

1 **Title: Time perception reflects individual differences in motor and non-motor**  
2 **symptoms of Parkinson's disease**

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19 **One Sentence Summary:** Quantitative characterization of time perception behavior reflects  
20 individual differences in Parkinson's disease motor and non-motor symptom clinical presentation  
21 that are consistent with hypothesized neural and cognitive mechanisms.

22

23 **Abstract:** Dopaminergic signaling in the striatum has been shown to play a critical role in the  
24 perception of time. Decreasing striatal dopamine efficacy is at the core of Parkinson's disease (PD)  
25 motor symptoms and changes in dopaminergic action have been associated with many comorbid  
26 non-motor symptoms in PD. We hypothesize that patients with PD perceive time differently and  
27 in accordance with their specific comorbid non-motor symptoms and clinical state. We recruited  
28 patients with PD and compared individual differences in patients' clinical features with their ability  
29 to judge millisecond to second intervals of time (500ms-1100ms) while on or off their prescribed  
30 dopaminergic medications. We show that individual differences in comorbid non-motor  
31 symptoms, PD duration, and prescribed dopaminergic pharmacotherapeutics account for  
32 individual differences in time perception performance. We report that comorbid impulse control  
33 disorder is associated with temporal overestimation; depression is associated with decreased  
34 temporal accuracy; and PD disease duration and prescribed levodopa monotherapy are associated  
35 with reduced temporal precision and accuracy. Observed differences in time perception are  
36 consistent with hypothesized dopaminergic mechanisms thought to underlie the respective motor  
37 and non-motor symptoms in PD, but also raise questions about specific dopaminergic mechanisms.  
38 In future work, time perception tasks like the one used here, may provide translational or reverse  
39 translational utility in investigations aimed at disentangling neural and cognitive systems  
40 underlying PD symptom etiology.

41

42 **Main Text:**

43 **INTRODUCTION**

44 Time perception is a fundamental cognitive process that intersects with basic human  
45 cognitive functions, such as attention, memory, sensorimotor processing, and decision-making (1-  
46 6). Time perception ranging from millisecond to minute durations is referred to as interval timing,  
47 and studies utilizing pharmacologic, genetic, neuroimaging, and stimulation-based manipulations  
48 widely support the involvement of striatal dopamine in this process (7-18). Notably, investigations  
49 into dopaminergic disorders in patient populations (e.g. Schizophrenia and Parkinson's disease)  
50 show specific quantifiable changes in interval timing behavior. For example, Schizophrenia  
51 (hypothesized to reflect a hyperdopaminergic state) is associated with overestimation of time  
52 intervals (19-21) and Parkinson's disease (a hypodopaminergic state) has been associated with  
53 reduced ability to discriminate between time intervals (22,23).

54 Parkinson's disease (PD) is caused by the irreversible loss of midbrain dopamine neuron  
55 terminals, which is associated with significant motor deficits (24,25). However, patients with PD  
56 also experience significant non-motor symptoms in the form of neuropsychiatric, autonomic,  
57 sleep, and sensory changes (26). Many of these comorbid conditions are hypothesized to have  
58 some form of dopaminergic etiology, but the precise mechanisms are not well understood. For  
59 example, Impulse Control Disorder (ICD) is a behavioral addiction characterized by the need to  
60 perform pleasurable and often risky behaviors compulsively and repetitively, which can be caused  
61 and/or intensified by certain dopaminergic therapies (DT) prescribed to alleviate PD motor  
62 symptoms (27-31). It is hypothesized that patients with ICD experience a state akin to a  
63 hyperdopaminergic state based on the link between ICD induction by dopamine receptor agonists  
64 with a preferential affinity for dopamine (D<sub>3</sub>) receptors in the ventral striatum (31,32).  
65 Additionally, depression affects approximately 40% of patients with PD (33,34) – nearly twice the  
66 rate of the general population. Depression in PD increases with PD symptom severity, physical  
67 disability, and PD duration (34). The etiology of depression remains unclear; however, substantial  
68 evidence implicates dopamine dysfunction in affective disorders (35,36). In particular, diminished  
69 Ventral Tegmental Area (VTA) dopaminergic activity and reduced VTA-striatal connectivity have  
70 been linked to anhedonia and amotivation (36,37), common depressive symptoms seen in patients  
71 with PD.

72 Generally, time perception in patient cohorts appears to be altered in a manner consistent  
73 with the hypothesized roles of dopamine in ICD (31,32) and depression (35-37). Impulsive patients  
74 in populations outside of patients with PD, such as schizophrenia and borderline personality  
75 disorder, tend to present with increased accuracy and precision variability on interval timing tasks  
76 (38,39). Patients with depressive symptoms have been observed to underestimate the duration of  
77 time intervals (40-42). Despite the increased rate of comorbidity in PD, the impact of comorbid  
78 depression or ICD on interval timing and the underlying neurobiology leading to depression and  
79 ICD in PD remains poorly understood.

80 Additional individual differences in the clinical state of patients with PD may be inferred  
81 from the strategies most effective at managing individual patients' symptoms with prescribed  
82 medications. The medications used to treat PD motor symptoms primarily target the dopaminergic  
83 system (43,44). These DT affect the dopaminergic system in different ways, are prescribed  
84 according to patients' specific symptom management needs, and are often required to be increased  
85 or changed in response to disease progression or disruptive side effects (44). Levodopa therapy is

86 often the first line of pharmacologic treatment, with increasing doses often necessary to mitigate  
87 motor symptoms as PD progresses (43). Additional dopaminergic pharmacotherapies may be  
88 prescribed based on age of onset, disease severity, and side effects of levodopa monotherapy (LM)  
89 (44). Poly-DT refers to the prescription of additional DT prescribed in addition to levodopa, for  
90 example, dopamine receptor agonists, monoamine oxidase B (MAO-B) inhibitors, and Catechol-  
91 O-methyltransferase (COMT) inhibitors (45-48). Each of these medications is expected to have  
92 very different mechanisms by which the dopaminergic system is affected. Therefore, their effects  
93 and interaction with non-motor symptom co-morbidities in PD and their effect on time perception  
94 in patients may be varied.

95 The cause and progression of PD (progressive loss of dopamine terminals over time),  
96 associated non-motor symptoms (particularly those affecting the dopamine system), and  
97 dopaminergic pharmacotherapies used to treat PD, suggest that patients with PD will possess  
98 differences specific to the impact of their disease on their overall dopaminergic system. Increases  
99 and decreases in the efficacy of dopamine neurotransmission (and complex combinations caused  
100 by changes in different aspects of the dopaminergic system) ought to have predictable effects on  
101 dopamine-dependent processes like interval timing. Thus, we hypothesized that a multivariate  
102 approach to characterizing individual differences in patients with PD would reveal systematic  
103 differences in interval timing behavior according to dimensions of their clinical state. We tested  
104 this hypothesis in patients with PD presenting with a heterogeneous profile of comorbid symptoms  
105 (Table 1).

106 Patients with PD performed a temporal bisection task both on and off their standard of care  
107 prescription DT (Fig. 1A) and individual differences in patients' clinical profiles were recorded.  
108 Multiple linear regression models were fit to determine a connection between patients' clinical  
109 profiles and psychometric measures of interval timing (Fig. 1B-C). These data revealed a clear  
110 association between interval timing and individual differences in patients' clinical profiles,  
111 demonstrating a link between the dopaminergic mechanisms of interval timing and altered  
112 dopamine function resulting in PD symptomology. The data was then fit with a leave-one-out  
113 cross-validated principal component regression model using the psychometric measures of interval  
114 timing (Fig. 2) as independent variables to predict the specific clinical features and comorbidities  
115 associated with individual patients with PD. Our results support our hypothesis and demonstrate  
116 a clear predictable association between complex PD clinical symptomology and quantitative  
117 differences in interval timing consistent with the hypothesized roles for dopamine in both the  
118 clinical features and timing behavior. Our results suggest that relatively simple psychophysical  
119 tasks that measure interval timing may be used as a behavioral biomarker for stratifying  
120 heterogeneous PD pathology. Further, such a paradigm may be used to investigate the  
121 neurobiological mechanisms that link the dopaminergic system, time perception and motor and  
122 non-motor PD pathology.

