



2023 **GW**
Epilepsy Board Review
& Best Practices

NORMAL ADULT EEG

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DISCLOSURES

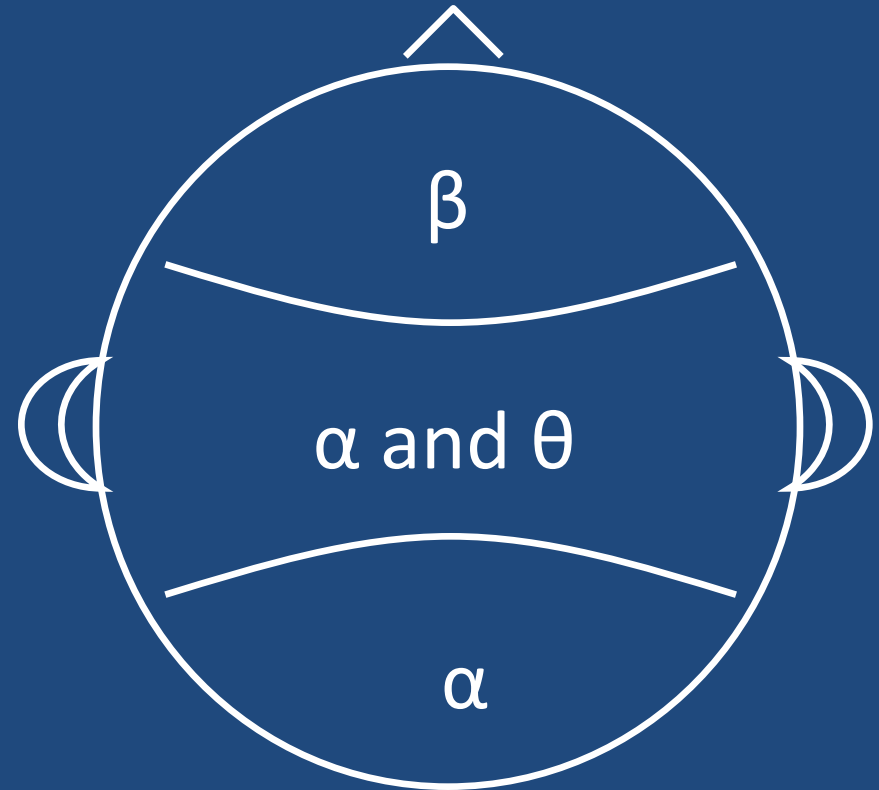
- **Disclosure of Financial Relationships**
 - **None**
- **Off-Label Usage**
 - **None**

Overview

- Awake EEG
- Drowsy EEG
- Normal / Benign Variants
- Sleep EEG

Major waking rhythms

- Posterior Dominant Rhythm
- Mu rhythm
- Third rhythm



Eyes Open



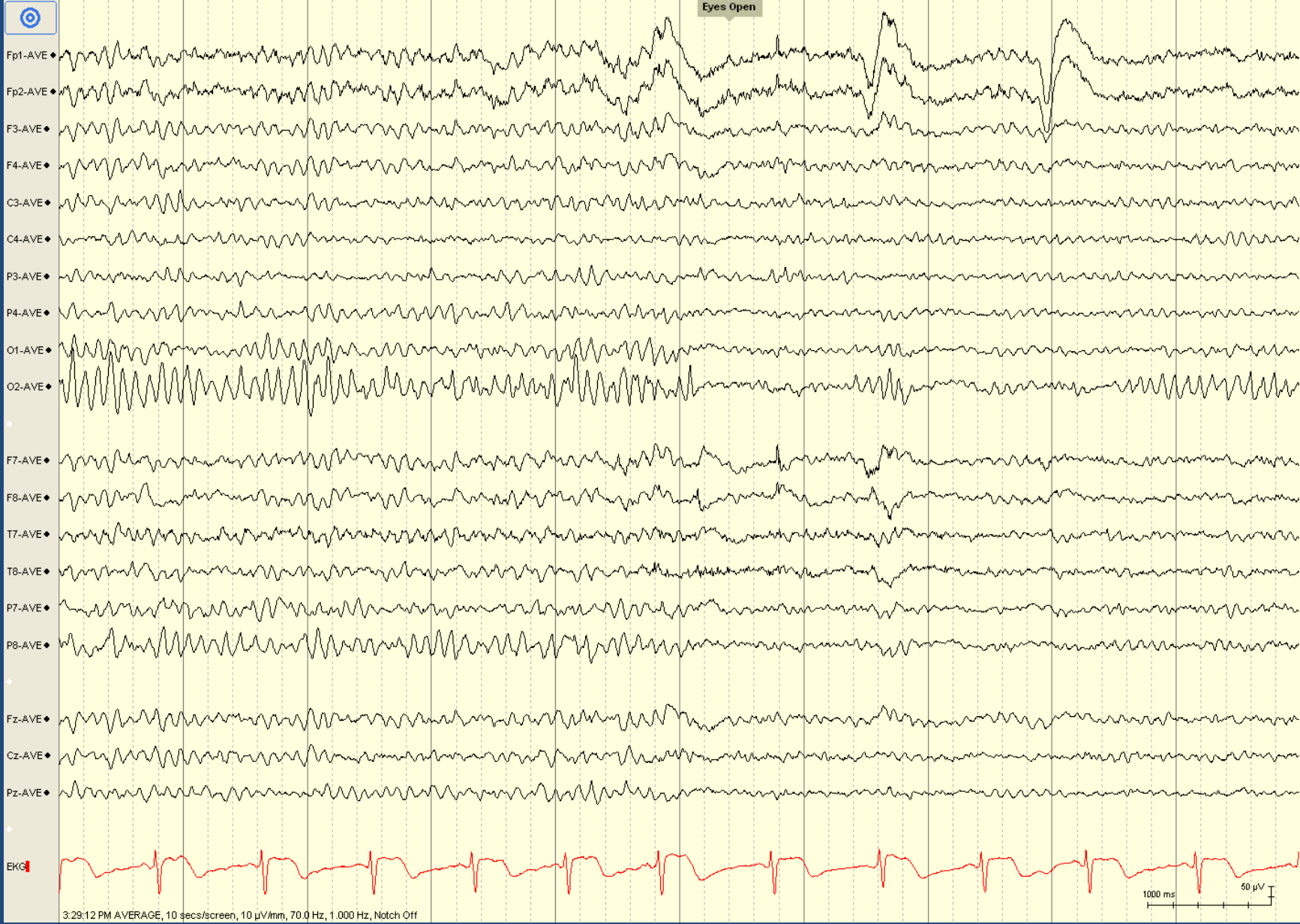
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1000 ms 50 μ V

Posterior Dominant Rhythm

- “the Alpha rhythm” (resting rhythm of occipital cortex)
- Variants
 - alpha squeak
 - slow and fast variants
 - paradoxical alpha – increases with alertness
- Bancaud’s phenomenon (abnormal) – failure to attenuate with eye closure (ipsilateral pathway lesion)
- Should be symmetric...?

Eyes Open

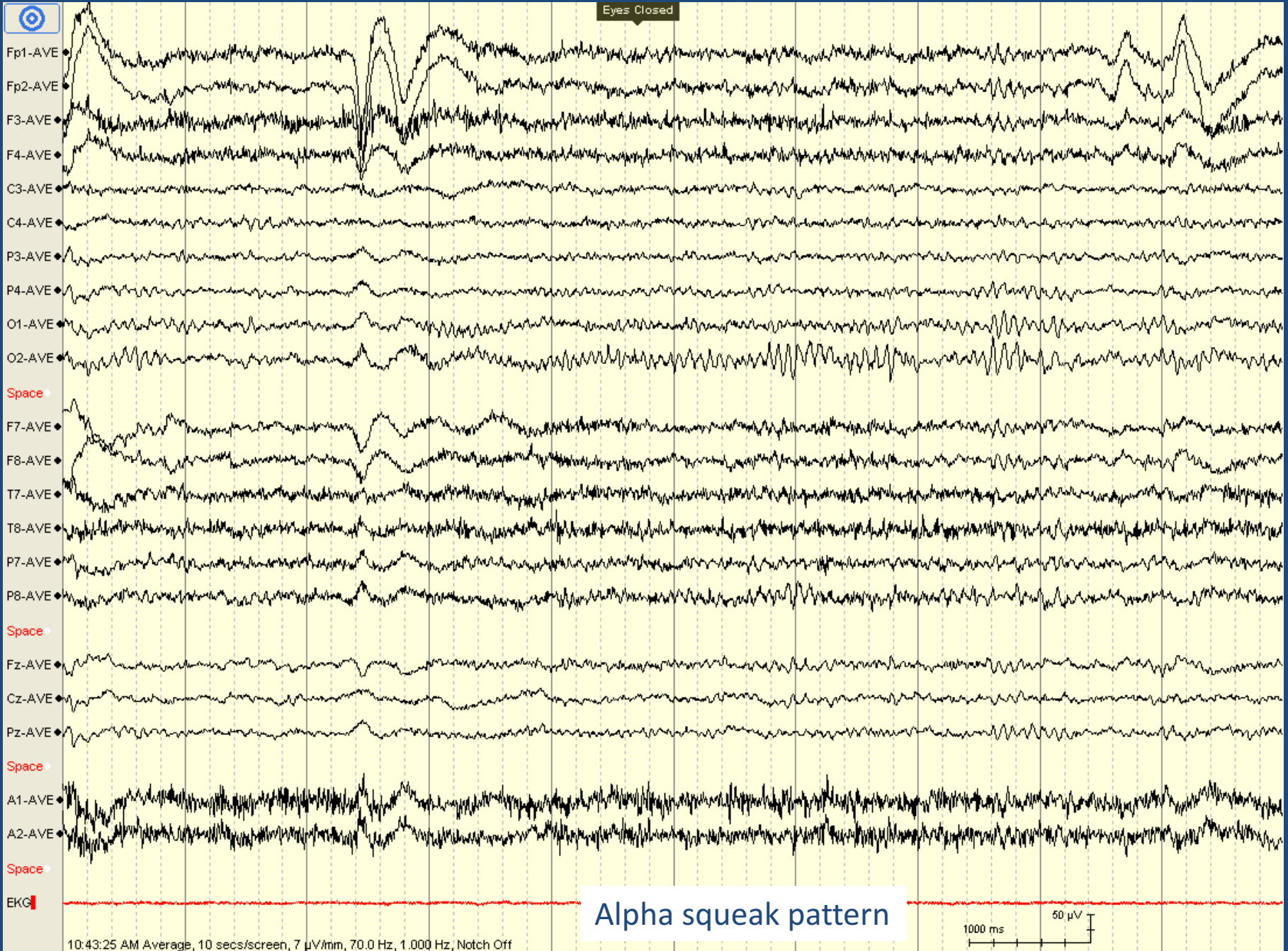


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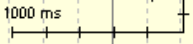
What is the allowable, normal asymmetry regarding the posterior dominant rhythm (alpha rhythm)?

