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► **To cite this version:**

Eléonore Fresnel, Gérard Dray, Simon Pla, Guilhem Belda, S. Perrey. Cerebral oxygenation and cognitive performance under acute normobaric hypoxia. ACAPS 2021 - 19ème congrès international des chercheurs en Activités Physiques et Sportives, Oct 2021, Montpellier, France. , ACAPS 2021 - 19ème congrès international des chercheurs en Activités Physiques et Sportives, 2021. hal-03443395

HAL Id: hal-03443395

<https://imt-mines-ales.hal.science/hal-03443395>

Submitted on 2 Dec 2021

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Cerebral oxygenation and cognitive performance under acute normobaric hypoxia

01 INTRODUCTION

► **Altitude hypoxia** can **degrade executive functions and associated behavioral responses** in fighter pilots and so be at the origin of accidents in flight.

► **Working Memory (WM)** is impaired during exposure to hypoxia beyond 3000m (Malle et al., 2013)

► **Cerebral oxygenation responses** are correlated to cognitive performance during hypoxia (Williams et al., 2019)

Purpose

Identify the effects of acute exposure in normobaric hypoxia on cerebral oxygenation and cognitive performance during a working memory task

02 METHODS

Normoxia | Hypoxia
FiO₂ = 21 % | FiO₂ = 11.3%

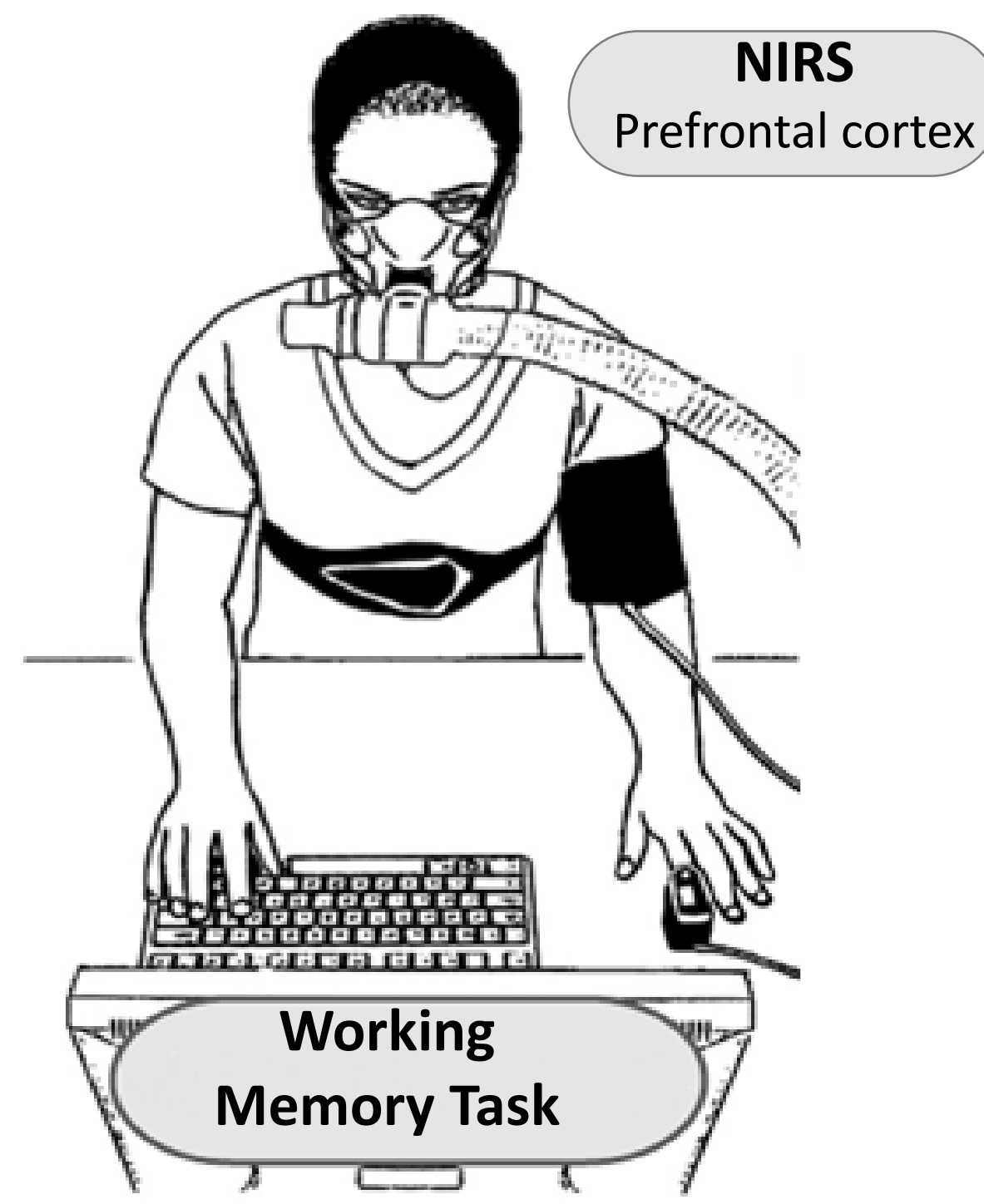


Fig.1: Experimental set-up

Participants:

- 10 healthy adults attended 2 randomized sessions:
- 1 normoxia (N)
- 1 hypoxia (H)

Design (Fig.1):

9 blocks of 49 stimuli of a WM task (2-back)

- N session: 9 blocks under N
- H session: 2 blocks N (T1) → 3 blocks up to H (T2) → 4 blocks H (T3)

Variables:

- Cerebral oxygenation (PortaLite, Artinis; 10Hz): oxygenated (O₂Hb) and desoxygenated (HHb) blood
- Working memory performance and reaction time (RT)
- Nasa-TLX (subjective questionnaire)

RESULTS 03

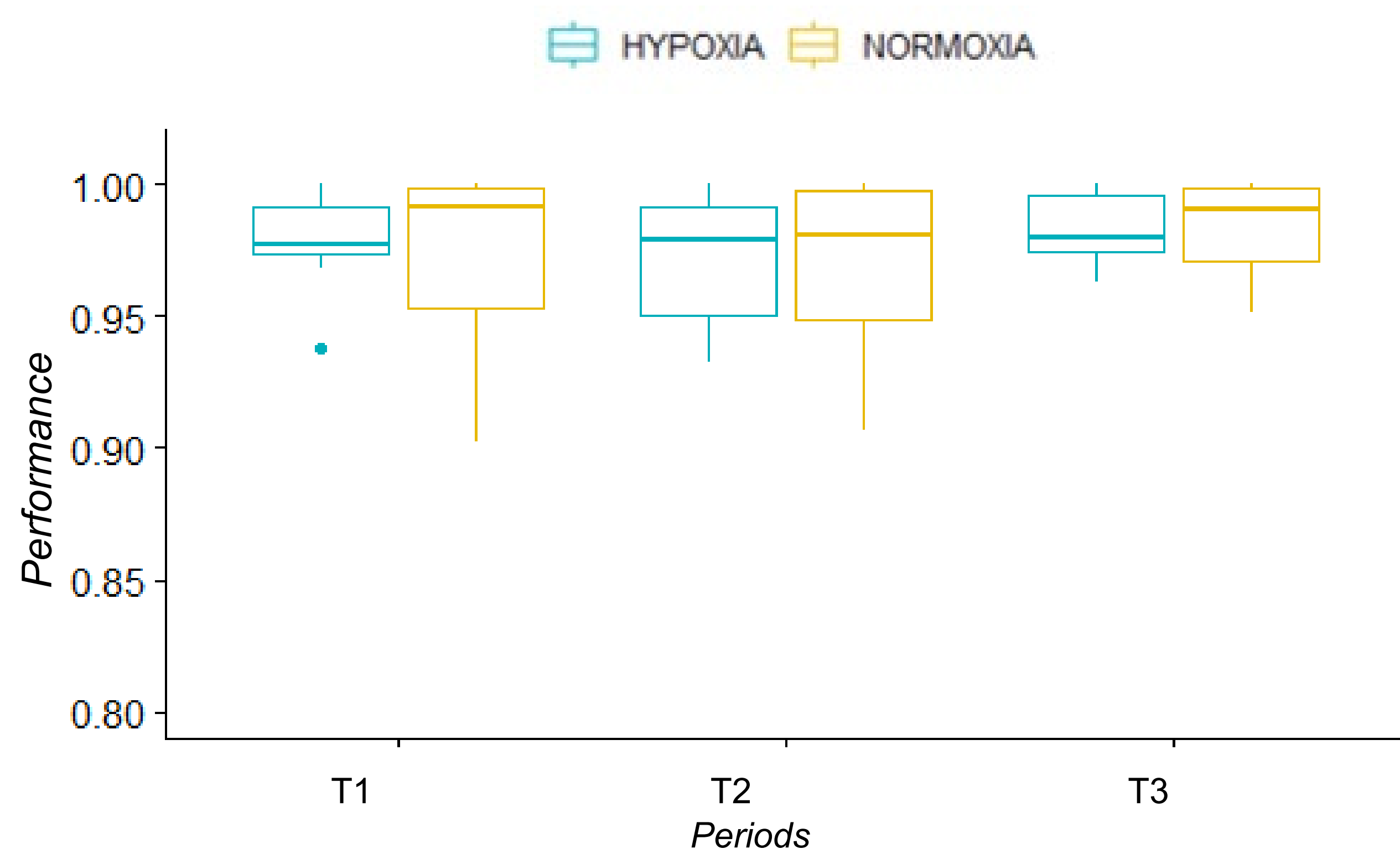


Fig.2: Performance of Working Memory task depending on condition (H vs N) and time periods