123

## 124 **RESULTS**

### 125 **No differences in average interval timing between patients with PD on or off-medication**

126 Patients with PD (N=19, Table 1), while on and off their DT (Fig. 1A), performed a  
127 temporal bisection task with intervals ranging from 500 to 1100ms (Fig. 1B-C). The average  
128 accuracy and precision of interval timing within participant groups were compared across  
129 medication states. Accuracy measures included the bisection point, bisection point error, and

130 percent of trials correctly selected as long or short. Precision measures included weber fraction,  
131 difference limen, and adjusted weber fraction (please see methods section for description of each  
132 psychophysical timing metric). On average, patients with PD did not show significant differences  
133 in interval timing measures when on vs. off DT (*bisection point*:  $p=0.63$ ,  $g=0.15$ ,  $\beta=0.35$ ; *weber*  
134 *fraction*:  $p=0.80$ ,  $g=0.08$ ,  $\beta=0.32$ ; *difference limen*  $p=0.74$ ,  $g=0.11$ ,  $\beta=0.33$ ; *percent correct*:  
135  $p=0.85$ ,  $g=-0.06$ ,  $\beta=0.32$ ; *bisection error*:  $p=0.30$ ,  $g=-0.34$ ,  $\beta=0.489$ ; *adjusted weber fraction*:  
136  $p=0.38$ ,  $g=-0.28$ ,  $\beta=0.43$ ) although the Bayesian evidence was ambiguous ( $>0.3$  and  $<3.0$ ) (see  
137 Table S1 for all group comparisons). However, medication state did have an effect on the ability  
138 of generated predictive models to discriminate whether patients were prescribed mono-versus  
139 poly-DT (predictive models and associated results described below, and in Figure 2).

140

### 141 **Interval timing predicts the clinical profiles of patients with PD**

142 For each patient with PD, profiles of clinical characteristics were collected, including  
143 comorbid diagnoses, types of DT (e.g., LM or Poly-DT; see Table S4 for prescribed DTs for each  
144 patient), Levodopa Equivalency Daily Dose (LEDD), United Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale  
145 (UPDRS), age, PD duration, and Questionnaire for Impulsive-Compulsive Disorders in  
146 Parkinson's Disease–Rating Scale (QUIP-RS) score (Table S2). These clinical features, including  
147 being in the on- or off-medication state, were collected to explore the heterogeneity of PD  
148 presentation in each participant, and to determine how each of these clinical features directly  
149 related to alterations in interval timing.

150 Six psychophysical timing measures of accuracy and precision were calculated from  
151 psychometric functions of interval timing (Figure 1C for example of a psychometric function; see  
152 supplemental methods for a detailed description of psychometric function fit). Akaike Information  
153 Criterion (AIC)-penalized (49) multiple linear regression models were used to determine  
154 associations between clinical features from patients with PD and their psychophysical timing  
155 measures. The models indicated that from the profiles of clinical characteristics, ICD (*bisection*  
156 *point*:  $t=3.6$ ,  $p=0.003^{**}$ ) and depression diagnoses (*bisection point error*:  $t=3.4$ ,  $p=0.004^{**}$ ;  
157 *percent correct*:  $t=-3.3$ ,  $p=0.005^{**}$ ; *adjusted weber fraction*:  $t=2.4$ ,  $p=0.028^*$ ), disease duration  
158 (*percent correct*:  $t=-4.0$ ,  $p=0.001^{**}$ ; *difference limen*:  $t=3.2$ ,  $p=0.007^{**}$ ; *weber fraction*:  $t=3.0$ ,  
159  $p=0.01^*$ ; *adjusted weber fraction*:  $t=2.4$ ,  $p=0.028^*$ ) and multitude of DT (*bisection point*:  $t=3.8$ ,  
160  $p=0.002^{**}$ ; *percent correct*:  $t=3.4$ ,  $p=0.005^{**}$ ; *difference limen*:  $t=-3.5$ ,  $p=0.004^{**}$ ; *weber*  
161 *fraction*:  $t=-3.3$ ,  $p=0.005^{**}$ ; *adjusted weber fraction*:  $t=-3.3$ ,  $p=0.004^{**}$ ) were significantly  
162 associated with specific psychophysical timing metrics (see Table S3 for beta coefficients of all  
163 clinical variables that survived AIC correction and associated model p-values).

164 We used the associations observed from the AIC linear regression models to direct the rest  
165 of our analyses. From these results, we hypothesized that interval timing would be predictive of  
166 ICD and depression diagnoses, disease duration, and multitude of DT in patients with PD. To test  
167 this hypothesis, we performed a principal component analysis of six time perception  
168 psychophysical measures (i.e., bisection point, bisection point error, percent correct, difference  
169 limen, weber fraction, adjusted weber fraction) performed separately for both the on and off-  
170 medication states (Fig. 2, see Fig. S1 for dimension loadings). To determine if patients with shared  
171 clinical features would appear clustered together, we produced biplots displaying loadings onto  
172 the first two principal components, which together accounted for 85.5% of the variance in interval  
173 timing data for the off-medication group and 93.3% for the on-medication group. Overlaid 95%

174 confidence interval ellipses showed distinct groupings of ICD(+/-) diagnosis (Fig. 2 A-D),  
175 depression(+/-) diagnosis (Fig. 2 E-H), prescription of Poly-DT or LM (Fig. 2 I-L), and disease  
176 duration (> or <4 years) (Fig. 2 M-P).

177 Next, we explored whether these clinical features could be predicted based on  
178 combinations of interval timing performance measures. Specifically, we performed a leave-one-  
179 out cross-validated multivariate logistic regression analysis using the principal component  
180 loadings as six independent predictors of these clinical groupings (Table S5). These regression  
181 models were used to produce probability values for each individual patient to classify them as  
182 ICD(+) or (-), depression(+) or (-), disease duration > or < 4 years, and prescribed Poly-DT or LM.  
183 The resulting predictions revealed high accuracy rates of greater than 70% for each clinical  
184 grouping. Accompanying receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves were plotted for each  
185 clinical grouping and associated Area Under Curve (AUC) values were calculated (Fig. 2). The  
186 ROC curves revealed acceptable ( $AUC > 0.70; p < 0.05^*$ ) to excellent ( $AUC > 0.90; p < 0.01^{**}$ )  
187 diagnostic fit (50) compared to chance level ( $AUC = 0.50$ ) for all included clinical features (Fig. 2),  
188 with the exception of Poly-DT in the on-medication state ( $AUC = 0.67; p = 0.234$ ) (Fig. 2L).

189

### 190 **PD presentation can be observed in psychometric functions of interval timing**

191 Based on the collected clinical characteristics and the associations found in our predictive  
192 models, we aimed to observe the specific differences in temporal performance using individual  
193 patient psychometric functions. We first identified and separately grouped ICD(+) and ICD(-)  
194 patients according to their ICD status, and we then modeled interval timing of ICD(+) and ICD(-)  
195 patients using psychometric functions of performance on the temporal bisection task (see Fig. 1C  
196 for an example psychometric function). The resulting psychometric functions, displaying  
197 representative performance from an ICD(+) and ICD(-) individual revealed that an ICD(+)  
198 diagnosis was associated with a right shift from the mid-interval duration (0.8s) when compared  
199 to ICD(-) subjects (See Fig. 3A for off-medication group comparison). Specifically, we observed  
200 that patients with PD with an ICD(+) diagnosis had a significantly lower bisection point than  
201 patients without an ICD diagnosis, indicating ICD(+) patients overestimated the duration of time  
202 intervals in the off-medication state, and therefore were less accurate in their time perception than  
203 ICD(-) patients (Table S6).

