

**Title:** Effects of optical correction method on the magnitude and variability of accommodative response: A test-retest study.

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## 1 **Introduction**

2 The accommodative response is defined as the ocular ability that allows people to see clearly at  
3 different distances,<sup>1</sup> and its measure constitutes an important part of the optometric examination.  
4 An inaccurate accommodative response can be derived from an imperfection in a neural  
5 integrator in the accommodation control system,<sup>2</sup> as a consequence of different circumstances  
6 such as trauma,<sup>3</sup> systemic and ocular pathological conditions,<sup>4,5</sup> pharmacological therapy,<sup>6,7</sup>  
7 neurological abnormalities,<sup>8</sup> refractive condition,<sup>9</sup> amblyopia,<sup>10</sup> and binocular and  
8 accommodative dysfunctions.<sup>11</sup>

9 Under-accommodation is termed as accommodative lag. However, at near distances, a value  $\leq$   
10 0.75 D is considered clinically normal since it does not usually surpass the depth of focus, with  
11 individuals rarely aware of a lack of sharpness in focus.<sup>12,13</sup> In this regard, the presence of a  
12 higher lag of accommodation may lead to ocular asthenopia and accommodative fatigue during  
13 prolonged near activities.<sup>14,15</sup> Also, there are some studies that have suggested a link between  
14 accommodative lag and myopia progression, although, this fact is still a matter of debate.<sup>16-21</sup>  
15 Consequently, a study examining factors that may modify the accommodative response is of  
16 significance for the understanding and management of ocular asthenopia and myopia  
17 progression.

18 Several studies have suggested that the use of single vision soft contact lenses versus spectacles  
19 could modify accommodative and binocular function,<sup>22-25</sup> as well as everyday visual  
20 functioning.<sup>26</sup> However, the use of soft contact lenses permits a central and peripheral visual  
21 performance similar to spectacles.<sup>27</sup> Relevantly, the concept of 'accommodative unit' introduced  
22 that the different vertex distances between both optical correction methods (e.g., soft contact  
23 lenses and spectacles), as well as the back vertex power, are known to vary the accommodative  
24 demand and response.<sup>28</sup> This concept needs to be addressed to determine the real  
25 accommodative stimulus and response when wearing different optical devices

26 In clinical practice, methods such as Cross retinoscopy, monocular estimate method retinoscopy  
27 or Nott dynamic retinoscopy (see Locke & Somers<sup>29</sup> for a description of these methods) are  
28 commonly used to assess the accommodative response,<sup>29</sup> however, there is no agreement as to  
29 which is the optimum technique.<sup>31-33</sup> The recent incorporation of autorefractometers in clinical  
30 and research settings has allowed investigators to obtain more reliable measures of static and  
31 dynamic accommodation.<sup>32,34-36</sup> In this regard, Hunt et al.<sup>23</sup> used an open field autorefractor, to  
32 quantify the accommodative response of young individuals rendered functionally emmetropic  
33 with either with soft contact lenses or spectacles, while viewing both static and oscillating  
34 targets. Data from Hunt's study supported previous scientific evidence that there are different  
35 accommodative and vergence requirements between soft contact lenses and spectacles, and  
36 these changes are dependent on the refractive error.<sup>22</sup>

37 Interestingly, when focusing on a stationary target, the accommodative response fluctuates  
38 dynamically (by ~0.50 D). In turn, continuous measurement of accommodation allows the  
39 frequency and magnitude of these accommodation fluctuations to be quantified.<sup>37</sup> Hitherto,  
40 despite the fact that these instruments allow dynamic assessment of the binocular  
41 accommodative response, they have yet to be used to assess the possible differences in the  
42 magnitude and variability of the accommodative lag over time with the use of soft contact  
43 lenses versus spectacles while viewing stationary targets. These potential differences may have  
44 significant implications in a variety of visual conditions (e.g., visual fatigue, myopia  
45 progression), as for the magnitude of the accommodative response.

46 The present study evaluated the influence of wearing soft contact lenses or spectacles on the  
47 accommodative response at five different near distances (50, 40, 33, 25 and 20 cm) in two  
48 different days in a counterbalanced manner; this evaluation was performed twice in order to  
49 assess the repeatability of these results. Here, our first objective was to assess the magnitude and  
50 variability of the dynamic binocular accommodative response when wearing soft contact lenses  
51 in comparison to spectacles at different near distances, and second, to test the repeatability of  
52 the magnitude and variability with a second identical intervention. We hypothesized that (1) the

53 accommodative response as measured with soft contact lenses would be lower (higher lag of  
54 accommodation) and show higher variability in comparison to the spectacles condition, and  
55 these differences would be greater at closer viewing distances (higher accommodative demand),  
56 and (2) the repeatability of these differences for both optical correction methods would be high  
57 when measured under the same experimental conditions. Data from this study may be of interest  
58 since the differences in the magnitude of accommodation are directly linked to asthenopia, and  
59 possibly to myopia progression.<sup>14-20</sup> For its part, alterations in the variability of accommodation  
60 have been considered interesting not only for their possible role in the control of  
61 accommodation,<sup>37</sup> but also for the association with symptomatic individuals.<sup>38</sup>

## 62 **Methods**

### 63 *Ethical approval and participants*

64 The study was conducted in line with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki and was  
65 approved by the University of Granada Institutional Review Board. All volunteers were  
66 informed about their right to leave the experiment at any moment and gave an informed consent  
67 prior to the commencement of the study.

68 We performed an *a priori* power analysis for a power level of 0.90 and alpha of 0.05 to  
69 determine the minimum sample size based on data from a similar study.<sup>25</sup> According to these  
70 assumptions, the size of the study population should be 16 participants. Thirty-eight individuals  
71 initially volunteered to participate in this study. Before starting the experiment, a board certified  
72 optometrist examined all subjects to screen any symptomatology, ocular pathology, as well as  
73 general conditions that could affect accommodative response. Hence, the inclusion criteria were  
74 (see Table 1 for more details): 1) the absence of any ocular disease, 2) belong to the  
75 asymptomatic group as measured with the Conlon survey (cut off value of  $\leq 24$ ),<sup>39</sup> 3) a best-  
76 corrected distance visual acuity  $\leq 0.00$  log MAR (20/20 Snellen) in each eye, 4) be free of any  
77 binocular or accommodative dysfunction following the recommendations of Scheiman &  
78 Wick<sup>40</sup>, 5) be soft contact lenses and spectacles users at least for one year, 6) anisometropia

79 <2.00 D, 7) score a value <3 with the Stanford Sleepiness Scale (SSS) to check the level of  
80 alertness prior each experimental session,<sup>41</sup> and 8) present an accommodative lag < 1.55D, using  
81 an autorefractor, at 20 cm, as indicated by Wang & Ciuffreda<sup>12</sup>.

82 Six out of 38 participants failed the initial screening, and 32 university students were enrolled in  
83 this study. We decided to use each participant as his or her own control, thus avoiding  
84 undesirable inter-subjects variability or insufficient sample size as consequence of attrition  
85 during the course of the study. Additionally, participants were asked to abstain from alcohol and  
86 caffeine-based drinks 24h and 12h, respectively, before experimental sessions, refrain from  
87 reading and mobile phone use one hour before each session, and to sleep at least 7h the night  
88 prior of attending to the laboratory.