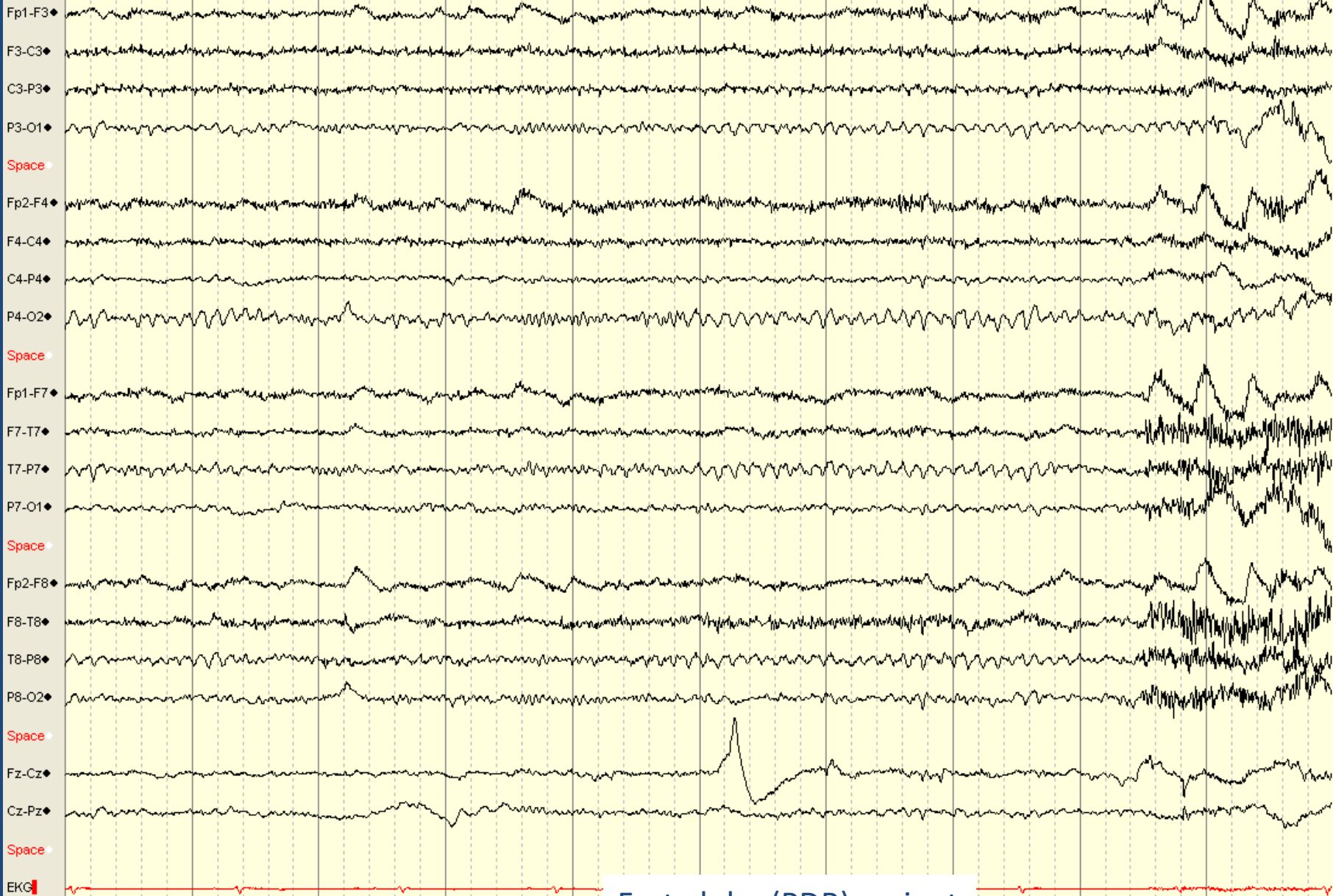
- A. Up to 35% higher amplitude on the right, and up to 35% higher amplitude on the left.
- B. Up to 50% higher amplitude on the right, and up to 35% higher amplitude on the left.
- C. Up to 35% higher amplitude on the right, and up to 50% higher amplitude on the left.
- D. Up to 50% higher amplitude on the right, and up to 50% higher amplitude on the left.
- E. Any asymmetry is considered abnormal

Eyes Closed



Alpha squeak pattern



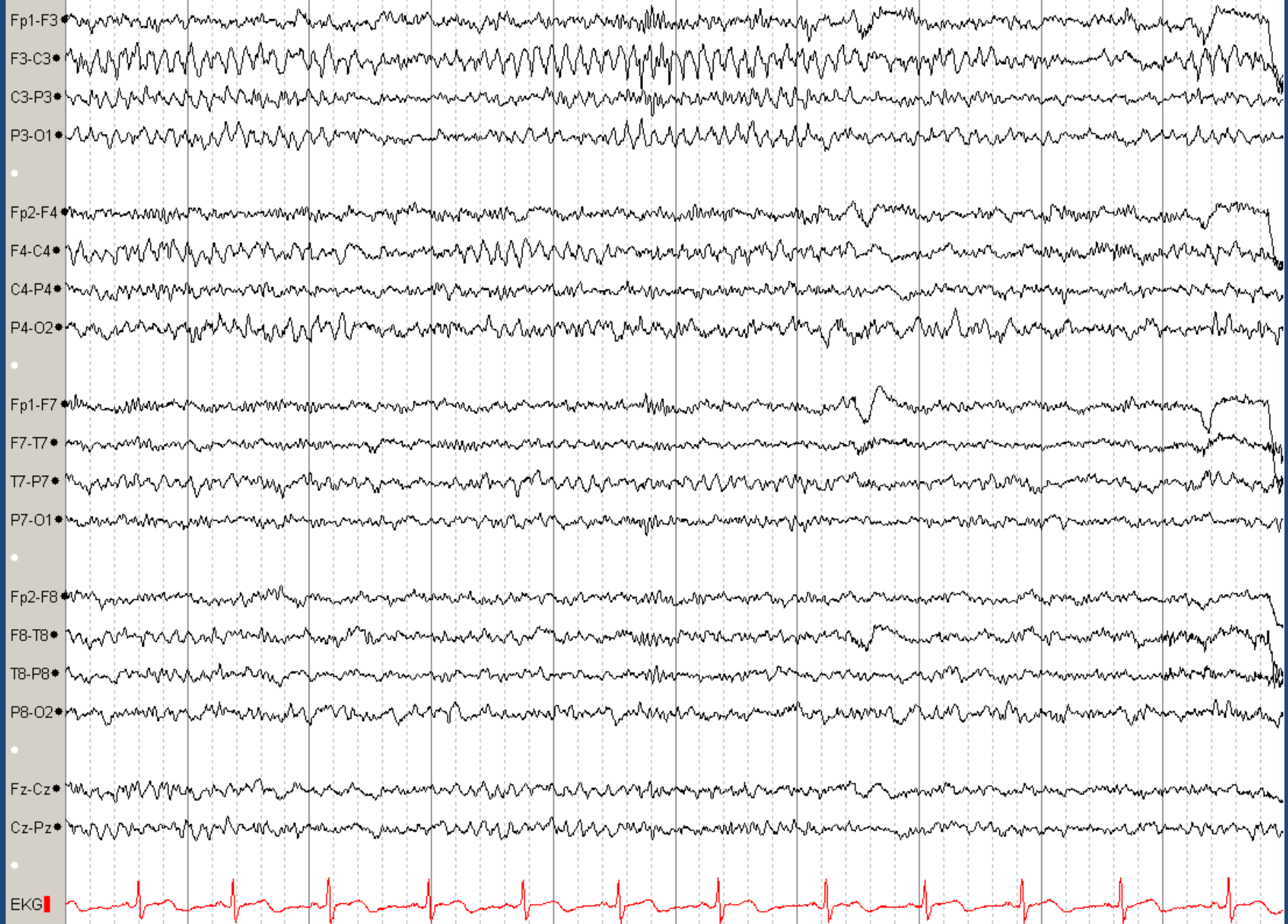


Fast alpha (PDR) variant



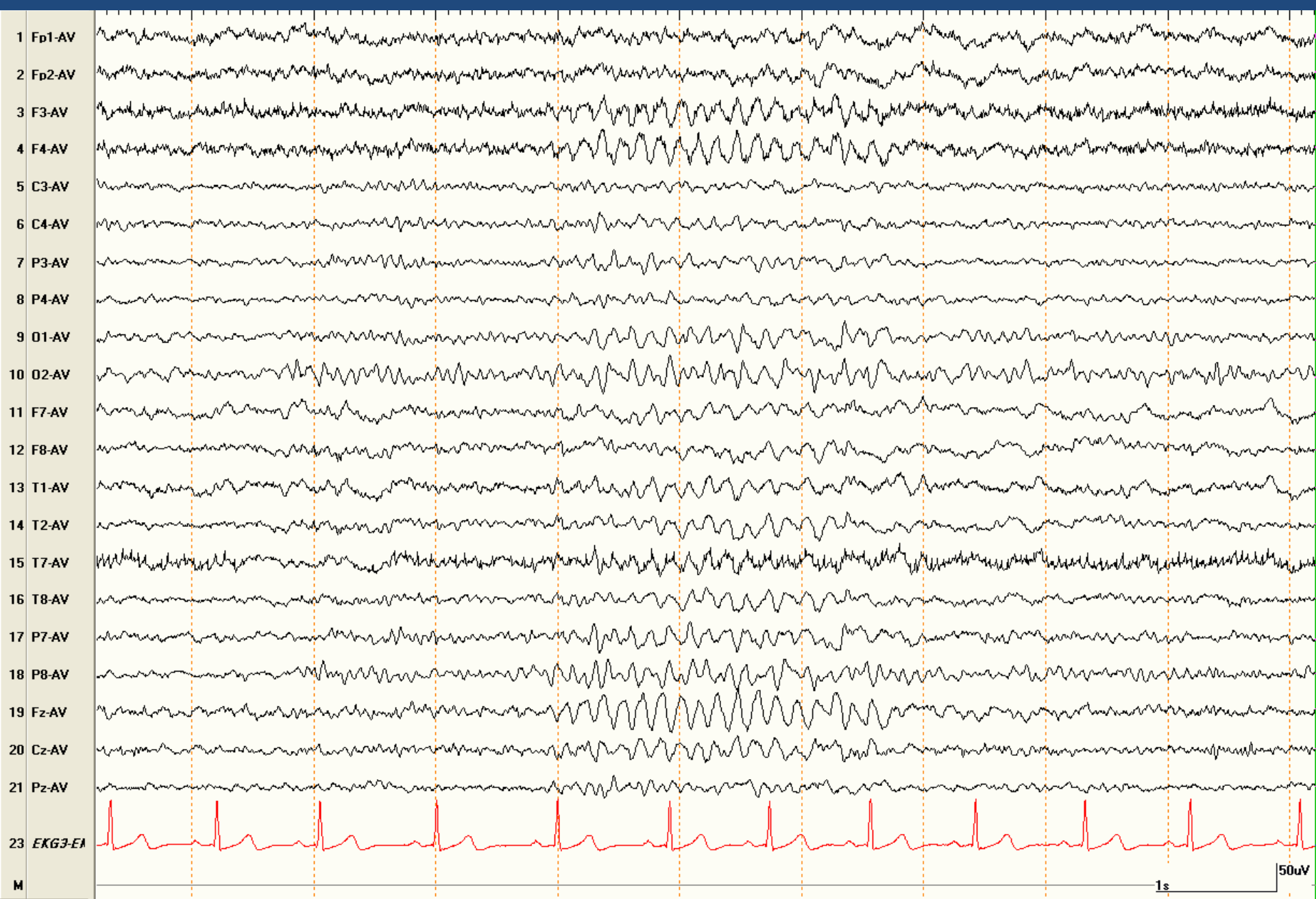
Bancaud phenomenon
(and right temporal-occipital slow activity)

Eyes Open Awake



Mu rhythm

- resting rhythm of central (premotor) cortex
 - Alpha or theta (7-11 Hz) spiky rhythm
 - Looks like the letter “ μ ”
- Attenuates with contralateral limb movement (or even thinking about movement)
- Often enhanced in presence of breach rhythm



Midline theta

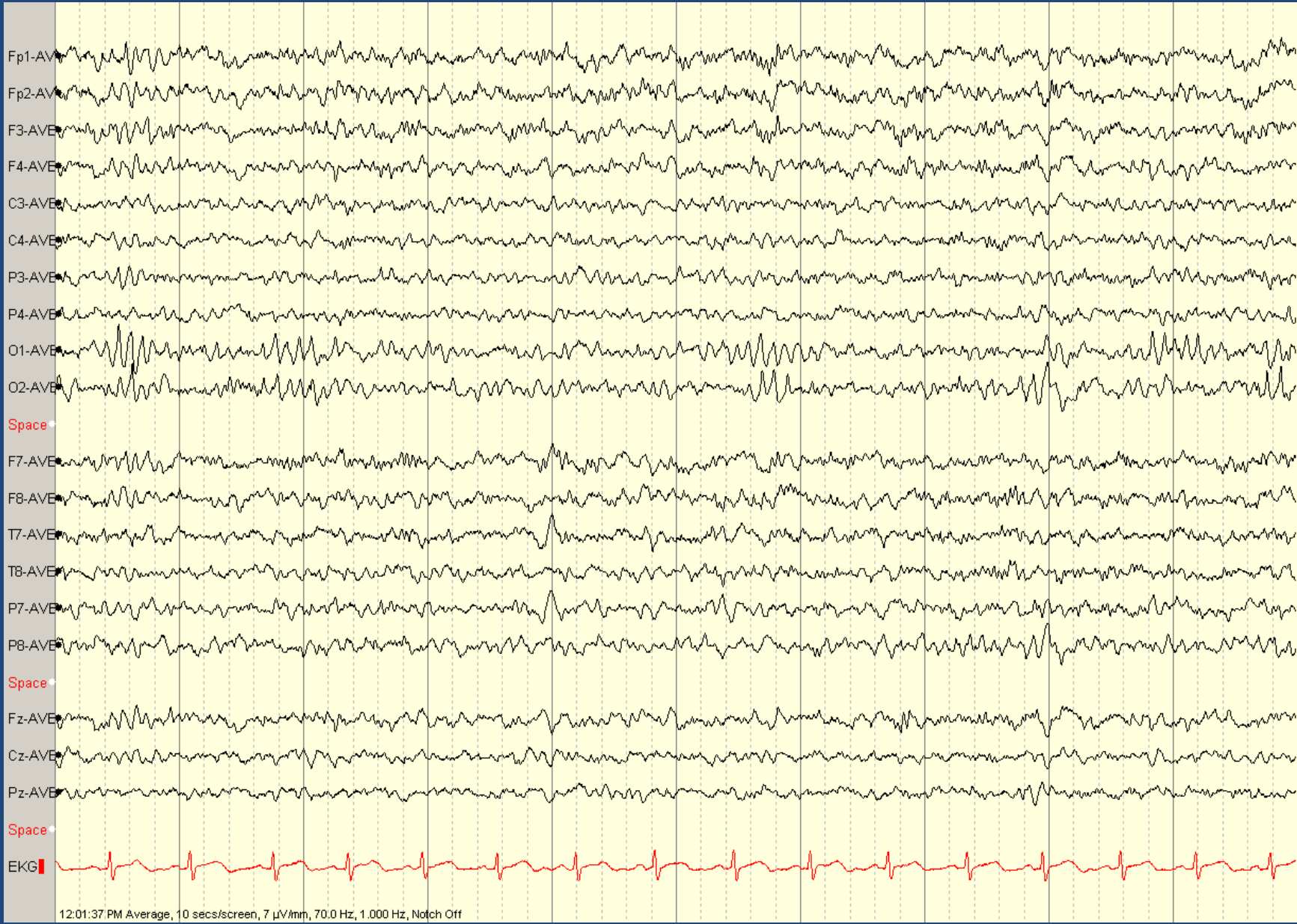
- a.k.a. Ciganek rhythm
- 5-7 Hz sinusoidal activity maximal at Cz or Fz
- may be spiky or arciform (mu-like)
- Present in awake and drowsy states
- Unrelated to eye opening, alerting, limb mvmt
- May enhance with concentration (midline frontal theta)

Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of Stage N1 Sleep?