204 Next, we considered the duration of PD for each patient, which had a group median of four  
205 years (see Table S1 for group means of clinical features and Table S4 for individual disease  
206 durations). To compare interval timing of patients with PD who had longer disease durations ( $\geq 4$   
207 years) to those who had shorter disease durations (<4 years), we directly compared the  
208 psychometric functions of interval timing between two representative patients in each group. We  
209 found that subjects with a longer disease duration had flatter psychometric functions, reflecting  
210 poorer temporal precision, compared to subjects with a shorter disease duration across both  
211 medication states (Fig. 3B).

212 To observe the effect of the multitude of prescribed DT on time perception, we grouped  
213 patients with PD based on their prescription of LM or Poly-DT. We displayed the psychometric  
214 functions of two representative patients from each group in the off state of medication (see Table  
215 S2 for types of DTs). The resulting psychometric functions of patients who were prescribed LM  
216 exhibited large leftward shifts from the midpoint and significantly shallower slopes than patients

217 prescribed Poly-DT (Fig. 3C). Thus, patients prescribed Poly-DT demonstrated both better  
218 temporal precision and timing accuracy than patients prescribed LM (Fig. 3C).

219 Finally, we identified patients with comorbid depression diagnoses and compared the  
220 psychometric functions of one representative depression(+) patient and one depression(-) patient.  
221 The resulting psychometric functions showed that depression(+) patients exhibited a large leftward  
222 shift from the mid-interval compared to depression(-) patients (Fig. 3D). Depression(+) patients  
223 presented with a higher bisection point error, higher adjusted weber fraction, and a lower percent  
224 correct than depression(-) patients with PD, demonstrating more variability in their bisection point  
225 and overall poorer temporal precision and accuracy reflected in their individual psychometric  
226 functions.

227

### 228 **Individual differences in complex combinations of clinical characteristics of PD relate to** 229 **interval timing**

230 Based on the results of our PCA and multivariate regression analyses, we examined  
231 whether individual combinations of clinical features would predict individual features of  
232 psychometric functions. To investigate, we first selected Subject 3, a patient who presented with  
233 negative ICD and depression diagnoses, and was prescribed Poly-DT. These are clinical  
234 characteristics that our analyses showed to result in a slight underestimation of intervals, but  
235 overall precise timing. However, Subject 3 also had a disease duration greater than 4 years (Table  
236 S4). Therefore, with the combination of these clinical features and the associations we found in  
237 our model, we predicted Subject 3 would be less temporally precise due to a longer disease  
238 duration. This prediction was supported by Subject 3's psychometric function, which displayed a  
239 slight rightward shift in BP close to the mid-interval and a shallower function (Fig. 4A). We then  
240 considered Subject 17, who presented with a similar clinical profile as Subject 3 – prescribed Poly-  
241 DT, ICD(-), depression(-) – but this patient had a disease duration less than 4 years. We predicted  
242 that due to their shorter disease duration, Subject 17 would have superior temporal precision than  
243 Subject 3, but otherwise similar interval timing performance. In fact, Subject 17's psychometric  
244 function showed a rightward shift in the BP close to the mid-interval and a steeper function  
245 demonstrating more precise interval timing (Fig. 4B). Similarly to Subject 17, Subject 1 was  
246 prescribed Poly-DT, was depression(-), and had a disease duration less than 4 years, but was  
247 ICD(+). On the basis of our previous analyses, we expected that this subject would exhibit relative  
248 overestimation of time intervals due to being ICD(+). Consistent with this prediction, this subject  
249 exhibited a psychometric function with a leftward shift in their BP, and otherwise similar interval  
250 timing performance as Subject 17 (Fig. 4C). Subject 13 had a similar clinical profile to Subject 1,  
251 but was prescribed LM, was both depression(+) and ICD(+), and had a disease duration less than  
252 4 years. Due to the concurrence of being prescribed LM and being depression(+), we expected that  
253 they would display poorer temporal accuracy than Subject 1. In support of this prediction, their  
254 psychometric function showed a large leftward shift in the BP away from the mid-interval (Fig.  
255 4D).

256 Overall, patient performance on the interval timing task corroborated our model  
257 predictions, and we found that these predictions were consistent with the co-occurrence of multiple  
258 clinical features of PD. Additionally, we showed that psychometric functions of interval timing  
259 performance could be used to identify and observe individual differences in clinical presentation  
260 and comorbidities of PD (see Fig. S2 for all patient psychometric functions). Therefore,

261 examination of psychometric functions of interval timing performance could provide insight into  
262 the comorbidities and clinical presentation of patients with PD.

263

## 264 **DISCUSSION**

265 The present study investigated time perception in patients with PD with varying disease  
266 duration, variable medication regimens, and comorbid non-motor symptoms, including ICD and  
267 depression. We investigated time perception in these patients while they were on- and off- their  
268 prescribed dopaminergic medications. Accounting for their specific clinical state (e.g., specific  
269 motor and non-motor symptoms and medications used) proved to be critical in interpreting changes  
270 in their timing behavior. Performing a cross-validated, leave-one-out, multivariate regression  
271 analysis revealed systematic patterns of timing behavior that are predictive of individual-level  
272 clinical states involving putative changes in the dopaminergic system. The relative simplicity of  
273 interval timing tasks and quantitative analyses of resulting behavior suggest the potential for future  
274 development of time perception as a behavioral biomarker for patients with PD with complex  
275 clinical profiles of motor and non-motor symptoms.

276 Interval timing may not be the first cognitive process one thinks about in the context of  
277 PD. However, with the amassing of evidence that striatal dopamine regulates interval timing (7-  
278 18,51), that patients with PD exhibit alterations in timing behavior (22-23,52-55), and our currently  
279 presented evidence that interval timing can predict non-motor symptoms of PD, interval timing  
280 tasks may help to elucidate the dopaminergic mechanisms of the non-motor symptoms of PD.  
281 Research into time perception in patients with PD has given insight into how dopamine may affect  
282 behavior and cognition for many decades (52-55). Previous work has revealed that patients with  
283 PD withholding their prescribed dopaminergic therapies exhibit poor temporal accuracy (54,55),  
284 but that accurate timing can be restored with the reintroduction of these therapies (52). These  
285 medication state-based studies, however, often do not consider the heterogeneity of PD  
286 symptomology affecting timing performance. Therefore, other factors of PD, such as individual  
287 differences in motor and non-motor symptom presentation, could be confounding these outcomes.  
288 More recently, interval timing studies have begun to relate individual features of disease  
289 presentation to differences in temporal behavior. Specifically, Merchant et al. observed a  
290 subpopulation of patients with PD that presented with similar disease duration, UPDRS scores,  
291 and Levodopa equivalency daily dose that had difficulty perceiving subsecond intervals of time  
292 when compared to patients with PD that exhibited different clinical profiles (23). Additionally,  
293 Kent et al., showed that time perception performance can differentiate between specific features  
294 of psychiatric disorders and potentially serve as a useful tool in the differential diagnosis of  
295 psychiatric illnesses (56). In this study, we aim to merge these ideas to determine if the  
296 heterogeneous profiles of patients with PD, which includes psychiatric comorbidities, could be  
297 predicted with interval timing.

298 Interval timing tasks, like the temporal bisection task in this study, are relatively simple to  
299 perform and do not take long to complete (for instance, this task takes less than 30 minutes, which  
300 can potentially be shortened). Therefore, they may serve as an additive to standard of care  
301 appointments for patients with PD; however, designing the optimal time perception task (57) is an  
302 important consideration prior to implementation. Specifically, it is important to consider the  
303 duration of stimuli to be tested. Research examining the effects of the duration of stimuli tested  
304 during timing tasks shows that performance differs based on dopamine availability. Patients with

305 PD have demonstrated impairments on suprasecond intervals of time when off of their prescribed  
306 DTs; but, medication state did not impact subsecond interval time perception the same patients  
307 (52,54-55). In our study, we show a consistent lack of effect of medication state on subsecond  
308 interval timing (54, Table S1), but we show that subsecond stimuli could predict other aspects of  
309 dopamine-specific clinical profiles of patients with PD (Fig. 2). Therefore, in designing time  
310 perception tasks to be used in a clinical setting, it is critical to select an optimal task design that  
311 relates to the symptomology of interest.

