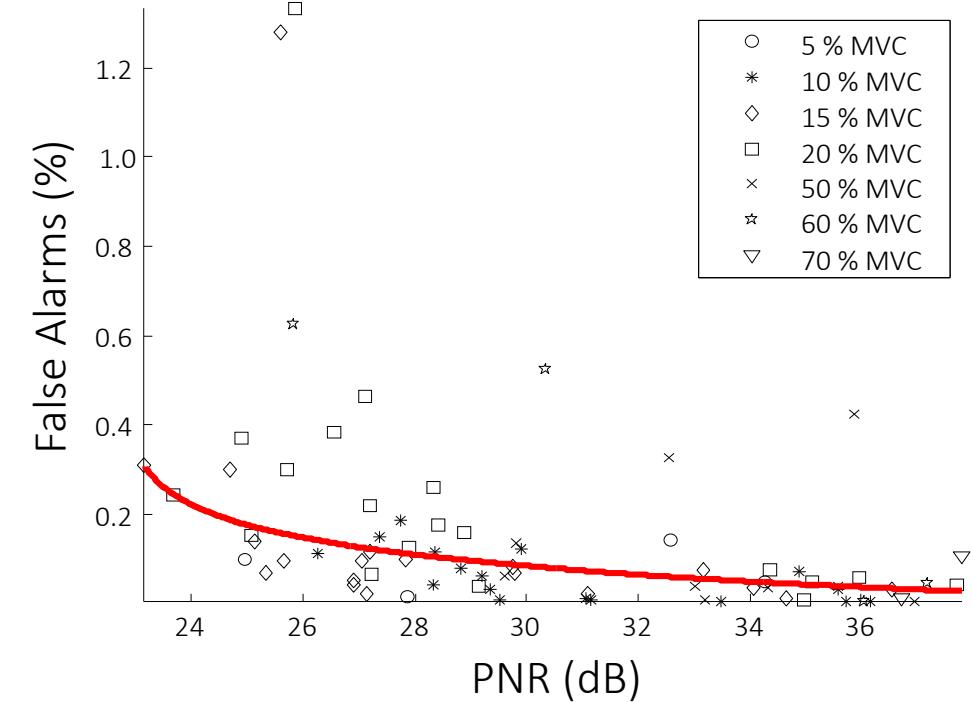
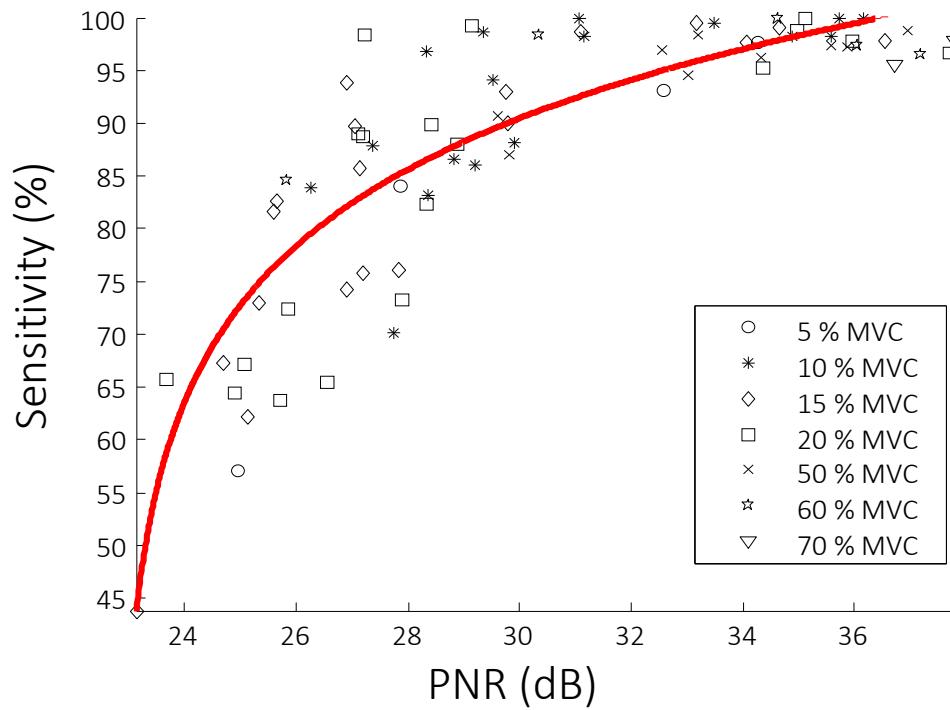
Pulse-to-Noise Ratio (PNR):

- applied to EVERY identified motor unit
- no additional experimental costs
- indicator of the accuracy of motor unit identification

C4 – Accuracy assessment: PNR



Simultaneous surface & intramuscular EMG acquistion



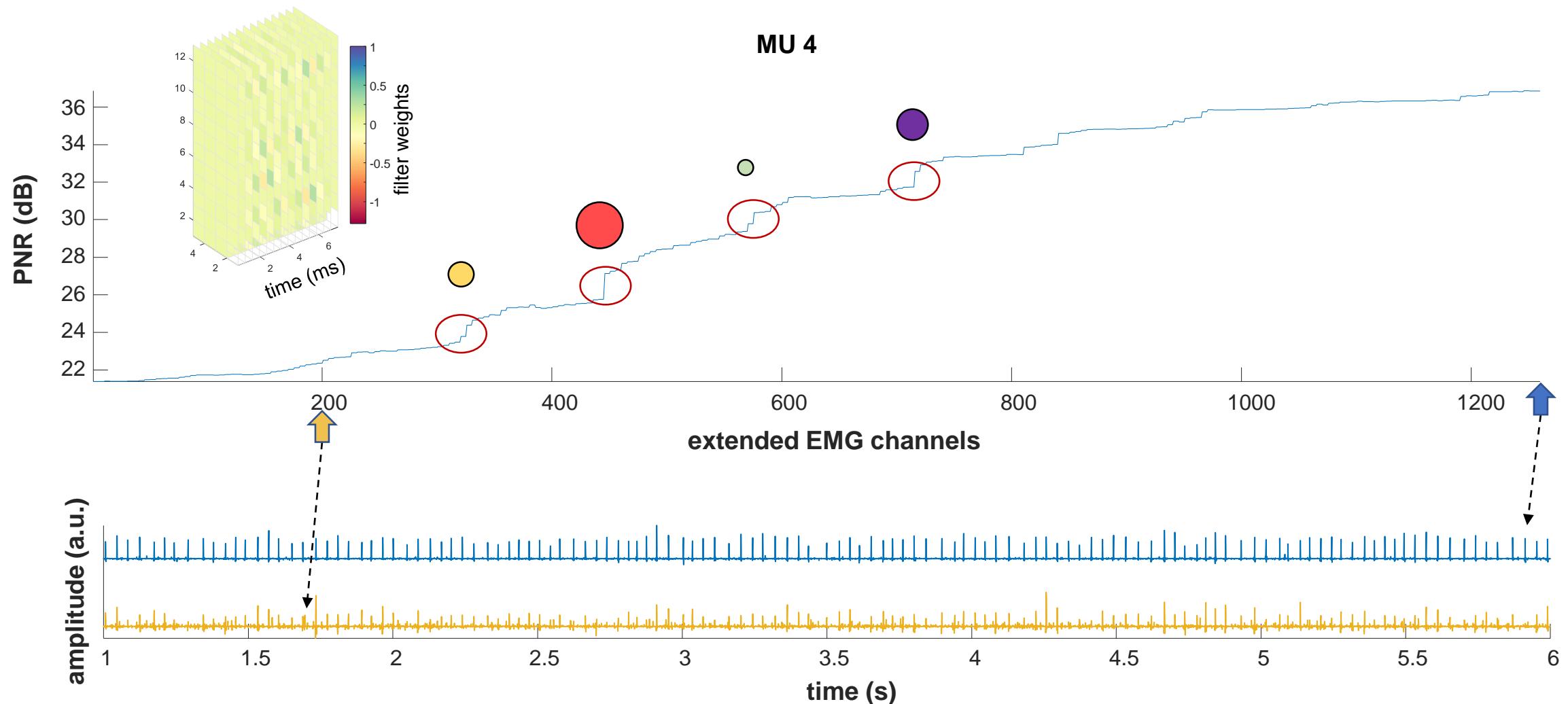
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Holobar et al. J. Neural Eng. 2014

C1 - EMG channel selection & extension



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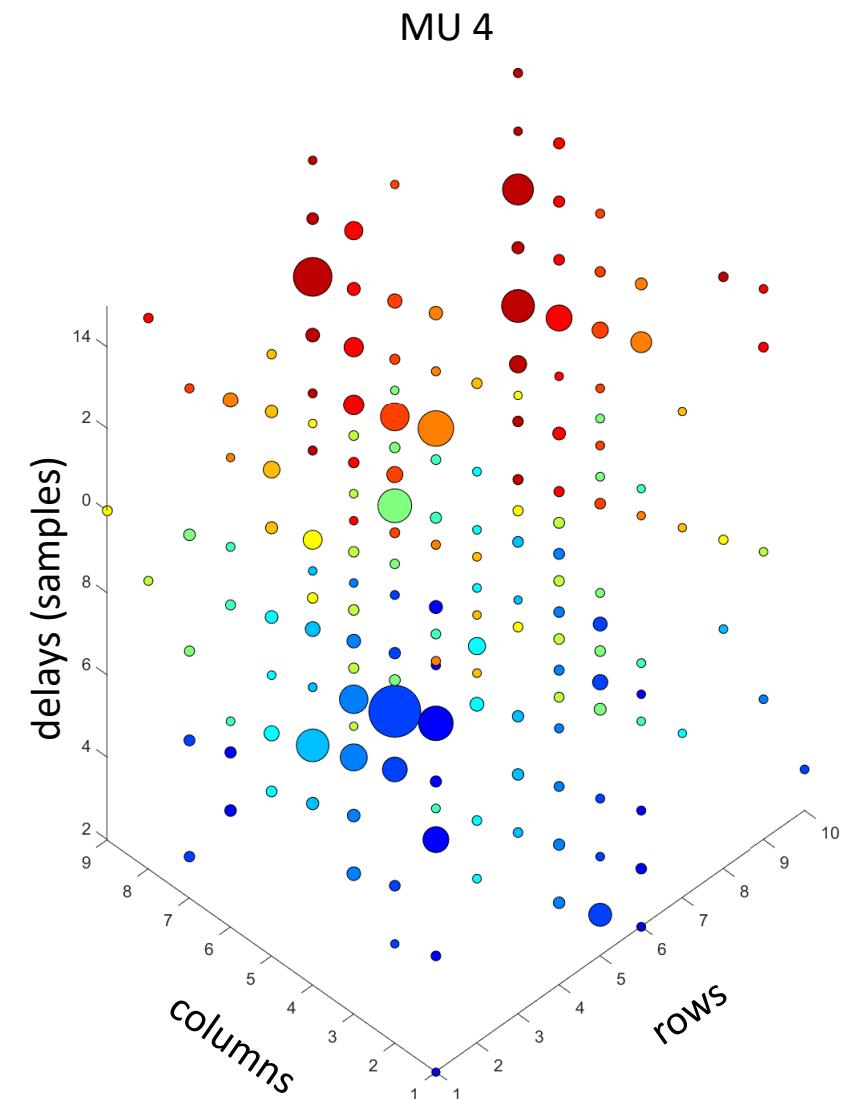
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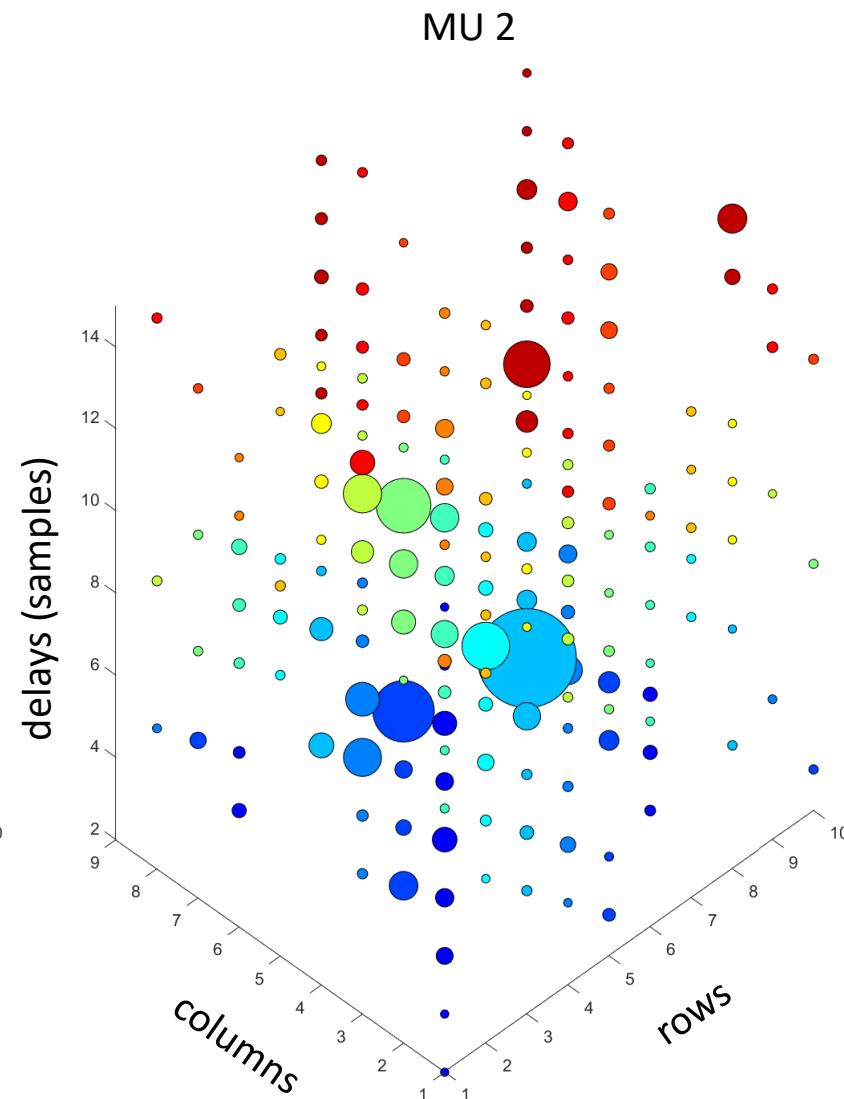
C1 - EMG channel selection & extension



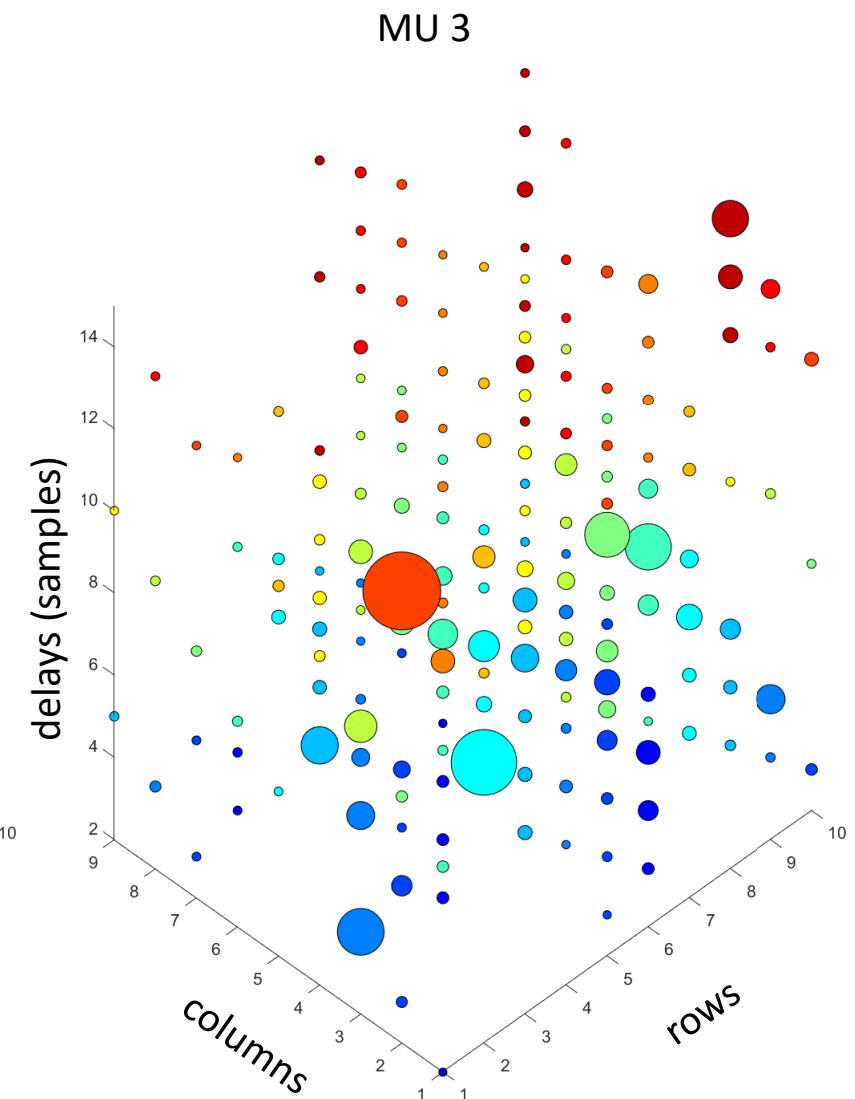
MU 4



MU 2



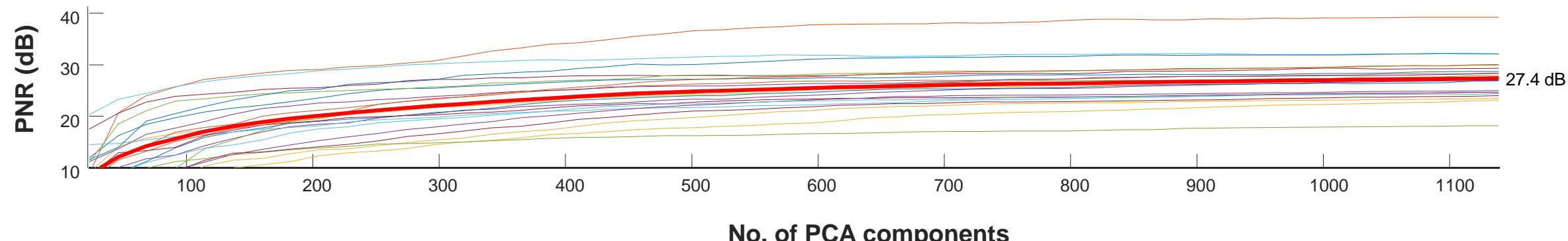
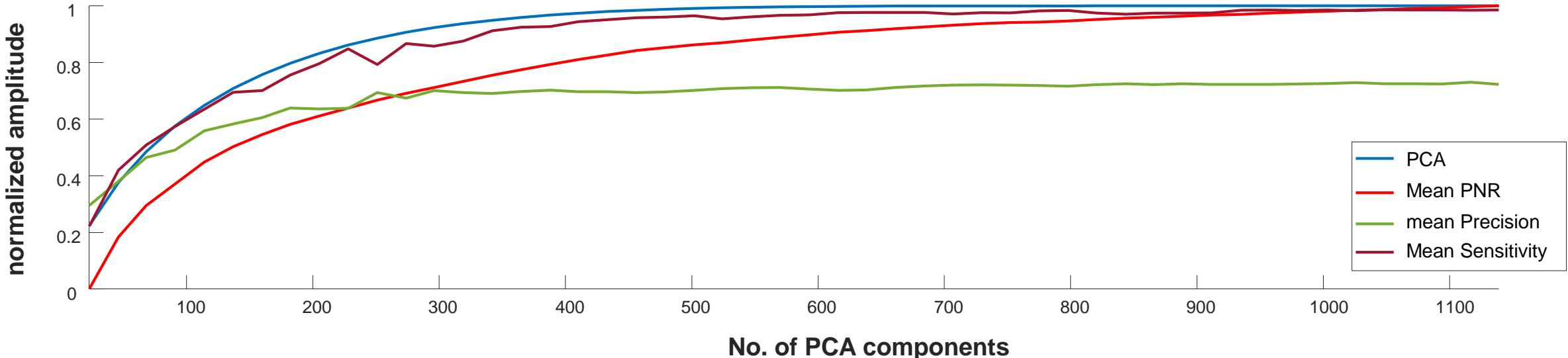
MU 3



C2 - Dimensionality reduction



Abductor Pollicis Brevis muscle



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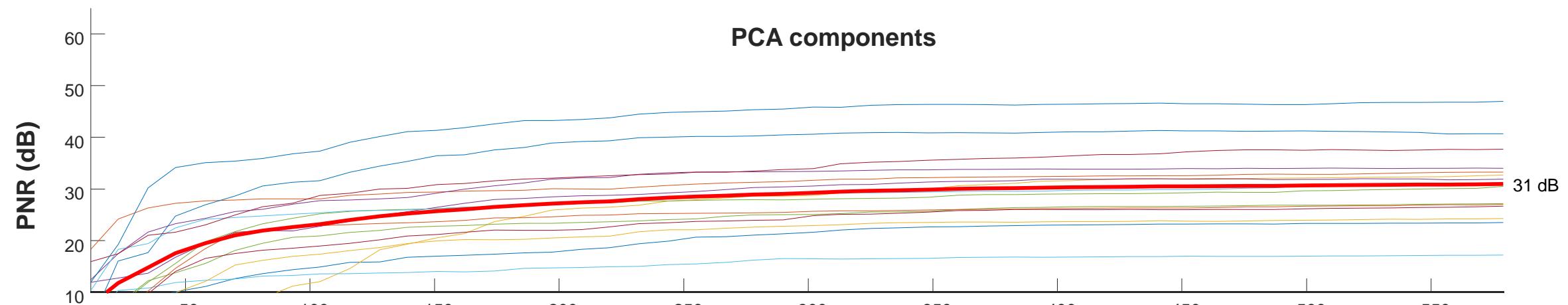
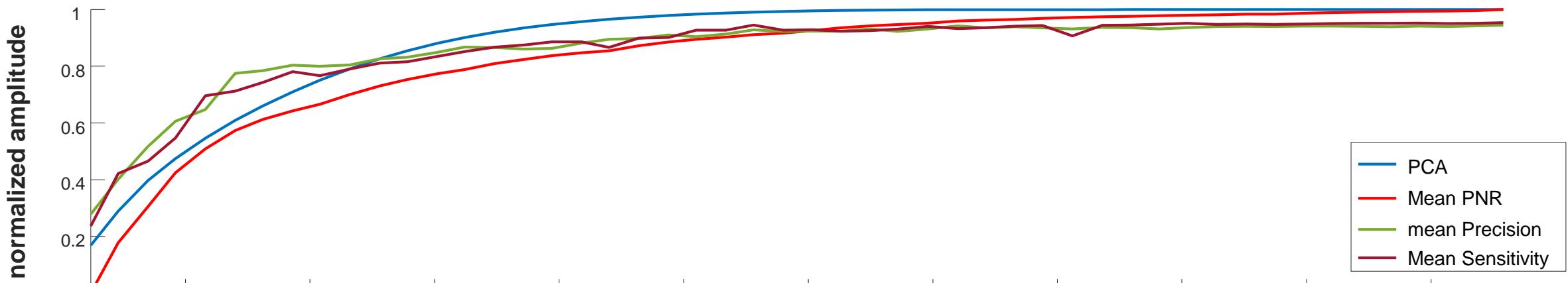
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C2 - Dimensionality reduction



