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Neuronal avalanches in neocortical circuits.

Beggs JM, Plenz D

J Neurosci 2003 Dec 3 **23**(35):11167-77 [[abstract on PubMed](#)] [[related articles](#)]

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Selected by | Xiao-Jing Wang / David Pinto / Alain Destexhe

First evaluation 24 Mar 2004 | Latest evaluation 24 Jun 2004

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Faculty Comments

Faculty Member

Xiao-Jing Wang

Brandeis University, United States

NEUROSCIENCE

 New Finding

Comments

This study is the first to show avalanche-like neural network dynamics at multiple spatial and temporal scales (up to hundreds of milliseconds). The size distribution of firing activity events shows a power law with an exponent of $-3/2$, both for mature organotypic cultures and acute rat cortical slices. This mode of network behavior differs qualitatively from random activity, synchrony, or waves.

Evaluated 24 Jun 2004

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David Pinto

University of Rochester Medical Center, United States

NEUROSCIENCE

 Hypothesis

This manuscript describes and analyzes "avalanche" patterns of activity that emerge spontaneously in the in vitro cortical slice. Avalanche activity is distinct from the both oscillations and smooth wave propagation, both well studied phenomena. The spatial branching of activity in the slice can be analyzed using techniques developed to study the spatial spread of forest fires and nuclear chain reactions.

Evaluated 26 May 2004

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Alain Destexhe

 CNRS, France
NEUROSCIENCE

 New Finding

The authors investigate the dynamics of recurrent patterns of network activity in neocortical slices and cultures using multielectrode arrays. The main finding is that the activity spreads according to power laws typical of avalanche phenomena (self-organized criticality), which represents a clear-cut experimental evidence that this type of dynamics applies to neuronal networks. The authors quantified the spread of activity according to a "branching parameter", which was close to unity, suggesting that these dynamics may be optimal for information transmission.

Evaluated 24 Mar 2004

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Faculty Comments

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