312 In this study, we investigated time perception behavior on a temporal bisection task in  
313 patients with PD while they were on- and off- of their prescribed dopaminergic medications. Each  
314 patient, in consultation with their clinical provider, develops a tailored medication regimen that  
315 aims to ameliorate their PD symptoms while also minimizing unwanted side-effects (44). Our  
316 results show that patients with PD on their prescribed DT did not differ in their interval timing  
317 compared to patients off their prescribed DT (Table S1). As studies have shown that the effects  
318 of dopamine medications differ based on stimulus duration (52,54-55), our results corroborate a  
319 finding that withholding DT does not alter time perception in the subsecond duration range (54).  
320 This result was internally validated across on and off-medication states for each comorbidity (Fig.  
321 2). A possible explanation for this lack of observed difference could be that we recruited a  
322 heterogenous population of patients with additional psychiatric comorbidities, whereas other  
323 studies often exclude these patients to compare more homogeneous groups of patients with similar  
324 disease profiles. Therefore, the complex combination of neurological and psychiatric disorders, as  
325 well as individualized medication profiles, could be masking the on- versus off-medication effects  
326 seen in past studies. More research is needed to determine the circuit and receptor-specific  
327 interactions potentially modulating this lack of medication effect, but altogether this highlights the  
328 complexities of PD populations that simply considering these patients as a homogenous  
329 “movement disorder” cohort undermines.

330 Due to heterogeneity in PD symptoms, patients are often prescribed multiple therapies that  
331 differentially target their dopamine systems to treat their symptoms (44). Therefore, we explored  
332 the impact of patients prescribed solely Levodopa monotherapy (LM) compared to a regime of  
333 Poly-DT. Our results reveal that patients prescribed Poly-DT are both more precise and more  
334 accurate in their interval timing than patients prescribed LM, across on and off-medication states  
335 (Table S1). Additionally, we found that patients prescribed LM versus Poly-DT could be predicted  
336 based on interval timing performance in the off-medication state; however, the predictability of  
337 prescription of Poly-DT disappeared when patients were on their PD medications (Figure 2). This  
338 result could stem from clinicians avoiding the prescription of dopamine agonists and certain poly-  
339 DT to patients vulnerable to psychiatric comorbidities, including ICD. Therefore, patients  
340 prescribed poly-DT may have been cognitively more robust at baseline resulting in better timing  
341 performance. Future research into the effects of DT on interval timing would need to include  
342 cognitive measures, like the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, to control for cognition at baseline.  
343 More research could also shed light on the underlying dopaminergic mechanisms of the non-motor  
344 effects of dopaminergic medications in patients with PD, as well as aid in the medication  
345 management of patients with PD.

346 Patients with PD present in the clinic with motor symptoms at the core of their diagnosis;  
347 however, each patient presents with a range of severity in motor and non-motor symptoms that  
348 may be independent of, caused by, or exacerbated by their dopamine therapies (58). For example,  
349 ICD is a behavioral addiction believed to be induced by the prescription of dopamine receptor



agonists in patients with a preferential affinity for dopamine (D<sub>3</sub>) receptors in the striatum (27-32). The preferential interaction between dopamine receptors and dopamine medications is believed to underly the onset of aberrant behaviors in the form of compulsive and repetitive gambling, sex, buying, and/or eating (59-61). Other behavioral ramifications of comorbid ICD in patients with PD, such as timing behaviors, were previously unknown. However, investigations into impulsivity in populations outside of patients with PD, such as schizophrenia and borderline personality disorder, demonstrate an association between impulsive behaviors and increased accuracy and precision variability in interval timing (38-40). In this study, we found that ICD(+) patients with PD tend to overestimate intervals of time compared to ICD(-) patients (Figure 3A), which is consistent with previous studies on impulsivity in timing (39-40). As pharmacological studies have shown that dopamine agonists tend to yield a relative leftward shift in psychometric functions (8,11), it has been hypothesized that increased levels of dopamine in the striatum are associated with the overestimation of time intervals (51). Therefore, as the interaction of overactive dopamine receptors with dopamine agonists are thought to produce a state analogous to a hyperdopaminergic state in patients with ICD (31,32), our results align with the hypothesized role of dopaminergic dysfunction in patients with PD with comorbid ICD.

Another common comorbidity of PD is depression (33,34), of which the etiology remains unclear (58). The extant literature, however, supports the depletion of dopaminergic tone in the basal ganglia in depressive patients (58,59). This is consistent with the action of many antidepressants, which aim to increase dopamine by targeting the midbrain (62,63). Decreased dopamine activity has been linked to decreased temporal precision (2,6), and patients with depression have been shown to exhibit a chronic underestimation of time (41,42). Our results show that depression in patients with PD may not be as congruous. We found significant variability in timing accuracy with some patients overestimating intervals and some patients underestimating intervals of time (Table S1). This outcome could relate to individual differences in depression diagnosis and prescribed medications used to treat depression symptoms, which patients were not asked to withhold. It could also provide insight into how depressive symptoms in patients with PD differ from other forms of depression. Future time perception research into comorbid depression in patients with PD could help explain this significant variance in timing accuracy and help determine the underlying role of dopamine in depression.

In this study, we showed that performing a cross-validated, leave-one-out, multivariable regression analysis can reveal systematic patterns in individual-level timing behavior that are predictive of individual-level clinical states involving the putative changes in the dopaminergic system. The results of our study demonstrate that behavior on a simple time perception task can predict ICD diagnosis, depression diagnosis, disease duration, and multitude of dopamine medications in patients with PD with high diagnostic accuracy (Figure 2). These findings expand upon previous work on time perception differences based on individual differences in PD severity (64), and it shows that beyond just correlation, interval timing can be predictive of individual clinical features of PD. A limitation of our study is the small sample size of patients with PD (n=19). Future work investigating time perception would need to be completed using a larger sample of patients with PD and involve the specific recruitment of patients with comorbidities. It would also be prudent to utilize a more diverse sample of patients, with more severe disease progression and duration. Another limitation is the utilization of a temporal bisection task design, which presents subjects with a brief training phase followed by a testing phase, with no feedback on performance during either phase. This task design presents with many idiosyncrasies in human performance that cannot be fully explained by currently proposed models of time perception (57).

396 Additionally, significant differences in performance have been noted between animals and humans  
397 (57). Therefore, care must be taken when interpreting results from temporal bisection tasks and  
398 future work is still needed to determine associated timing mechanisms.

399 More work is needed, but basic cognitive neuroscience has a variety of tasks that aim to  
400 probe neuromodulatory systems (especially the dopamine system). The relative simplicity of  
401 interval timing tasks and quantitative analyses of resulting behavior suggest the potential for future  
402 development of time perception behavior as a behavioral biomarker for patients with PD with  
403 complex clinical profiles that include motor and non-motor symptoms (65,66). The need for  
404 accurate biomarkers of PD has been proposed, with the objective of producing biomarkers  
405 predictive of disease progression (66,67). Our study shows that with future development, time  
406 perception has the potential to be used as a behavioral biomarker for individual differences in  
407 progressive dopaminergic dysfunction associated with PD.

408

## 409 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### 410 **Subjects**

411 Patients with PD (n=19) were recruited through Atrium Health at Wake Forest Baptist's  
412 (AHWFB) movement disorders clinic (Table 1). All patients with PD were phone-screened by a  
413 researcher to determine eligibility prior to any scheduled research visits. Patients were eligible to  
414 participate if they were between the ages of 21-85 years, had a confirmed diagnosis of PD from a  
415 trained movement disorder specialist, were currently prescribed and taking DT, and had the ability  
416 to withhold DT for up to 11 hours (8 hours prior to experiment and 2-3 hours for the duration of  
417 testing). Patients with PD were ineligible if they failed to meet the inclusion criteria, had moderate  
418 or severe dementia, or the inability to use a computer. All patients provided informed written  
419 consent in accordance with approval by the IRB committees at AHWFB (IRB00017138).