First dorsal interosseous muscle



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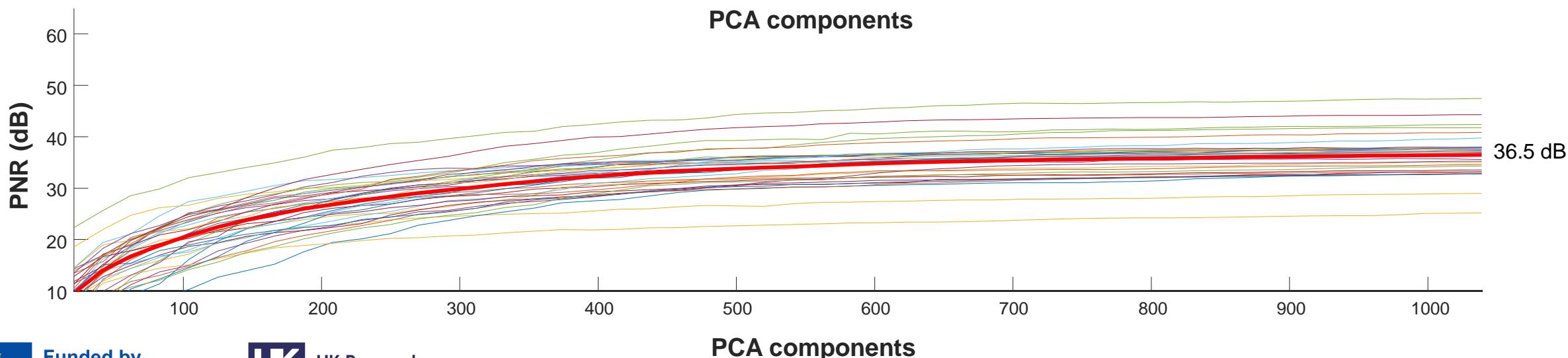
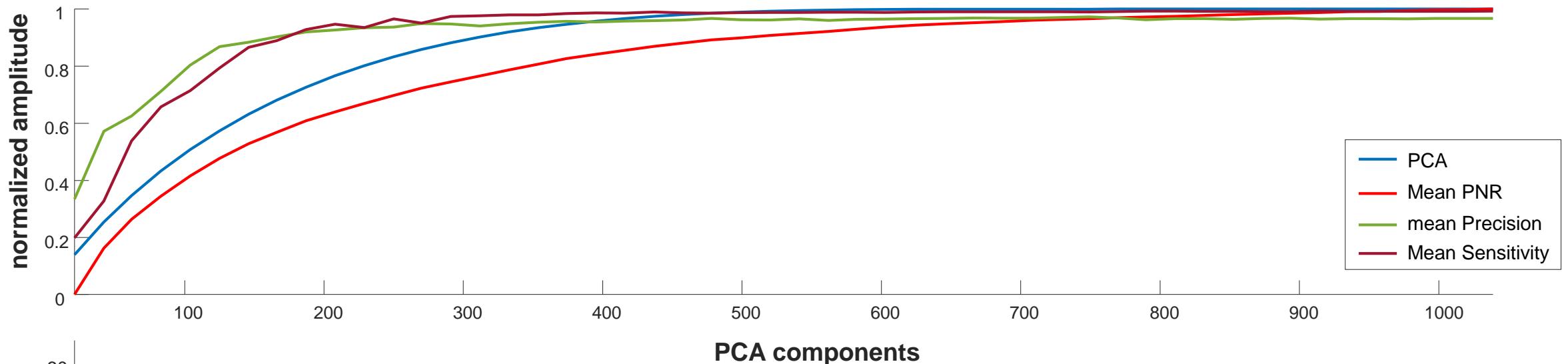
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C2 - Dimensionality reduction



Gastrocnemius Medialis Muscle



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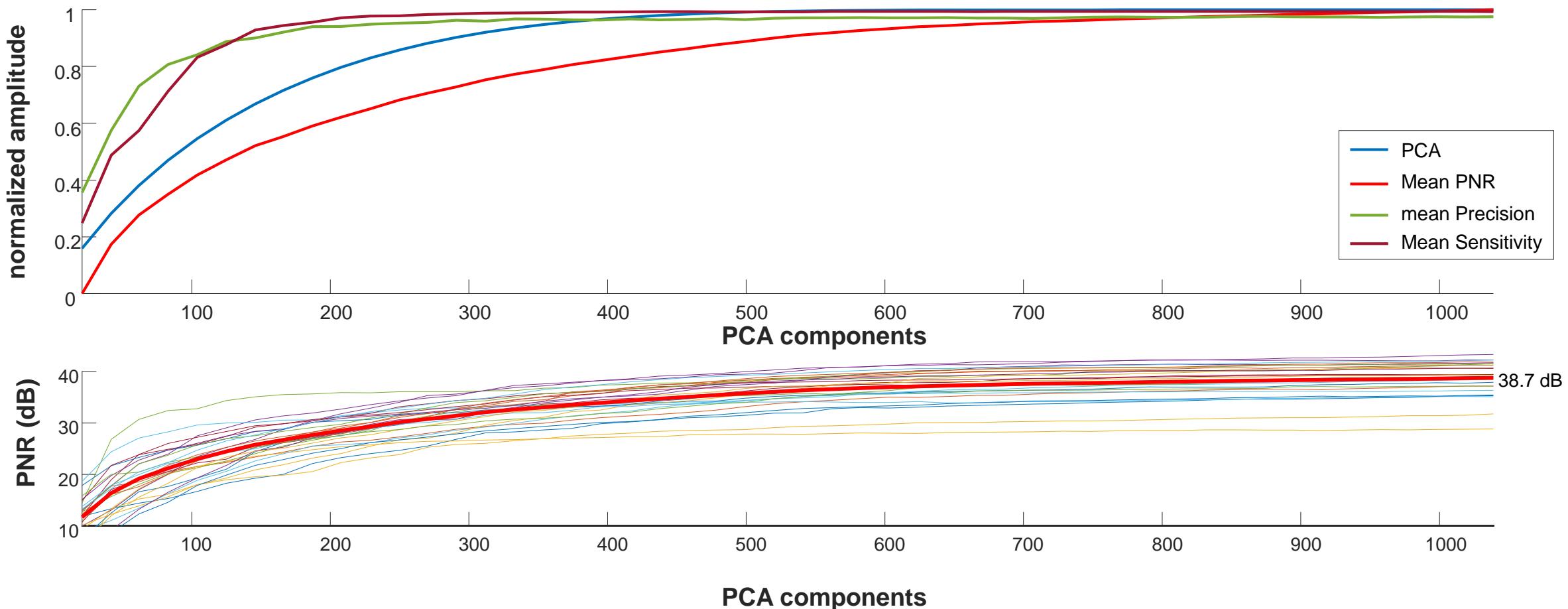
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C2 - Dimensionality reduction



Gastrocnemius Lateralis Muscle



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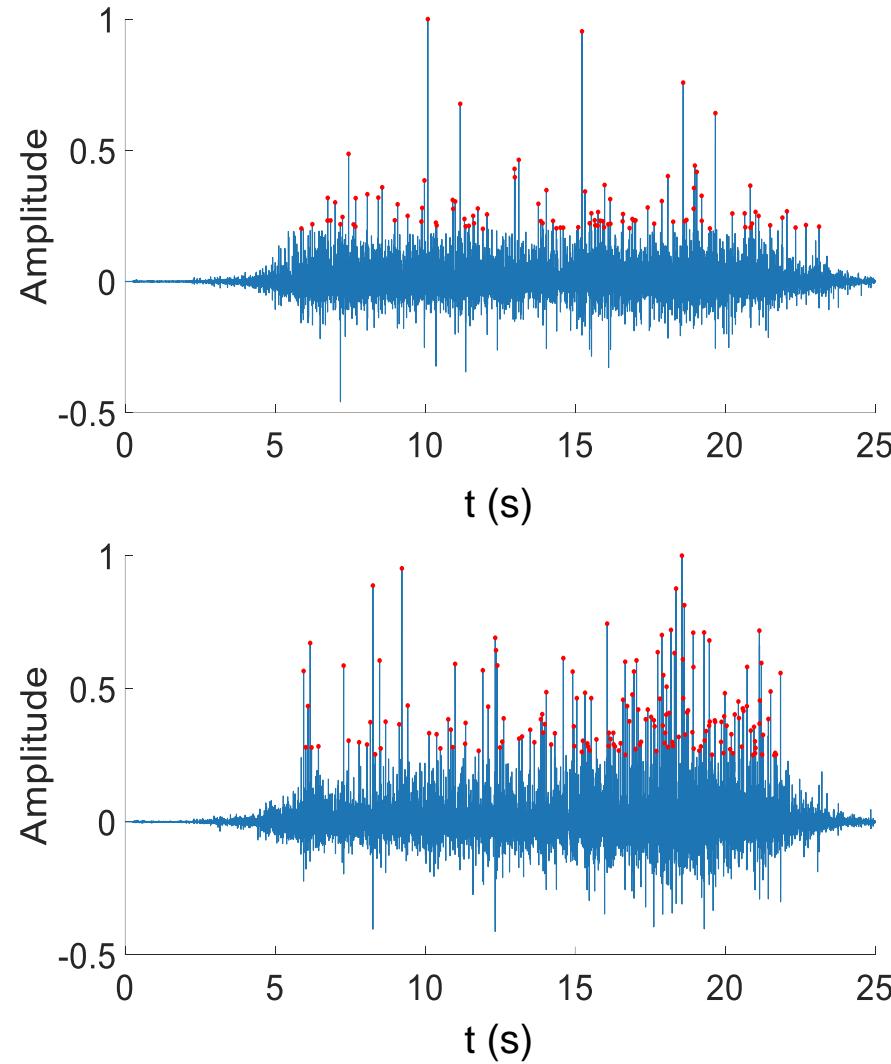
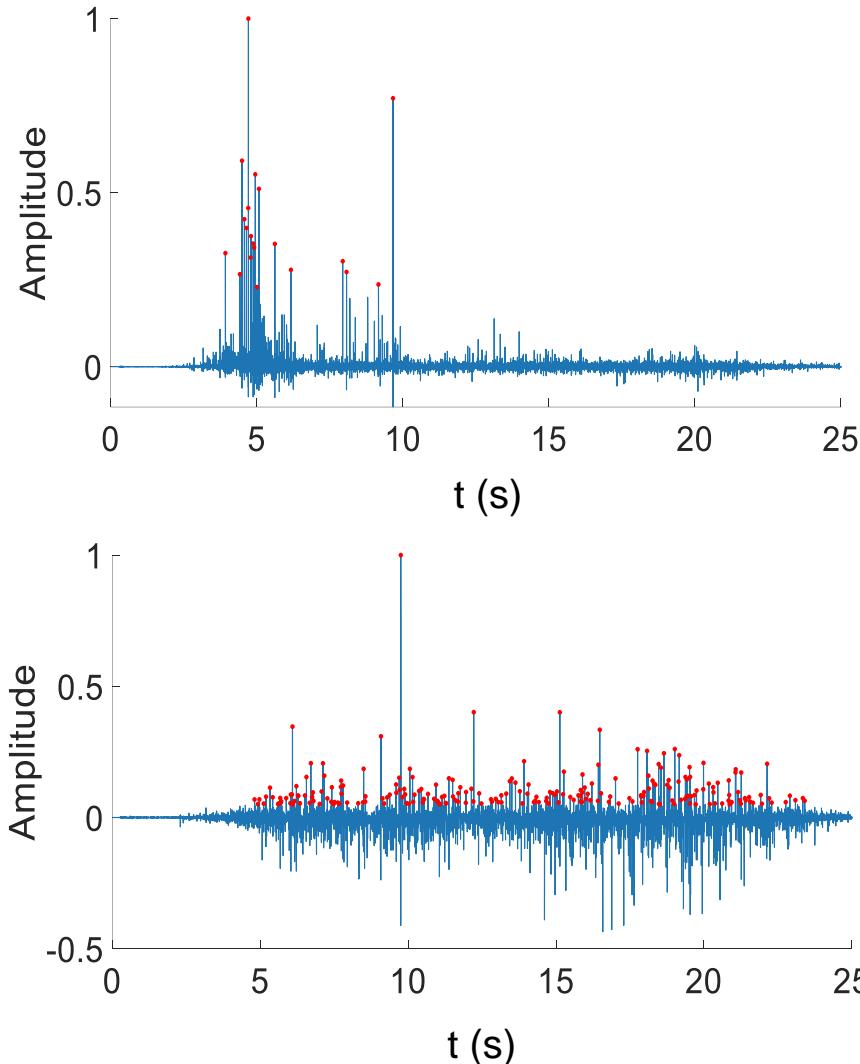


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C4 - Bad MU removal



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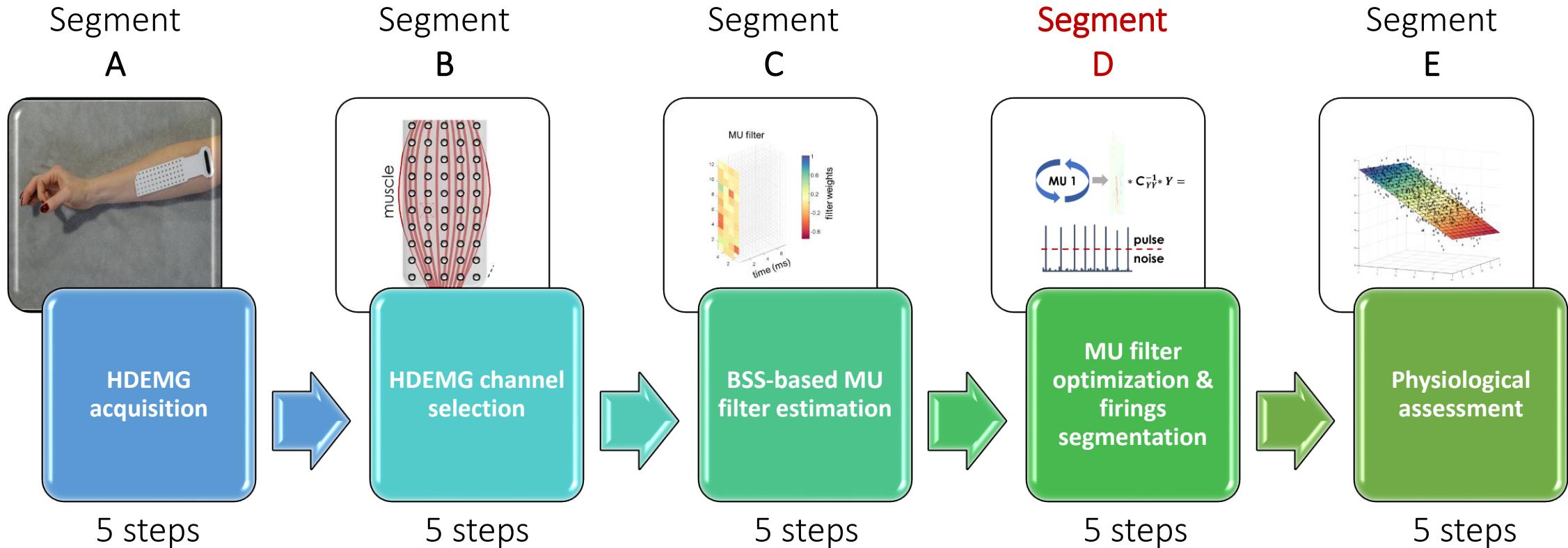


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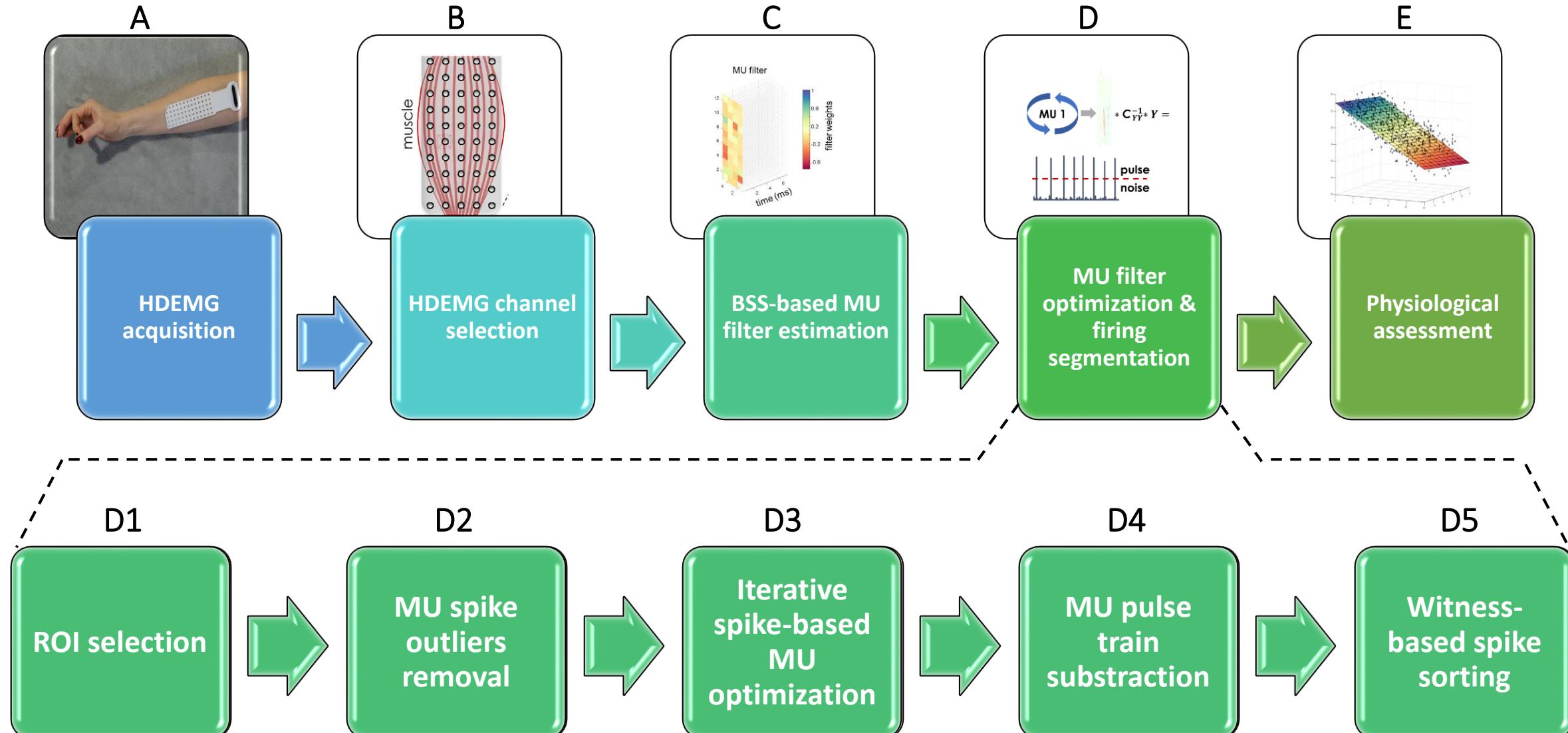
GA No. 101079392

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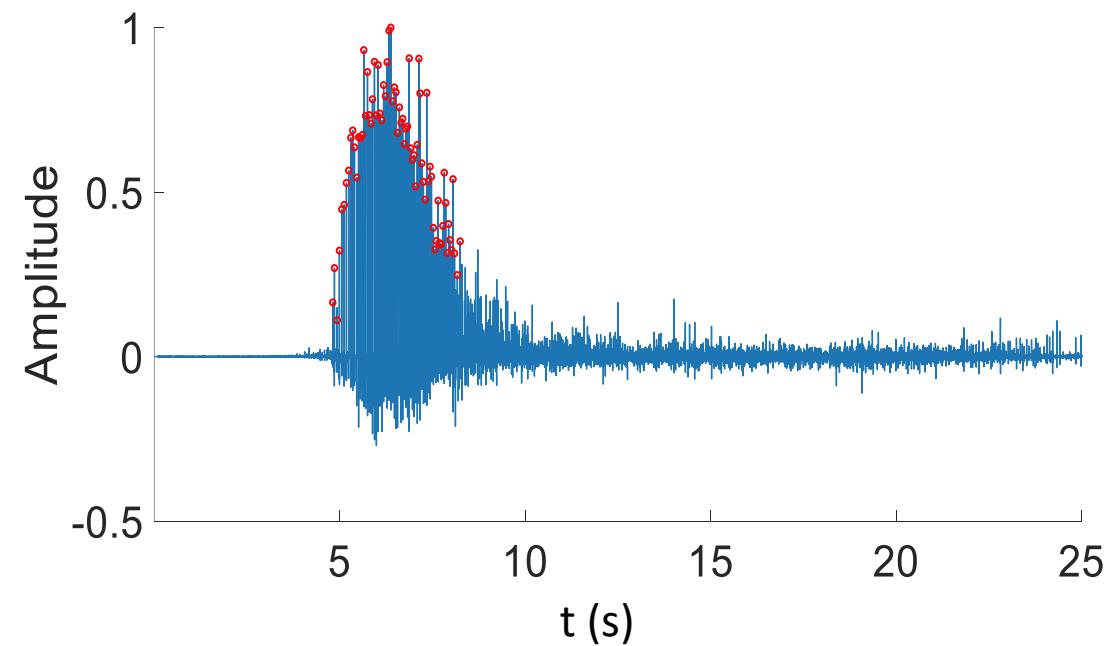
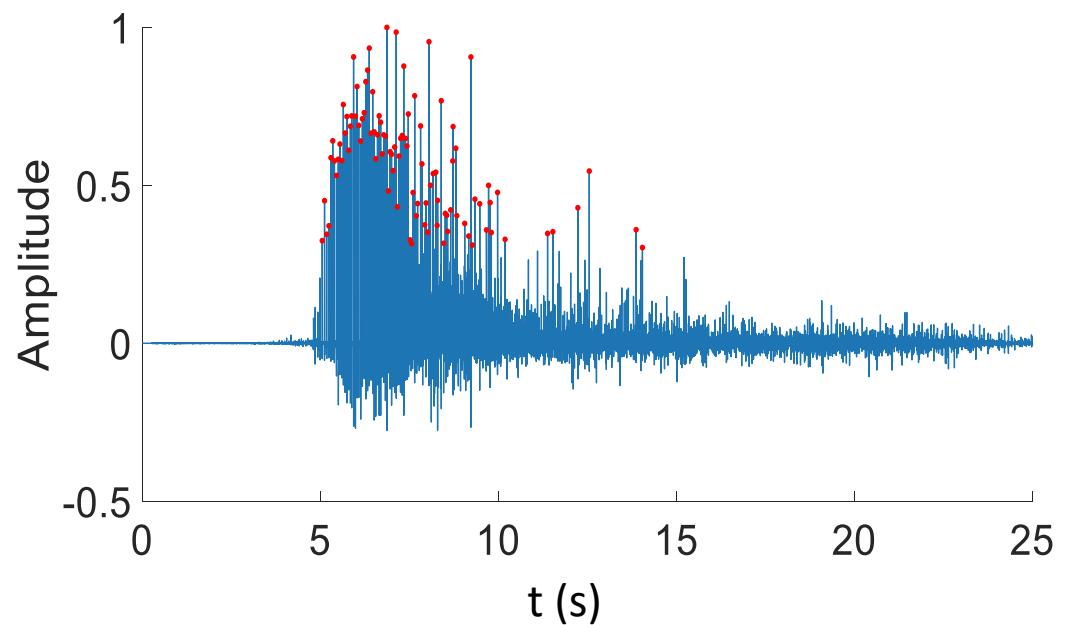
Processing pipeline



