Author’s response to reviews

Title: Abnormal susceptibility to distracters hinders perception in early stage Parkinsons disease: a controlled study

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Author’s response to reviews:

We made a second revision to the manuscript according to the recommendations of the reviewer.

Dr. Henk W. Berendse felt his contribution in earlier versions of the manuscript not sufficient to justify being a coauthor. As his present contribution in rewriting the manuscript and interpreting the data added to his earlier help with designing the study certainly justifies an authorship, he is added to the list of authors.

Background

- We made a number of small textual changes to increase the grammar and readability of the background and removed the abrupt changes in the text on page 4.

- With respect to the rationale for investigating perceptual deficits in early PD, we added 5 lines at the end of the background to explain the choice of early PD.

- The sentence "However, in most .....for task performance." is clarified and elaborated on in a number of subsequent lines (page 5, paragraph 2, lines 2-7).

The analyses concerning age effects are reported and discussed in the text as follows:

Abstract

page 2, line 11: we added ‘age (< 61 yrs/>= 61 yrs’ as follows: ‘Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with group (patients/controls) and age (< 61 yrs/>= 61 yrs’)

page 2, lines 18-21: the results on age effects are mentioned in the text of the Abstract.

Data analysis

page 8, line 8: ‘age ’is added as independent factor (age (< 61 yrs/>= 61 yrs)

Results

page 9, lines 8-14: the significant interaction between group, age and onset is described.

Pages 8 and 9: all statistics (F, p, eta2 and df) in the Results section have been changed as a result of adding age as an independent factor to the analyses. These changes have no impact on the original results.

Discussion
the effects of age are discussed with reference to studies that reported similar findings. As it appeared that studies reporting the effects of age on cognitive or perceptual deterioration in PD are scarce, we could only discuss and add references 27-30. From these, references 28-30 specifically pertain to age effects in PD.

General

We changed the text of the whole manuscript to improve the grammar and the structure of the paper. In a number of cases we changed 'onset' in 'onset distracter' which may be more clear for readers who are not familiar with the attention literature. In addition, we added references 25, 26 and 32 to support the interpretation of the results, the text of which is revised at page 11 (lines 8-16).

At the end of the Discussion we added some lines (line 3-6 from bottom) with respect to the role of the reticular formation, which is also mentioned in the Abstract, at the end of Results and discussion.