### 420 **Study design**

421 The study took place over two visits, a minimum of one week apart (Fig. 1A). During one  
422 visit, patients were asked to withhold their DT prescribed to treat their PD symptoms for at least 8  
423 hours prior to the visit ("off-state"). During the other visit, patients were asked to take DT as  
424 normally prescribed ("on-state"). Medication state was randomized for the first visit via a coin toss  
425 and followed by a second visit of alternate medication state. Clinical measures were collected for  
426 each patient, including age, PD duration, number and type of DT, and comorbid diagnoses (Table  
427 1). Clinical data was collected from a combination of self-report surveys and clinical records of  
428 patients utilizing EPIC software from AHWFB (Table S2). ICD diagnosis was measured by the  
429 QUIP-RS utilizing diagnostic thresholds from Weintraub et al. 2012 (68). The QUIP-RS was  
430 completed by each PD patient at the end of their second research visit. Depression diagnosis was  
431 measured by physicians and reported through clinical records and/or by self-report questionnaires.  
432 Disease motor severity was measured by UPDRS reported through clinical records of neurology  
433 visits at AHWFB (69). Levodopa equivalency daily dose was calculated from reported prescribed  
434 DT utilizing dopaminergic equivalency conversions from EQUIDopa platform (70) (Table S4).

### 435 **Visual display and computer set-up**

436 The task was performed in Matlab R2020b, using Psychophysics Toolbox extensions (71).  
437 Subjects were seated about two feet from a computer screen and used a Logitech gaming controller  
438 to ledge their judgments. During the task, an image of a white circle was shown on a black

439 computer screen centered at 2-4° of their visual field. Subjects submitted their responses using the  
440 shoulder keys on the Logitech controller.

#### 441 **Temporal bisection task**

442 The task was broken up into two phases, a training and a testing phase. The participant first  
443 learnt two anchor time intervals, a short interval of 0.5s and a long interval of 1.1s. A total of ten  
444 short anchor intervals and ten long anchor intervals appeared randomly during the training phase.  
445 If the participant did not score greater than sixty percent correct during the training phase, they  
446 were automatically presented with additional trials until the accuracy threshold was reached or ten  
447 minutes had passed. The task would automatically move onto the testing phase after ten minutes  
448 irrespective of the accuracy threshold. Six patients needed to repeat the training phase of the task,  
449 and two were unable to meet the accuracy threshold before moving onto the testing phase. Data  
450 from the training phase was not used in the above analyses. The testing phase included additional  
451 target intervals of 0.65s, 0.75s, 0.85s, 0.95s, as well as the 0.5s and 1.1s anchor intervals. The  
452 participant judged whether the presented stimulus intervals were closer in duration to the short or  
453 long anchor intervals learned during the training phase. The three shortest intervals — 0.5, 0.65,  
454 and 0.75 seconds — were counted as correct if the subject responded with short, while the three  
455 longest intervals — 0.85, 0.95, and 1.1 seconds — were counted as correct if the subject responded  
456 with long.

457 Each trial in the task (Fig. 1B) began with a black screen that lasted for 0.4-0.6s (inter-  
458 stimulus interval one, ISI 1). The ISI 1 was drawn randomly from a truncated Poisson distribution.  
459 It was immediately followed by a white circle in the center of the black screen (displayed for 0.5s,  
460 0.65s, 0.75s, 0.85s, 0.95s, and 1.1s), and a fixed 0.9s interval of black screen (inter-stimulus  
461 interval two, ISI 2). Subsequently, a response screen appeared, with either the "L" and "S" or the  
462 "S" and "L" letters shown for the participant to indicate whether the stimulus was perceived as  
463 closer in duration to the short or long anchor ("S" for "short" and "L" for "long"). Subjects  
464 submitted their response by pressing a button on the side of the controller that corresponded with  
465 that of a response letter on the screen. To address motor and attentional biases that are unable to  
466 be controlled for in rodent-based studies, the order of response letters on the screen was random.  
467 At the completion of each block of trials, a screen would appear to signify the start of a new block.

468 The task was performed in two sessions. Both sessions comprised the training and testing  
469 phases. However, they both differed in number of testing-phase trials. There were four and six  
470 blocks of fifty trials each in the first and second session, respectively. Each anchor appeared five  
471 times and each target interval ten times in a random order within each block, totalling to 200 and  
472 300 trials in the first and second session, respectively. Both sessions (500 total trials) were played  
473 during each medication state visit about a week apart.

#### 474 **Psychometric measures**

475 We generated psychometric functions of temporal behavior by fitting logistic curves to the  
476 proportion of "long" responses across stimulus intervals using Palamedes Toolbox version 1.11.2  
477 in Matlab R2020b (Fig. 1C; see supplemental methods for parameter values and fitting procedure)  
478 (72-77). From these psychometric functions, psychophysical indices for temporal accuracy and  
479 precision are calculated. Temporal accuracy is measured by the bisection point (BP), the duration  
480 at which 50% of participant responses were long, and bisection point error (BPE) measured by  
481 (72):

482 
$$BPE = (0.8 - BP)^2$$

483 Temporal precision was measured by the difference limen (DL), weber fraction (WF), and adjusted  
484 WF (73,74).

485 
$$DL = \frac{(T(PL(75)) - T(PL(25)))}{2}$$

486 
$$WF = \frac{DL}{(T(1/2))}$$

487 
$$Adjusted\ WF = \frac{DL}{(1/BP\ Error)}$$

488 The percentage of trials each participant correctly categorized as long or short was calculated as  
489 an additional accuracy measurement. Mean psychometric measures were compared at a group  
490 level between patients with PD in the on- and off-medication states (Table 1) (76).

### 491 **Stepwise AIC linear regression models**

492 To determine if there were associations between time perception behavior and clinical  
493 features of PD, time perception performance metrics (bisection point, bisection point error, percent  
494 correct, weber fraction, adjusted weber fraction, difference limen) were used as dependent  
495 variables in a stepwise linear regression analysis using bidirectional elimination to determine the  
496 combination of predictor clinical measures (medication state, age, disease duration, multiple  
497 medications, levodopa equivalency daily dose, depression diagnosis, ICD diagnosis, QUIP score,  
498 UPDRS score) whose inclusion generated the lowest AIC score (Table S2). AIC linear regression  
499 models were performed on time perception performance metrics collected and analyzed at the  
500 group level, from patients with PD in both the on (n = 19) and off (n = 19) medication states, and  
501 all patients with PD pooled together (n = 38). Regression results were considered significant for p  
502 < 0.05.

### 503 **Leave-one-out cross-validated multivariate logistic regression model**

504 Time perception performance metrics (bisection point, bisection point error, percent  
505 correct, weber fraction, adjusted weber fraction, difference limen) were utilized in a PCA, resulting  
506 in six principal components (see Fig. S1 for PCA results, Fig. 2 for biplots of principal components  
507 one and two). These principal components were used as independent variables in a leave-one-out  
508 cross-validated multivariate logistic regression model using clinical features found from the initial  
509 AIC linear regression analyses. From this model, the probability of each patient with PD presenting  
510 as ICD(+), depression(+), having a PD duration >4 years, and prescribed poly-DT was estimated.  
511 If the resulting probability was greater than 0.5, then we predicted that patient with PD would  
512 possess that clinical feature. From these predictions, the number of true and false positives were  
513 accumulated, and ROC curves were generated to show the diagnostic accuracy of timing behavior  
514 for each clinical feature (Fig. 2). Diagnostic accuracy was measured via Delong's method (50)  
515 with the calculation of AUC, Confidence Interval (CI), and difference of AUC value of predictive  
516 model from chance (chance AUC = 0.5). Calculations and modeling were generated via Palamedes  
517 Toolbox in Matlab and Rstudio Statistical Software (76,77).

518

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784 Funding Acquisition: DBT, KTK

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786 Supervision: ED, IUH, MSS, DBT, KTK

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788 Writing—review & editing: ED, RS, AJ, REJ, BL, IUH, MSS, DBT, KTK

789

790 **Competing interests:** Authors declare they have no competing interests.

791

792 **Data and materials availability:** All data are available in the main text or supplementary  
793 materials.