Processing pipeline: Segment D



D1- Region of Interest (ROI) selection



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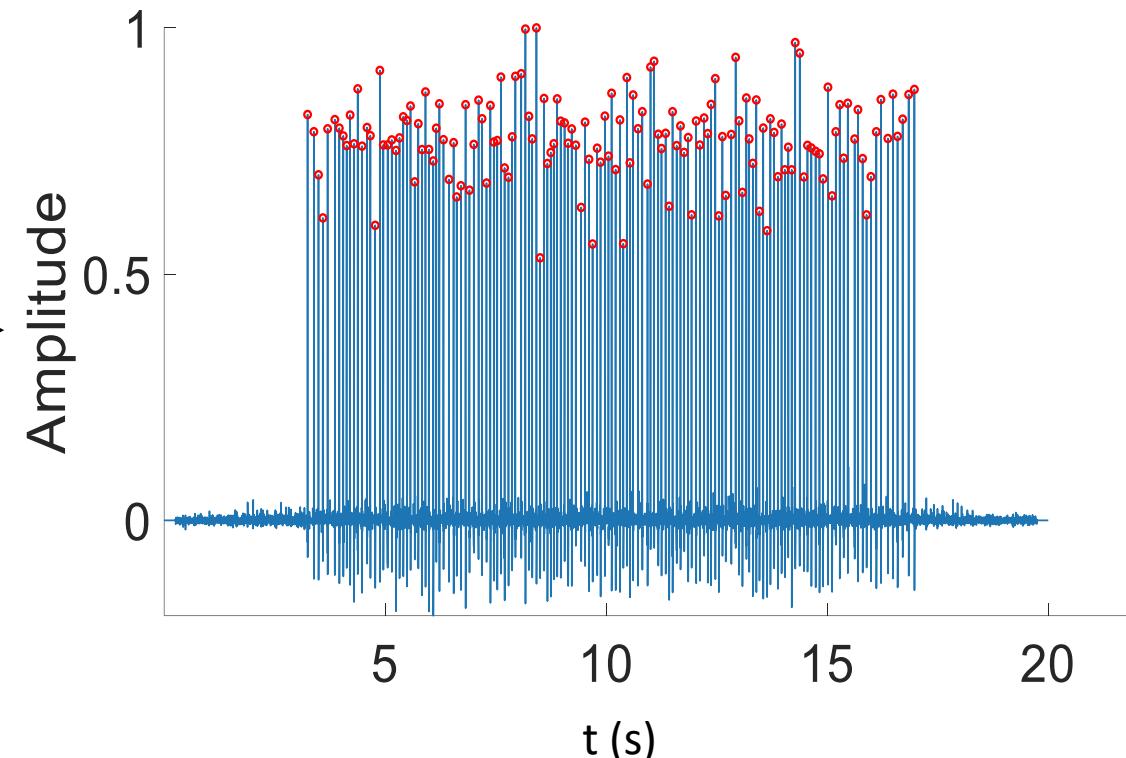
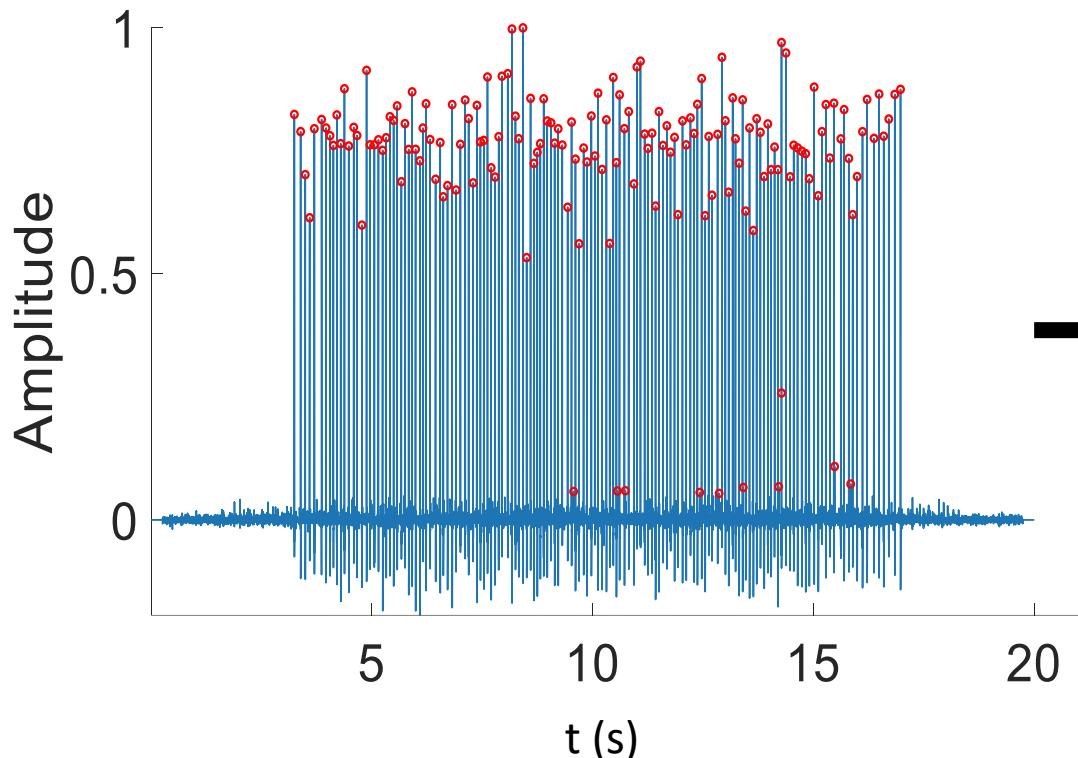
GA No. 101079392



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D2- MU spike outliers removal



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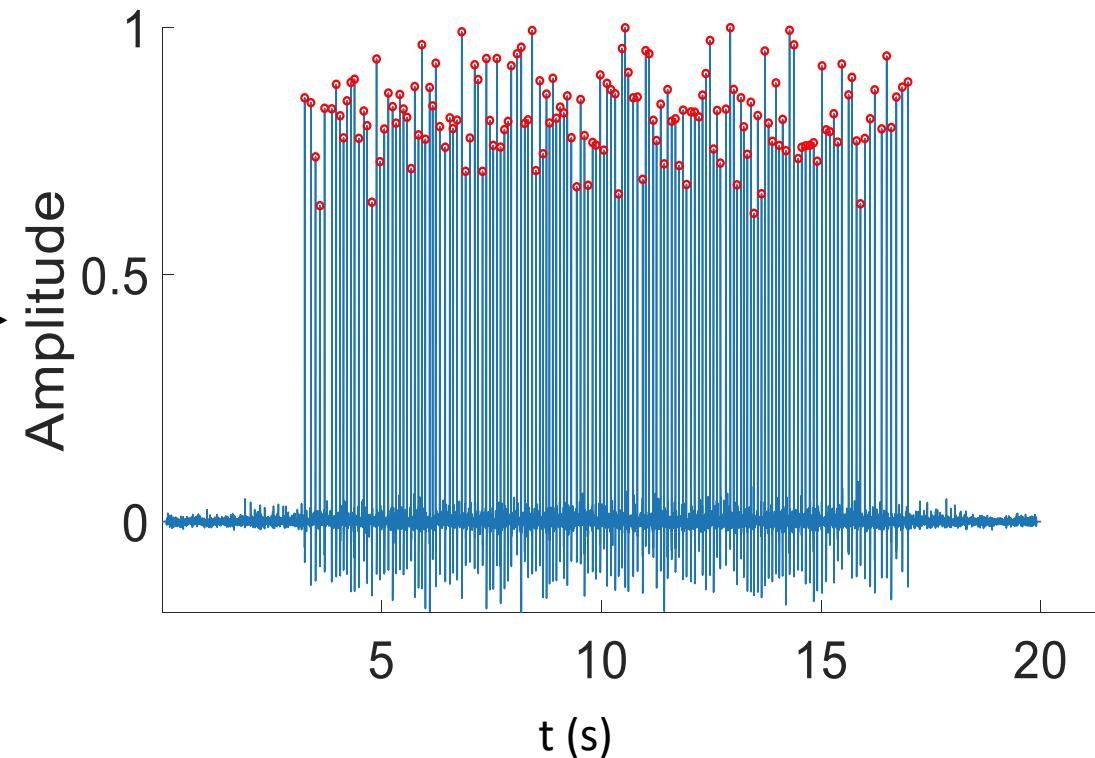
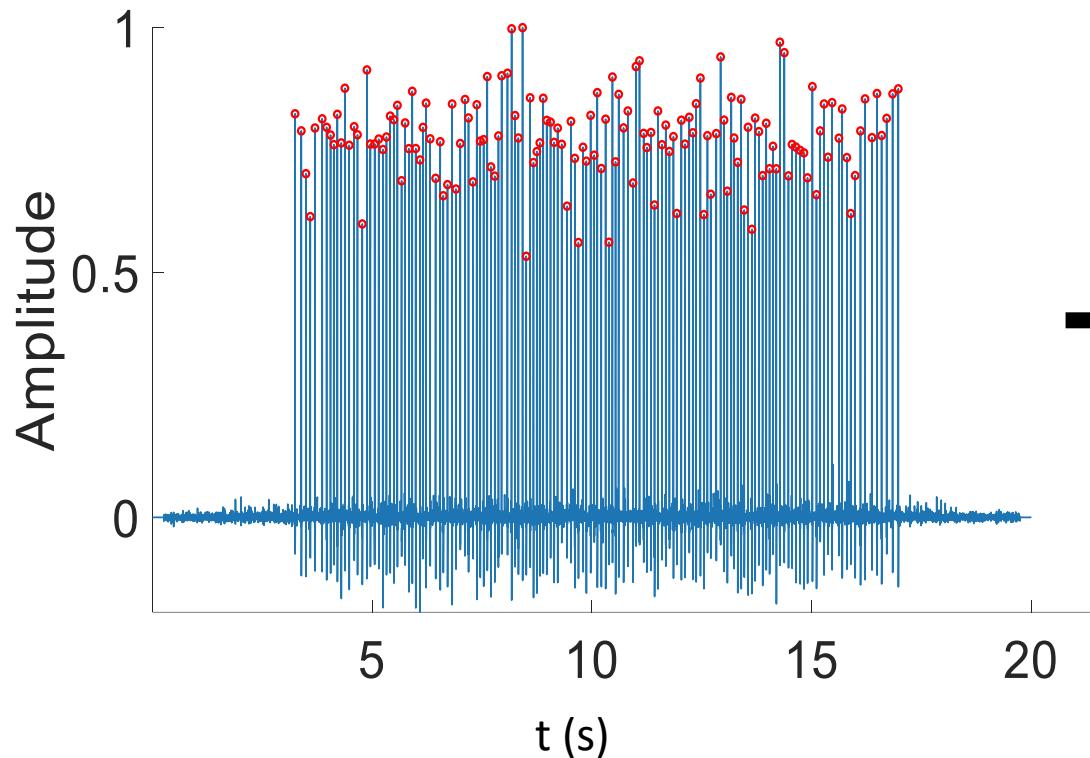
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D3- Iterative spike-based MU optimization



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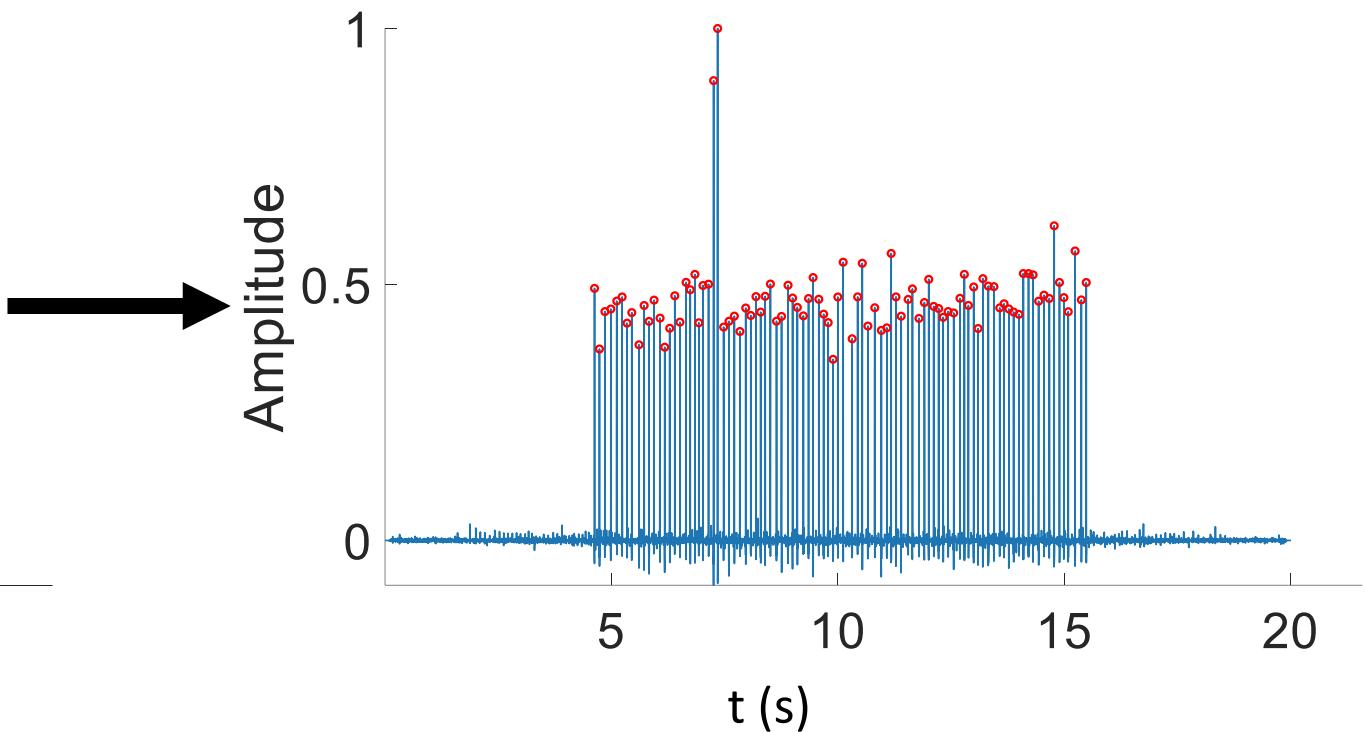
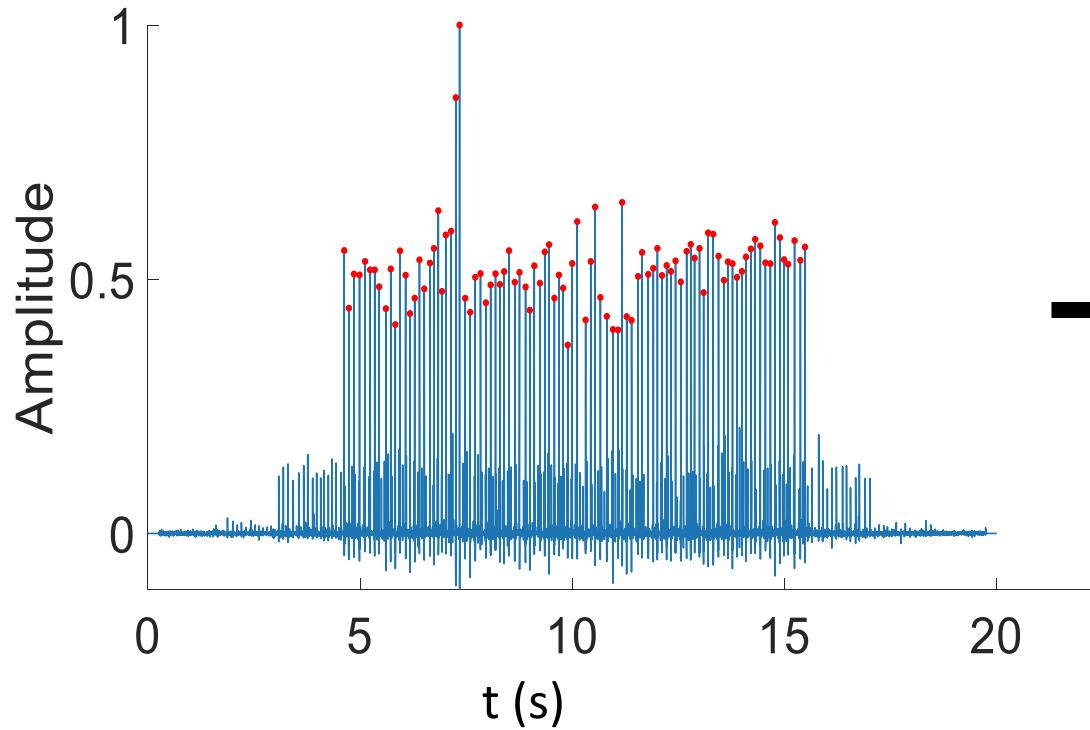
GA No. 101079392



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D4- MU pulse train subtraction



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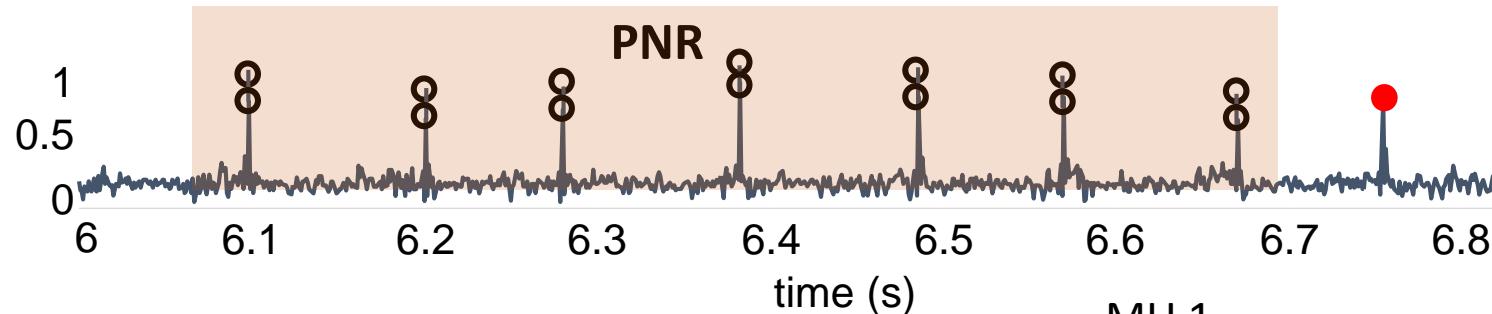


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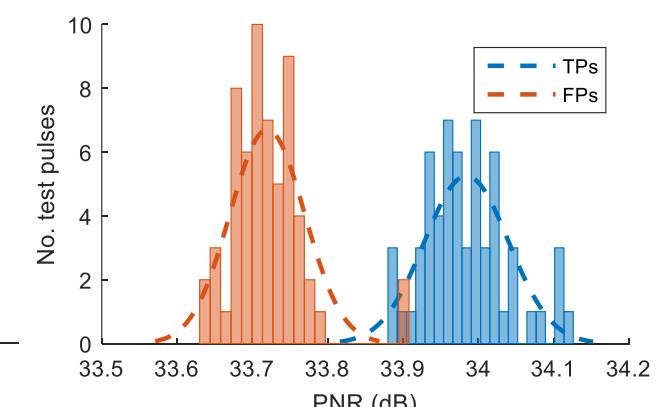
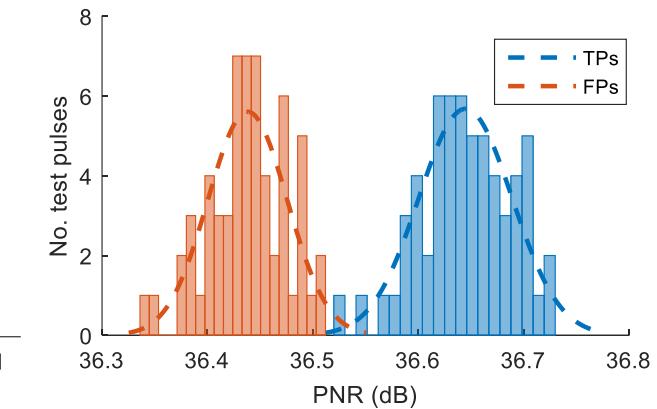
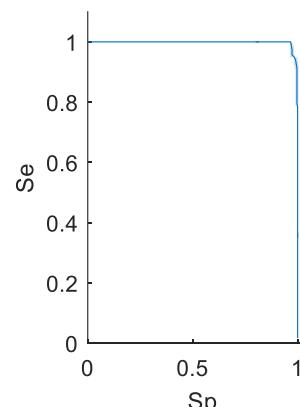
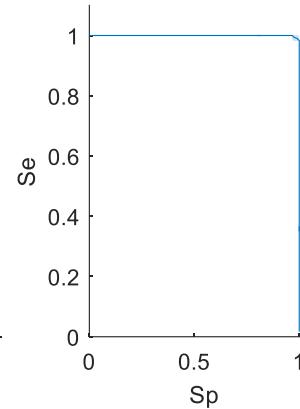
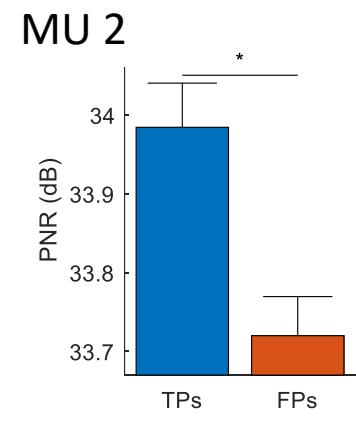
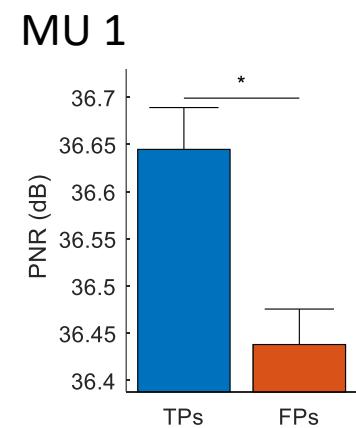
GA No. 101079392

GA No. 10052152

D5 - Witness-based spike sorting



- Selected MU spikes in identified spike train act as witnesses of decomposition accuracy.
- Witnesses are used to test other spikes.
- Tested spike cannot be its own witness.