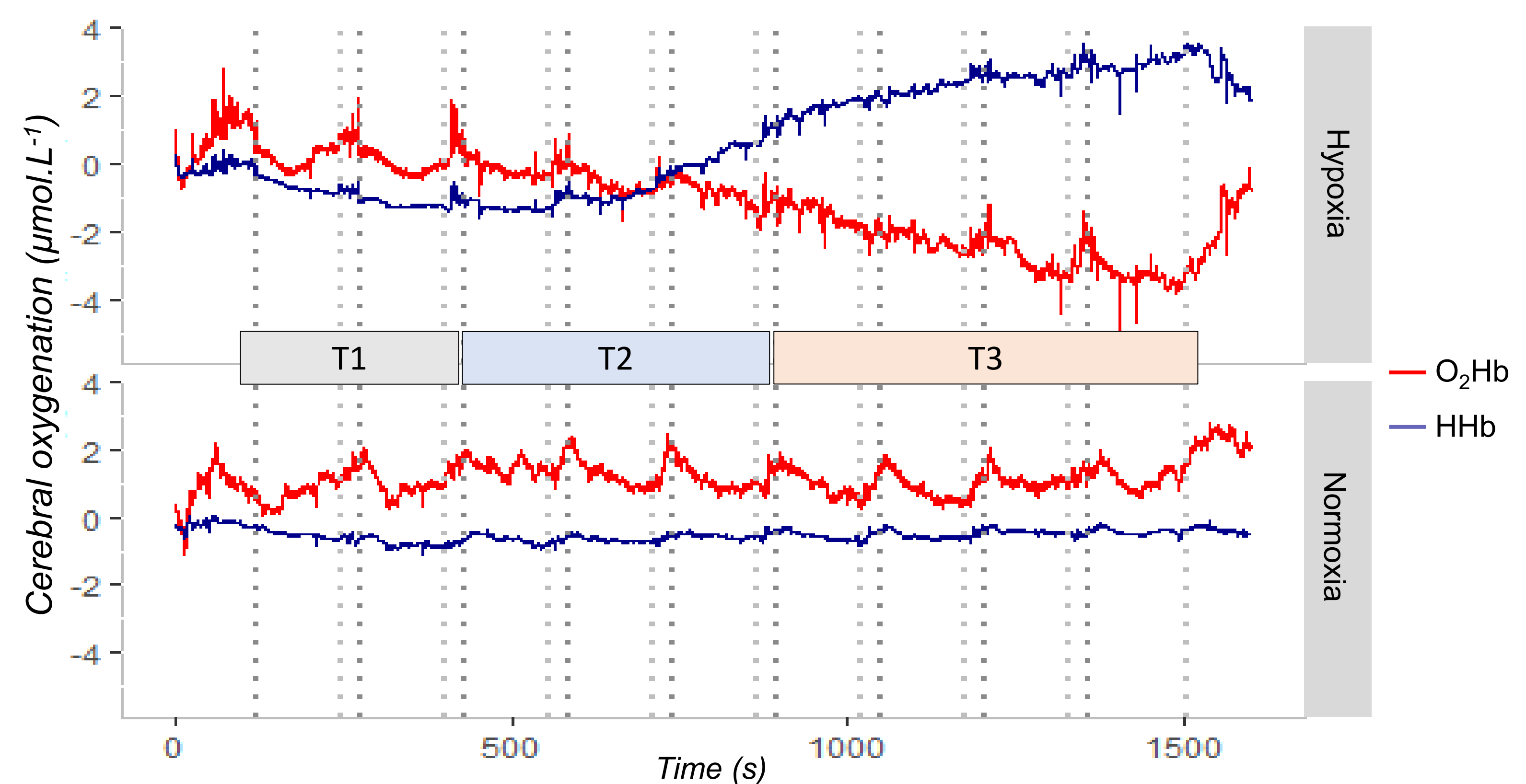


Fig.3: Cerebral oxygenation under N and H during the cognitive task

IN BRIEF

Working Memory (Fig.2)

- No difference of condition (H / N) on performance and RT
- No difference of time on performance and RT

Cerebral oxygenation (Fig.3)

- Difference between N and H on O₂Hb and HHb
- ↘ O₂Hb and ↗ HHb with time in H

NASA-TLX

- Hypoxia ↗ perceptive workload (p < .05)

04 CONCLUSION

► Hypoxia (~5000m) induced reduction in cerebral oxygenation but not with cognitive performance.

The difficulty of WM might be too low in altering the cognitive performance.

► Other executive functions must be taken in consideration (e.g., inhibition and selective attention with the Stroop task)

Notes

¹ EuroMov Digital Health in Motion, Univ Montpellier, IMT Mines Alès, Montpellier, France

² Semaxone, Rochefort du Gard (30650), France

References

- Malle C, et al. (2013). Aviat Space Environ Med. DOI: 10.3357/ASEM.3482.2013
- Williams TB, et al. (2019). Exp Physio. DOI: 10.1113/EP087647

Acknowledgements

This work was publicly funded through ANR (the French National Research Agency) under the "Investissements d'avenir" program with the reference ANR-16-IDEX-0006.

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