794

795 **Supplementary materials:**

- 796 1. Table S1: Mean PD group performance measures on the temporal bisection task.  
797 2. Table S2: Clinical variables for all PD patients that were utilized as independent variables  
798 for the AIC linear regression model.  
799 1. Table S3: Dependent variables for linear regression analysis and the independent  
800 variables that were included (beta coefficient) or excluded(-) from the AIC generated  
801 linear regression models.  
802 2. Table S4: Doses and types of dopaminergic therapies of all PD subjects.  
803 3. Table S5: Beta coefficients from multivariate logistic regression models utilizing  
804 dimensions from principal component analysis as independent predictors of dependent  
805 clinical features of PD presentation for both on and off-medication groups.  
806 4. Table S6: Results of Fischer Exact Tests to compare the categorical independent variable,  
807 impulse control disorder, for PD patients off-medication based on the dependent variable,  
808 the bisection point.  
809 5. Figure S1: Dimension contributions from principal component analysis utilizing time  
810 perception measures for both on- and off-medication groups.  
811 6. Figure S2: Psychometric functions of interval timing from all 19 patients with PD.

812 TABLES

**Table 1: Summary of participant demographics and clinical features.**

	<b><u>PD Patients (n=19):</u></b>
<b><u>Mean Age (Years):</u></b>	65.52 ± 6.5
<b><u>Sex</u></b>	
<b>Male:</b>	11 (64.7%)
<b>Female:</b>	8 (42.1%)
<b><u>Race</u></b>	
<b>Asian:</b>	0 (0.0%)
<b>Black or African American:</b>	0 (0.0%)
<b>White:</b>	19 (100.0%)
<b>2 or More Races:</b>	0 (0.0%)
<b><u>Handedness</u></b>	
<b>Right:</b>	18 (94.7%)
<b>Left:</b>	1 (5.3%)
<b>Ambidextrous:</b>	0 (0.0%)
<b><u>Clinical Features</u></b>	
<b>Diagnosed with Depression:</b>	4 (21.1%)
<b>Mean PD Duration (Years):</b>	4.368 ± 2.1
<b>Mean LEDD (mg):</b>	564.6 ± 210
<b>Mean UPDRS Score:</b>	19.71 ± 4.9
<b>Diagnosed with ICD:</b>	11 (57.9%)
<b>Mean QUIP Score:</b>	13.00 ± 11
<b>Prescribed Poly-Dopaminergic Therapy:</b>	11 (57.9%)

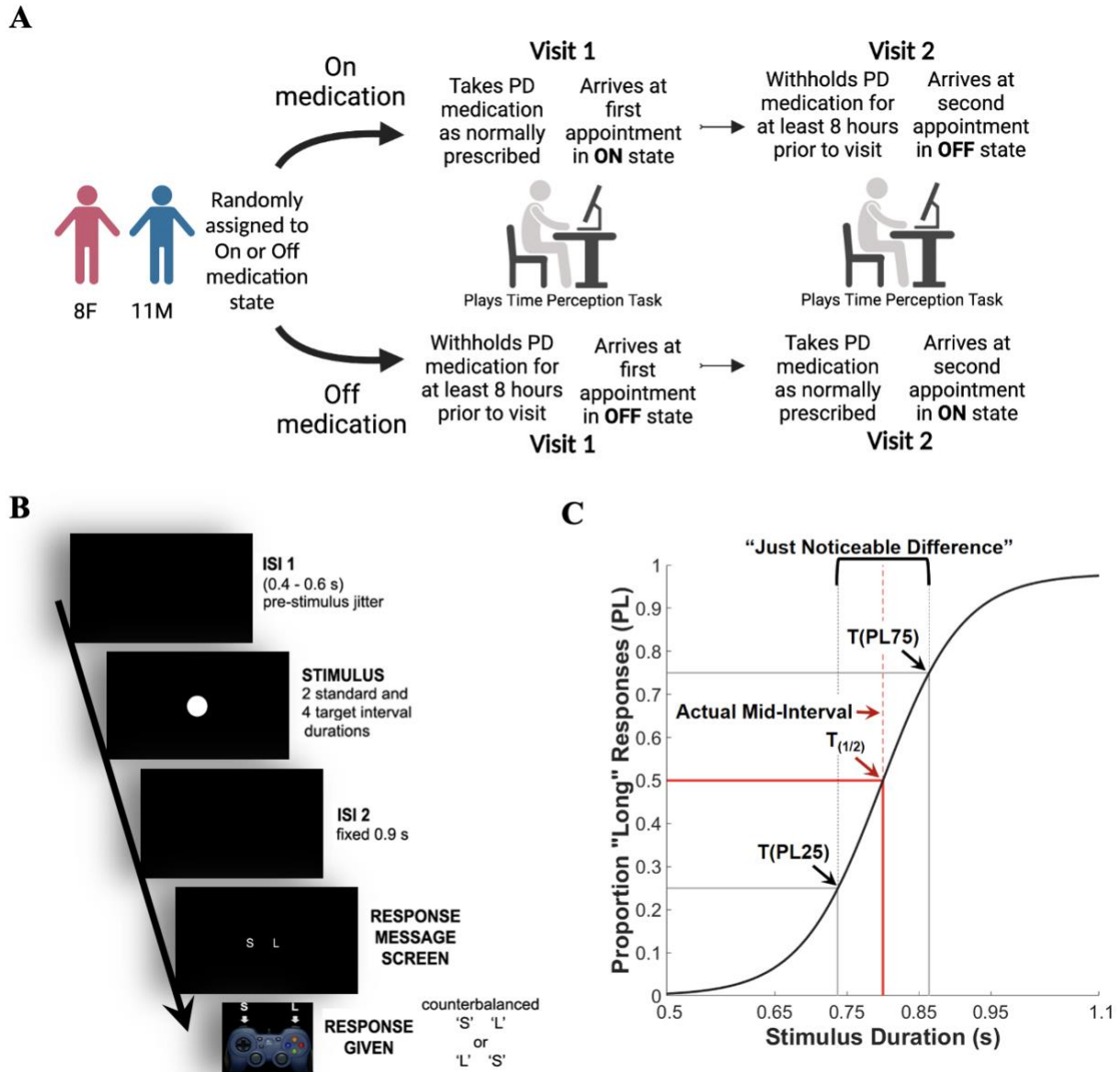
*PD=Parkinson's Disease; LEDD=Levodopa Equivalency Daily Dose; UPDRS=United Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale; ICD=Impulse Control Disorder; QUIP=Questionnaire for Impulsive-Compulsive Disorders in Parkinson's Disease. Data are expressed as Mean ± SD or Frequency (Percentage).*

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814

815 **FIGURES**

816



818

819 **Fig. 1. The temporal bisection task.** A. PD patient recruitment and medication state assignment.

820 Each patient was randomly assigned to either a first on-medication or off-medication visit. The

821 second visit was the alternate medication state. During both visits, each patient played a temporal

822 bisection task (Created with BioRender.com). B. The schedule of a single trial from the bisection

823 task. A trial begins with an Inter-Stimulus Interval (ISI) consisting of a pre-stimulus jitter of a

824 black screen for a poison distribution of 0.4s to 0.6s. The stimulus of a white circle is presented in

825 the center of the screen for one of six stimulus durations: 0.5s, 0.65s, 0.75s, 0.85s, 0.95s, 1.1s. ISI

826 2 followed for a fixed 0.9s. The response screen then appears with a counterbalanced S and L

827 presented on the screen. The subject judges whether the stimulus interval was closer in duration to

828 a previously learned short (0.5s) or long (1.1s) interval and submits their response using the

Logitech Controller. C. A psychometric function applied to data in a healthy control demonstrates

829 near-optimal temporal bisection task performance. Psychometric indices were derived from the  
830 psychometric function, with the solid red line showing the subject's Bisection Point (BP or  $T_{(1/2)}$ ),  
831 which is the stimulus duration at which 50% of responses were "long". This is compared against  
832 the dotted red line of the actual mid-interval (0.8s). The difference between the BP and the actual  
833 mid-interval dictates the bisection point error (BPE). The stimulus duration corresponding to  
834 proportion long 25 ( $T(PL25)$ ) refers to the duration at which a subject responded long 25% of the  
835 time whereas the duration corresponding to proportion long 75 ( $T(PL75)$ ) refers to the duration at  
836 which a subject responded long 75% of the time. The difference between these values is the "just  
837 noticeable difference". This difference divided by two yields an estimate of temporal precision,  
838 the difference limen (DL). The Weber Fraction (WF) is then calculated as the quotient of the DL  
839 and BP. For both the DL and WF, more precise performance is represented by lower values.