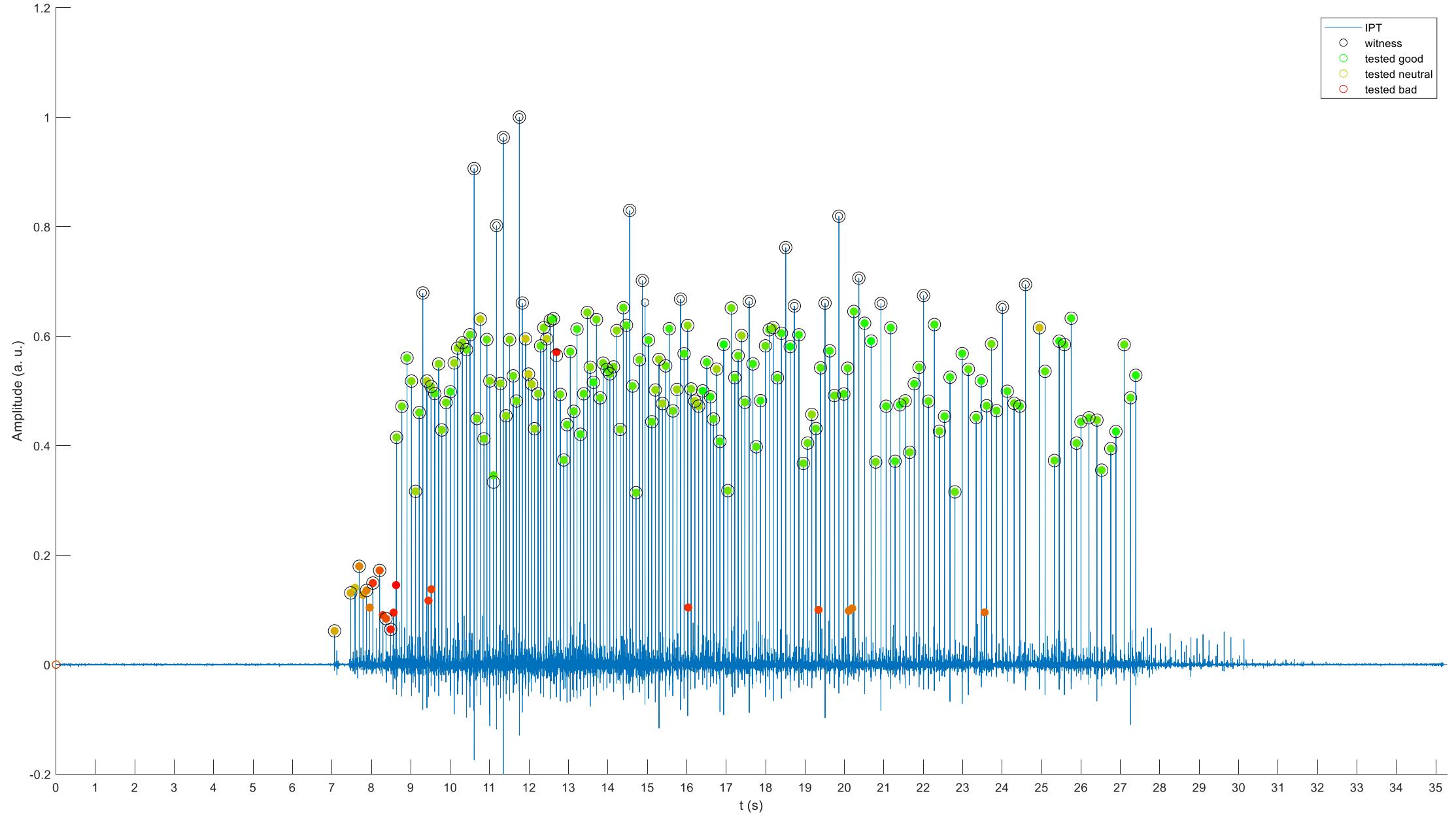
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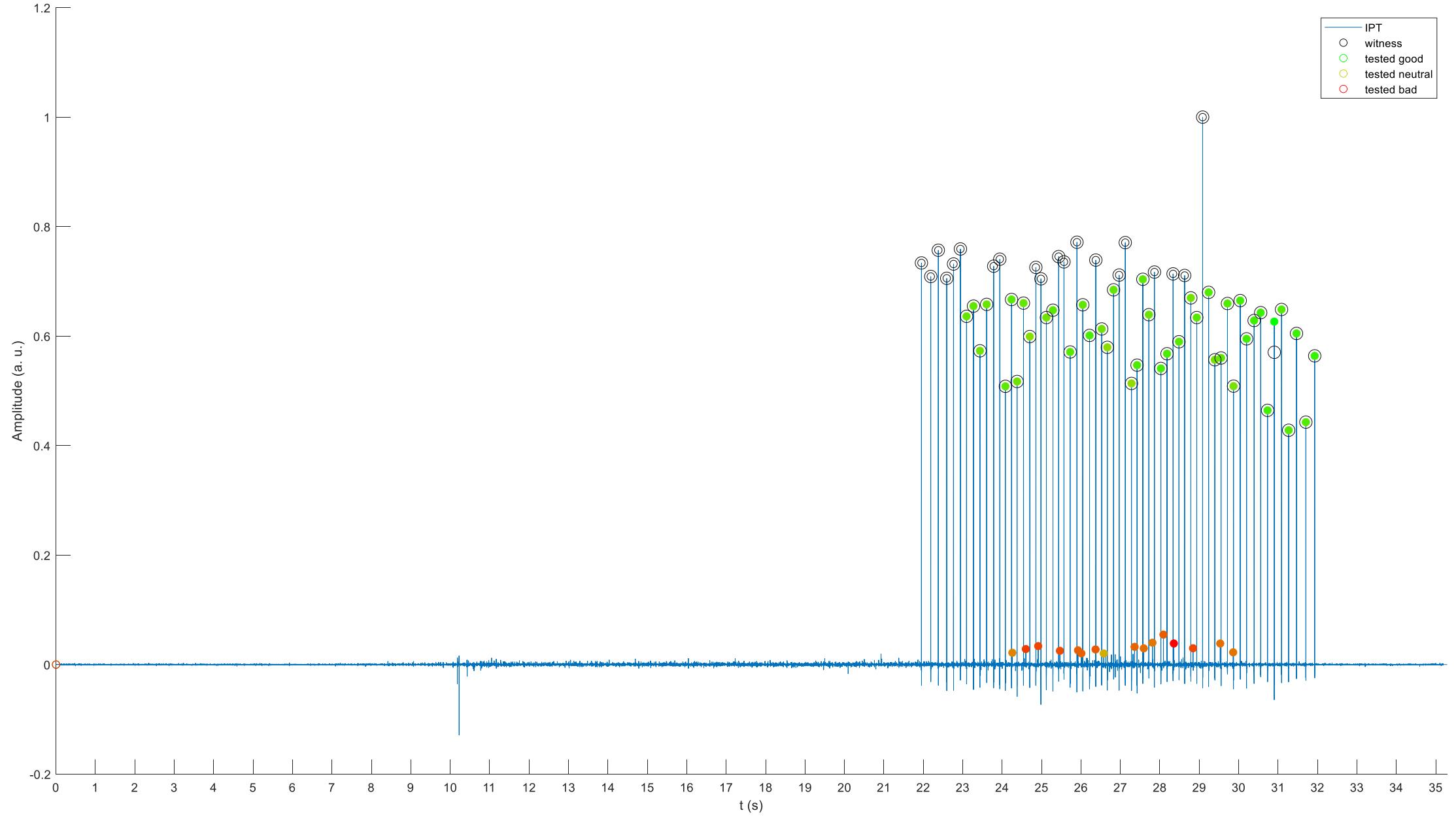


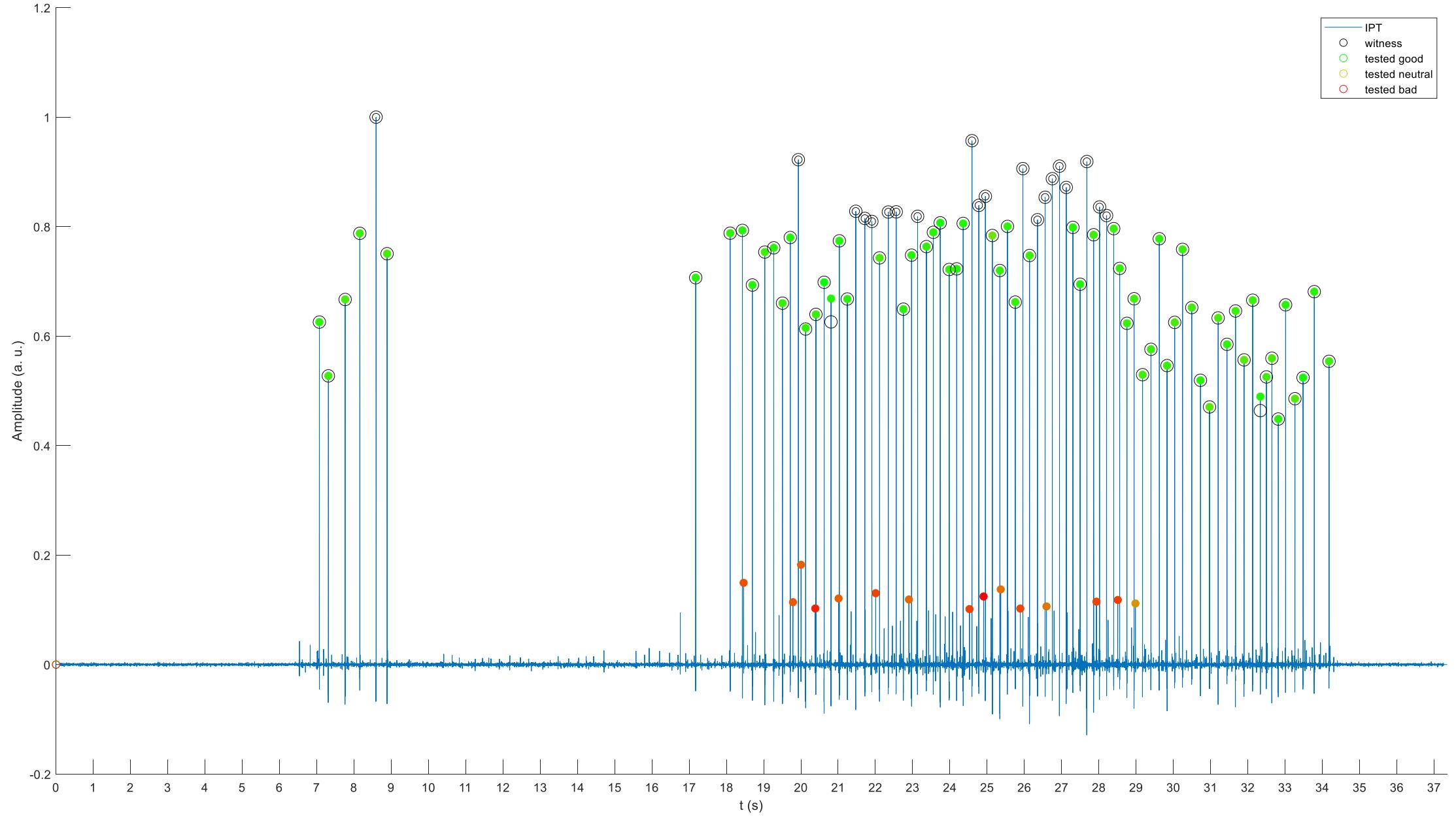
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GA No. 101079392

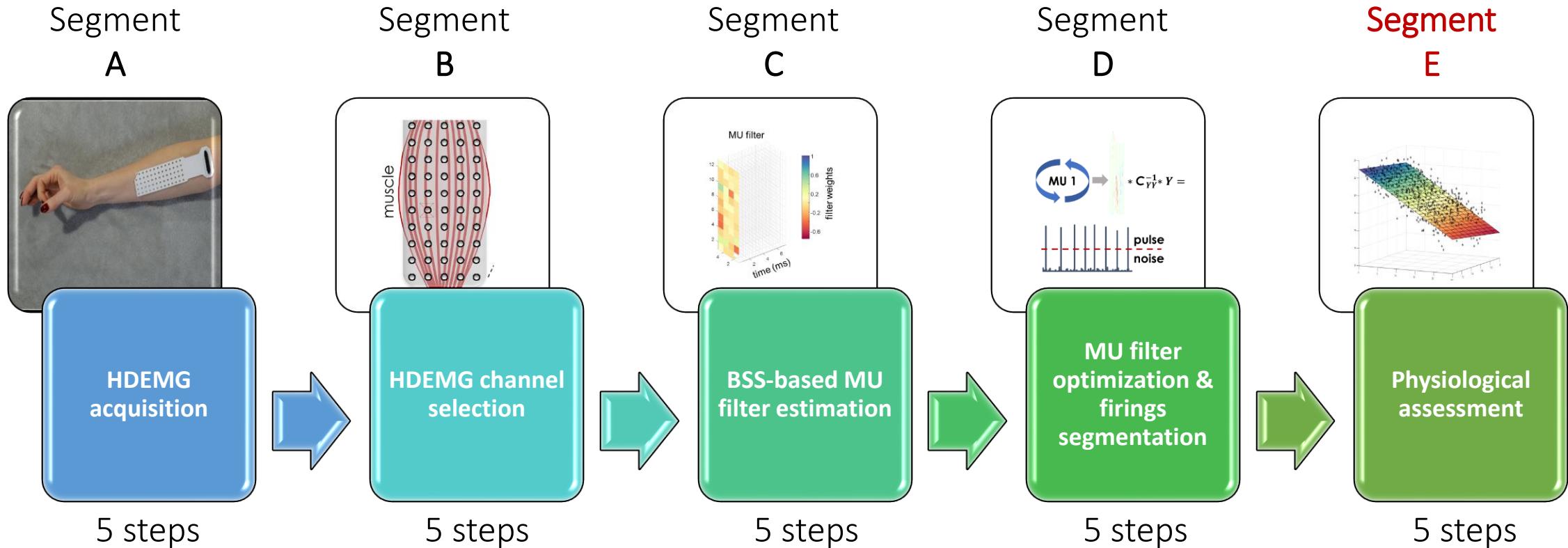
GA No. 10052152

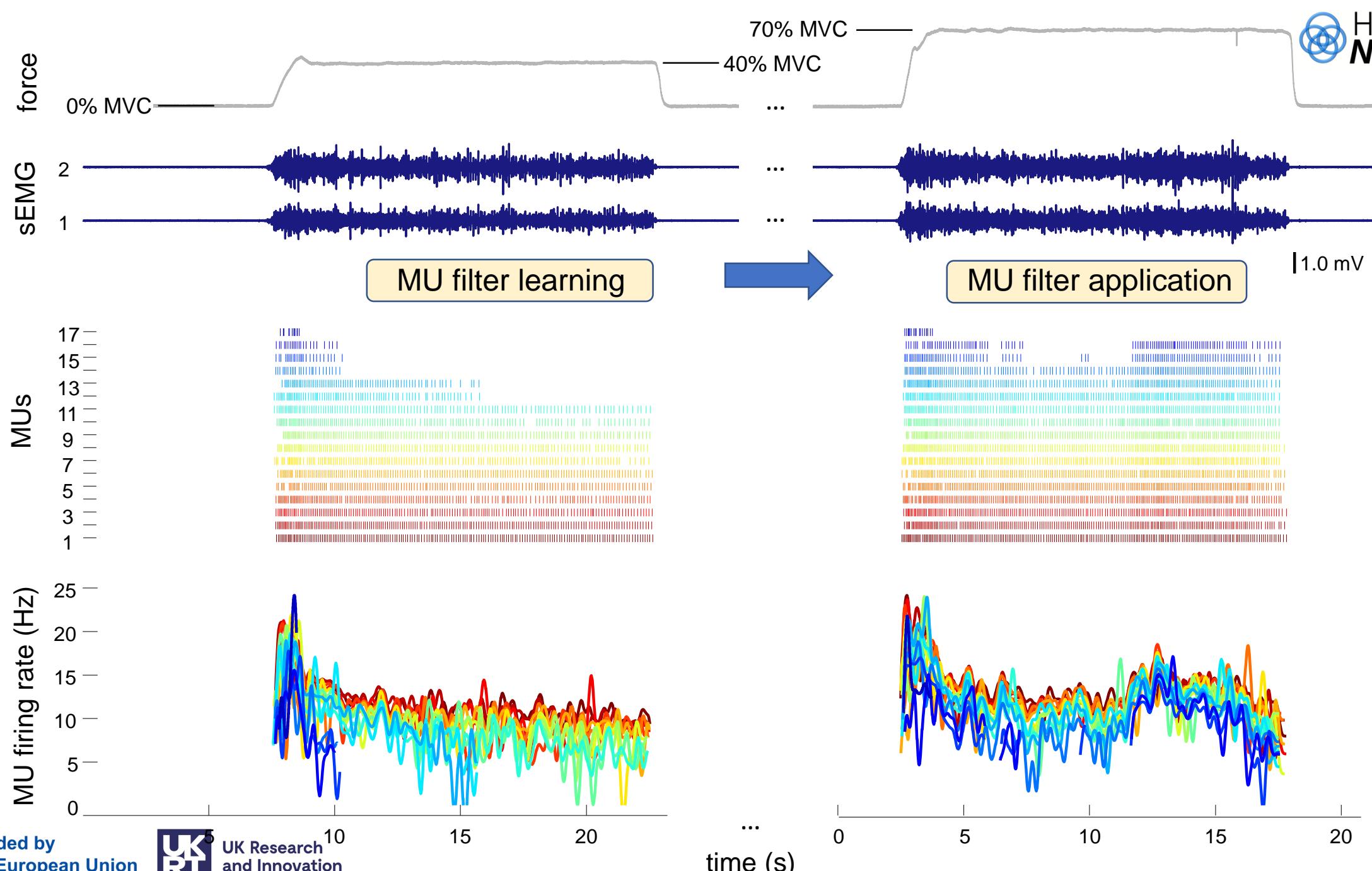






Processing pipeline





EXAMPLE 1: MU tracking across different contraction levels

Frančič & Holobar, IEEE Access 2021

No. of tracked MUs
First Dorsal Interosseous (FDI)
application MVC %



	10	20	30	40	50	70
10	10.4 ± 3 (20, 30, 40, 50, 70)	8.7 ± 2.7 (30, 40, 50, 70)	7.4 ± 2.7 (40, 50, 70)	3.9 ± 4	3.3 ± 3.6	1.7 ± 2.1
20	9.7 ± 2.8 (20, 50, 70)	13.6 ± 2.1 (40, 50, 70)	12 ± 2.1 (40, 50, 70)	9.4 ± 2.8 (50, 70)	5.9 ± 3.6 (70)	2 ± 2.8
30	7.9 ± 3.7 (20, 30, 40)	12.9 ± 3.3 (30)	16.7 ± 2.9 (40, 50, 70)	14.7 ± 3.5 (50, 70)	10.4 ± 4.9 (70)	5.1 ± 4.8
40	4.7 ± 3.9 (20, 30, 40, 50)	9.3 ± 3.5 (40, 50)	13.1 ± 4.5 (40)	15.9 ± 4.5 (70)	14.6 ± 4.2 (70)	8.6 ± 5.4
50	3.6 ± 4.3 (20, 30, 40, 50, 70)	7.1 ± 4.9 (40, 50, 70)	10 ± 4.4 (50, 70)	12 ± 4.5 (50)	15.9 ± 3.1 (70)	12.3 ± 3.7
70	1.9 ± 3.6 (30, 40, 50, 70)	2.7 ± 4.4 (30, 40, 50, 70)	4.3 ± 4.3 (50, 70)	6.1 ± 5.8 (50, 70)	9.7 ± 5.6 (70)	15.6 ± 5.6



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EXAMPLE 2:

MU tracking across different contraction levels

Frančić & Holobar, IEEE Access 2021

No. of tracked MUs
Tibialis Anterior (TA)
application MVC %



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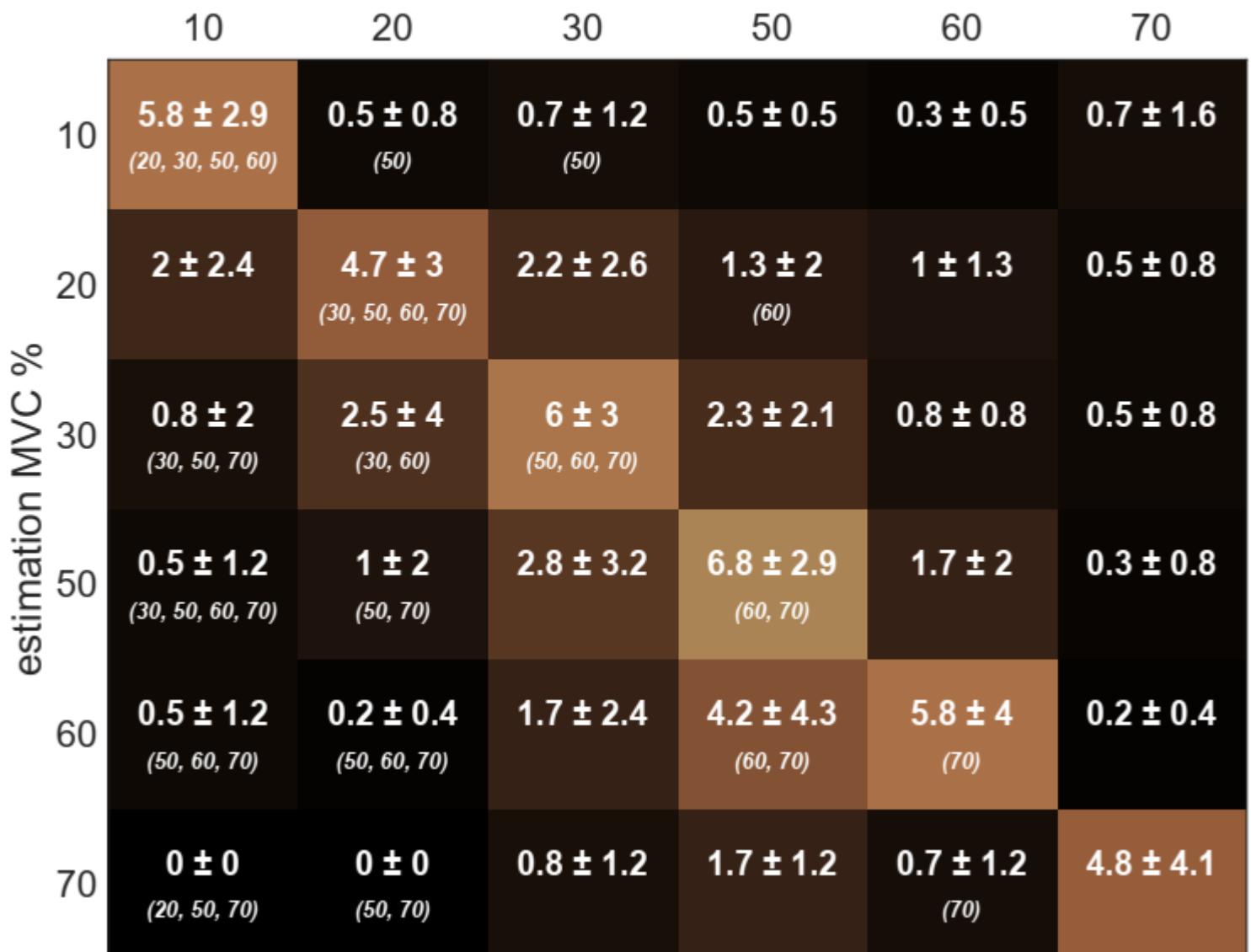
GA No. 10052152

EXAMPLE 4:

MU tracking across different contraction levels

Frančič & Holobar, IEEE Access 2021

No. of tracked MUs
Biceps Brachi (BB)



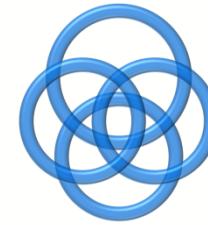
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Segment E - Physiological assessment: Isometric voluntary contractions