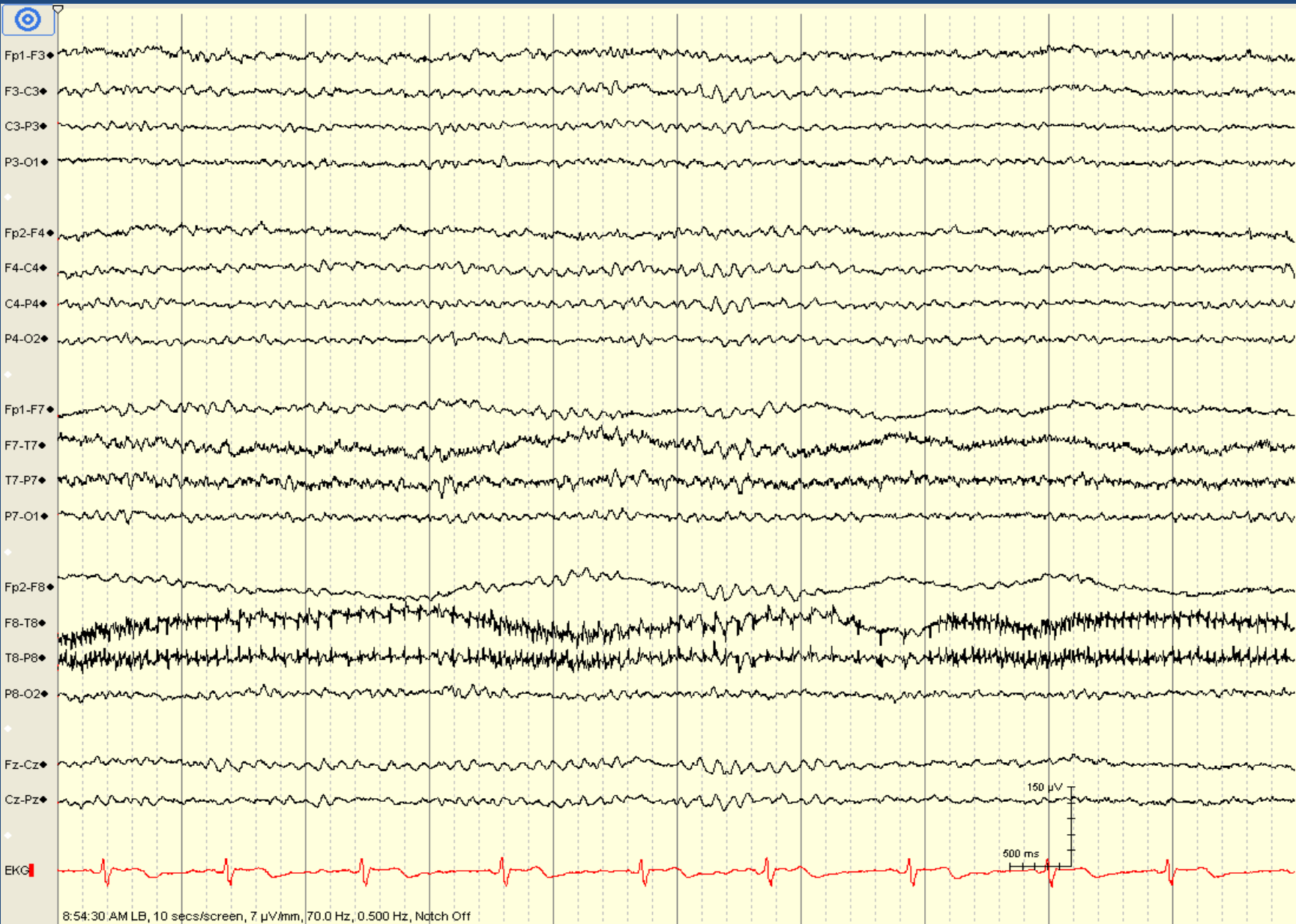
- A. Slow lateral eye movements
- B. Attenuation of posterior dominant rhythm
- C. Emergence of sleep spindles
- D. Emergence of vertex waves
- E. Emergence of theta activity

Drowsy EEG

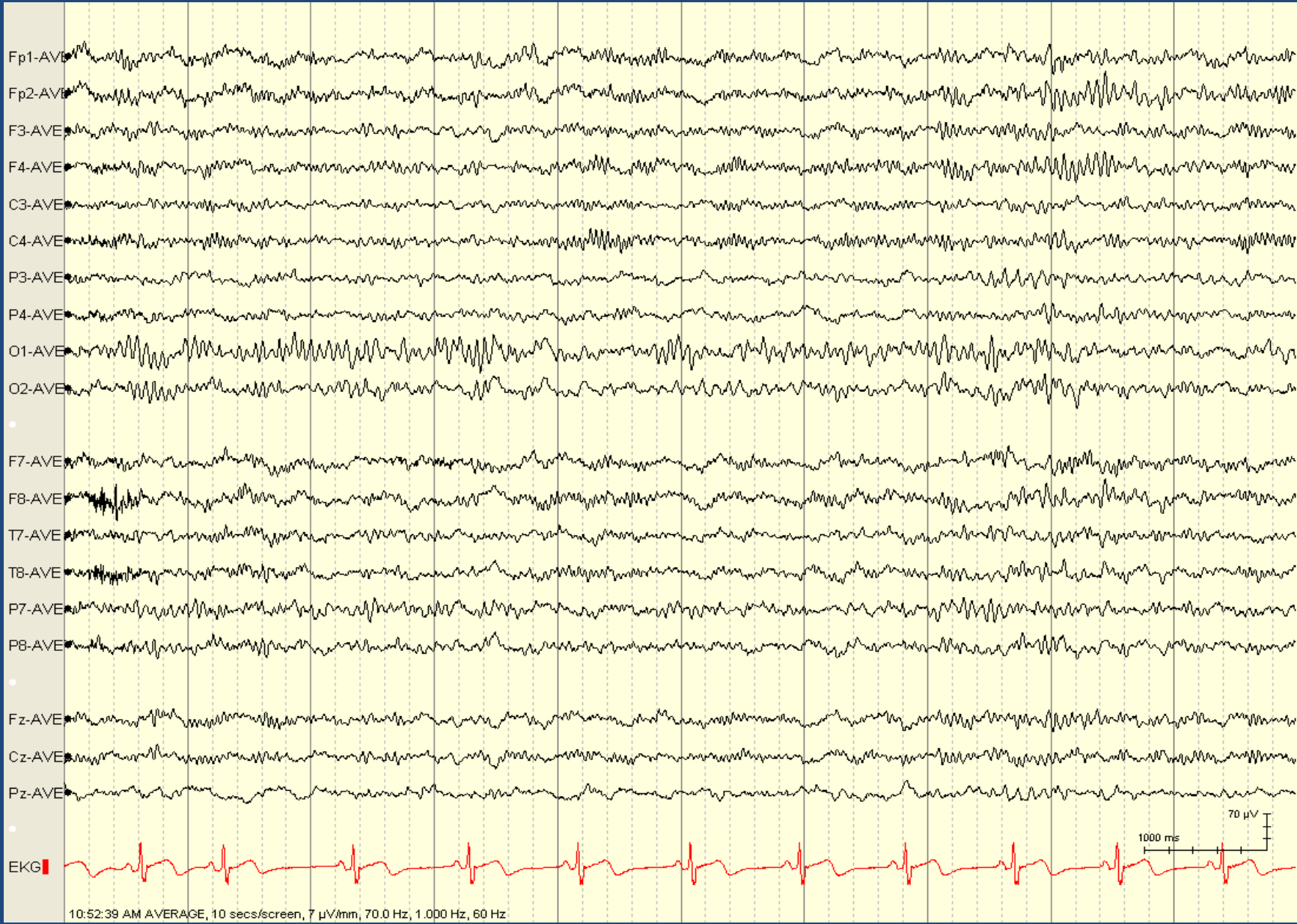
- Changes in PDR
 - Attenuation without eye opening
 - May slow by up to 1 Hz
 - May become anteriorly projected
- Slow lateral eye movements
- Emergence of theta activity (often bursts)
- Emergence of frontal beta activity



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8:54:30 AM LB, 10 secs/screen, 7 µV/mm, 70.0 Hz, 0.500 Hz, Notch Off



10:52:39 AM AVERAGE, 10 secs/screen, 7 μ V/mm, 70.0 Hz, 1,000 Hz, 60 Hz

Frontal Beta Activity

- Resting rhythm of the frontal lobes
- Best seen in drowsiness
- Abnormal*
 - Generalized
 - High voltage ($>30 \mu\text{V}$)
 - Persistent in sleep or awake states

*think benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and propofol



Third rhythm

- Resting rhythm of temporal cortex
- Alpha or theta (7-11 Hz) sinusoidal rhythm
- May be asynchronous or unilateral
- Can be seen in waking or drowsiness
- If not seen, EEG may still be normal

Which of the following features is especially useful in differentiating normal / benign variants from true epileptiform discharges?

- A. Benign variants attenuate during deeper sleep
- B. Benign variants disrupt the background rhythms
- C. Benign variants have associated slow activity
- D. Benign variants are blunt (not sharp or spike)
- E. Benign variants are low voltage