89 Then, 11 out of the 32 enrolled subjects had to be excluded during the main trials of the study.  
90 Two participants were excluded because they reported a value higher to 3 at the SSS at the  
91 beginning of one experimental session, four individuals did not complete all the experimental  
92 sessions, three participants did not obtain the imposed criteria of monocular visual acuity while  
93 wearing soft contact lenses (see below), one participant presented a lag of accommodation  
94 higher to 1.55 D at 20 cm, and one participant exhibited numerous recording errors (more than  
95 50%) due to reflection, and therefore, they were removed from further analysis. As a result, we  
96 analysed data from 21 (mean age (standard deviation) = 21.45 (2.26) with an age range of 19 to  
97 26 years, 8 males and 13 females) out of 32 participants. Baseline characteristics without optical  
98 compensation of the study sample were: an average spherical equivalent refractive error  
99 (standard deviation) of -0.79 (1.39) D, ranging from -3.25 to +2.75 D (16 myopes and 5  
100 hyperopes).

#### 101 *Procedure*

102 All participants presented to the lab on six different occasions. On the first visit, each participant  
103 received a full optometric examination which included objective ocular refraction and  
104 keratometry using an auto-keratorefractometer (WAM-5500, Grand Seiko Co. Ltd., Hiroshima,

105 Japan), with the mean value from three measurements calculated. Subsequently, a full  
106 monocular and binocular subjective refraction, using an endpoint criterion of maximum plus  
107 consistent with best vision, using a bichromatic test, was performed. This new optical correction  
108 was used for spectacles and soft contact lenses, considering the appropriate vertex distance  
109 adjustments. In addition, we assessed accommodative and binocular function following the  
110 recommendations of Scheiman & Wick<sup>40</sup>, and examined the presence of any ocular pathology  
111 by slit lamp and direct ophthalmoscopy examination. Eye dominance was determined by hole-  
112 in-the card method,<sup>42</sup> since this eye was used to obtain the accommodative response  
113 measurement.

114 At the second session, soft contact lenses were individually fitted, considering the corneal  
115 measures and exact refraction compensated for vertex distance. Disposable HEMA and  
116 Ocufilecon D (55% water content) spherical and toric soft contact lenses were used to  
117 compensate astigmatism errors  $\leq 0.75$  D and astigmatism between 0.75 D and 2.00 D,  
118 respectively. A combination of myopia with less than 0.75 D astigmatism was corrected with  
119 appropriate spherical equivalent, being the same procedure performed with spectacles in order  
120 to match the possible residual errors in both optical correction methods. Participants wore the  
121 soft contact lenses for one hour, and a fitting evaluation and an over-refraction (as in session 1)  
122 were performed in order to ensure appropriate visual comfort and performance with the lenses.  
123 In addition, an appropriately centred lens with adequate post blink movement, and distance  
124 visual acuity  $\leq 0.00$  logMAR (20/20 Snellen) in each eye were required for participants to  
125 continue in the study.

126 The next four visits (3 to 6) comprised the main experimental protocol. Here, the  
127 accommodative response at five different distances (50, 40, 33, 25, and 20 cm) was measured in  
128 a fixed order (from far to near distances) when wearing soft contact lenses and spectacles.  
129 Participants presented to the lab with soft contact lenses or spectacles in randomized order, and  
130 this protocol was repeated twice (trial 1 and trial 2) in order to explore the intersession  
131 repeatability of both conditions. For the session with soft contact lenses, participants were asked

132 to wear them for at least one hour and less than four hours before attending to the lab.  
133 Participants were instructed to avoid the use of soft contact lenses during the entire day in which  
134 they were tested while wearing spectacles.

#### 135 *Experimental design*

136 The study followed a repeated measures design to test the effect of wearing soft contact lenses  
137 or spectacles on the accommodative response (magnitude and variability). The accommodative  
138 distance (50, 40, 33, 25 and 20 cm) and the optical correction method (soft contact lenses or  
139 spectacles) were the within subjects factor. Importantly, to avoid the possible effect of diurnal  
140 variations on accommodative response,<sup>33</sup> all experimental sessions were scheduled at the same  
141 hour ( $\pm 1$ h) for each participant. To evaluate the differences in accommodative response while  
142 wearing soft contact lenses and spectacles (reproducibility), we used the mean value from both  
143 trials in each experimental condition (soft contact lenses and spectacles), whereas the two  
144 identical trials carried out with each optical correction method were individually considered to  
145 assess the intersession repeatability.

#### 146 *Dynamic accommodative response assessments*

147 In the present study, we used the WAM-5500 autorefractor, which has been demonstrated to be  
148 an accurate tool for quantifying accommodation in both static and dynamic modes, and in  
149 different contexts and experimental conditions.<sup>34,35,43–45</sup> The WAM-5500 can acquire continuous  
150 recordings of accommodation and pupil size in the dynamic mode (high-speed), with a  
151 sensitivity of 0.01 D and 0.1 mm, respectively, and a temporal resolution of approximately 5  
152 Hz.<sup>35</sup> Accommodative response can be measured for a set time interval and distance and,  
153 therefore, the magnitude and intra-measure variability from a continuous accommodation  
154 response to a static near target can be evaluated. This instrument permits binocular open-view  
155 but accommodative response measures are only obtained from one eye at the time, and in this  
156 study the dominant eye was chosen to record data.<sup>46</sup> Before commencing all experimental  
157 sessions, we performed a monocular static refractive measure in both eyes (considering the

158 mean value from ten measures) to obtain a baseline refractive value, which would be used  
159 during data analysis. For all the measures, participants were asked to position their chin and  
160 forehead on the respective supports, and viewed a photopic high contrast Maltese cross target  
161 aligned on the midline of the head through the 12.5 x 22cm open-field beam-splitter. For the  
162 dynamic measurement of accommodative response with spectacle correction the subjects used a  
163 half-eye trial frame, which were adjusted for their interpupillary distances and pupil heights to  
164 avoid prismatic effects. We used narrow metal-ring trial lenses in order to (1) optimise the  
165 WAM's centration and focus, (2) reduce the possible effects of proximal accommodation, and  
166 (3) not restrict the visual field. All these effects may be expected by the use of reduced aperture  
167 lenses.