Physiological Assessment & Applications



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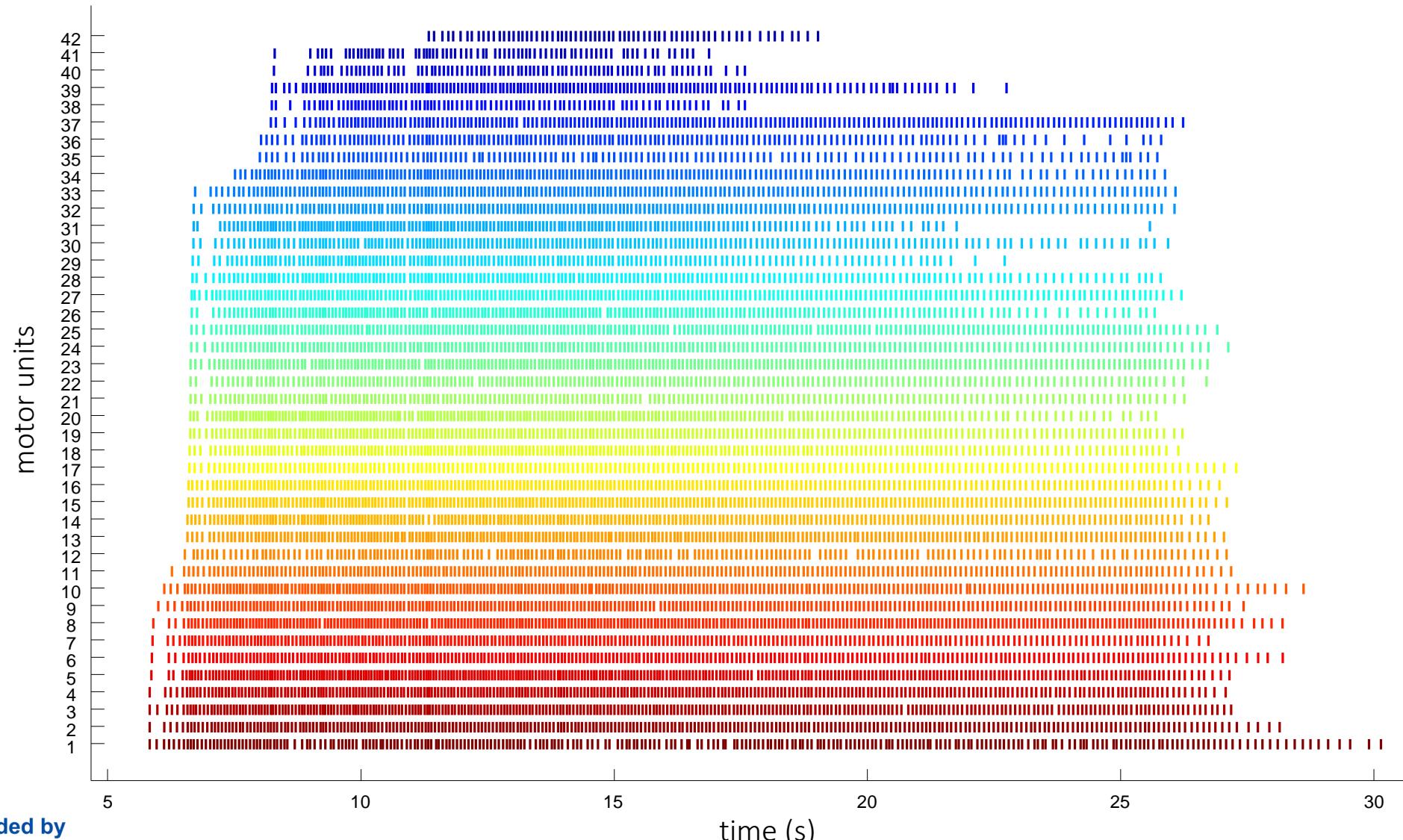
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Voluntary contractions: identified MUs

Gastrocnemius medialis, 30% MVC



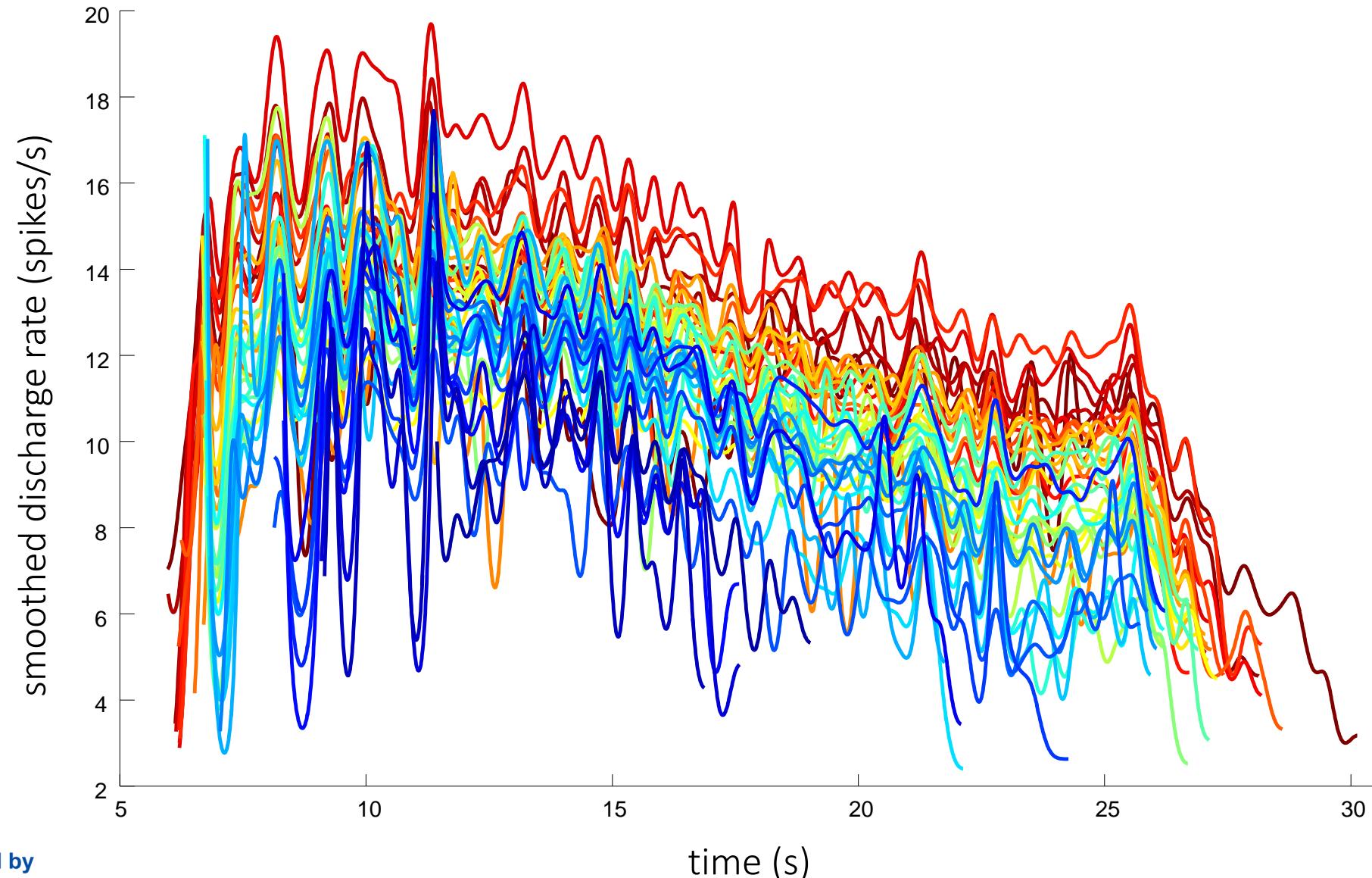
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Divjak et al. *Frontiers in physiology* 12 (2022)

Smoothed MU discharge rates

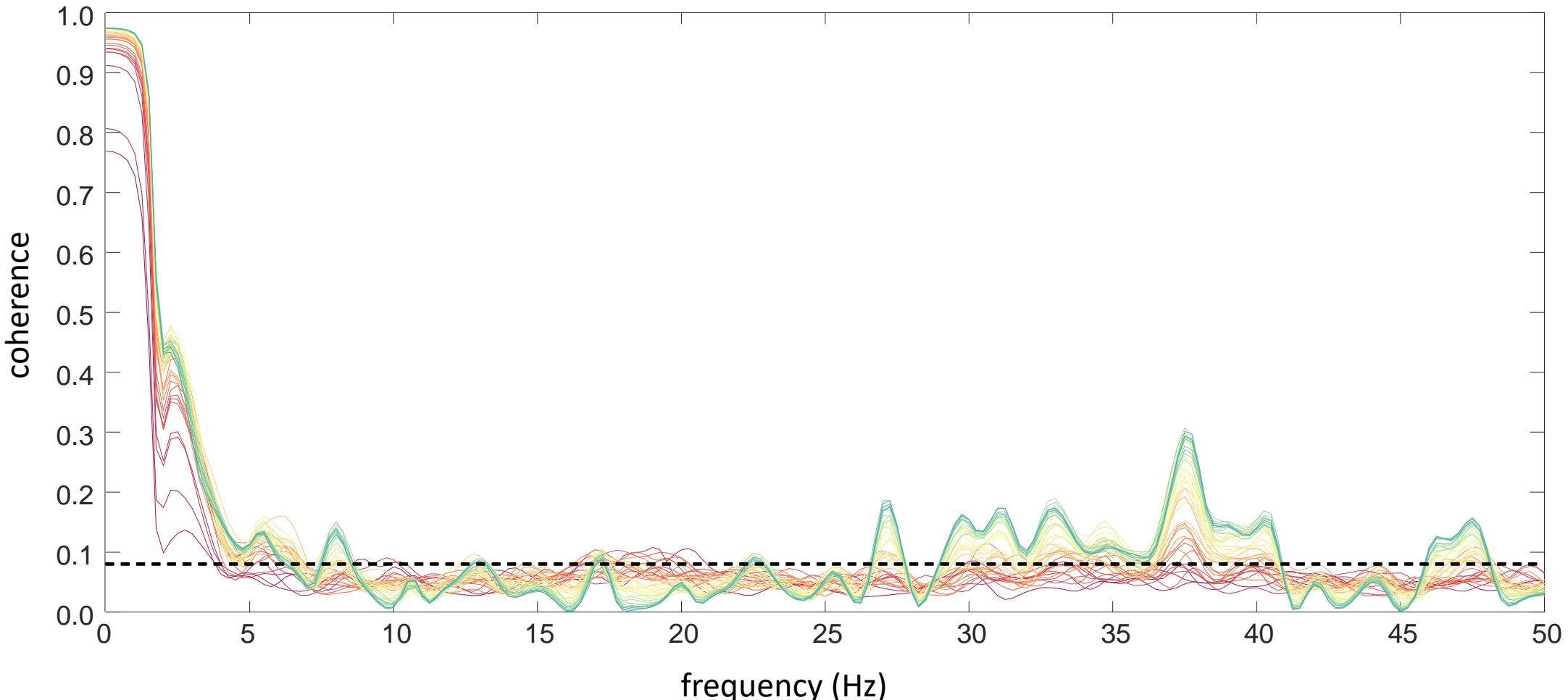
Gastrocnemius medialis, 30% MVC



Experimental HDEMG: CST



GM – 43 identified MUs, GL – 35 identified MUs



Activity index (AI)



hdEMG model: $y(n) = \bar{H}\bar{t}(n) + \omega(n)$

MU spike trains: $t_j(n) = \sum_k \delta(n - \tau_j(k)), j=1\dots N$

MUAPs: $\bar{H} = [\bar{H}_1 \dots \bar{H}_N]$

$$\bar{H}_j = \begin{bmatrix} \bar{h}_{1j}(0) & \dots & \bar{h}_{1j}(L) \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \bar{h}_{Mj}(0) & \dots & \bar{h}_{Mj}(L) \end{bmatrix}$$

CKC: $\hat{t}_j(n) = \mathbf{c}_{t_j y}^T \mathbf{C}_y^{-1} y(n) \approx \mathbf{c}_{t_j t}^T \mathbf{C}_t^{-1} t(n)$

MU filter $\mathbf{c}_{t_j y}^T \mathbf{C}_y^{-1}$ needs to be estimated for every motor unit

CST – sum of individual MU spike trains (Negro & Farina, J. of Physiology 2011)

Activity Index: $AI(n) = y(n)^T \mathbf{C}_y^{-1} y(n) \approx \bar{t}(n)^T \mathbf{C}_{\bar{t}}^{-1} \bar{t}(n)$

superimposed spike trains from all MUs in the detection volume



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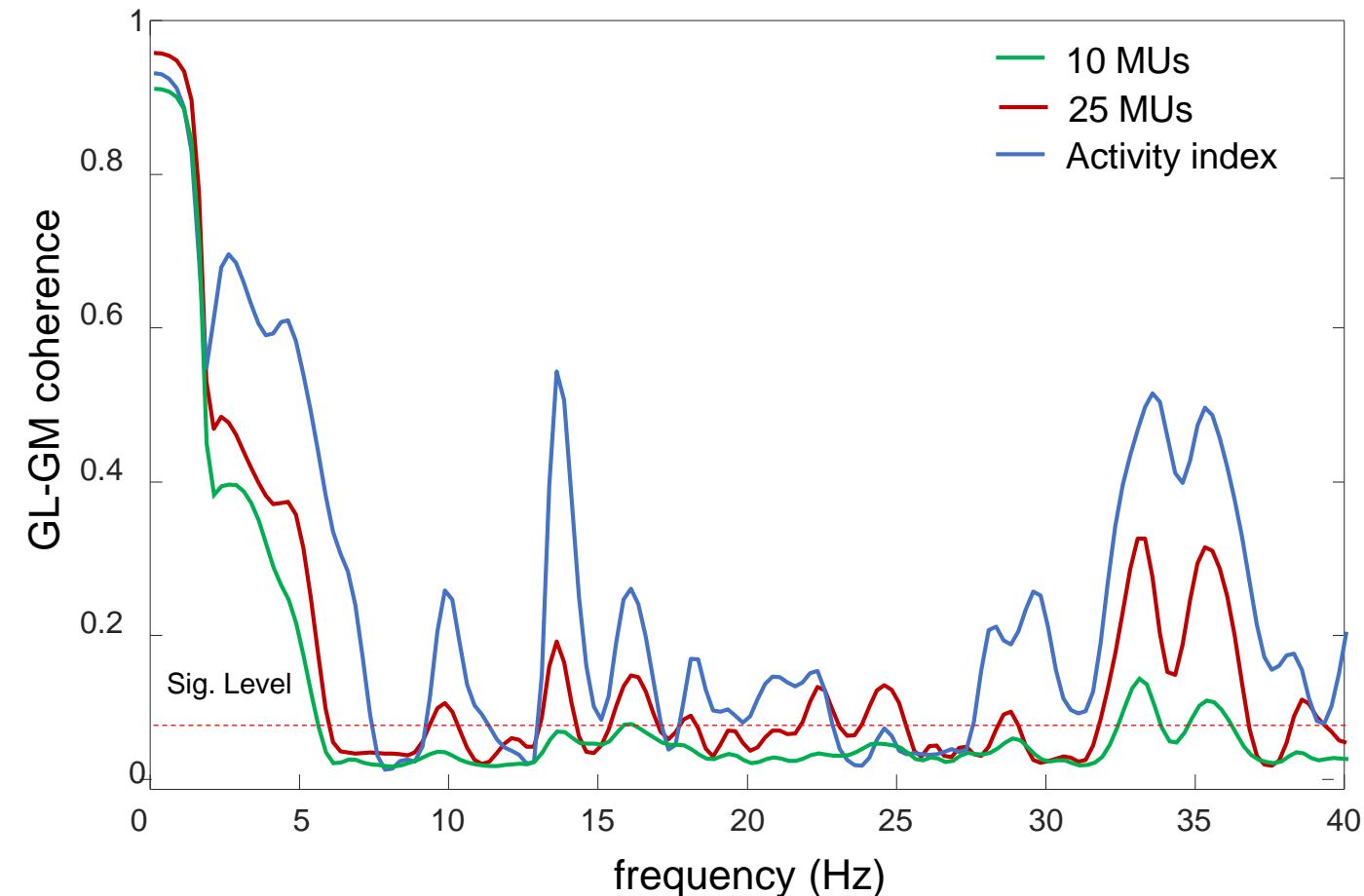
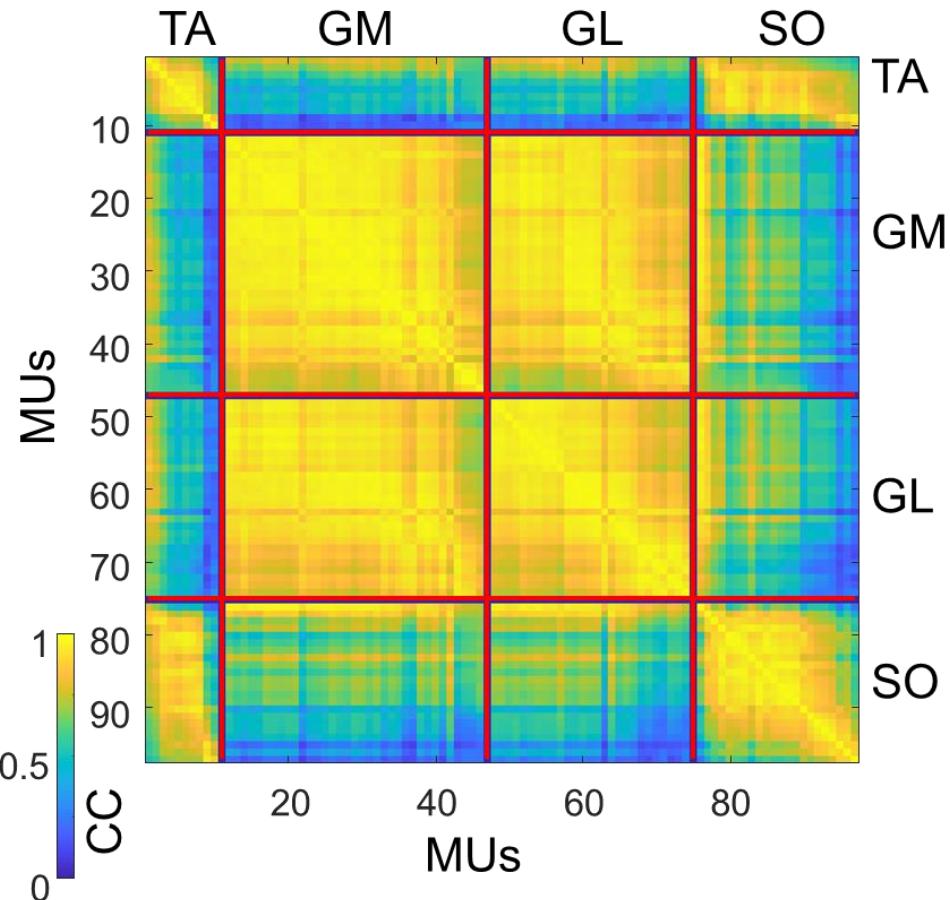


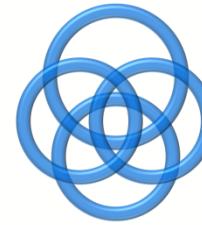
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Activity index & coherence between GL and GM





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Segment E - Physiological assessment: Dynamic & fatiguing contractions

MUAPs are not stationary – they can change intensively & fast

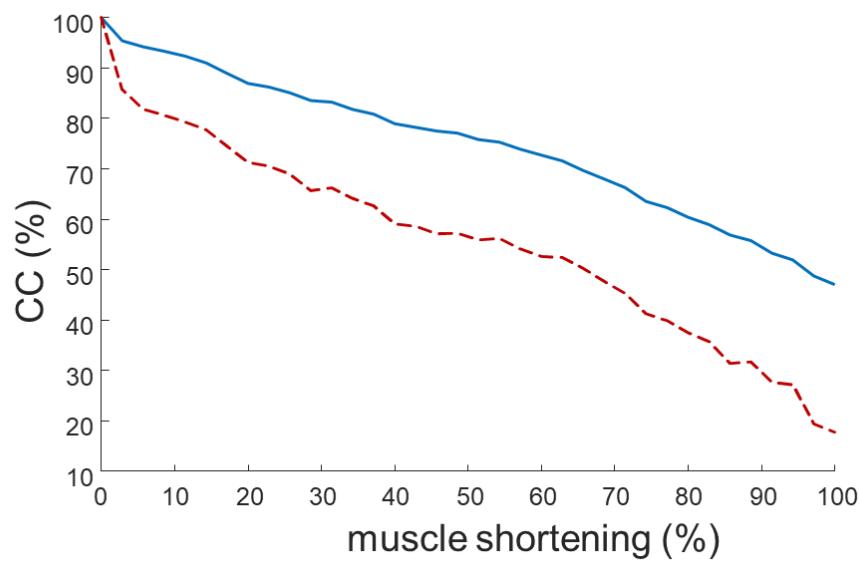
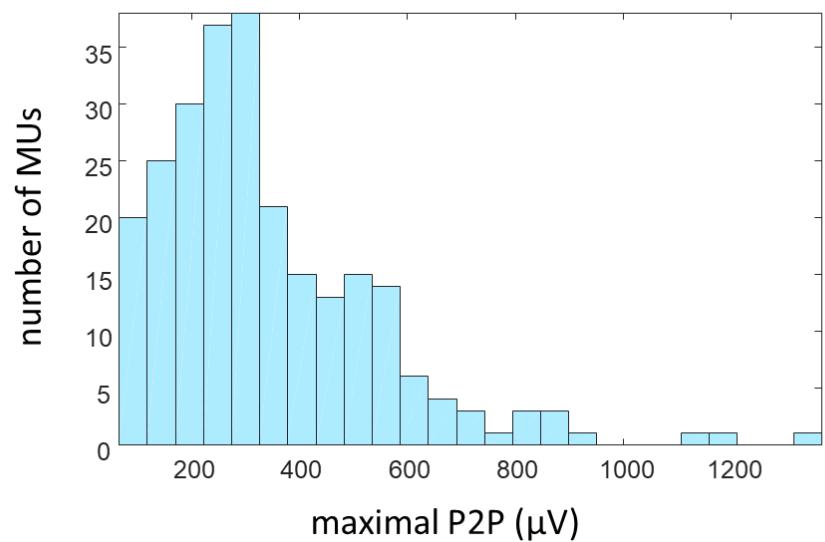
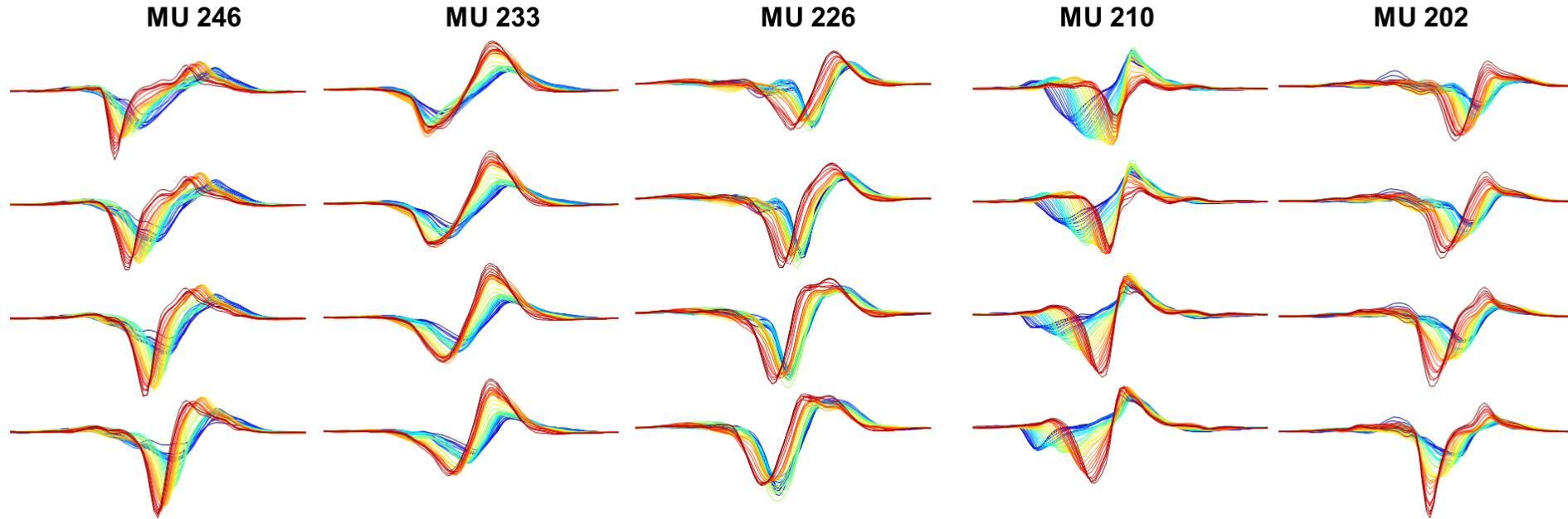


