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Toward discovery science of human brain function

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Although it is being successfully implemented for exploration of the genome, discovery science has eluded the functional neuroimaging community. The core challenge remains the development of common paradigms for interrogating the myriad functional systems in the brain without the constraints of a priori hypotheses. Resting-state functional MRI (R-fMRI) constitutes a candidate approach capable of addressing this challenge. Imaging the brain during rest reveals large-amplitude spontaneous low-frequency (<0.1 Hz) fluctuations in the fMRI signal that are temporally correlated across functionally related areas. Referred to as functional connectivity, these correlations yield detailed maps of complex neural systems, collectively constituting an individual's "functional connectome." Reproducibility across datasets and individuals suggests the functional connectome has a common architecture, yet each individual's functional connectome exhibits unique features, with stable, meaningful interindividual differences in connectivity patterns and strengths. Comprehensive mapping of the functional connectome, and its subsequent exploitation to discern genetic influences and brain-behavior relationships, will require multicenter collaborative datasets. Here we initiate this endeavor by gathering R-fMRI data from 1,414 volunteers collected independently at 35 international centers. We demonstrate a universal architecture of positive and negative functional connections, as well as consistent loci of inter-individual variability. Age and sex emerged as significant determinants. These results demonstrate that independent R-fMRI datasets can be aggregated and shared. High-throughput R-fMRI can provide quantitative phenotypes for molecular genetic studies and biomarkers of developmental and

pathological processes in the brain. To initiate discovery science of brain function, the 1000 Functional Connectomes Project dataset is freely accessible at www.nitrc.org/projects/fcon_1000/.

database | neuroimaging | open access | reproducibility | resting state

Much like the challenge of decoding the human genome, the complexities of mapping human brain function pose a challenge to the functional neuroimaging community. As dem-

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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the origins and biological significance of spontaneous low-frequency fluctuations of neuronal and hemodynamic activity, the impact of intrinsic activity on evoked responses (and vice versa), and the ideal means of acquiring, processing, and analyzing R-fMRI data. Nevertheless, the potential of discovery science is vast, from the development of objective measures of brain functional integrity to help guide clinical diagnoses and decision-making, to tracking treatment response and assessing the efficacy of treatment interventions. Finally, whereas the present work examines functional connectivity alone, future studies may combine R-fMRI with other modalities (e.g., EEG, magnetoencephalography, diffusion-tensor imaging, volumetrics) and genetics to achieve a more complete understanding of the human brain.

All data and analytic tools used in the present work will be made available at www.nitrc.org/projects/fcon_1000/. We anticipate that the open availability of the 1000 Functional Connectomes dataset will recruit the broad participation and collaboration among the scientific community necessary for successful implementation of discovery-based science of human brain function. In addition, we hope that it will further advance the ethos of data sharing and collaboration initiated by such efforts as fMRIDC (www.fmriddc.org), FBIRN (www.birncommunity.org), OASIS (www.oasis-brains.org), BrainScope (www.brainscope.org), and BrainMap (www.brainmap.org).

Methods

Resting-state fMRI scans were aggregated from 35 community-based datasets ($n = 1,414$). The present analysis was restricted to 24 centers ($n = 1,093$; 21 published, 3 unpublished; mean age <60 years; only participants over age 18; one scan per participant; duration: 2.2–20 min; $n = 970$ at 3 T, $n = 123$ at 1.5 T; voxel size, 1.5–5 mm within plane; slice thickness, 3–8 mm). Each contributor's respective ethics committee approved submission of deidentified data. The institutional review boards of NYU Langone Medical Center and New Jersey Medical School approved the receipt and dissemination of the data.

For functional connectivity, we used seed-based correlation analysis, based on six previously identified seed regions (31), and model-free ICA, using temporal

concatenation to generate group-level components and dual regression to generate individual participant maps. For amplitude measures at each voxel, we used the FFT-based ALFF (2, 17, 43) and its normalized variant, fALFF (44).

Standard image preprocessing was performed (i.e., motion correction, spatial filtering with FWHM = 6 mm, 12-dof affine transformation to MNI152 stereotaxic space). For seed-based correlation approaches and dual regression following ICA analysis, nuisance signals (e.g., global signal, WM, CSF, motion parameters) were regressed out. Temporal filtering was tailored for each analytic approach (29, 31, 32, 44).

ICA components for dual regression analyses were determined by (i) low-dimensional (20 components) temporal concatenation ICA carried out 25 times (each with 18 participants randomly selected from each of 17 centers with minimum of 165 time points) and (ii) low-dimensional (20 components) meta-ICA, a second concatenation-based ICA using the component sets produced by the 25 runs (see *SI Results* for a description of an alternative method). For each participant, dual regression (32–34) was performed using the 20 components identified by the meta-ICA (Fig. 53), yielding a connectivity map for each component.

Aggregate statistical analyses of center, sex, and age effects were based on a generalized linear model implementation of one-way ANOVA (factor: center; covariates: age and sex). To identify functional boundaries, we calculated voxelwise coefficients of variation across all 1,093 participants, and ranked each voxel based on the absolute value of its coefficient of variation.

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