168 Dynamic binocular accommodative response was recorded continuously during 31sec at each of  
169 the five accommodative demands; however, the first second was removed to eliminate transient  
170 effects from the stimulus onset,<sup>47</sup> and a three minute break between measures was given to  
171 avoid accommodative adaptation.<sup>48</sup> Participants looked at a 2-cm high-contrast Maltese cross  
172 (Michelson contrast of 0.79). The viewing angle of the target at the five different distances was  
173 2.29, 2.86, 3.47, 4.58, and 5.73°, for the accommodative distances of 50 cm (2 D), 33 cm (3 D),  
174 25 cm (4 D), and 20 cm (5 D), respectively. During the measurement, the subjects were asked to  
175 keep the target as clear as possible. Possible blinking or recording errors were identified as all  
176 those values varying more than 3 standard deviations from the mean, and these values were  
177 removed from further analysis.<sup>15,49</sup> At the beginning of each experimental session, we measured  
178 baseline static refractive errors, using the autorefractometer, in order to correct any potential  
179 diurnal changes in the over-refraction. For the calculation of the lag of accommodation, as  
180 indicated by Poltavski, Biberdorf & Petros<sup>50</sup>, we subtracted the mean value from the dynamic  
181 measures and the baseline static refractive value obtained in far distance to the accommodative  
182 demand at each distance (2, 2.5, 3, 4 and 5 D). As the presence of an ophthalmic lens changes  
183 both the accommodative stimulus and the measured accommodative response, all measurements  
184 obtained with spectacles were referred to the corneal plane, following the equations 5e and 8e

185 provided in the study of Atchison and Varnas<sup>51</sup>. The target distances were always constant,  
186 however, the accommodative demand is modified when the stimulus is viewed through  
187 ophthalmic lenses in comparison to the target distance. In order to eliminate this confounding  
188 factor, the ophthalmic lenses were placed at a vertex distance of 12 mm, as measured by the app  
189 (MyCenter, Tematica software, Spain) installed in an iPad 3 (Apple, Inc., Cupertino, CA), and  
190 using the different holders of the trial frame in order to adjust them for the desirable vertex  
191 distance (12 mm). The base luminance of the target was 31 cd m<sup>-2</sup>, and room illumination  
192 conditions were kept constant across sessions (approximately 150 lx, range: 145 to 155 lx).

### 193 *Statistical Analysis*

194 First, two separate two-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to  
195 test the differences in the magnitude and variability (standard deviation during each dynamic  
196 accommodative response measurement) of accommodative response, respectively, considering  
197 the optical correction method (spectacles and soft contact lenses) and the viewing distance (50,  
198 40, 33, 25, 20 cm) as the within-participants factors. The mean values from both trials were  
199 used for statistical analyses of both dependent variables (magnitude and variability of  
200 accommodative response). Also, separate linear regression analyses for each viewing distance  
201 were performed to assess the possible relationship between participant's refractive error and the  
202 differences in the accommodative response (magnitude and variability) between both optical  
203 correction methods (spectacles and soft contact lenses). The magnitude of the differences was  
204 calculated by partial eta squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ), and the Holm-Bonferroni correction<sup>52</sup> for multiple  
205 comparison was used where applicable as indicated by Armstrong<sup>54</sup>.

206 Second, to examine inter-methods (spectacles and soft contact lenses) reproducibility, paired  
207 two-tailed t-tests were employed to determine the differences between both optical correction  
208 methods for each distance (50, 40, 33, 25 and 20 cm). Similarly, to test inter-sessions (trial 1  
209 and trial 2) repeatability, we performed paired two-tailed t-tests for each comparison between  
210 both trials with both optical correction methods and distance. Following the recommendation of  
211 McAlinden et al.<sup>54</sup>, we checked that there were no statistically significant mean differences

212 across comparisons. The magnitude of change between methods and sessions were expressed as  
213 a standardised mean difference (Cohen's  $d$  effect size), and they were interpreted as:  $<0.2 =$   
214 trivial,  $0.2-0.6 =$  small,  $0.6-1.2 =$  moderate,  $1.2-2.0 =$  large, and  $>2 =$  very large.<sup>55</sup> If the  
215 differences were insignificant, the Pearson product moment correlation coefficients and the  
216 intraclass correlations coefficients were used to assess the correlation between the two methods  
217 of optical correction and the two identical experimental sessions (trial 1 and trial 2).<sup>54</sup>

218 Lastly, we used the Bland and Altman method<sup>56</sup> to evaluate the mean differences between both  
219 methods of optical correction (spectacles and soft contact lenses) and sessions (trial 1 and trial  
220 2).

## 221 **Results**

222 Before any statistical analysis, the normal distribution of the data (Shapiro-Wilk test) and the  
223 homogeneity of variances (Levene's test) were confirmed ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### 224 *Magnitude of accommodative response differences*

225 The lags of accommodation obtained from the 30 sec dynamic accommodative measure were  
226 used to explore the differences in the magnitude of accommodative responses for the two optical  
227 correction methods (soft contact lenses and spectacles) at the five distances tested (50, 40, 33,  
228 25, and 20cm), using the average value from Trial 1 and 2. The optical correction method  
229 showed statistical significance with greater lags of accommodation for the soft contact lenses in  
230 comparison to spectacles ( $F_{1,20} = 5.140$ ,  $p = 0.035$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.204$ ), and the viewing distance  
231 showed differences for the lag of accommodation with greater lags at closer distances ( $F_{4,80} =$   
232  $7.280$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.267$ ). The interaction *optical correction method x distance* did not yield  
233 statistical significance ( $F_{4, 80} = 0.144$ ,  $p = 0.965$ ). Post-hoc comparisons between both optical  
234 correction methods at the different viewing distances did not reach statistical significance after  
235 corrected with the Holm-Bonferroni procedure (all corrected  $p$ -values  $> 0.05$ ) (Figure 1).  
236 Additionally, the association between refractive error and the differences in accommodative  
237 response between both optical correction methods was explored by linear regression analysis,

238 showing that the Pearson correlation coefficients at the five viewing distances ranged between  
239 0.17 and 0.33 (all p-values > 0.05). It should be noted that the limited range of refractive errors  
240 included in this study could mask a possible association of the differences in lags of  
241 accommodation between both optical correction methods and participants' refractive error.

#### 242 *Variability of accommodative response differences*

243 The standard deviation from the 30 sec dynamic accommodative response measure were used to  
244 define the variability of accommodation for the two optical correction methods (soft contact  
245 lenses and spectacles) at the five distances where the stimuli was presented. The mean value  
246 from both trials was considered. The optical correction method and the viewing distance  
247 exhibited statistical significance ( $F_{1, 20} = 36.581$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.647$ ; and  $F_{4, 80} = 13.697$ ,  $p <$   
248  $0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.406$ , respectively), obtaining higher values of accommodative variability in the  
249 soft contact lenses condition and when viewing at closer distances. The interaction *optical*  
250 *correction method x distance* did not yield statistical significance ( $F_{4, 80} = 1.287$ ,  $p = 0.282$ ).  
251 Subsequently, we performed post-hoc analyses, obtaining statistically significant differences for  
252 the accommodative response variability between optical correction methods (higher variability  
253 with soft contact lenses) at the distances of 50 cm (corrected p-value = 0.005, effect size =  
254 0.96), 40 cm (corrected p-value = 0.005, effect size = 1.06), 33 cm (corrected p-value = 0.010,  
255 effect size = 0.69), 25 cm (corrected p-value = 0.005, effect size = 0.88) and 20 cm (corrected p-  
256 value = 0.010, effect size = 0.69) (Figure 2). Lastly, the level of association between  
257 participant's refractive error and the differences in the variability of accommodation between  
258 spectacles and soft contact lenses demonstrated to be low (Pearson correlation coefficient  
259 ranging from 0.04 to 0.30; all p-values > 0.05).