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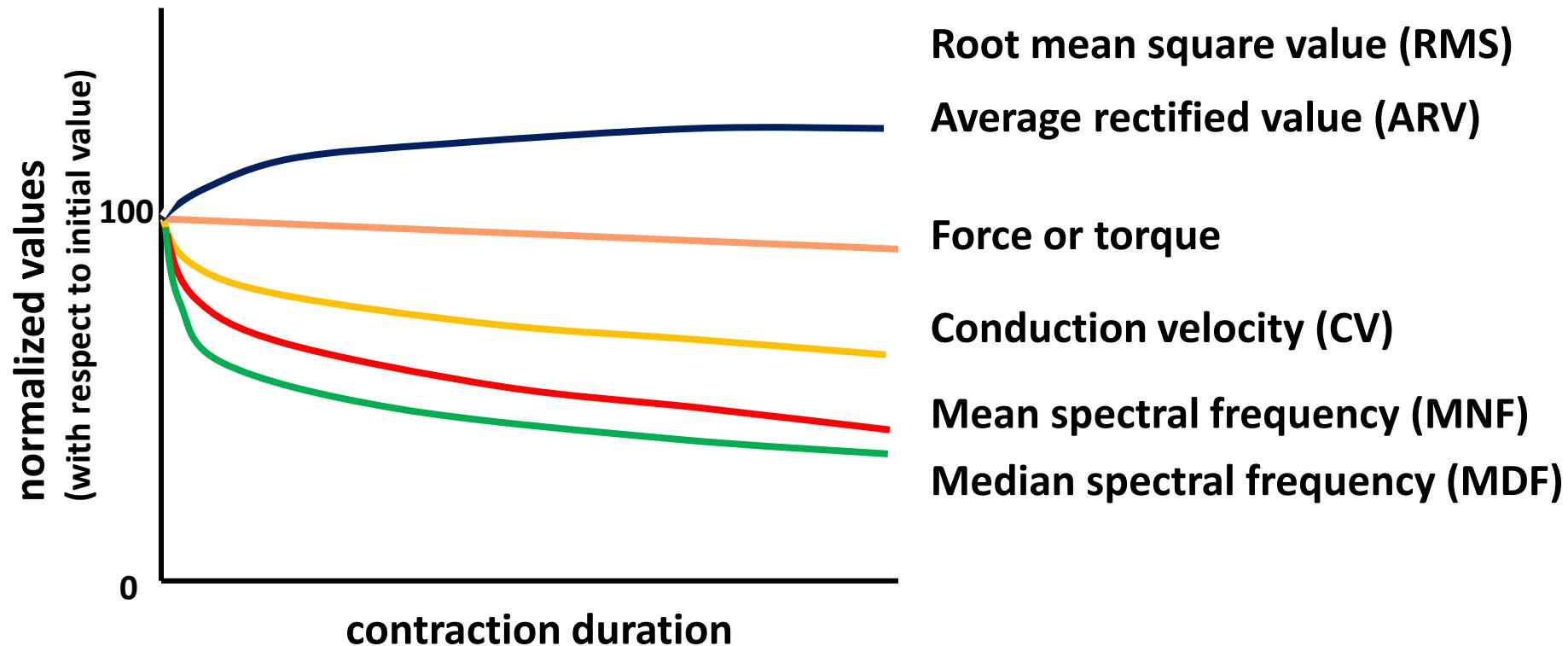


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Shortening of Biceps Brachii



The Fatigue Plot

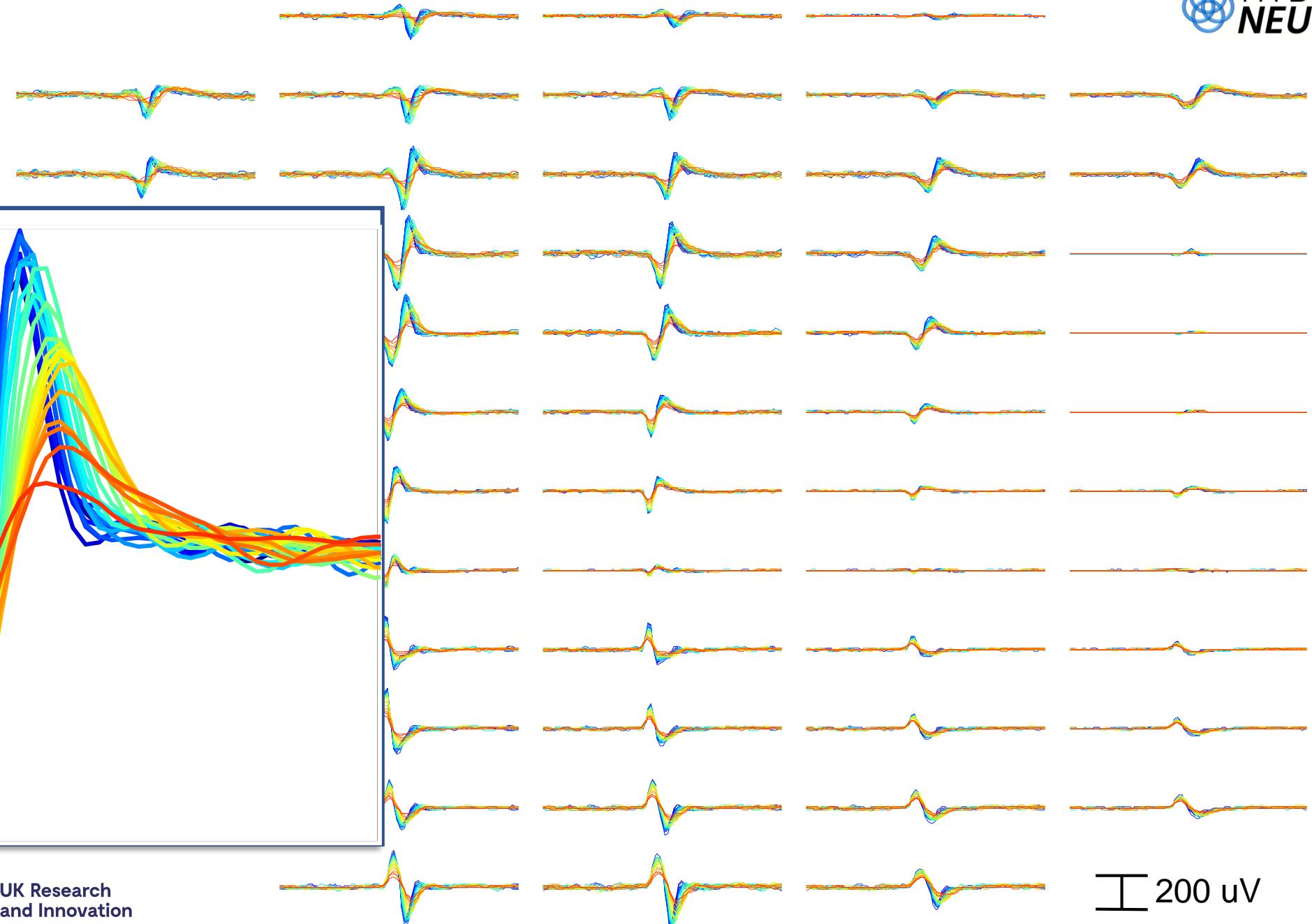


Global metrics (RMS, ARV, MNF, MDF) are easy to calculate but tricky to interpret. Their values depend on many internal factors.



Fatigue

MU 2



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200 μ V

Fatigue

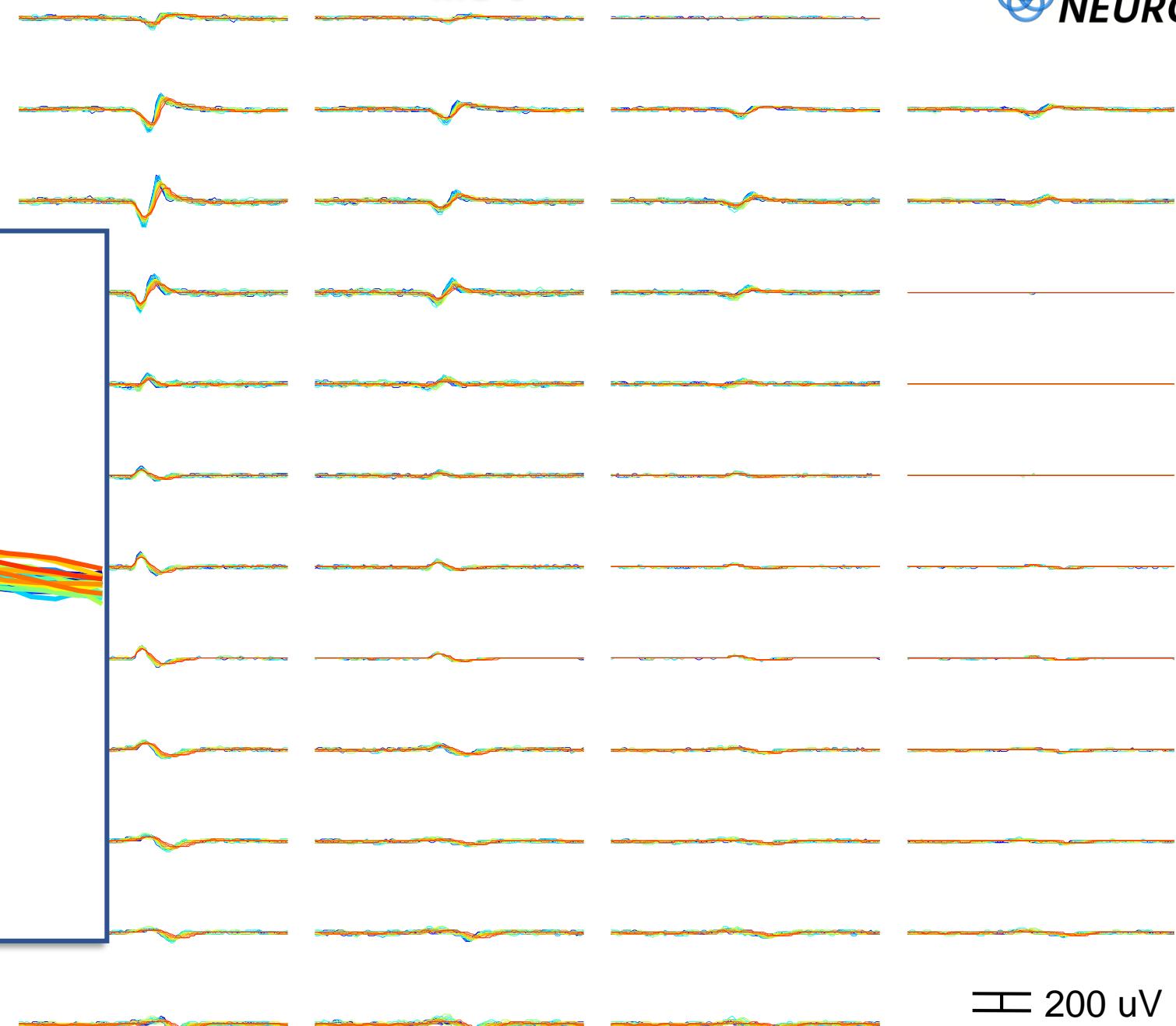
MU 9

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Note: fatigue evident in the last few ramps only

1st ramp

27th ramp



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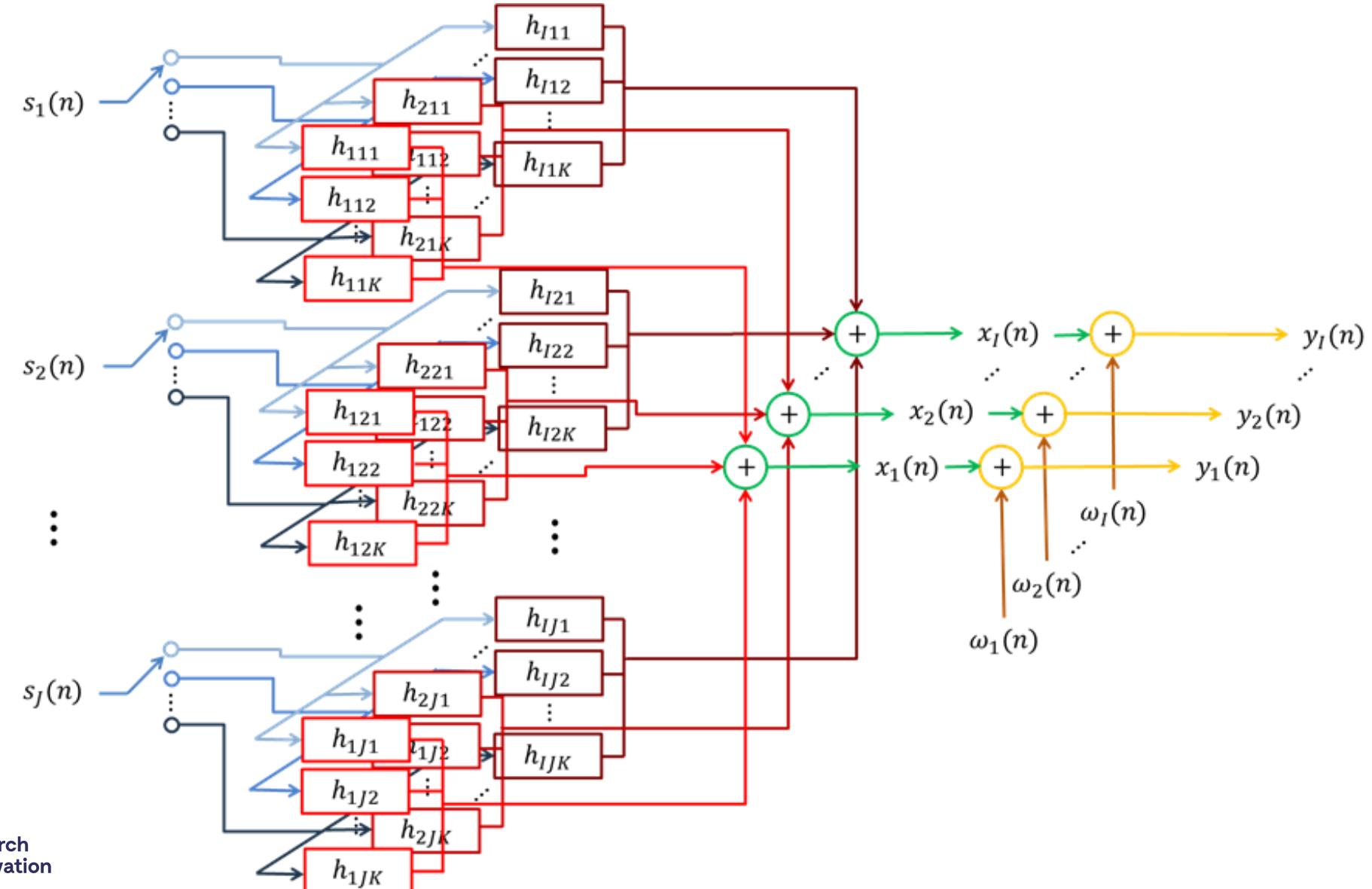
200 uV

Dynamic HDEMG model



MUAPs are functions of time

- Repeated dynamic contractions: cyclostationary
- Nonrepeated dynamic or/and fatiguing contractions: nonstationary



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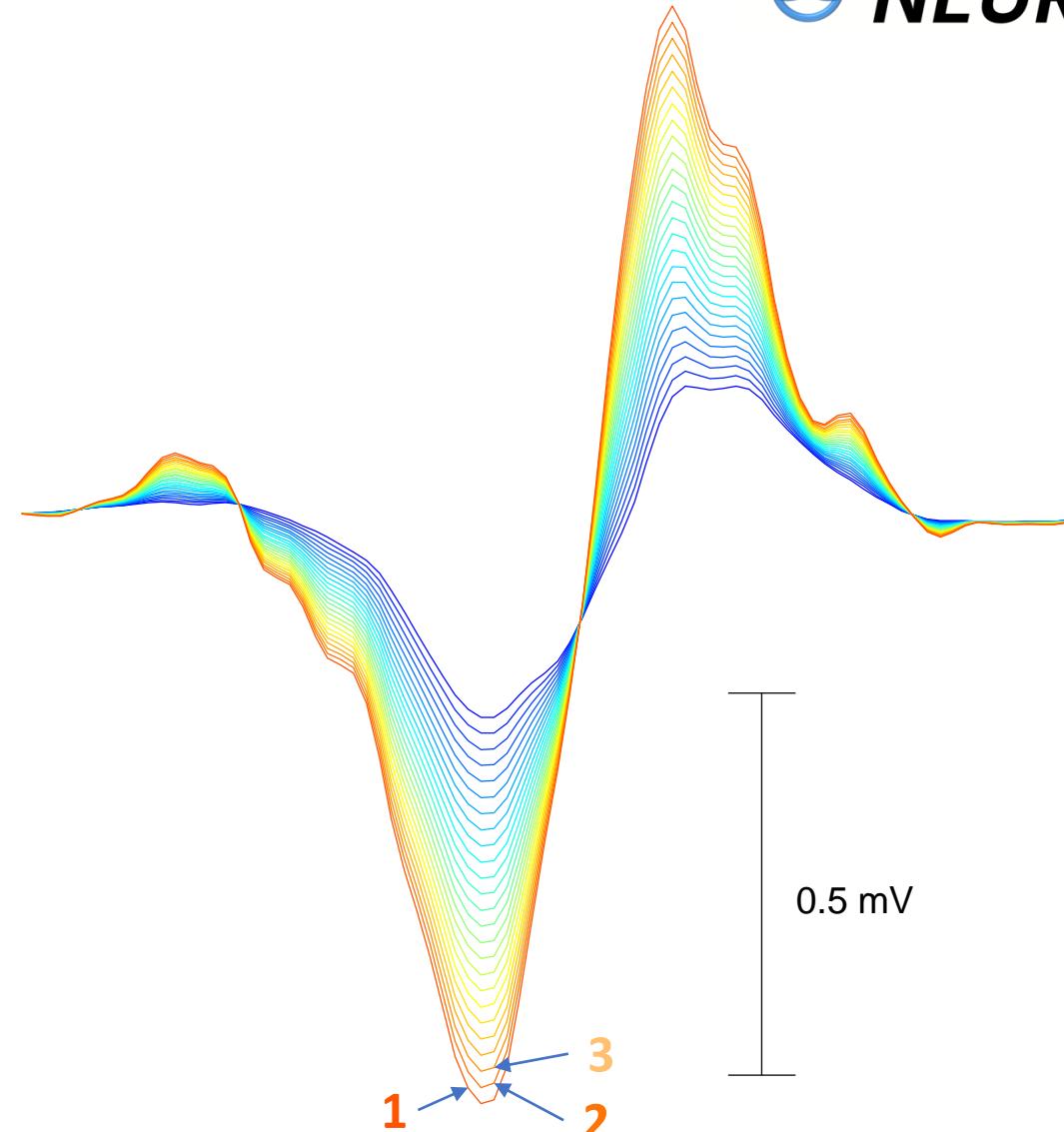
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MUAP shape prediction on each HDEMG channel



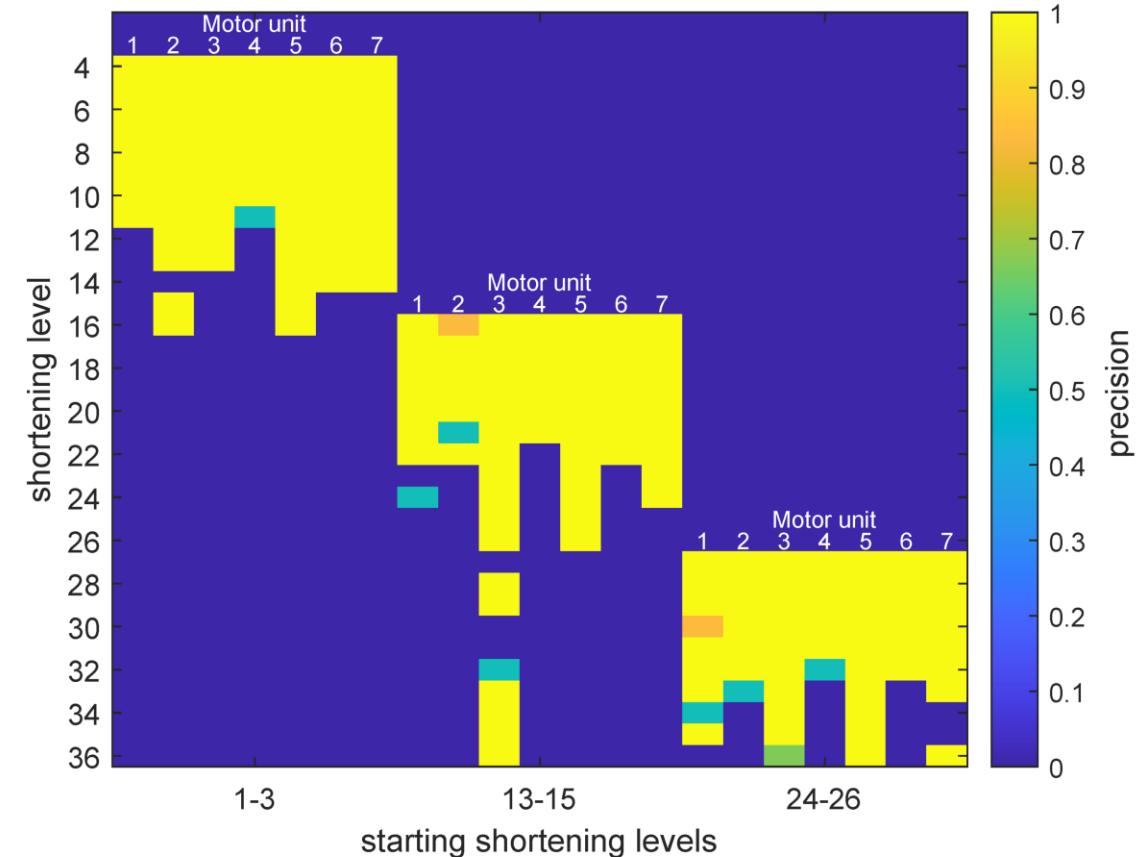
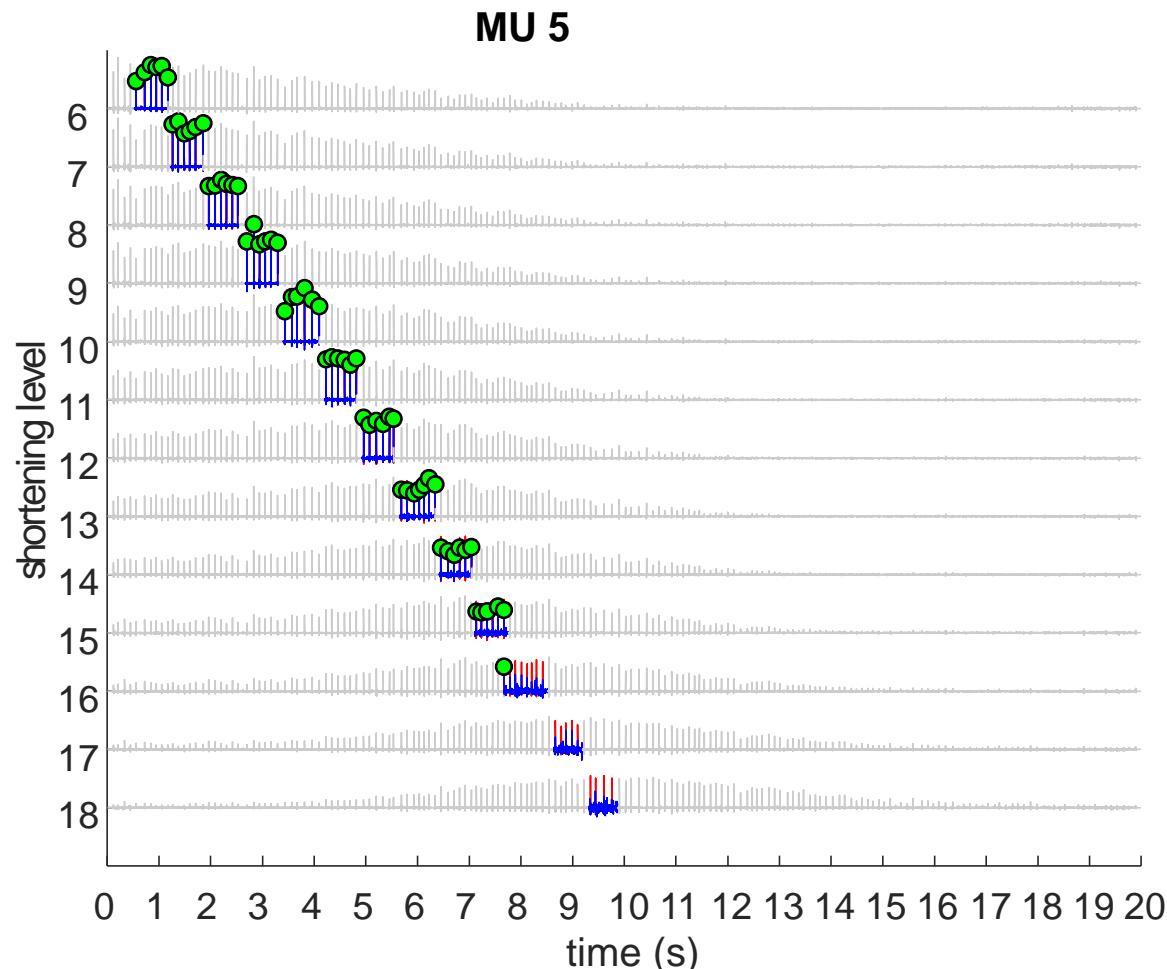
Can we predict the change of MUAP based on already identified changes?