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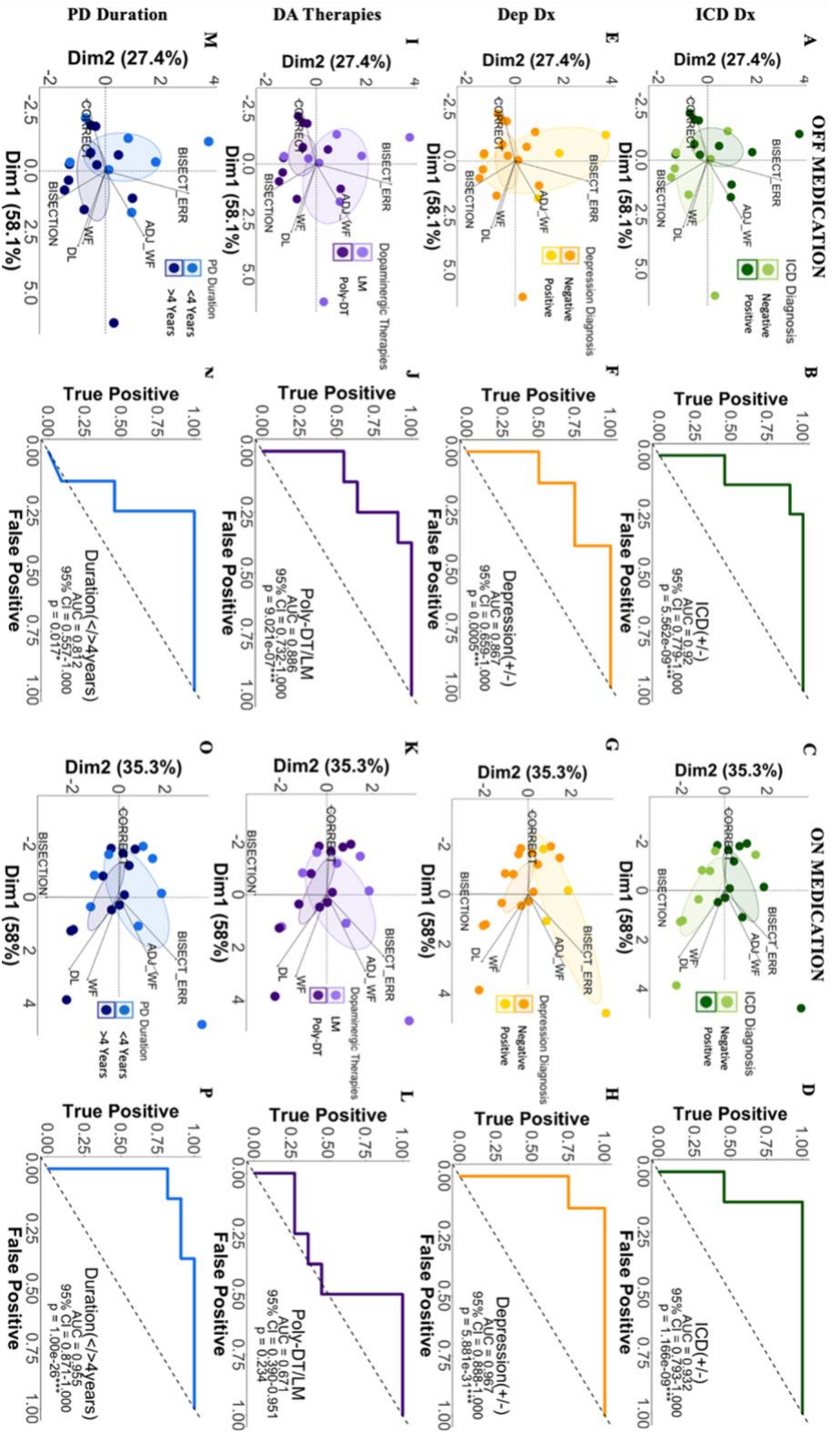
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**Figure 2: Principal Component Analyses (PCA) of the time perception metrics and receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves illustrating the diagnostic accuracy of dimensions OFF and ON medication states in the discrimination of clinical subgroups of PD patients.** A. Biplots showing loadings of dimensions one and two with 95% confidence ellipses showing the groupings of ICD(+) and ICD(-) patients of off-medication were generated. B. ROC curve showing comparison of true and false positives for ICD diagnosis in patients with PD off-medication, with associated Area Under the Curve (AUC), 95% Confidence Interval (CI), and p-values (AUC=0.92, CI=0.78-1.0, p=5.6e-09\*\*\*). C-D. For ICD diagnosis on-medication (AUC=0.93, CI=0.79-1.0, p=1.7e09\*\*\*). E-F. For depression diagnosis off-medication (AUC=0.87, CI=0.66-1.0, p=0.0005\*\*\*). G-H. For depression diagnosis on-medication (AUC=0.97, CI=0.89-1.0, p=5.9e-31\*\*\*). I-J. For Dopaminergic Therapies off-medication (AUC=0.89, CI=0.74-1.0, p=9.0e-07\*\*\*). K-L. For Dopaminergic Therapies on-medication (AUC=0.67, CI=0.39-0.95, p=0.23). M-N. For disease duration off-medication (AUC=0.81, CI=0.56-1.0, p=0.017\*). O-P. For disease duration on-medication (AUC=0.96, CI=0.87-1.0, p=1.0e-26\*\*\*). *Dim*=Dimension; *ICD DX*=Impulse Control Disorder Diagnosis; *DEP*=Depression; *PD*=Parkinson's disease. *L*=Levodopa Monotherapy; *DT*=Dopaminergic Therapies. Significance based on  $p < 0.05$ \*,  $0.01$ \*\*\*,  $0.001$ \*

