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| 情報・智能工学専攻 | | 学籍番号 | 第 173310 号 | 指導教員 | 鯉田 孝和 中内 茂樹 |
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論文内容の要旨 (博士)

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| 博士学位論文名 | ニホンザル外側膝状体における青色応答細胞の K 層局在を明らかにするための装置 および記録部位特定手法の開発 |
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(要旨 1,200 字程度)

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| <p>ヒトの色覚系を理解するためには、色情報処理する神経系について構造と機能の両面からの理解が必要である。近年大脳皮質における色情報処理の理解が進んでいるのに対して、皮質下の視覚中枢である外側膝状体、特にK細胞層における色情報処理に関しては、実験手法の制約から理解が進んでおらず、構造と機能の理解に分断が生じていた。本論文は、この実験手法の制約を解決するために実験システムおよび高精細なマーキング手法を開発し、ニホンザル外側膝状体K層からの細胞記録位置証明に用いることで、青色応答細胞がK層に局在することを示す。併せて本手法が今後の脳研究に有用であることを示すものである。</p> <p>本論文ではまず、神経生理実験で用いるための新たな計測システムを開発し、時間精度を評価した。本システムでは、従来のシステムにおける2台のPCおよびデータ収録装置をそれぞれ1台に集約し、開発言語はMatlabとした。これによりシステムの導入運用コストが従来よりも低くできた。また本システムの性能は、ハードウェア間の信号同期を1 ms未満、刺激描画を正確に1フレーム遅れで実施できたことから、従来システムと同等の時間性能をもつことが示された。以上より、本システムは神経生理実験に有用であることが示された。</p> <p>次に、タングステン微小電極を用いた、高精細・低侵襲な記録位置証明（マーキング）手法を開発した。従来のマーキング手法では、分解能や組織への侵襲性に問題があり、脳の微細構造へ適用するには性能が不十分であった。そこでタングステン微小電極を用いて、記録部位に双極パルス電流を印加することで、電極先端に酸化物を発生させマーキングとする手法を開発した。マウスを対象とした適用実験では、周辺細胞へのダメージを抑えつつ、直径20 μmを下回る高精細なマーキングに成功した。適用した電流パラメータは電気刺激実験に用いられる条件と類似していたことから、過去に電気刺激を行ったサル脳スライスを再解析した。その結果マーキングは見つかり、マーキングは2年以上生きたサルの個体で、周辺組織を侵襲することなく残存することが明らかになった。以上より、タングステン電極を用いた本マーキング手法は霊長類を対象とした長期間の慢性実験に有用であることが示された。</p> <p>最後に、本論文で開発した実験システムとマーキング手法を用いて、ニホンザル外側膝状体の細胞から青色応答を記録すると同時に、位置を特定した。記録部位を示すマーキングはすべてK層に位置しており、これによって青色に応答する細胞がK層に局在することが示された。</p> <p>以上より、本論文は霊長類脳深部を対象とした新たな実験手法を示すとともに、色覚を構成する脳深部組織である外側膝状体K層の構造と機能にさらなる理解を与えるものである。本論文の成果によって、外側膝状体を中心とした初期視覚系の構造と機能の理解の分断が埋められ、未だに不明瞭な部分が多い脳深部の微細な組織への理解が進むものと考えられる。</p> |
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Abstract (Doctor)

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| Title of Thesis | Development of methods to reveal K-layer localization of blue-on cells in lateral geniculate nucleus of the macaque monkey |
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Approx. 800 words

To understand human color vision, it is necessary to understand the structure and function of the nervous system that processes color information. In contrast to the understanding of the cerebral cortex, color information processing in the lateral geniculate nucleus (LGN), especially in the K cell layer, has not been well understood due to limitations in experimental techniques, preventing full understanding of structure and function. Although progress has been made in understanding the K layer mainly through studies using marmosets, marmosets differ from humans in brain structure and color vision. Therefore, to understand human color vision, it is necessary to study the K layer in macaque monkeys, a primate more closely related to humans. Based on anatomical studies, cells in the K layer are thought to respond to blue visual stimuli. However, no studies have directly shown that cells in the K layer respond to blue in macaque monkeys. In this paper, I developed an experimental system and a fine-scale marking method to prove the recording site of the K layer of the Macaque, providing direct evidence that blue-responsive cells are localized in the K-layer.

At first, I developed a novel visual neurophysiology experimental system, utilizing a single computer and one data acquisition system (DAQ), and evaluated its temporal accuracy. In this system, two PCs and DAQs in the previous system were integrated into one PC and DAQ. Matlab-PsychToolbox manages visual stimulation and behavioral control, while the DAQ (TDT) handles neural recording and real-time analysis. Additional analysis, such as calculating the peri-stimulus time histogram, is conducted in a second instance of Matlab. The development language of the system is solely Matlab. Thus, the cost from system installation to operation is lower than conventional systems, and even researchers unfamiliar with system development can develop the system on their own. The system can synchronize signals between hardware in less than 1 ms and draw stimuli with one frame delay, indicating that it has the same time performance as conventional systems. The parallel execution of two Matlabs allows for precise real-time control and simultaneous resource-consuming analysis. The system exhibited adequate temporal performance for visual neurophysiology experiments, and operated stably for over 2000 hours in experiments involving awake macaque monkeys. These results indicate that this system is useful for neurophysiological experiments.

Next, I developed a fine-scale and minimally invasive marking method using tungsten microelectrodes. Conventional marking methods have problems in resolution and invasiveness to tissues and are insufficient for application to microstructures in the deep brain. Therefore, I developed a novel marking method of simple, fine scale, and low invasiveness for use with tungsten electrodes. Tungsten needles are often processed by electrolytic polishing with alternating current, and small fragments of tungsten oxide appear and deposit around the tip. This tungsten oxide could be a mark if the electrolytic polishing is processed in vivo. The marking was clearly visible as a bright red in dark-field microscopy, probably due to the specular reflection of the tungsten oxide. Thus, even tiny fragments of tungsten oxide smaller than cellular size were visible in low magnification image, contributing prompt detections of the marking. Experiment on mice in vivo, I observed fine-scale markings with a size of less than 20 μm while minimizing damage to the surrounding cells. Furthermore, re-analysis of monkey brain slices that participated in the electrical stimulation experiment revealed that the markings persisted without invading the surrounding tissue and lasted for at least two years in vivo. These results indicate that this marking technique using tungsten electrodes is useful for long-term chronic experiments on primates.

Finally, the experimental system and marking technique developed in this paper were used to record color responses in the LGN of Macaque monkeys and provide fine-scale evidence of the location of cells responding to blue color. In the experiment, a total of 330 color response units were recorded from two monkeys, 26 of which responded to blue, and marking was performed at each recording site. The results showed that all identified markings were located in the K layer. This strongly suggested that the cells responding to blue were localized in the K layer.

In summary, this paper demonstrates a new experimental technique for deep brain regions and provides further insight into the structure and function of the K layer of the LGN, a deep brain area that constitutes color vision. Although unit recording using metallic microelectrodes is classic, the combination of single unit recording and my marking technique could be most effective methods available today for recording neural activity in the deep brain microstructure. I believe that the results of this paper will bridge the divide in our understanding of the structure and function of the early visual system and advance our understanding of the fine organization of the deep brain, which is still largely obscure.