POPULATION MODELS FOR THE SENSE OF TOUCH: Edition No. 1

Description: The skin is a complex living organ incorporating sensory receptors, nerve fibers, blood vessels, sweat glands, etc. Rapidly-adapting fibers linked to Meissner corpuscles make up one class of mechanoreceptive nerves found in the hairless skin and are associated with the sense of touch. Population models of mechanoreceptive fibers are essential to understand sensory processing in the brain. This monograph explains the anatomy and physiology of rapidly-adapting fibers and builds population models incrementally based on experimental data mainly from cats and monkeys. First, a deterministic model based on average firing rate is presented and the activity of a hypothetical higher-order neuron is considered. Next, a probabilistic model is studied and its predictions are compared to human psychophysical data. The probabilistic model is extended by including a Markov chain for spike generation. The resulting model is finally tested with a psychophysical detection task as the stimulus location is varied. The book is recommended to students and researchers who are interested in computational models for sensory processing, specifically in the sense of touch.

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