Benign Variants

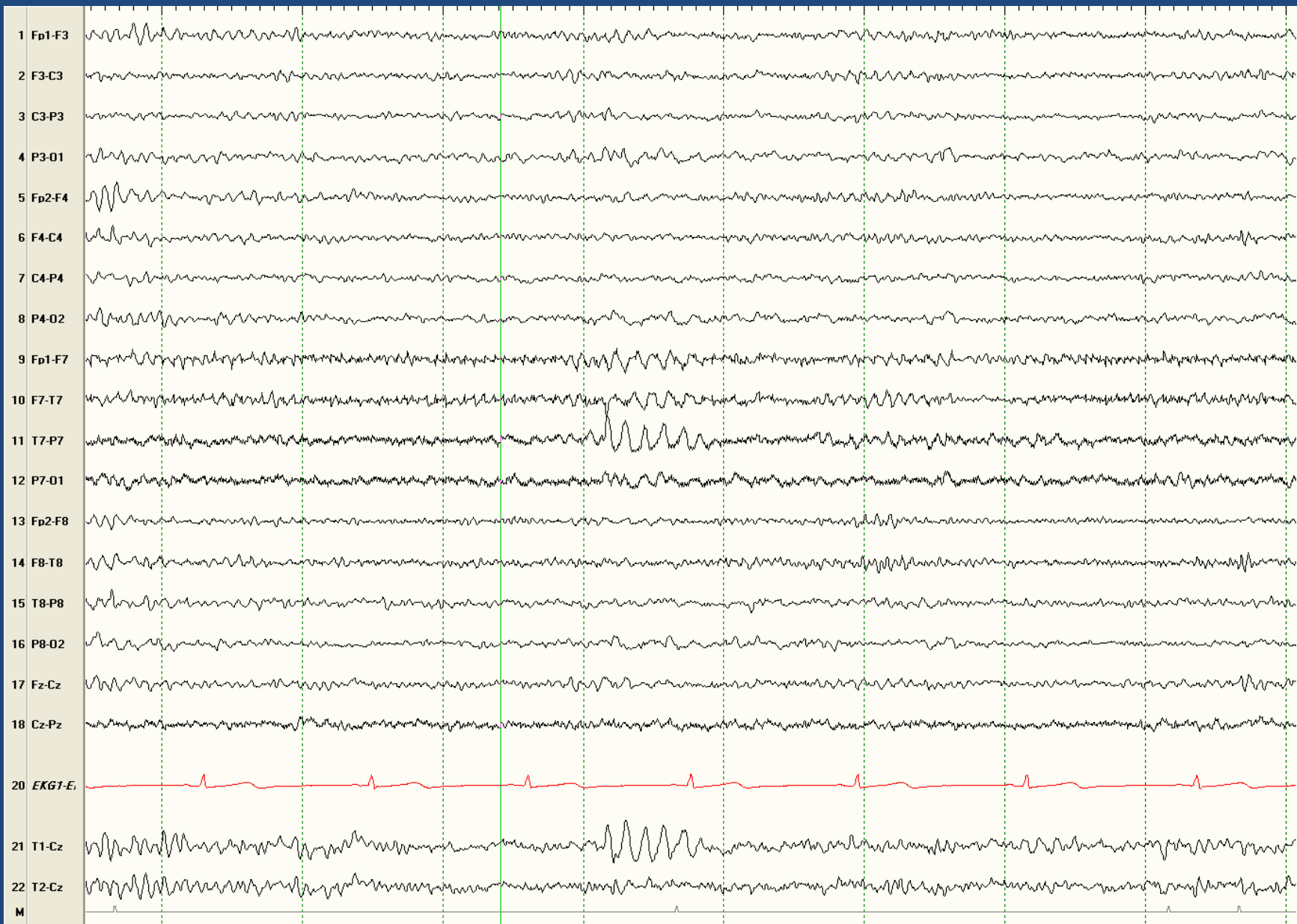
- May be rhythmic or occur in isolation
- May be high or low voltage (typically low)
- May be quite “sharp” or “spiky”

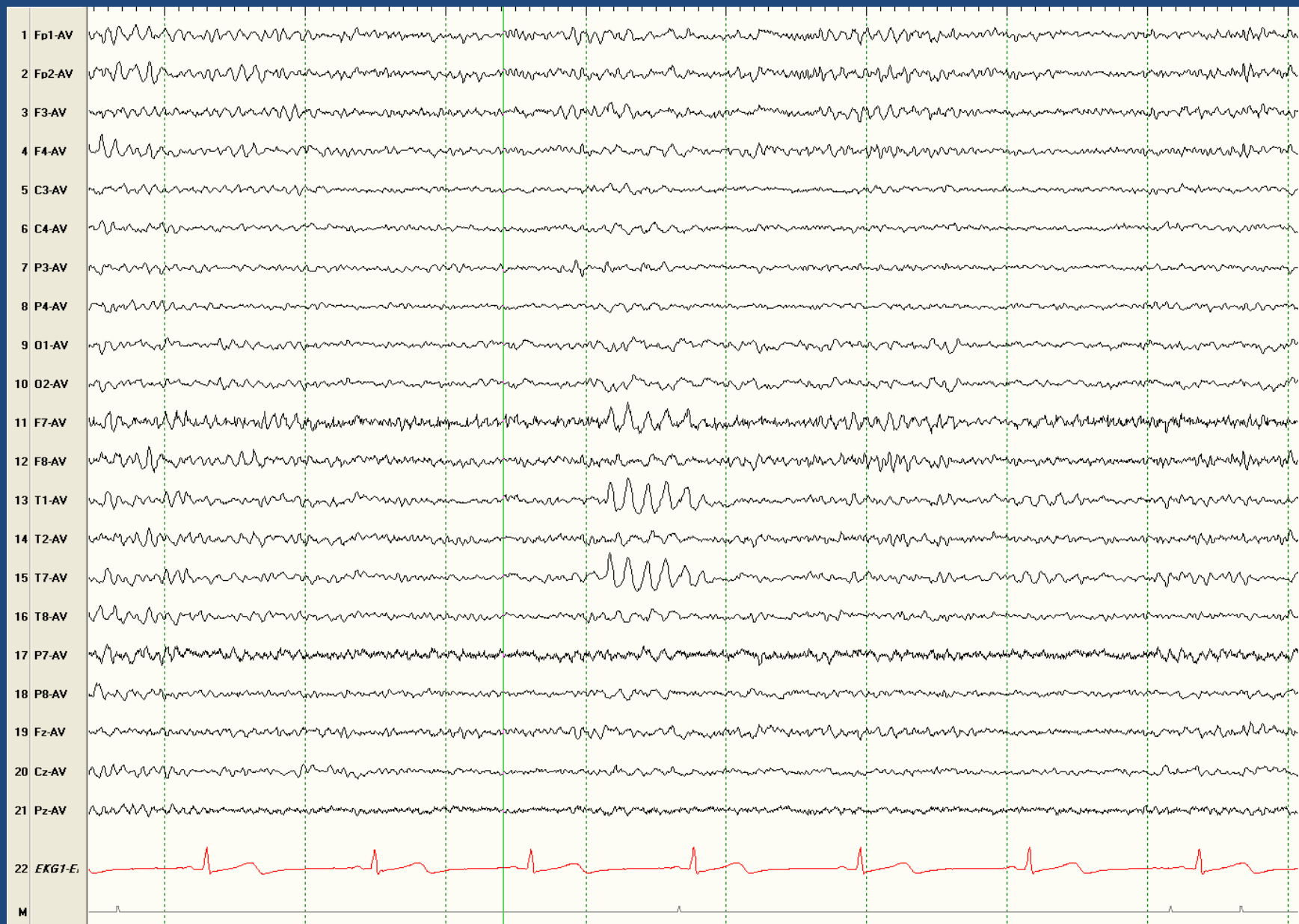
- Usually in drowsiness (not in deeper sleep)

- Should not disrupt the background
 - Have a “smooth” rhythm
 - No associated slow / delta activity

Which of the following normal / benign variants occurs in waking (and not drowsiness)?

- A. Wicket waves
- B. 14- and 6-Hz positive bursts
- C. Small sharp spikes
- D. Lambda waves
- E. Psychomotor variant





Wickets

- Rhythmic bursts of monophasic 6-11 Hz activity
- Seen bitemporally in drowsiness (not in deep sleep)
- Typically occur in trains or runs
 - don't disrupt background
 - tend to be "isosceles" (no aftergoing slow wave)
 - when seen as single waves – may be overinterpreted
 - surrounded by similar waves (may be lower amplitude)
- On a spectrum with third rhythm

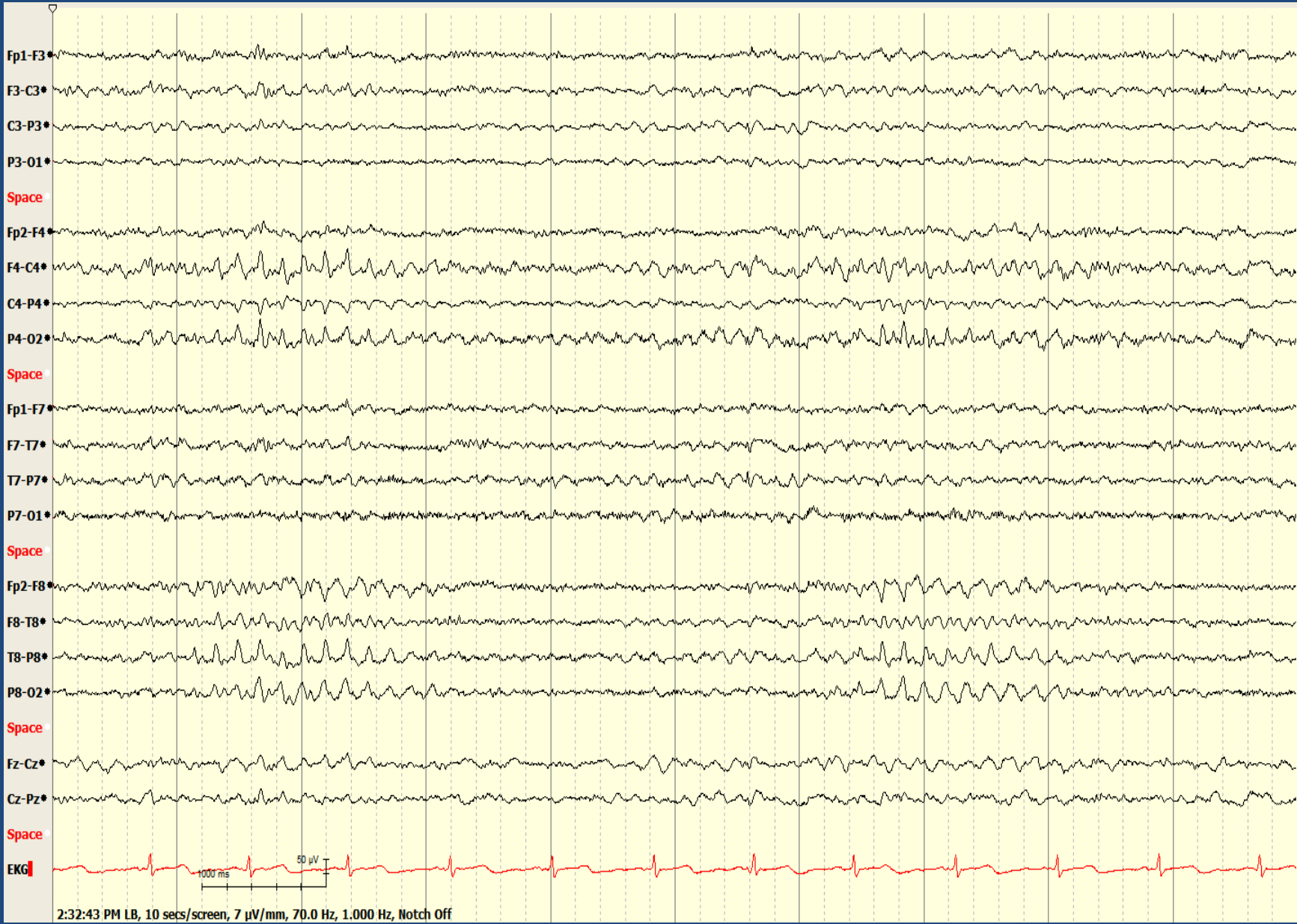
Wickets

- One of the most commonly over-read benign variants
- One study re-read EEGs of patients referred to an epilepsy center
 - over 50% (25/46) had wicket rhythms misinterpreted as epileptiform
 - these 25 patients had nonepileptic clinical episodes
- Wicket rhythms tend to be more LEFT sided (“classic” teaching is incorrect)