#### 260 *Inter-session repeatability*

261 Table 2 shows the values of inter-session repeatability between the trial 1 and 2 for both optical  
262 correction methods (soft contact lenses and spectacles). The spectacles condition (Figure 3) and  
263 the soft contact lenses condition (Figure 4), as measured at all the tested distances, have proven

264 to be strongly repeatable (Pearson and Intraclass correlation coefficient range: 0.95–0.99, and  
265 0.94– 0.99, respectively) when measured two different days under the same experimental  
266 conditions. Please note that Bland-Altman plots for both spectacles conditions at 25 cm (Figure  
267 3, panel D) and both soft contact lenses conditions at 33 cm (Figure 4, panel C) showed a  
268 significant association between the difference in measurements and the mean measurement, and  
269 thus, following the recommendations of Sedgwick<sup>57</sup>, Bland-Altman plots were performed for  
270 the log transformed data. These analyses demonstrated that the associations between the  
271 difference in measurements and the mean measurement remained statistically significant in both  
272 analysed, which indicate a poor level of agreement.

## 273 **Discussion**

274 This study demonstrates that the use of soft contact lenses induces higher values of lag of  
275 accommodation (magnitude) and accommodative response fluctuations (variability) than  
276 spectacles under near work conditions (50, 40, 33, 25 and 20cm). Our results show that  
277 accommodative response measures, on two different occasions under the same experimental  
278 conditions, are highly repeatable for both correction methods (soft contact lenses and  
279 spectacles) and all the distances tested.

### 280 *Magnitude of accommodative response*

281 It is well known that a lag of accommodation higher than the depth of focus of an eye is  
282 associated with visual fatigue.<sup>14,15,38</sup> In the present study, higher lags of accommodation than  
283 0.75 D, considered as a cut-off value for normative data in a non-clinical population,<sup>40</sup> were  
284 found at all near distances tested when wearing soft contact lenses (lag of accommodation of 1  
285 D approximately). However, we found lags of accommodation lower than 0.75 D for all the  
286 viewing distances (from 50 to 20 cm) when wearing spectacles. A high lag of accommodation  
287 has been linked to accommodative and binocular anomalies such as accommodative  
288 insufficiency and convergence excess, which are frequently associated with ocular discomfort  
289 and strain at near.<sup>38,40</sup> Importantly, it should be considered that our data revealed lag of

290 accommodation differences between both optical correction methods of about 0.30 D, and  
291 therefore, these differences may not be large enough to induce asthenopic symptoms. Also, the  
292 greater accommodative demand imposed by soft contact lenses in comparison to spectacles may  
293 play a role in the higher lags of accommodation found with soft contact lenses, however, the  
294 small range of refractive errors included in this study seems insufficient to explain these  
295 differences. Nevertheless, our findings agree, in part, with the accommodative response  
296 differences reported by Tosha et al.<sup>15</sup>, who compared two groups with high and low visual  
297 discomfort (~0.40 D of difference at 20 cm between both groups). In addition, the  
298 accommodative response was recorded for a short time period (30 sec) in this study. We believe  
299 that wearing soft contact lenses during prolonged near activities may exacerbate asthenopic  
300 symptomatology in comparison to spectacles correction, in agreement with previous studies.<sup>23,25</sup>  
301 and it could be aggravated in presbyopic individuals.<sup>58</sup>

302 Numerous studies have focused on the genesis and aetiology of myopia progression, and the  
303 possible association between lag of accommodation and the onset of myopia. From an optical  
304 perspective, a continuous foveal hyperopic retinal blur due to a lag of accommodation has been  
305 considered as a possible cause for the development of myopia, but also it has been stated that  
306 accommodative lag may be a consequence rather than a cause of myopia.<sup>16-18</sup> Remarkably, the  
307 presence of correlation does not imply causation, and therefore, future studies are needed for the  
308 determination of causal directionality in the link of myopia progression and lag of  
309 accommodation. Our results evidenced that the accommodative response dynamically,  
310 objectively, and binocularly measured, was diminished with soft contact lenses when compared  
311 with spectacles. Nevertheless, future longitudinal studies including the assessment of central  
312 and peripheral defocus with spectacles versus soft contact lenses are needed to elucidate the role  
313 of optical correction method on the onset and progression of myopia.

#### 314 *Variability of accommodative response*

315 The temporal characteristics of accommodation plays a role in accommodation control,<sup>37</sup> and in  
316 optical terms, high frequency fluctuations can impair image quality.<sup>59</sup> As with the lag of

317 accommodation, high variability of accommodation promotes larger retinal defocus, and has  
318 also been linked to visual fatigue,<sup>37,48</sup> and myopia progression.<sup>37,59,60</sup> Our data demonstrate that  
319 wearing soft contact lenses induces a higher accommodation variability in near tasks and,  
320 therefore, these findings should be taken into account for optical correction prescription in  
321 relation to myopia progression and visual discomfort management. In agreement with the  
322 previous literature, the variability of accommodation is larger at closer viewing distances,<sup>15,59</sup> as  
323 it has been shown in the current study. Interestingly, we found a lower variability, although  
324 significant between both correction methods (see figure 2), at 40 cm distance. This length is  
325 considered as the habitual distance for near tasks in the vast majority of nonpresbyopic  
326 adults,<sup>45,61</sup> and it is also the normalized distance used in optometric examinations for near  
327 tests.<sup>40</sup> We support the contention that the visual functioning may be adapted to the habitually  
328 used distance in the real life. Future studies are required in this regard.

329 Lastly, as indicated by Harb, Thorn, & Troilo<sup>62</sup>, those individuals who prefer closer reading  
330 distances may be more susceptible to develop myopia because both accommodative fluctuations  
331 and lags are greater. In this line, our data revealed higher values of accommodative variability  
332 and lag of accommodation with the use of soft contact lenses in comparison to spectacles, and it  
333 could further support the hypothesis that using soft contact lenses rather than spectacles during  
334 near tasks may exacerbate myopia progression.<sup>63,64</sup>

### 335 *A plausible explanation for the present findings*

336 There are several mechanisms that may explain our results. It should be noted that the study  
337 sample presents a trend toward to myopia (-0.79 [1.39] D), and recent evidence suggests that the  
338 vergence in myopes is slower, while the accommodation is less stable in comparison to  
339 emmetropes.<sup>65</sup> In addition, there is evidence about the influence of the optical correction method  
340 on the accommodative and vergence demands while viewing oscillatory targets, with myopes  
341 demonstrating greater accommodative and vergence requirements when wearing soft contact  
342 lenses in comparison to spectacles.<sup>23</sup> The use of soft contact lenses permit to maintain the  
343 optical centre in a correct position at all viewing distances (soft contact lens moves with the