Can we integrate this prediction into MU filter?



MU tracking

Kramberger & Holobar, IEEE Access 2021



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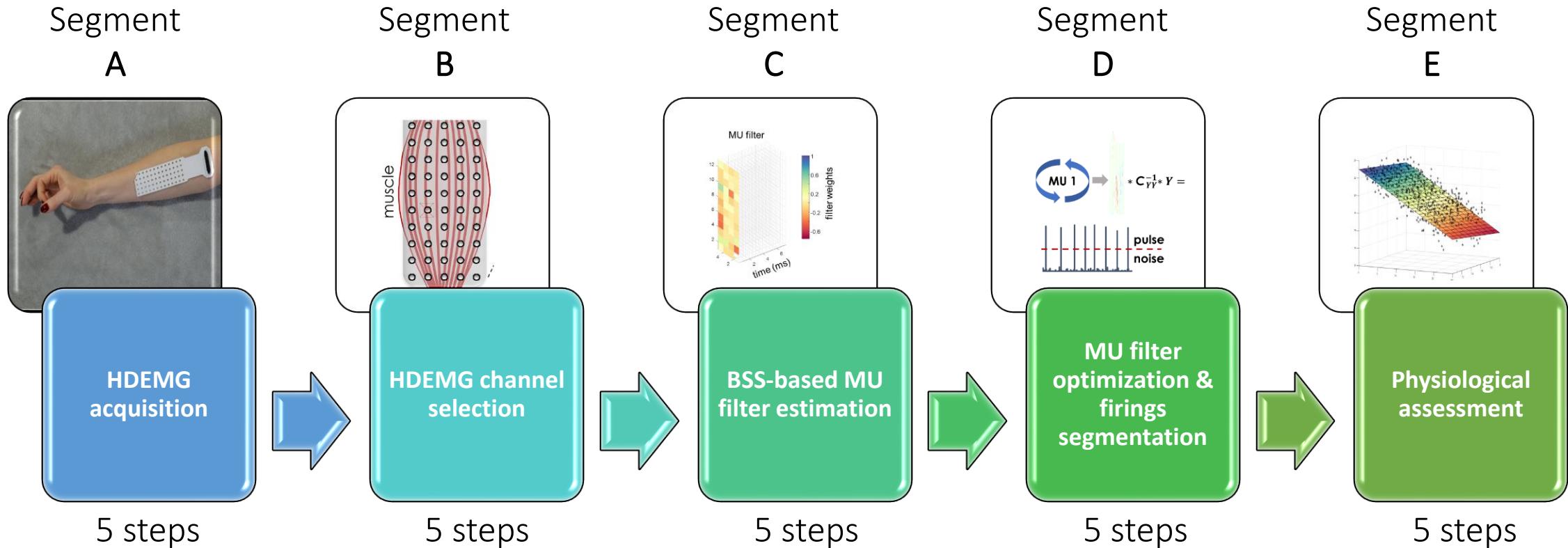


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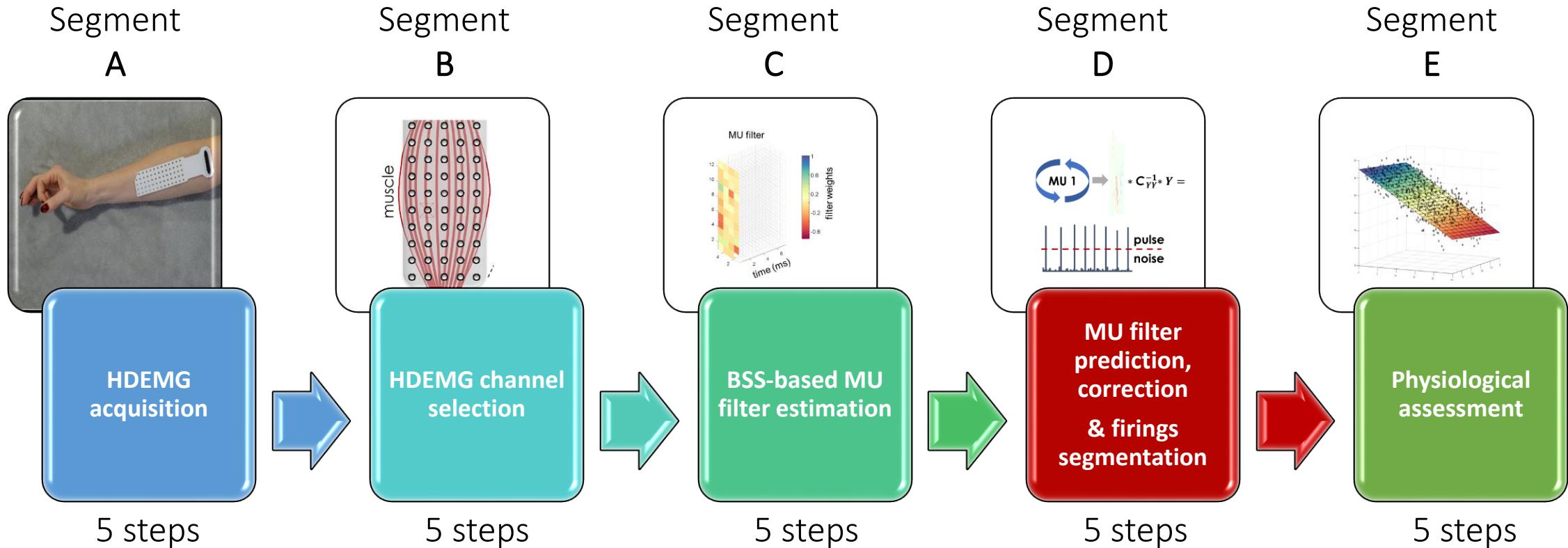
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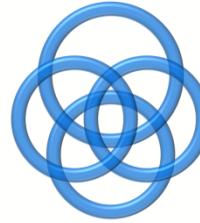
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Processing pipeline



Processing pipeline





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Segment E - Physiological assessment: Elicited contractions

Reflexes, Electrical or Magnetic Stimulations



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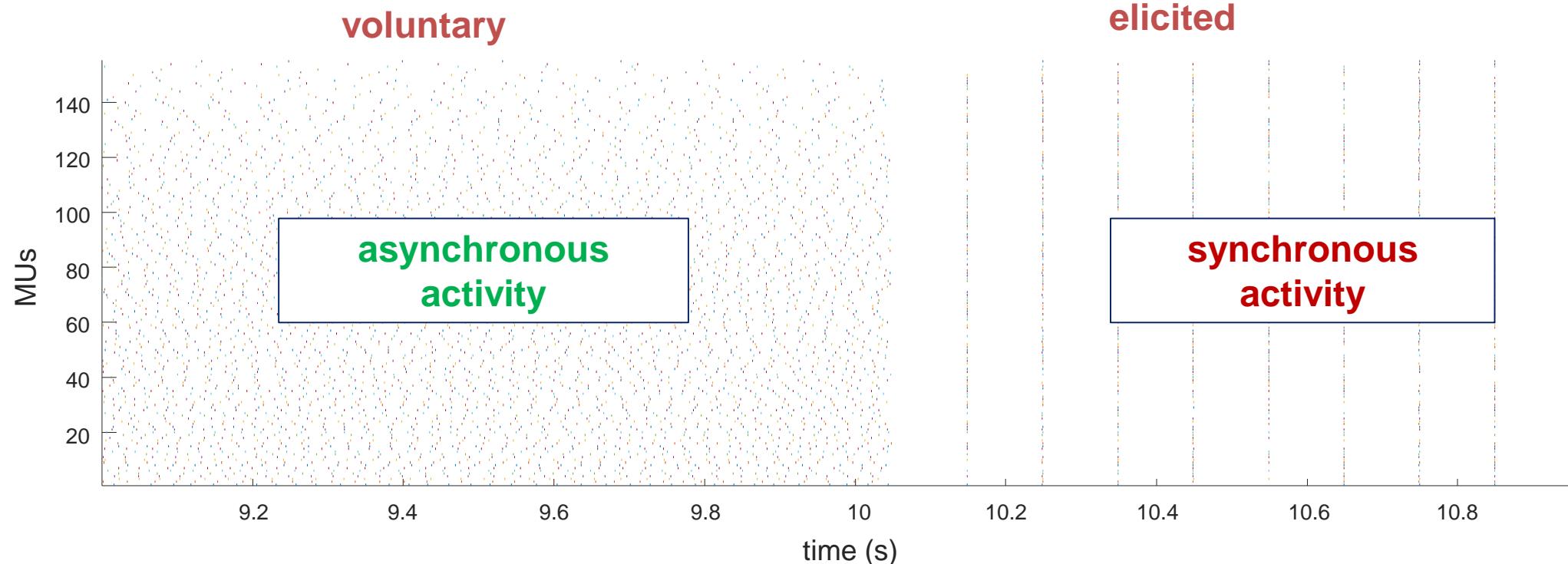
GA No. 101079392

GA No. 10052152

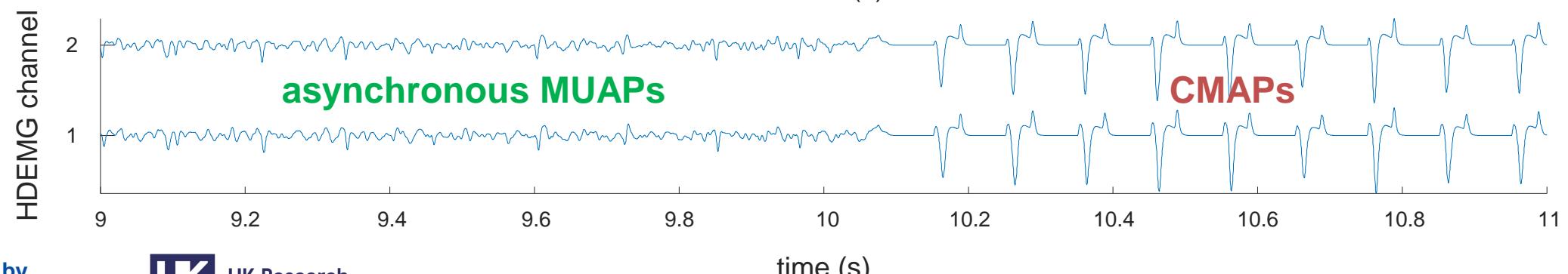
Voluntary vs. elicited contraction:

MU firing patterns & EMG

A)



B)



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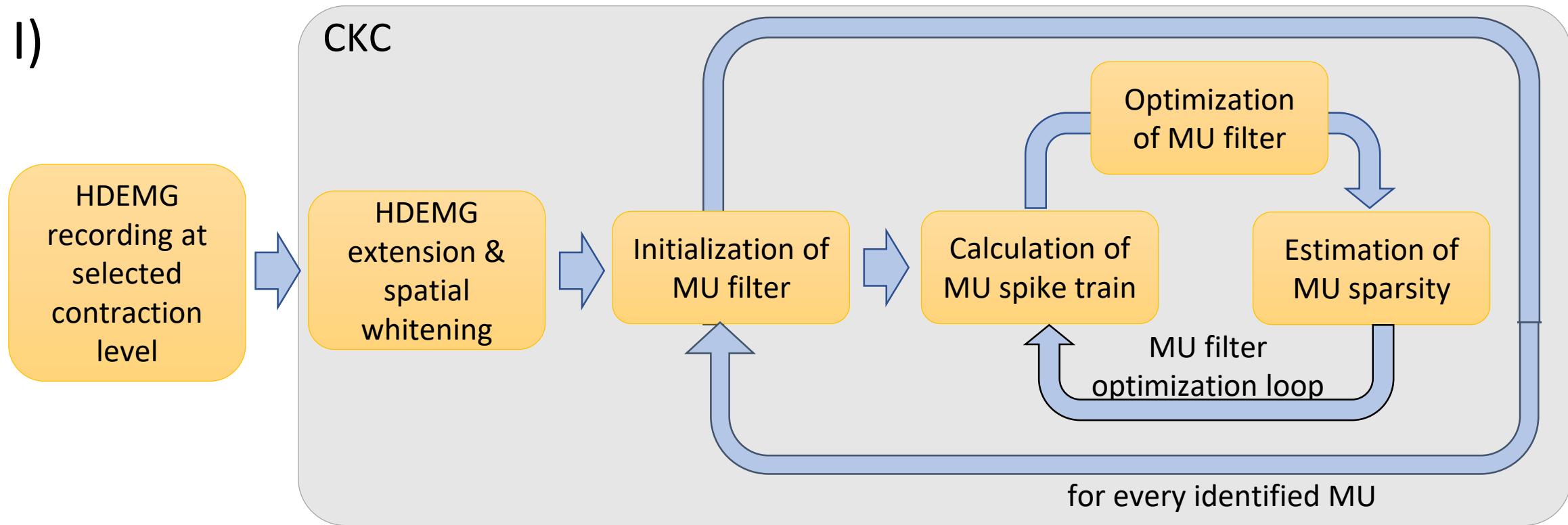
GA No. 101079392

GA No. 10052152

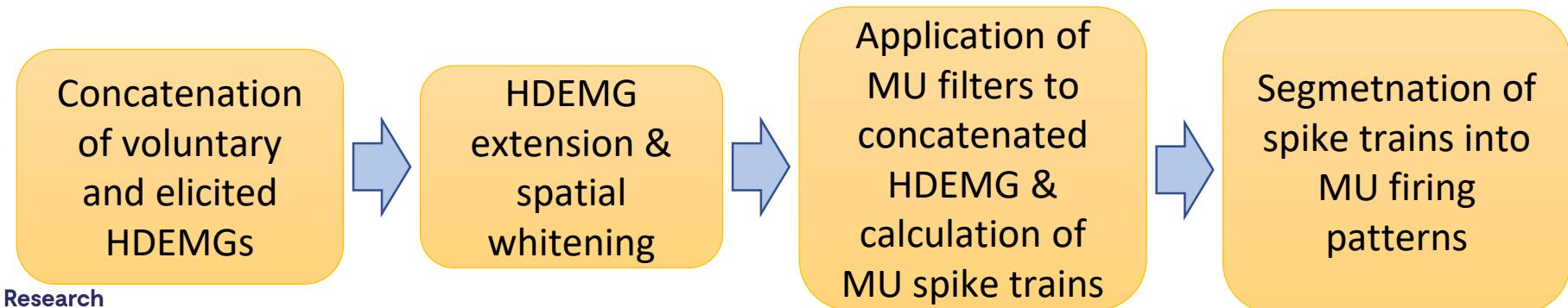
Segment C – MU filter estimation



I)

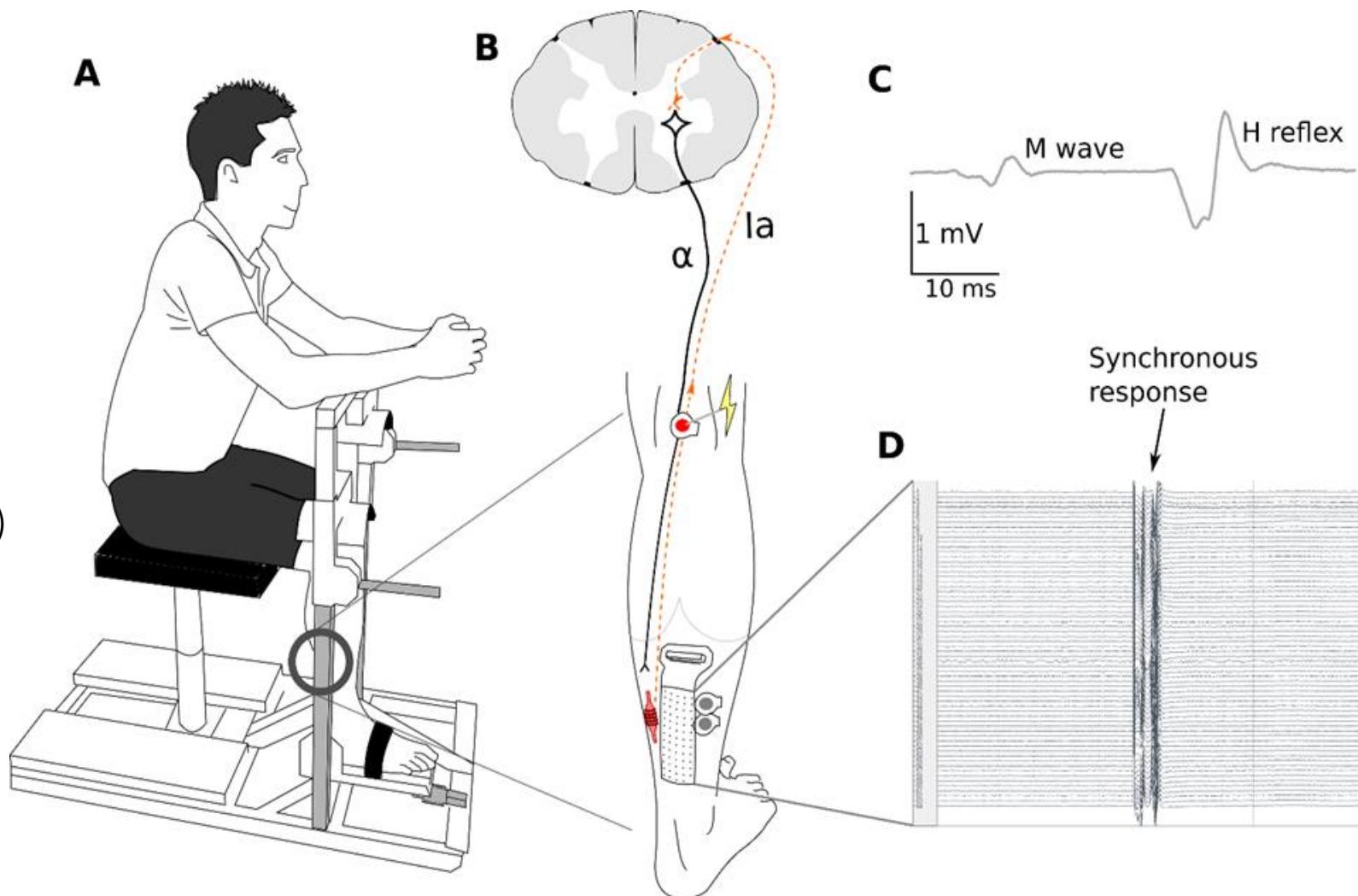


II)



H reflexes – soleus

- 12 healthy males (33.6 ± 5.8 years, 79 ± 4.8 kg, $1,81 \pm 0.05$ m)
- HD-EMG at 5120 Hz
- Voluntary contractions
 - 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 and 70 %MVC
- Constant current high voltage stimulator
 - rectangular electrical impulses (1 ms) to the tibial nerve
- 60 H-reflexes evoked at three levels of muscle activity:
 - rest (REST)
 - plantar flexion at 10% (C10)
 - plantar flexion at 20% of MVC (C20)