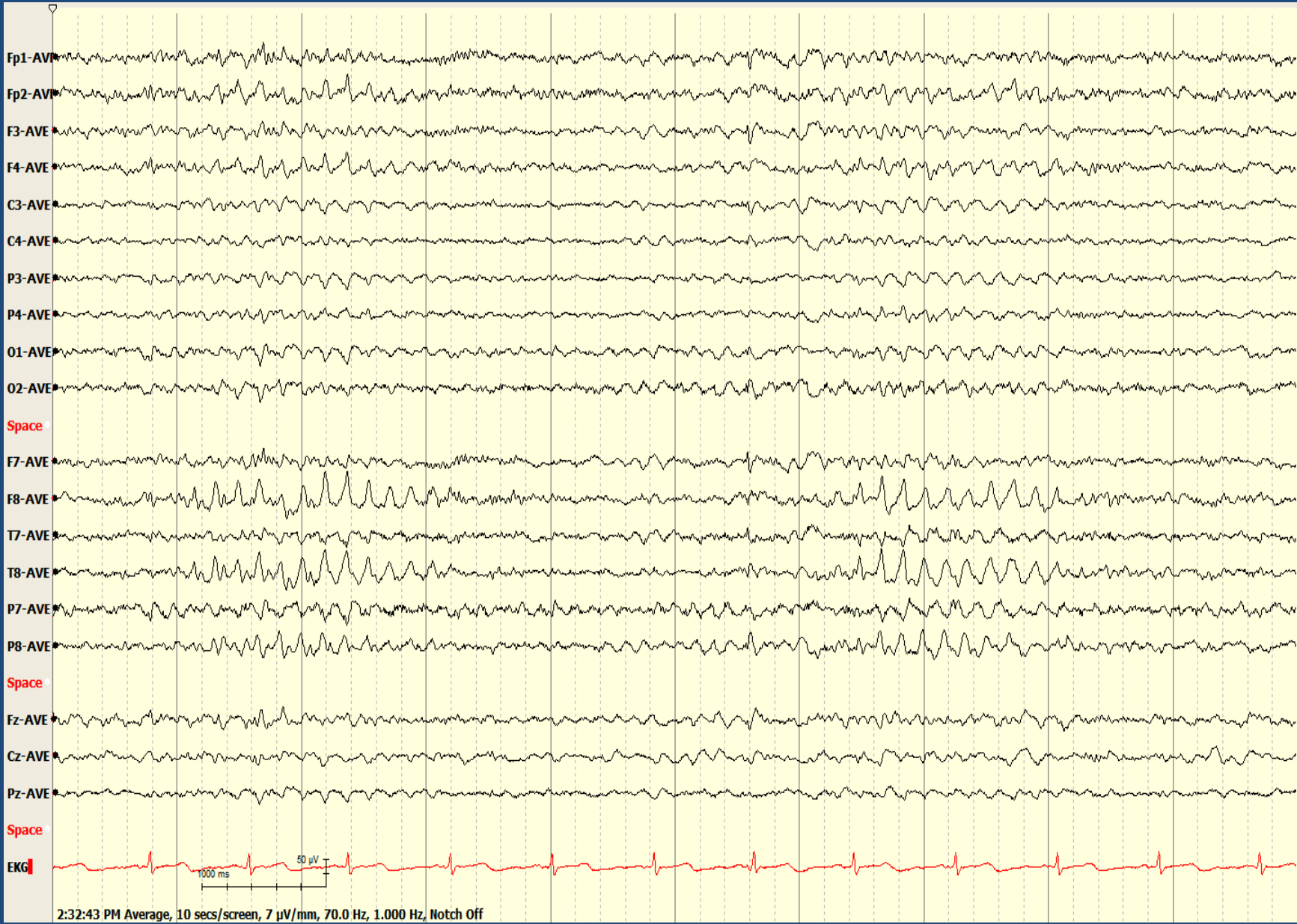
Krauss GL, et al. "Clinical and EEG features of patients with EEG wicket rhythms misdiagnosed with epilepsy." *Neurology* 64.11 (2005): 1879-1883.

Azzam RH, Arain AM, and Azar NJ. "Revisiting the Laterality of Wicket Spikes With Continuous EEG." *Journal of Clinical Neurophysiology* 32.2 (2015): e8-e11.

Vallabhaneni M, et al. "A case-control study of wicket spikes using video-EEG monitoring." *Seizure* 22.1 (2013): 14-19.



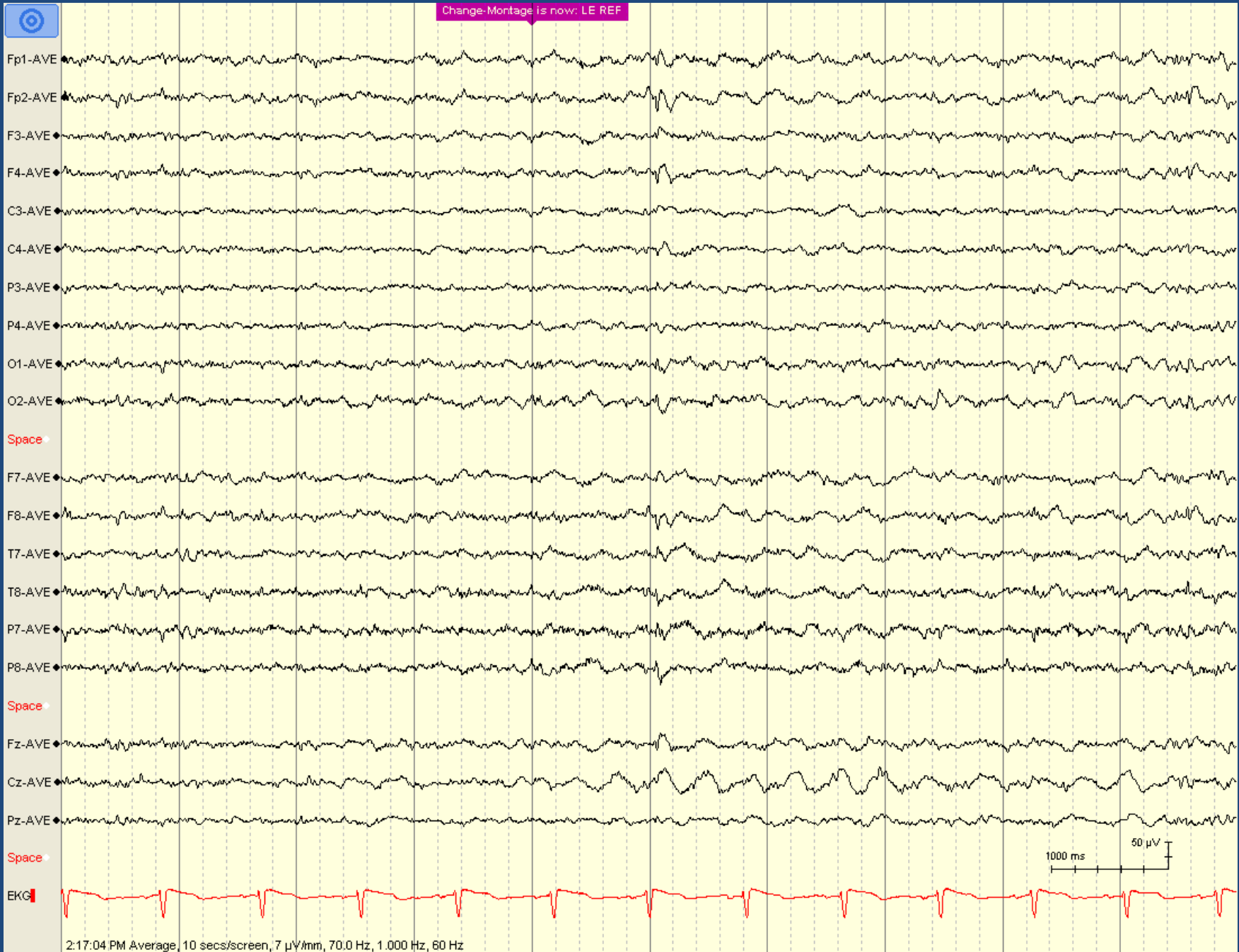
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Rhythmic Temporal Theta Bursts of Drowsiness (RTTBD)
Rhythmic Midtemporal Theta of Drowsiness (RMTD)
Psychomotor variant

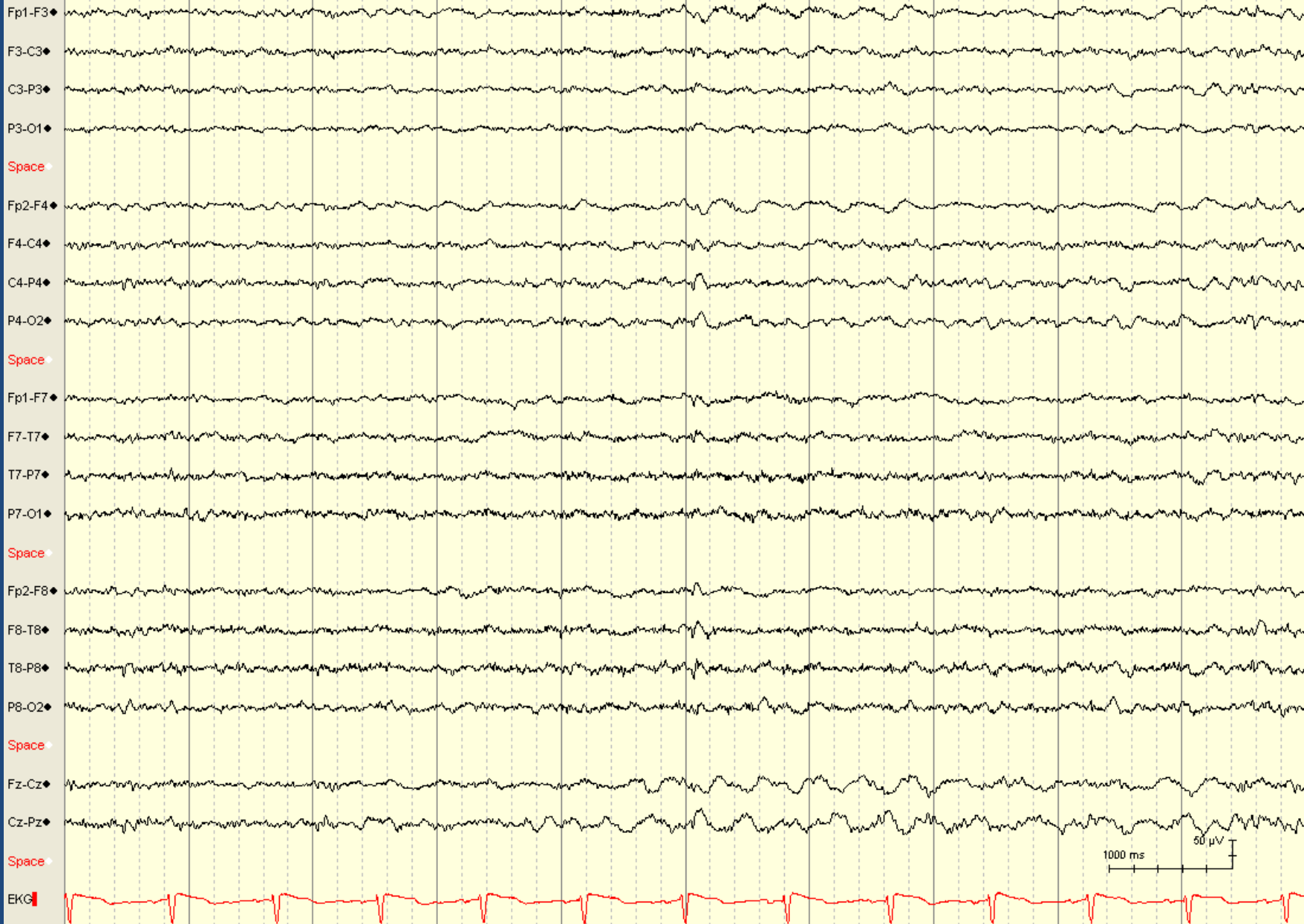
- Bursts of rhythmic, notched 5-7 Hz activity
- Bi-synchronous or bilateral independent in the midtemporal regions
- Seen in drowsiness (disappear in deeper sleep)