344 eye), whereas spectacle correction is normally centred at far distance and it is used for all  
345 viewing distances. In this regard, the use of spectacles by myopes and hyperopes, during near  
346 vision, induces base-in and base-out prism effects, respectively, and therefore, the vergence  
347 demands vary depending on the type of optical correction method and refractive error.<sup>66</sup> For  
348 example in the range of -3.25 to +2.75 D and considering a viewing distance of 20 cm, the  
349 prismatic effect ranges from 0.58 base-in to 0.50 base-out prismatic diopters. Additionally, it is  
350 well known that the retinal image size depends on the optical correction method due to its  
351 different distances in relation to the entrance pupil plane (approximately 15 mm in spectacles  
352 and 3mm in contact lenses). The magnification changes induced by lens powers of -4 D and +2  
353 D, considering a base curve of +4 D and a refractive index of 1.5, are -0.24% and +1.23%,  
354 respectively.<sup>40</sup> Also, accommodative response is sensitive to lens effectivity, since  
355 accommodative demand changes as a consequence of the power of the refractive error.<sup>67</sup>  
356 However, theoretical calculations indicate that these difference are negligible when considering  
357 the average refractive error of our experimental sample ( $0.79 \pm 1.39$  D).<sup>66</sup> Consequently, the  
358 influence of retinal image size (magnification) and lens effectivity cannot completely explain  
359 the differences found for the accommodative response between spectacles and soft contact  
360 lenses. We consider that the inclusion of participants with larger refractive errors is needed to  
361 address this question. In this context, the eye obtains feedback from the fluctuations of  
362 accommodation (variability of accommodation) influencing the accommodative response,<sup>68</sup> and  
363 also, the fluctuations of accommodation are closely related to the error in the magnitude of  
364 accommodation.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, some studies have found that there is a bi-directional  
365 relationship between the magnitude and variability of accommodation, which may exacerbate  
366 the differences found between both optical correction methods as consequence of the factors  
367 previously discussed (e.g., vergence demand, retinal image size). Although it was beyond to the  
368 aims of this study, we tested the possible association between the magnitude and variability of  
369 accommodative response when both wearing soft contact lenses and spectacles at the five  
370 distances tested, and we failed to find any statistically significant association (all p-values >  
371 0.05) between both ocular parameters.<sup>59,69</sup> This lack of association may be due to the inclusion

372 of different refractive groups, since the relationship between the magnitude and variability of  
373 accommodation has showed to be highly dependent on refractive group.<sup>37,59</sup> Lastly, the use of  
374 soft contact lenses promotes dry eye symptomatology, being blurry and changeable vision  
375 symptoms commonly reported by contact lens wearers.<sup>70</sup> Also, ocular dryness and poorer  
376 optical quality induced by soft contact lenses movement decrease optical quality,<sup>71,72</sup> which  
377 have showed a positive association with accommodative lag and fluctuations.<sup>73</sup> This possibility  
378 should be explored in future investigations.

### 379 *Repeatability*

380 The terms of repeatability and reproducibility refer to the precision in repeated measurement by  
381 one observer when all external factors are assumed constant, or when they (e.g., observer,  
382 instrument, environmental conditions, etc.) are altered, respectively. Here, we are considering  
383 the precision of measuring AR inter-sessions (repeatability) and inter-optical correction  
384 methods (reproducibility), and high levels of repeatability or reproducibility indicate that two  
385 measures are comparable and interchangeable.<sup>54</sup> For all the near stimuli (50, 40, 33, 25, and 20  
386 cm), there were significant differences between optical correction methods (soft contact lenses  
387 induce a higher lag of accommodation), and thus, the accommodative response measure is  
388 incomparable between soft contact lenses and spectacles (see magnitude of accommodative  
389 response in the results section). Finally, our analysis yielded a strong inter-session repeatability  
390 at the five distances and both optical correction methods (Intraclass correlation coefficient  
391 range: 0.95-0.99), no variability exists between two measures of accommodative response when  
392 performed by the same observer, in the same experimental conditions, and with the same optical  
393 correction method.

### 394 *Limitations and future research*

395 The current study provides evidence on the modulation of accommodative response (magnitude  
396 and variability) as consequence of using soft contact lenses or spectacles with accommodative  
397 demands. The inter-sessions repeatability at all distances tested highlight that the objective

398 measure of accommodative response with the instrument used in the present investigation is  
399 fairly repeatable, and demonstrate that a single measure under these conditions is enough to  
400 obtain valid results. In any case, the limits of agreement may be carefully considered, since no  
401 significant statistical differences may be of relevancy depending on the type of application (e.g.,  
402 research, clinical, etc.). However, we think that several considerations may be taken into  
403 account in further research. Here, we adapted a soft contact lenses with a specific design and  
404 properties, and we would consider interesting to investigate the effects of other types of contact  
405 lenses (e.g. aspheric, bifocal, multifocal, defocus incorporated soft contact lenses, etc.), as well  
406 as testing the peripheral retinal defocus with different optical correction methods focusing on  
407 the influence in myopia progression.<sup>74</sup> It is our hope that future studies will explore the  
408 influence of wearing different optical correction methods considering different refractive  
409 groups, as well as during prolonged near tasks, with possible relevance in visual fatigue. Also,  
410 the refractive error range of our experimental sample was extremely limited, and thus, the non-  
411 existent association of the differences in the dynamics of ocular accommodation (magnitude and  
412 variability) between both optical correction methods and participants' refractive error may be  
413 due to this fact. The inclusion of individuals with larger refractive errors are needed to test this  
414 possible relationship in future studies. Lastly, other factors such as cognitive demand, time of  
415 the day, the level of activation, and the level of visual symptomatology, including ocular  
416 dryness, may be considered due to its possible influence in the accommodative response.

#### 417 *Conclusions*

418 The magnitude and variability of accommodative response are sensitive to the method used for  
419 ametropia correction, showing that soft contact lenses induce higher lags and larger fluctuations  
420 of ocular accommodation when compared with spectacles. These findings may have important  
421 implications in research (experimental designs) and clinical (emmetropization process and  
422 visual fatigue) contexts. Longitudinal studies are required to determine whether the differences  
423 in the accommodative response between optical correction methods affects to myopia

424 progression. Further, experimental designs with prolonged near demands would show the  
425 effects on visual fatigue.

426

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432 interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the  
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434 **Ethical approval:** All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in  
435 accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and  
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616 **Figure captions**

617 **Figure 1.** Effects of optical correction method (soft contact lenses versus spectacles) on the lag  
618 of accommodation. Average lag of accommodation for each distance with both methods of  
619 correction. Data from the spectacles correction are represented with green triangles and, from  
620 the soft contact lenses with blue squares. The lag of accommodation values correspond to the  
621 average value from both trials with each optical correction method. Error bars show the  
622 Standard Deviation (SD).

623 **Figure 2.** Effects of optical correction method (soft contact lenses versus spectacles) on the  
624 accommodative response variability. Mean standard deviation of accommodative response for  
625 each distance with both methods of optical correction. Data from the spectacles correction are  
626 represented with green triangles and, from the soft contact lenses with blue squares. The  
627 accommodative response variability values correspond to the average value from both trials  
628 with each optical correction method. \* indicates statistically significant differences between  
629 both optical correction methods at each specific accommodative (corrected p-values < 0.05).  
630 Error bars show the Standard Deviation (SD).

631 **Figure 3.** Bland and Altman plots illustrating the intersession repeatability of accommodative  
632 response measurements (lag of accommodation) made in participants while wearing spectacles  
633 correction at 50 cm (A), 40 cm (B), 33 cm (C), 25 cm (D), and 20 cm (E). The x-axis shows the  
634 mean lag of accommodation from trial 1 and trial 2. The dotted line represents the mean bias  
635 and the dashed lines show the 95% limits of agreement. The regression line is represented by a  
636 solid black line, and the grey lines indicate the value zero.

