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Standard visual processing is prone to distractions and therefore the human brain has dedicated information “highway” to enable us see what we do, research has shown, agencies report from London.

“Our brains have separate ‘hard-wired’ systems to visually track our own bodies, even if we are not paying attention to them,” the study showed.

In fact, the newly-discovered network triggers reactions even before the conscious brain has time to process them, suggested the researchers from University College London (UCL) and Cambridge University.

The researchers discovered the new mechanism by testing



52 healthy adults in a series of three experiments.

In all experiments, participants used robotic arms to control cursors on two-dimensional displays, where cursor motion was directly linked to hand movement.

Their eyes were kept fixed on a mark at the centre of the screen, confirmed with eye tracking.

The newly-discovered system could explain why some schizophrenia patients feel like their actions are controlled by someone else.

These findings could also explain why people with even the most advanced prosthetic limbs can have trouble coordinating movements.