Change Montage is now: LE REF



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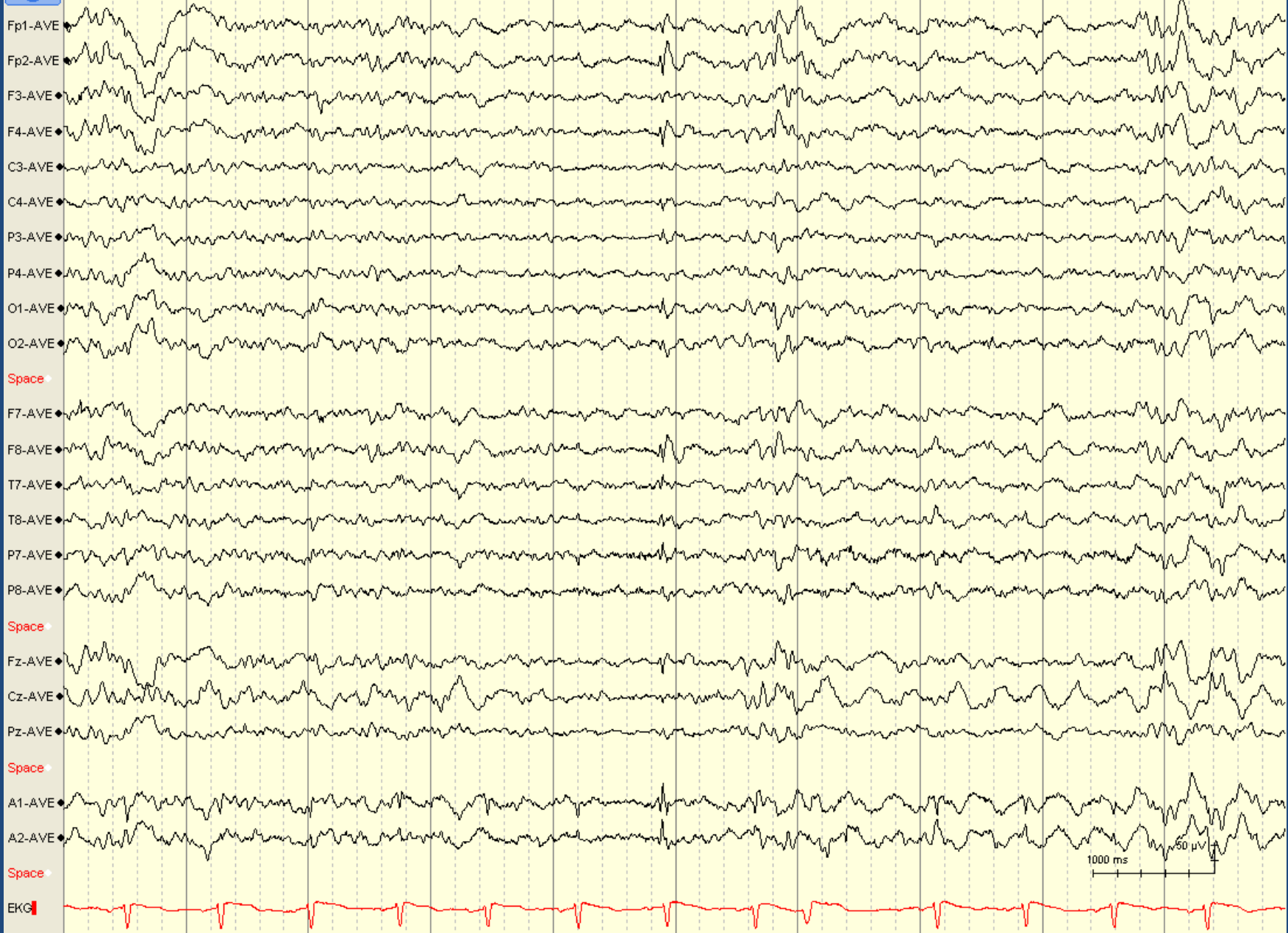
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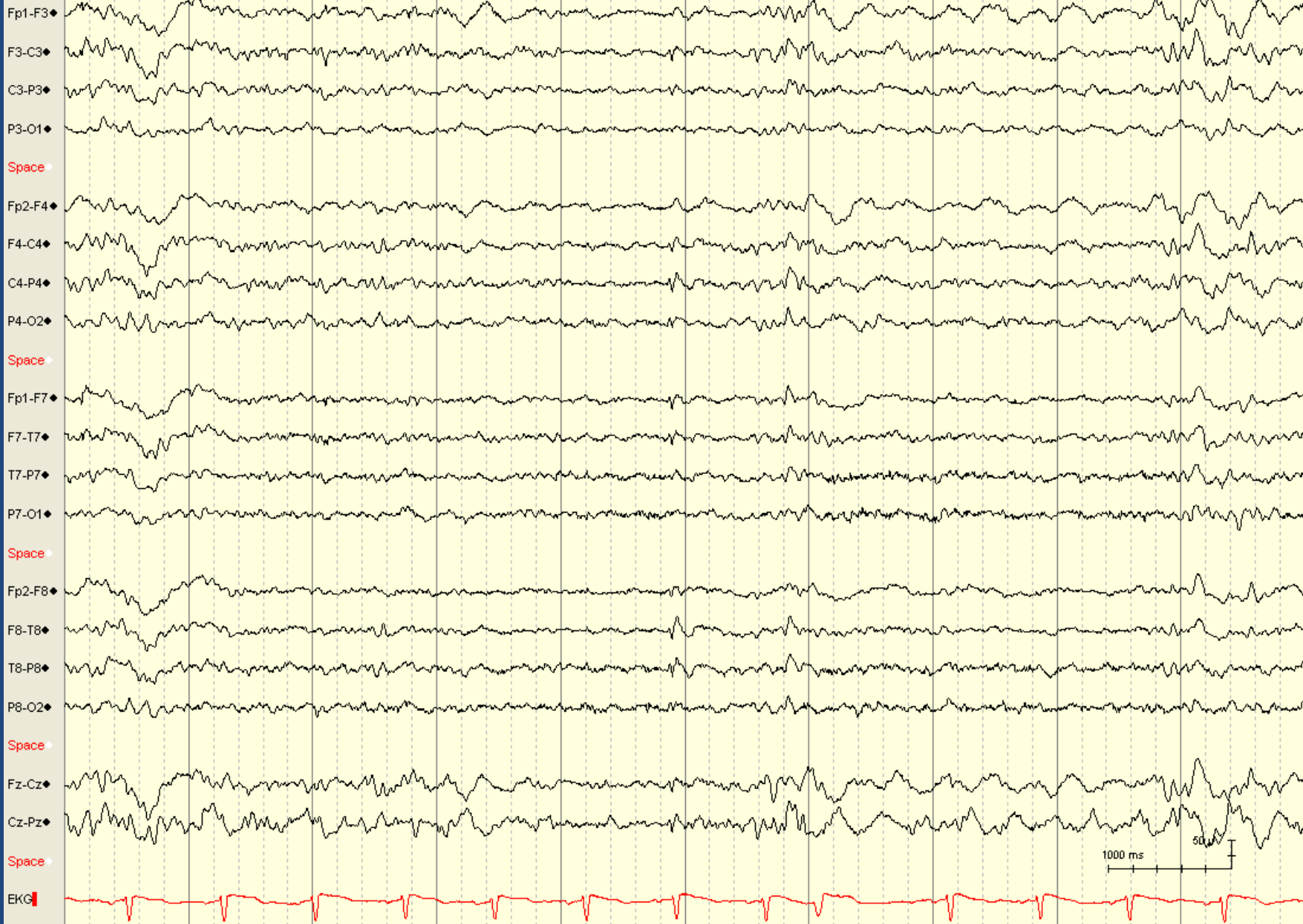
Eyes Closed





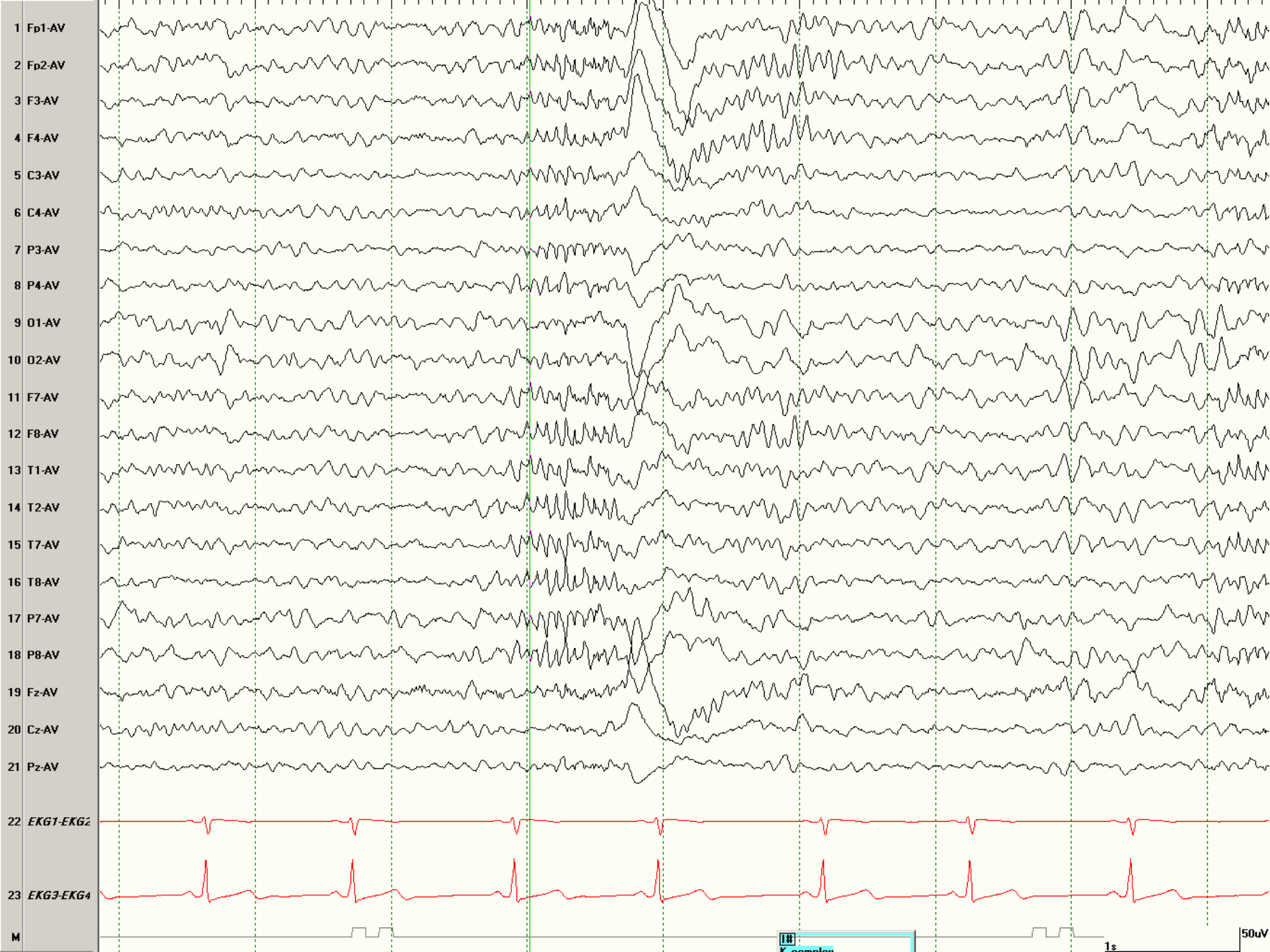
Change Montage is now: TB

Eyes Closed



Benign Sporadic Sleep Spikes (BSSS)
Benign Epileptiform Transients of Sleep (BETS)
Small Sharp Spikes (SSS)

- Typically < 50 ms and $< 50\mu\text{V}$
- May be diphasic (morphology varies)
- May have a transverse dipole
- Usually seen bilaterally independently
- Appear in drowsiness (disappear in deeper sleep)
- Do not distort background; no associated slow activity







14- and 6-Hz positive bursts (ctenoids)

- Intermixed 14 Hz and 6-7 Hz activity
- Wide field positive polarity (posterior temporal predominance)
- Best confirmed on contralateral ear montage (long distance referential)
- Occur in N1 or N2 sleep
- Seen in normal adolescents but also in hepatic disease (Reye syndrome, hepatic encephalopathy)

6-Hz Phantom Spike-and-Wave

- Spike is often very low voltage (“phantom”)
- Occur in two forms:

WHAM	FOLD
Waking	Female
High Amplitude	Occipital
Anterior	Low Amplitude
Male	Drowsiness

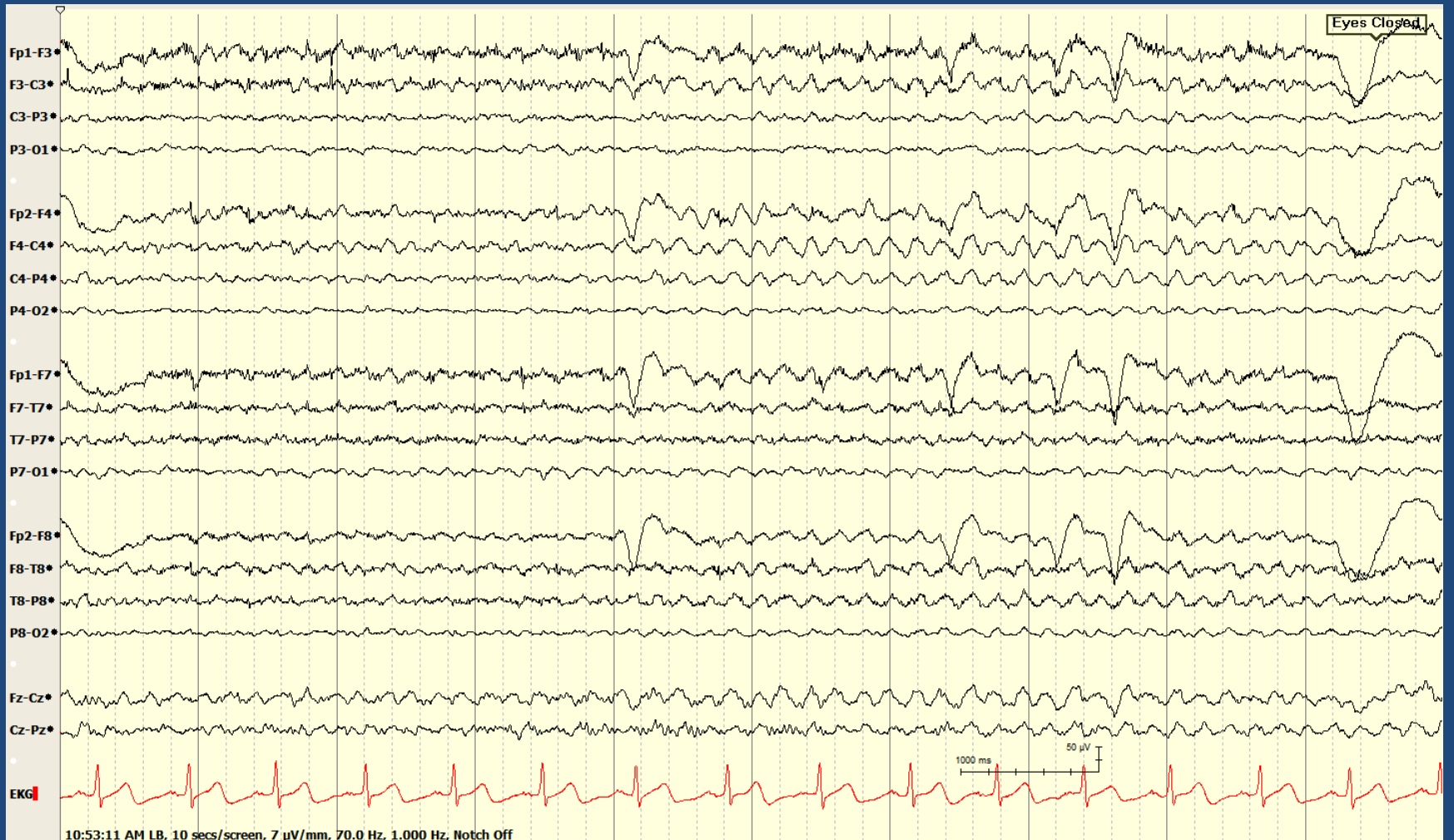
- WHAMs have an association with epilepsy (may actually represent true epileptiform frontally predominant generalized spike-and-wave)