637 **Figure 4.** Bland and Altman plots illustrating the intersession repeatability of accommodative  
638 response measurements (lag of accommodation) made in participants while wearing soft contact  
639 lenses correction at 50 cm (A), 40 cm (B), 33 cm (C), 25 cm (D), and 20 cm (E). The x-axis  
640 shows the mean lag of accommodation from trial 1 and trial 2. The dotted line represents the

641 mean bias and the dashed lines show the 95% limits of agreement. The regression line is  
642 represented by a solid black line, and the grey lines indicate the value zero.

643

**Table 1.** Inclusion criteria and sample values of the visual parameters evaluated.

	Inclusion criteria values	Study sample values (mean $\pm$ SD, range)
<b><i>Visual symptomatology</i></b>		
Conlon questionnaire	< 24 (low discomfort)	6.18 $\pm$ 3.16, 1 - 14
<b><i>Visual acuity</i></b>		
Right eye (logMAR)	$\leq$ 0.00 log MAR	-0.08 $\pm$ 0.03, -0.14 – 0 log MAR
Left eye (logMAR)	$\leq$ 0.00 log MAR	-0.07 $\pm$ 0.03, -0.13 – 0 log MAR
<b><i>Refractive error</i></b>		
Spherical component (D)	between -5.00D and +3.00D	-0.79 $\pm$ 1.39, -3.25 - +2.75 D
Astigmatic component (D)	< 2.00D	0.68 $\pm$ 0.30, 1.50 – 0 D
<b><i>Accommodative testing</i></b>		
Amplitude of accommodation (D)	18 – 1/3 age $\pm$ 2D	11.81 $\pm$ 1.47, 10 – 13 D
Monocular accommodative facility (cpm, RE)	11 $\pm$ 5 cpm	10.84 $\pm$ 3.14, 8 – 14 cpm
Monocular accommodative facility (cpm, LE)	11 $\pm$ 5 cpm	10.45 $\pm$ 2.84, 8 – 14 cpm
Binocular accommodative facility (cpm)	10 $\pm$ 5 cpm	10.42 $\pm$ 2.12, 8 – 13 cpm
<b><i>Binocular testing</i></b>		
Distance phoria ( $\Delta$ )	1 exophoria $\pm$ 2 $\Delta$	0.85 exophoria $\pm$ 1.20, 1 <b>esophoria</b> – 2 exophoria $\Delta$
Near phoria ( $\Delta$ )	3 exophoria $\pm$ 3 $\Delta$	1.45 exophoria $\pm$ 1.05, 1 exophoria – 5 exophoria $\Delta$
Distance negative fusional vergence ( $\Delta$ , break/recovery)	7 $\pm$ 3 $\Delta$ / 4 $\pm$ 2 $\Delta$	8.45 $\pm$ 1.85 / 4.40 $\pm$ 1.50, 5 – 9 / 3 – 5 $\Delta$
Distance positive fusional vergence ( $\Delta$ , break/recovery)	11 $\pm$ 7 $\Delta$ / 7 $\pm$ 2 $\Delta$	13.65 $\pm$ 3.68 / 8.05 $\pm$ 1.40, 10 – 17 / 6 – 9 $\Delta$
Near negative fusional vergence ( $\Delta$ , break/recovery)	13 $\pm$ 6 $\Delta$ / 10 $\pm$ 5 $\Delta$	15.40 $\pm$ 4.20 / 11.53 $\pm$ 3.42, 10 – 19 / 8 – 15 $\Delta$
Near positive fusional vergence ( $\Delta$ , break/recovery)	19 $\pm$ 9 $\Delta$ / 14 $\pm$ 7 $\Delta$	22.26 $\pm$ 6.24 / 16.07 $\pm$ 4.21, 17 – 27 / 12 – 21 $\Delta$
Near point of convergence (cm, break/recovery)	5 $\pm$ 2.5 cm / 7 $\pm$ 3 cm	5.85 $\pm$ 1.74 / 7.72 $\pm$ 2.05, 4 – 7 / 5 – 9 cm

Note: Amplitude of accommodative was measured by the push-up technique using an accommodative target, monocular and binocular accommodative facility was measured with  $\pm$  2.0 diopters flippers, distance and near phorias were measured by Thorington's method, vergences were measured by prisms bar, and the near point of convergence was measured by the push-up technique using an accommodative target. Accommodation and vergence values correspond to those given by Scheiman & Wick (2008).<sup>40</sup>

Abbreviations: logMAR = logarithm of the Minimum Angle of Resolution, D = diopters, cpm = cycles per minute,  $\Delta$  = prismatic dioptre, **RE = right eye, LE = left eye**, cm = centimetre.

**Table 2.** Inter-session repeatability between trial 1 and 2 for both optical correction methods at the six distances tested.

	p-value	ES	r	ICC
SCL 50 cm	0.81	0.01	0.98	0.98
Spectacles 50 cm	0.20	0.05	0.99	0.99
SCL 40 cm	0.47	0.03	0.98	0.98
Spectacles 40 cm	0.66	0.02	0.99	0.99
SCL 33 cm	0.87	0.01	0.99	0.99
Spectacles 33 cm	0.60	0.02	0.99	0.99
SCL 25 cm	0.69	0.03	0.95	0.94
Spectacles 25 cm	0.36	0.03	0.99	0.99
SCL 20 cm	0.02	0.13	0.98	0.98
Spectacles 20 cm	0.23	0.06	0.98	0.98

Abbreviations: SCL = soft contact lens; ES = effect size; r = Pearson coefficient of correlation; ICC = Intraclass correlation coefficient; m = meters; cm = centimeters.