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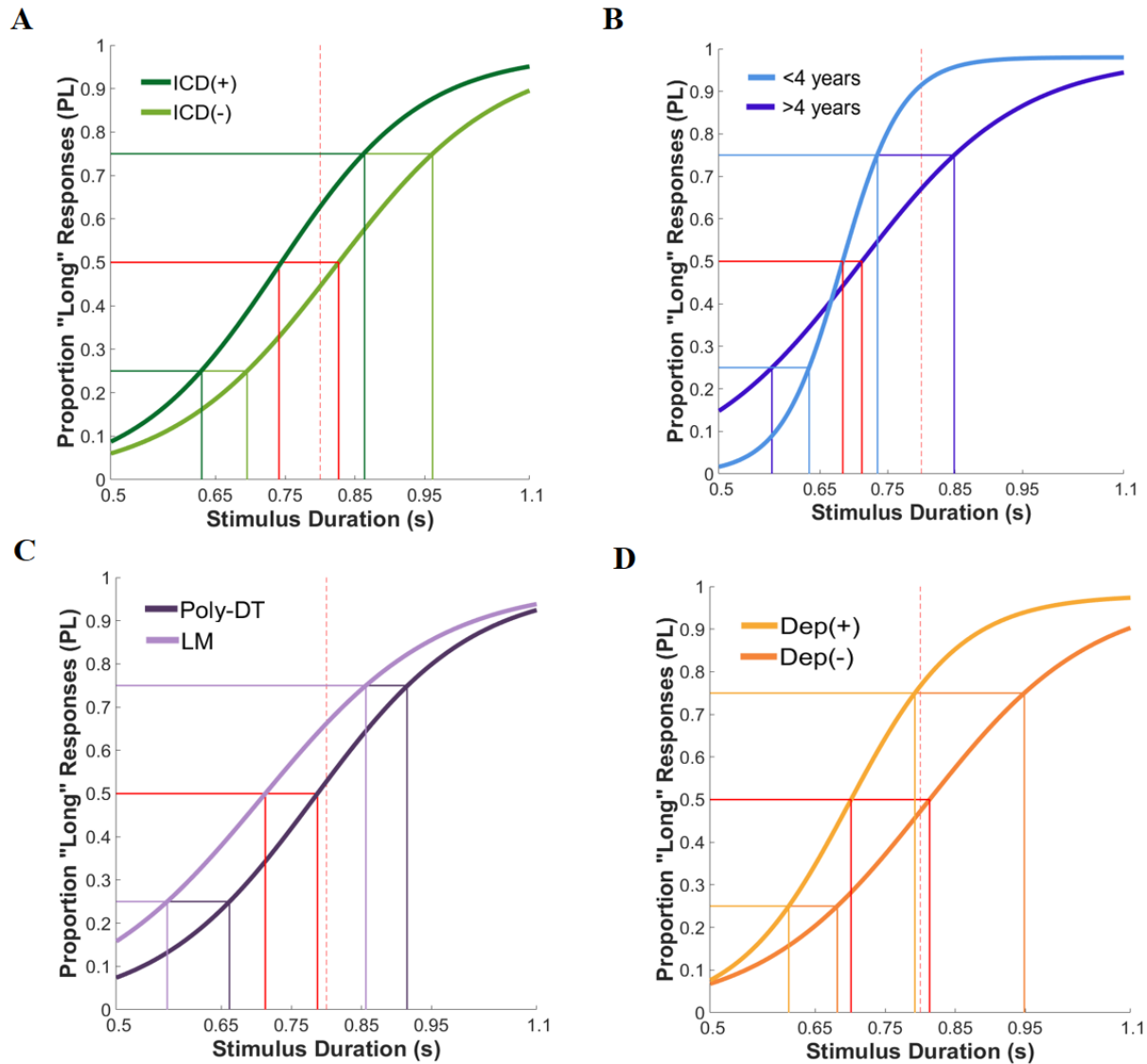
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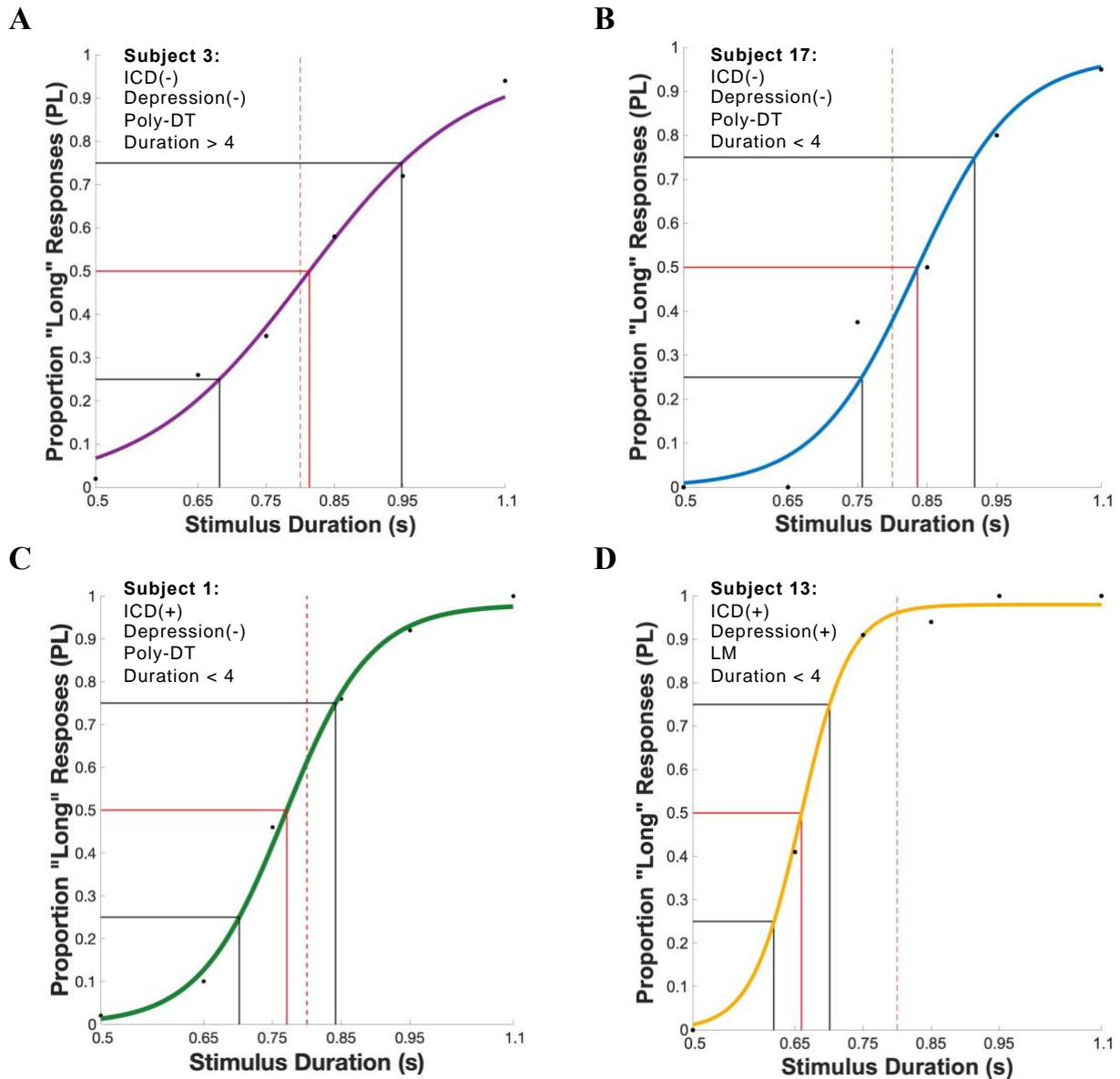




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886 **Fig. 3. Representative psychometric functions of patients with Parkinson's disease (PD)**  
887 **demonstrate the relationships between clinical features of PD and interval timing**  
888 **performance.** **A.** Psychometric functions comparing the presentation of a representative Impulse  
889 Control Disorder (ICD)(+) patient (dark green) to the psychometric function of a representative  
890 ICD(-) patient (light green) in the off-medication state. **B.** Psychometric functions comparing the  
891 presentation of a representative patient with a PD duration of less than four years (light blue) to  
892 the psychometric function of a representative patient with a PD duration of more than four years  
893 (dark blue) in the off-medication state. **C.** Psychometric functions comparing the presentation of a  
894 representative patient prescribed dopaminergic polytherapy (dark purple) to a representative  
895 patient prescribed Levodopa monotherapy (light purple) in the off-medication state. **D.**  
896 psychometric functions comparing the presentations of a representative depression(-) patient  
897 (orange) to a representative depression(+) patient (yellow) in the on-medication state.  
898 *BP=Bisection Point; WF=Weber Fraction; PC=Percent Correct. AWF=Adjusted Weber*  
899 *Fraction. AIC=Akaike Information Criterion.*

900



901

902 **Fig. 4: Psychometric functions demonstrate relations between multiple comorbidities and**  
903 **heterogeneous clinical features of Parkinson's disease (PD) to temporal performance. A.** The  
904 combination of clinical features of Subject 3 is represented in a psychometric function that displays  
905 relatively high accuracy, but lower precision (BP:0.818; WF:0.162; PC:73.09). **B.** In comparison  
906 to A, the psychometric function of Subject 17 shows relatively high accuracy and precision  
907 (BP:0.831; WF:0.133; PC:75.34). **C.** In comparison to B, the psychometric function of Subject 1  
908 shows high precision, but an overestimation of time intervals (BP:0.775; WF:0.091; PC:82.17). **D.**  
909 In comparison to C, the psychometric function of Subject 13 shows high precision and low  
910 accuracy with an overestimation of time (BP:0.665; WF:0.060; PC:72.42). *DT=Dopaminergic*  
911 *Therapies; BP=Bisection Point; WF=Weber Fraction; PC=Percent Correct.*

912