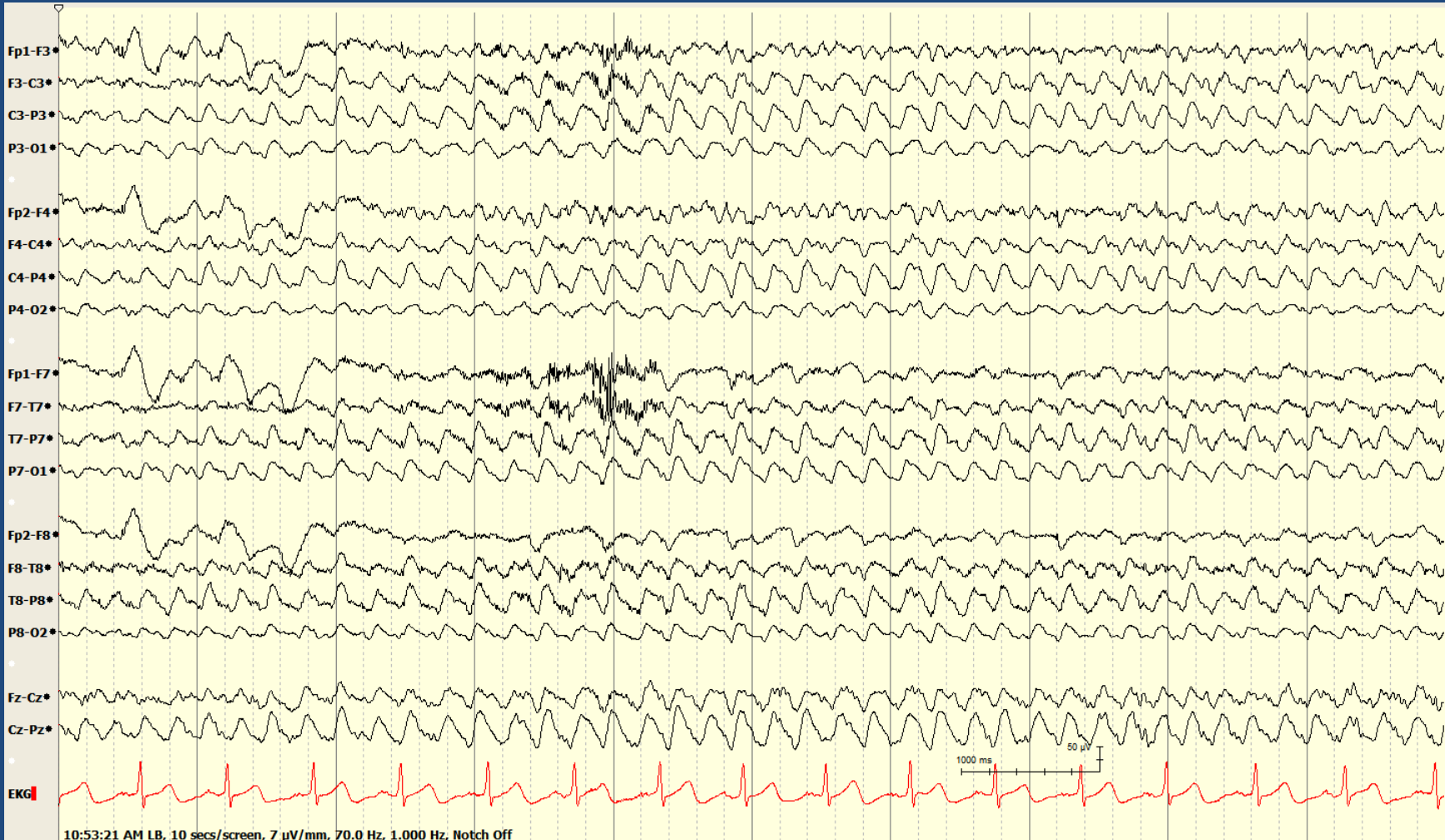
Which of the following features is necessary to diagnosis SREDA (subclinical rhythmic electrographic discharges of adults)?

- A. Age > 65 years
- B. Lack of clinical signs during discharge
- C. Normal EEG outside of SREDA
- D. Occurs during N2 sleep
- E. Occurs during N3 sleep

Subclinical Rhythmic Electrographic Discharges in Adults (SREDA)

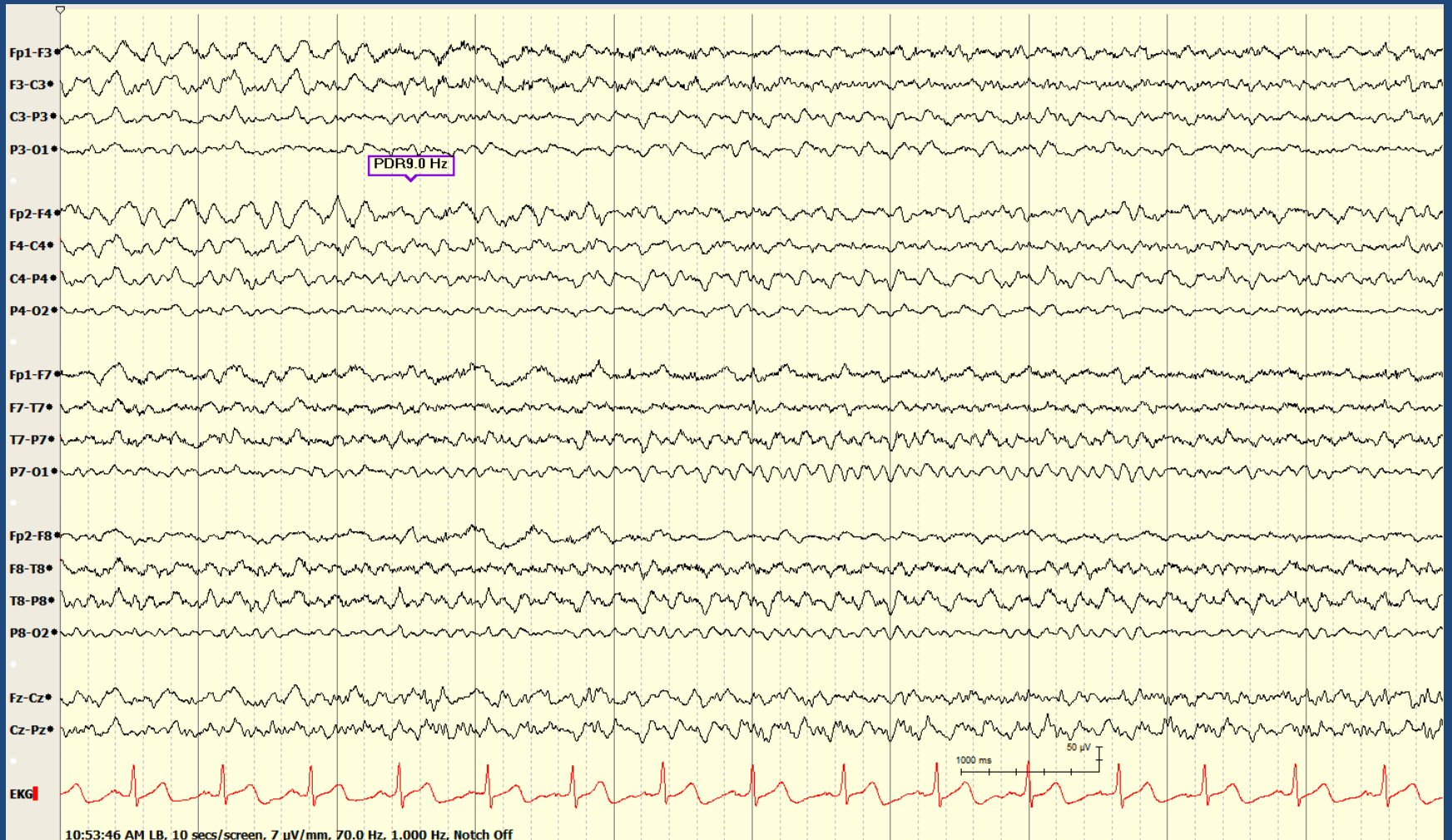
- Mainly seen in older adults in waking or drowsiness (often during HV)
- Wide field (parietal or posterior temporal predominance)
- Mixed delta-theta rhythmic activity that evolves to faster frequencies over 20-80 seconds
- Has been described as 'seizure' in reverse
- Must be without clinical signs





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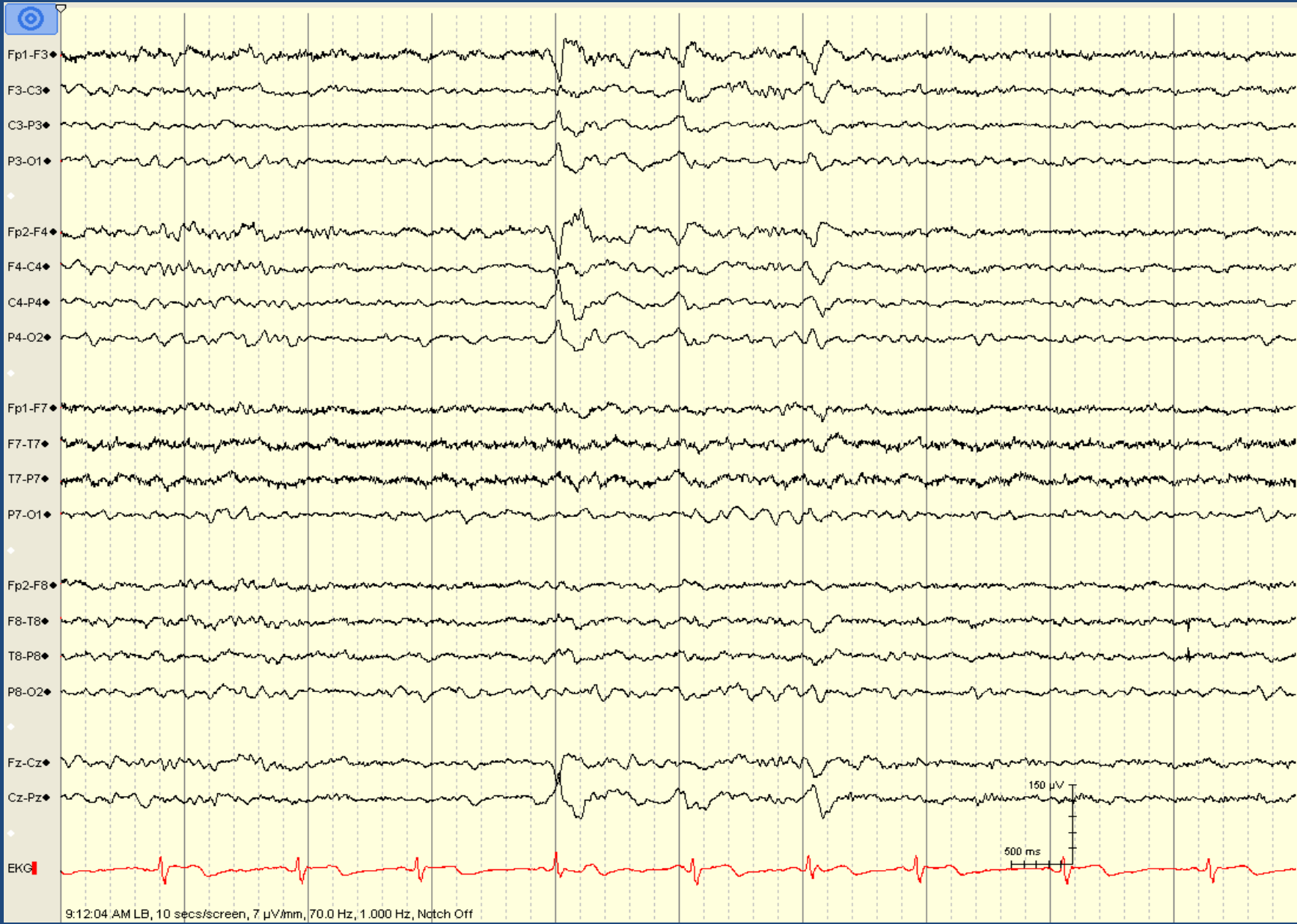
Sleep EEG