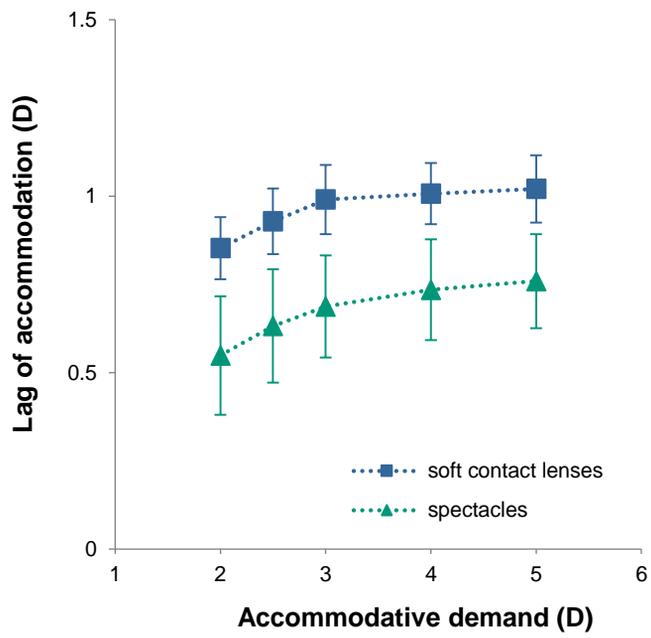


Figure 1

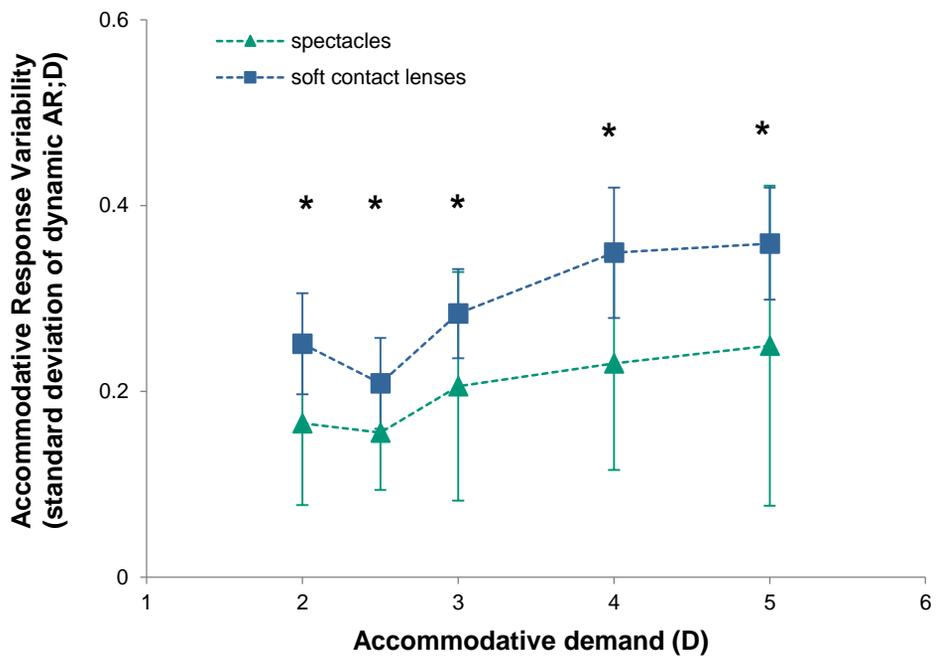


Figure 2

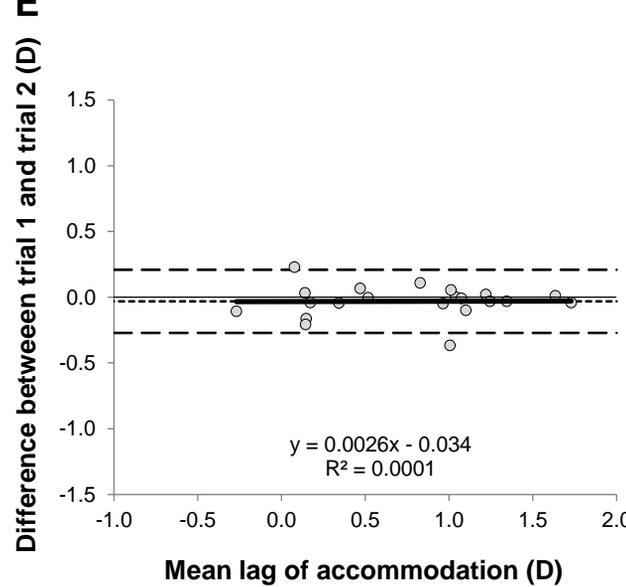
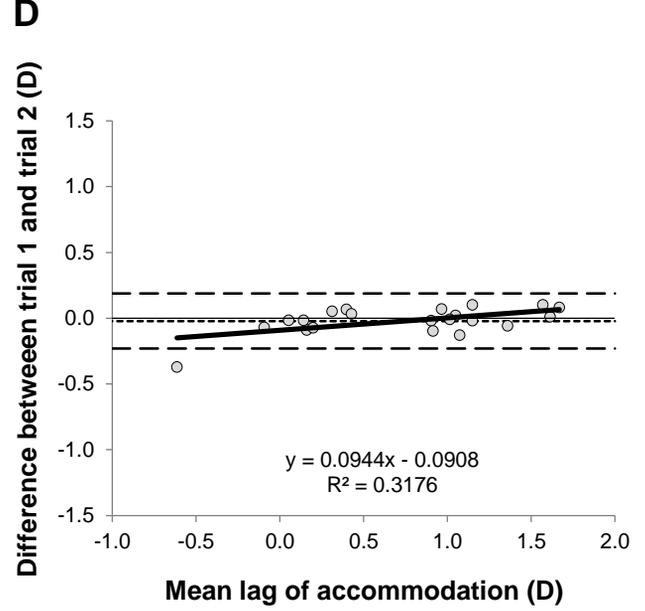
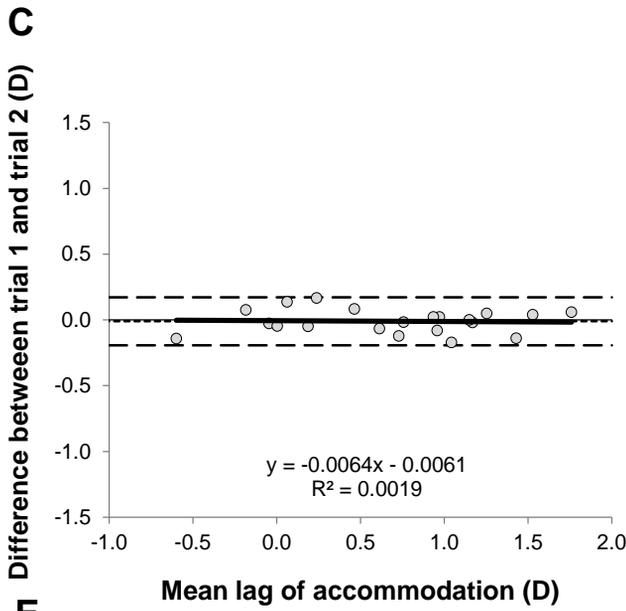
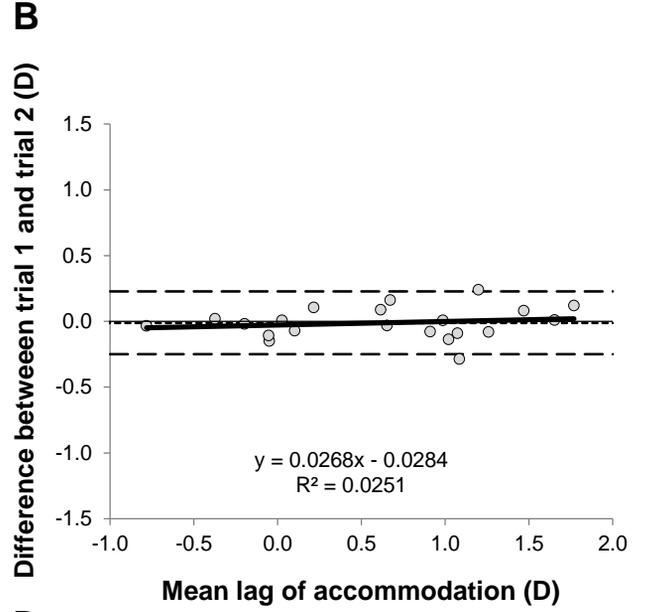
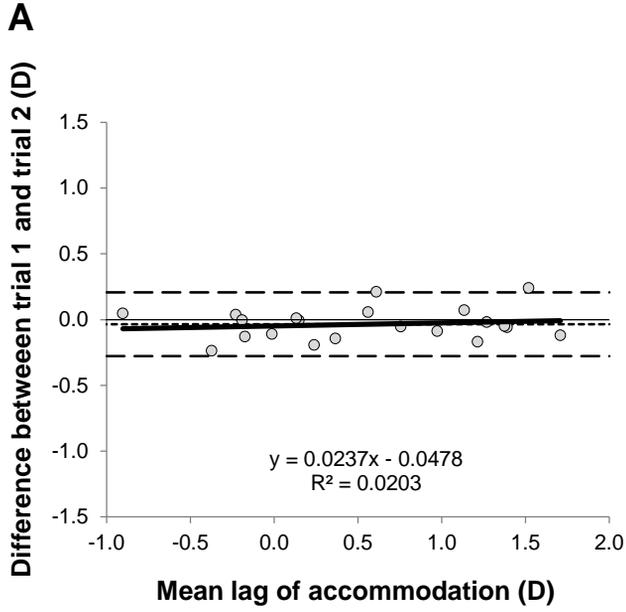


