NEST Conference 2022



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Modeling spiking networks with neuron-glia interactions in NEST

Friday 24 June 2022 13:33 (3 minutes)

Recent experimental evidence suggests an active roles of astrocytes in a number of brain functions and demonstrates coordinated neuronal and astrocytic activity in vivo [1]. In the cortex, astrocytes form non-overlapping domains, each containing several hundreds of neurons and ~100,000 synapses [2]. Astrocytic processes are in close contact with synaptic terminals and affect synaptic transmission, plasticity, and neuronal excitability [3, 4]. Understanding the role of astrocytic mechanisms in brain functions and dysfunctions requires openaccess tools for model implementation, simulation, and analysis. In the past decade, hundreds of new models with some form of neuron-astrocyte interaction dynamics have been proposed. However, their implementation is rarely shared and not sufficiently documented to reproduce the findings [4, 5]. We developed a new module in the NEST simulator that allows efficient implementation and simulation of large neuron-astrocyte populations. This includes an astrocyte model with internal calcium dynamics, a synapse model to communicate between astrocytes and postsynaptic neurons, and user-friendly and efficient high-level connectivity functions, which allow probabilistic or deterministic pairing of neurons and astrocytes. This new module will improve the convenience, reliability, and reproducibility of computational studies involving neuron-astrocyte interactions.

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Preferred form of presentation

Poster & advertising flash talk

Topic area

models and applications

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