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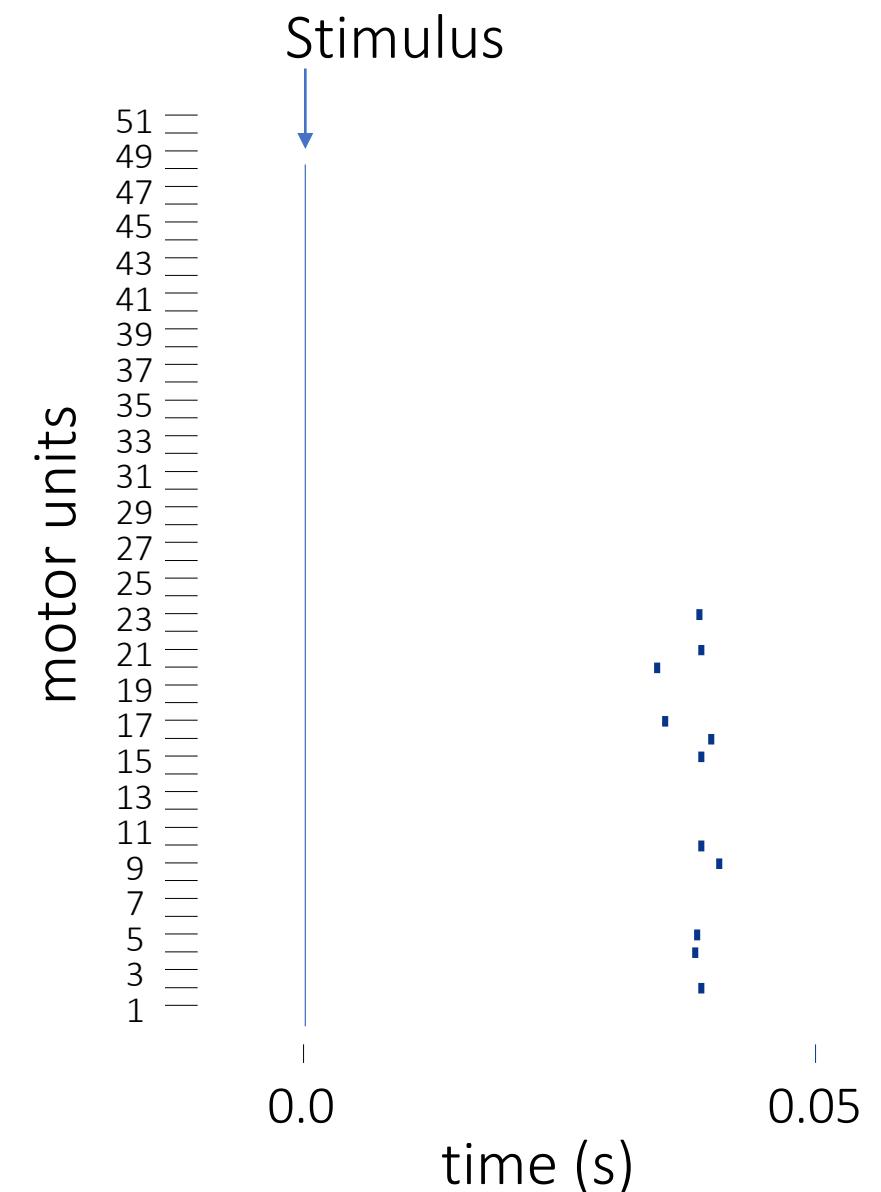
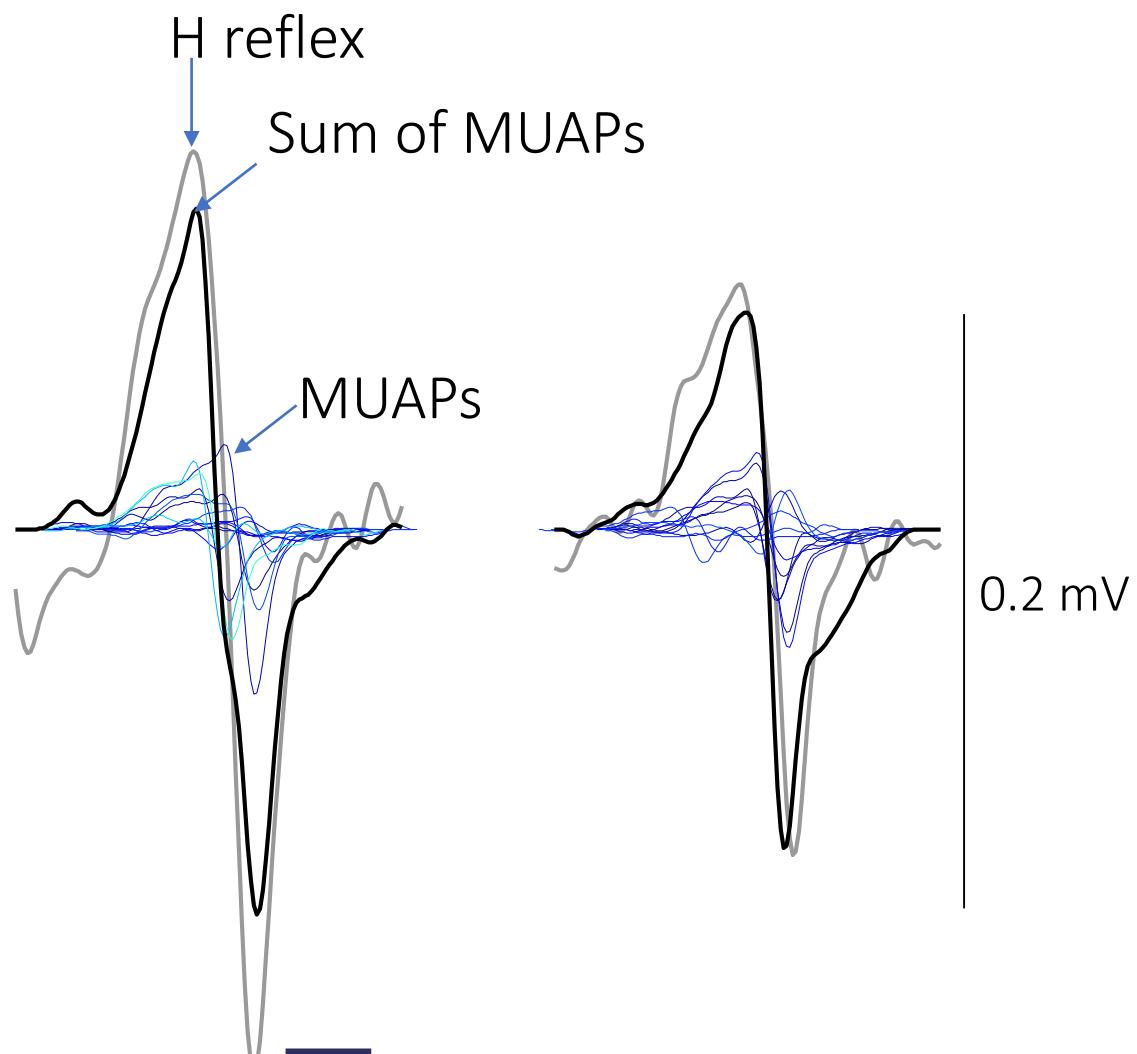


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H reflexes –soleus

Kalc et al. IEEE Trans. on Neural Sys. and Rehab. Eng. 31 (2022)



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H – REST

stimulus 49

stimulus 50

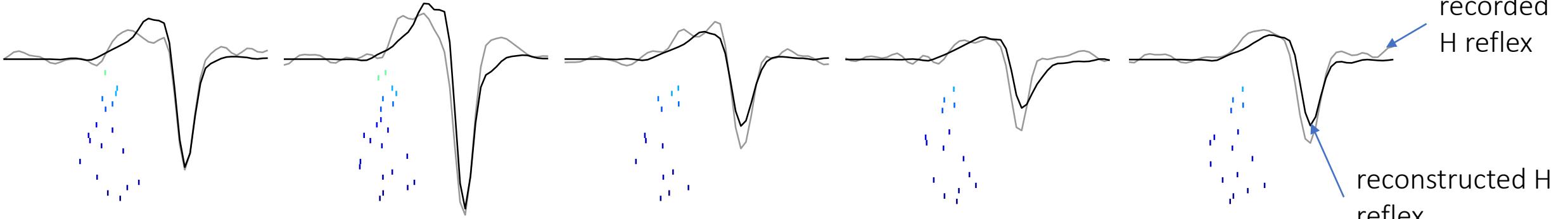
stimulus 51

stimulus 52

stimulus 53

recorded H reflex

reconstructed H reflex



H – 10% MVC (C10)

stimulus 31

stimulus 32

stimulus 33

stimulus 34

stimulus 35

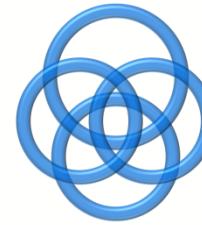
0.5 mV



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Segment F - Physiological assessment: EEG processing

Physiological Assessment & Applications



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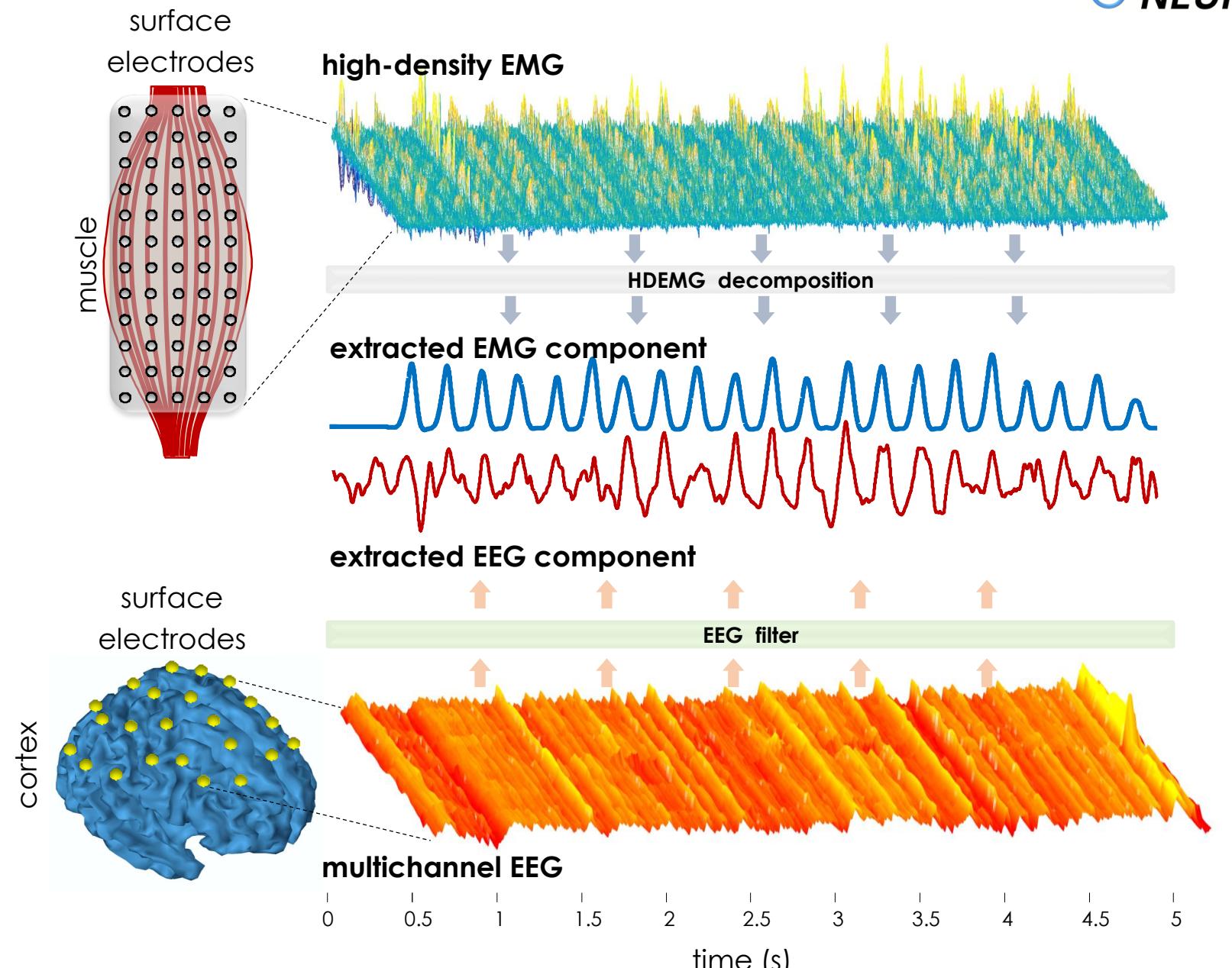
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EMG & EEG: pathological tremor

Holobar & Farina: IEEE Sig. Proc. Magazine, 2021



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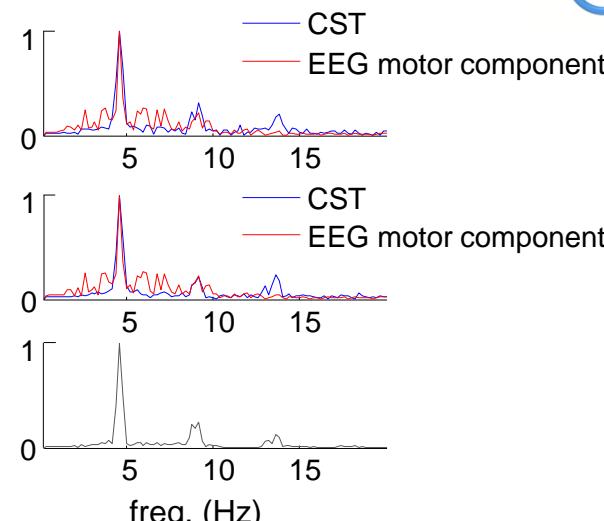
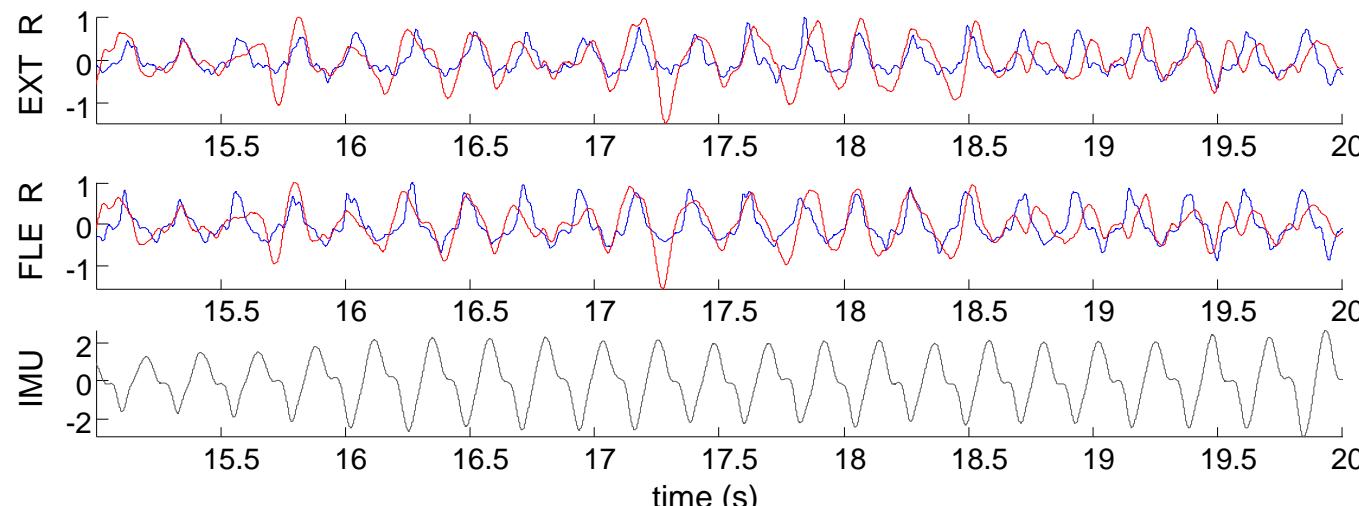
GA No. 101079392

GA No. 10052152

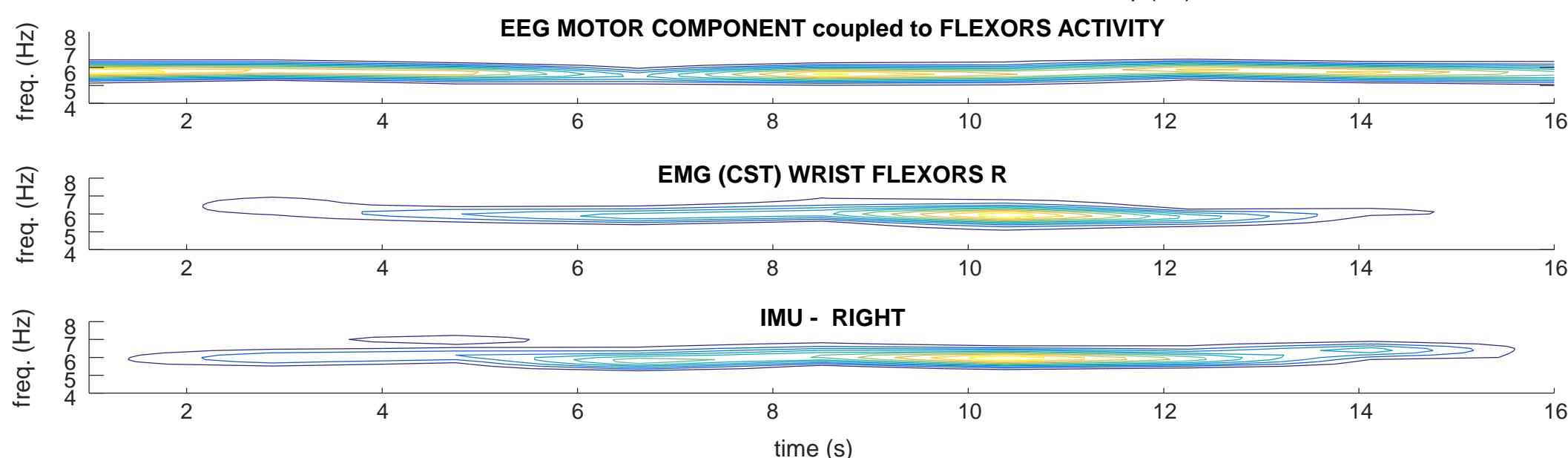
EMG to EEG filter transfer: pathological tremor



A)



B)



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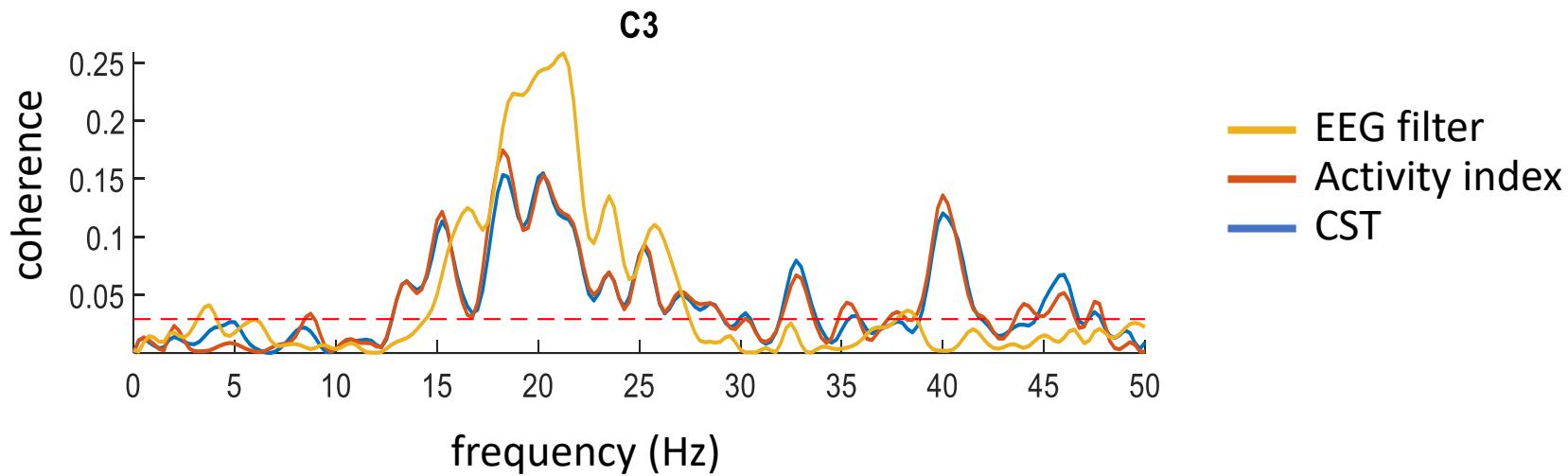
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Holobar et al. Frontiers in neurology 9 (2018)

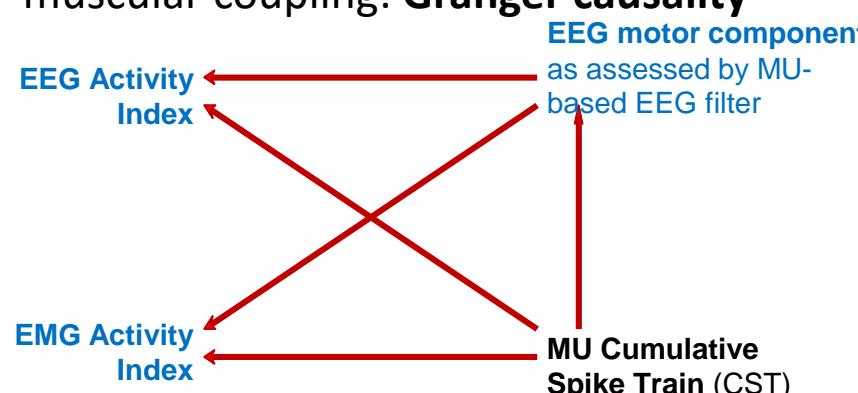
MU-based EEG filters & MU Activity Index

A)

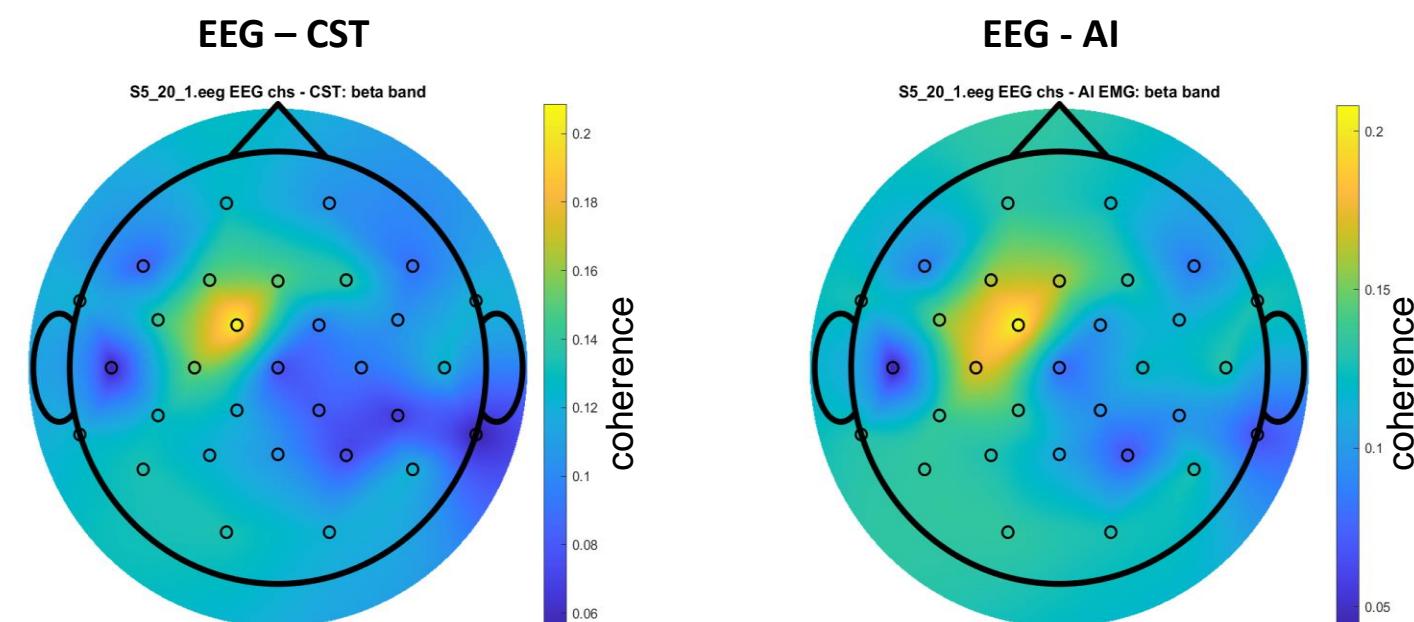


B)

Connectivity measurement of cortico-muscular coupling: **Granger causality**



C)



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CONCLUSIONS



- HDEM processing pipelines are relatively complex & contain main parameters
- Well defined quality measures support informative parameter selection
- Different steps/segments of pipelines updated independently
- Pipelines need to be adapted to the signal acquisition conditions (isometric, dynamic, elicited).
- „Per aspera ad astra“ in all the pipeline's segments



Questions?



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