Figure 3

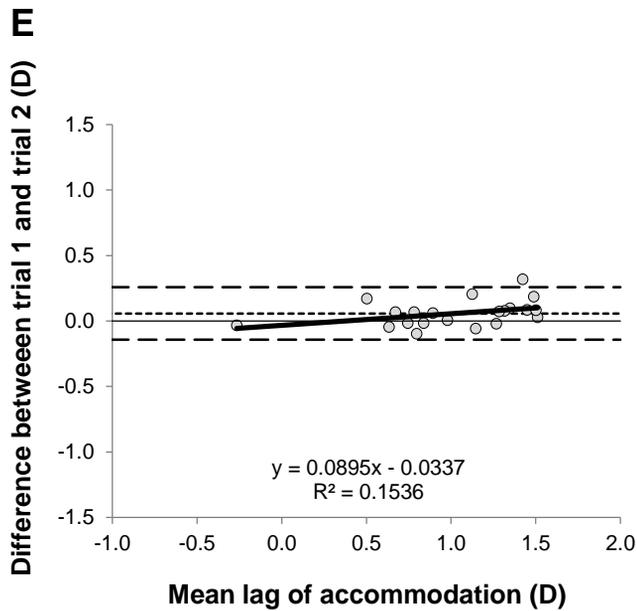
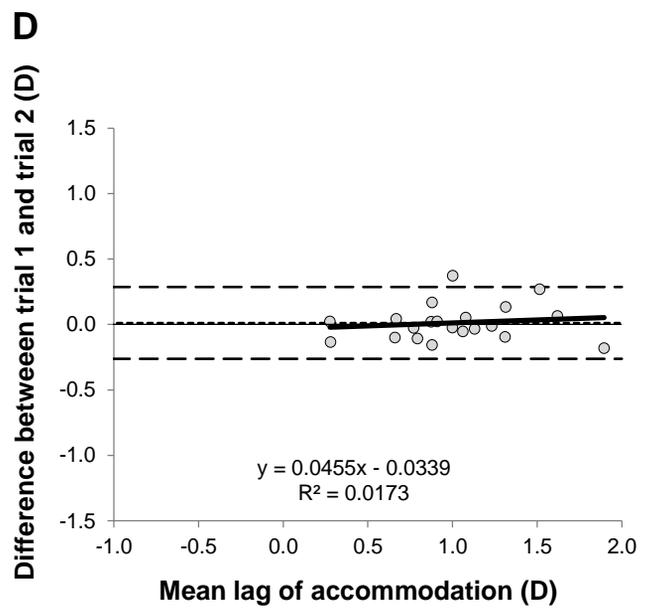
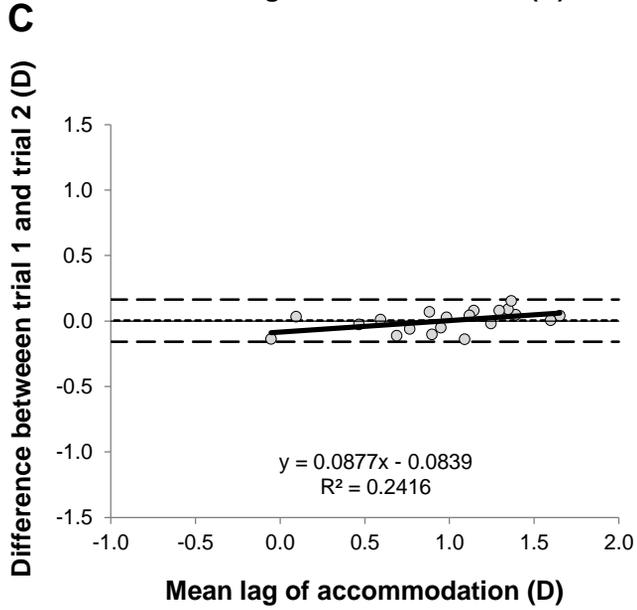
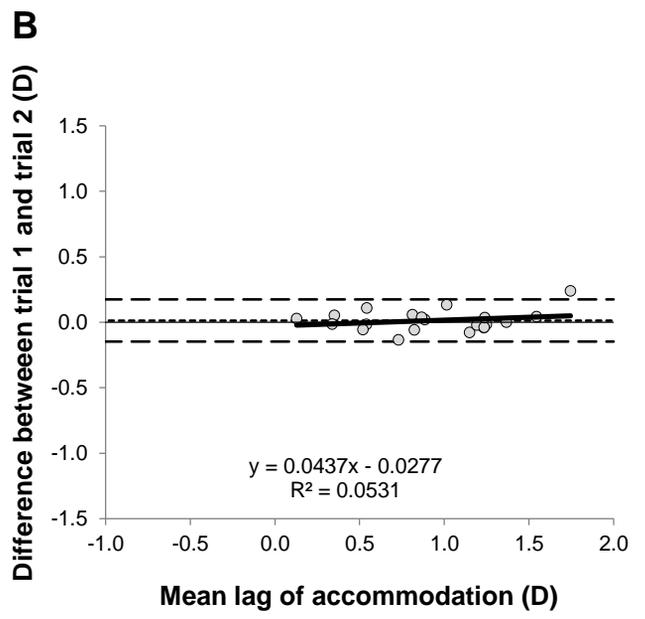
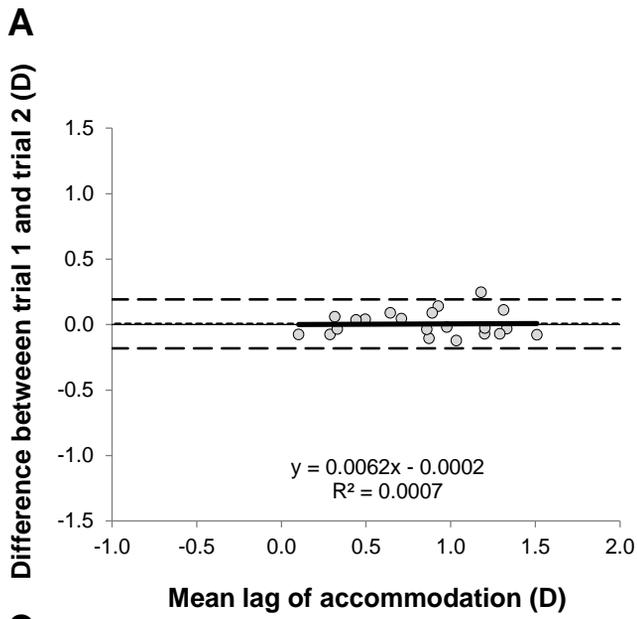


Figure 4