- Stage N1 - drowsiness
- Stage N2 - specific architecture
- Stage N3 - slow wave sleep
- REM - rapid eye movement

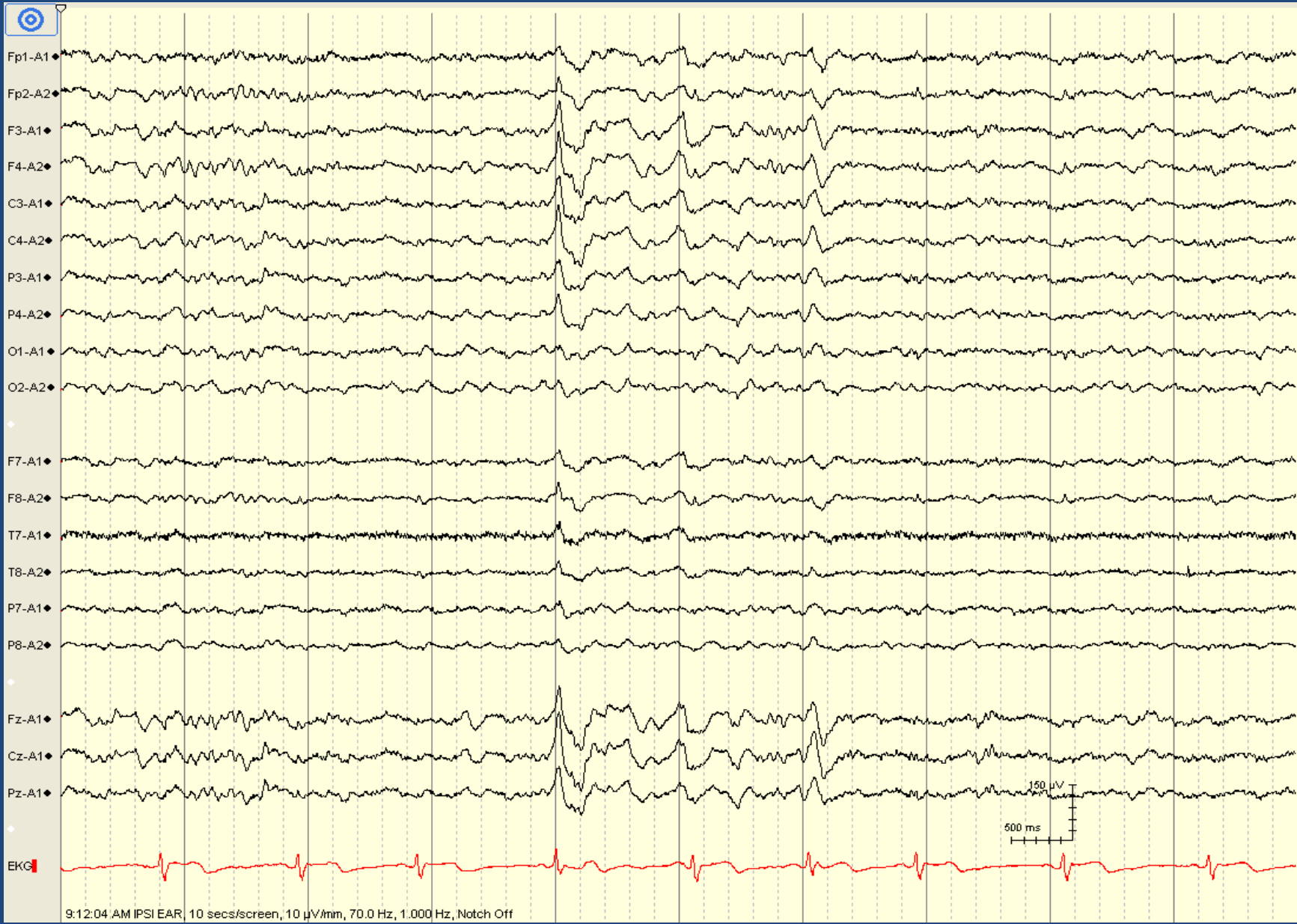
Patterns in Stage N2 Sleep*

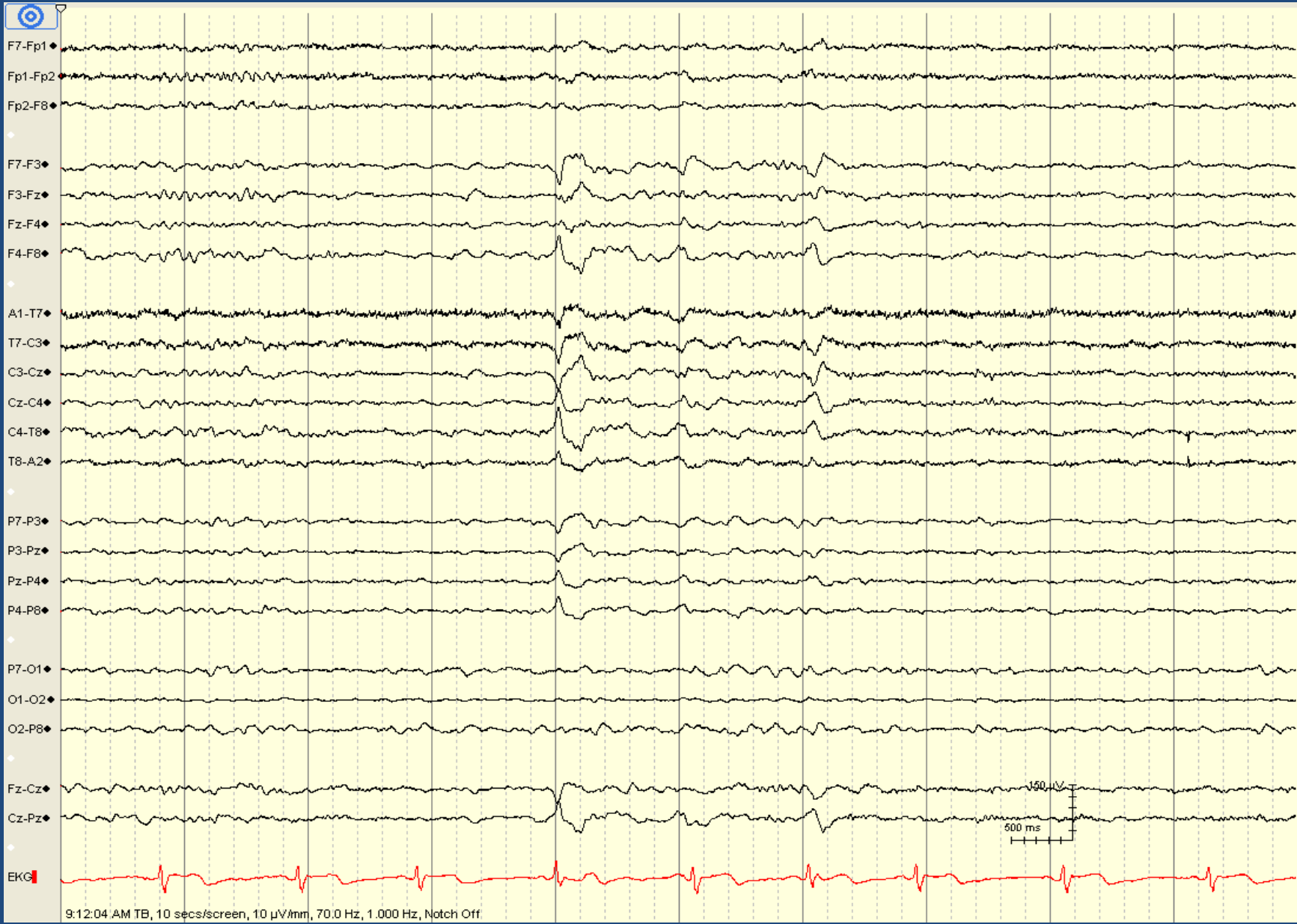
- Sleep spindles
- K complexes
- Vertex waves (can also be in stage 1)
- POSTS

* all are normal, though some appear “sharp”



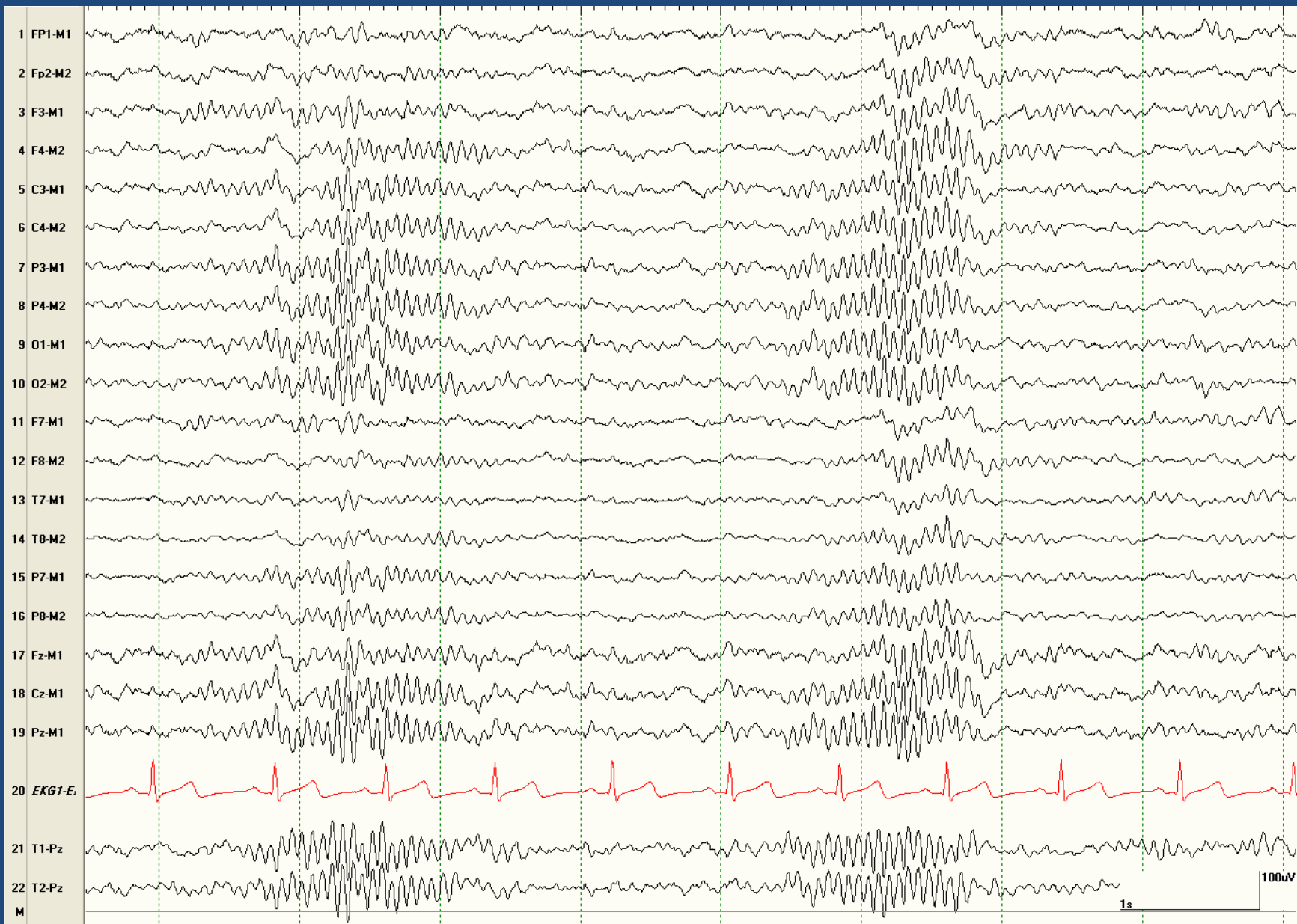
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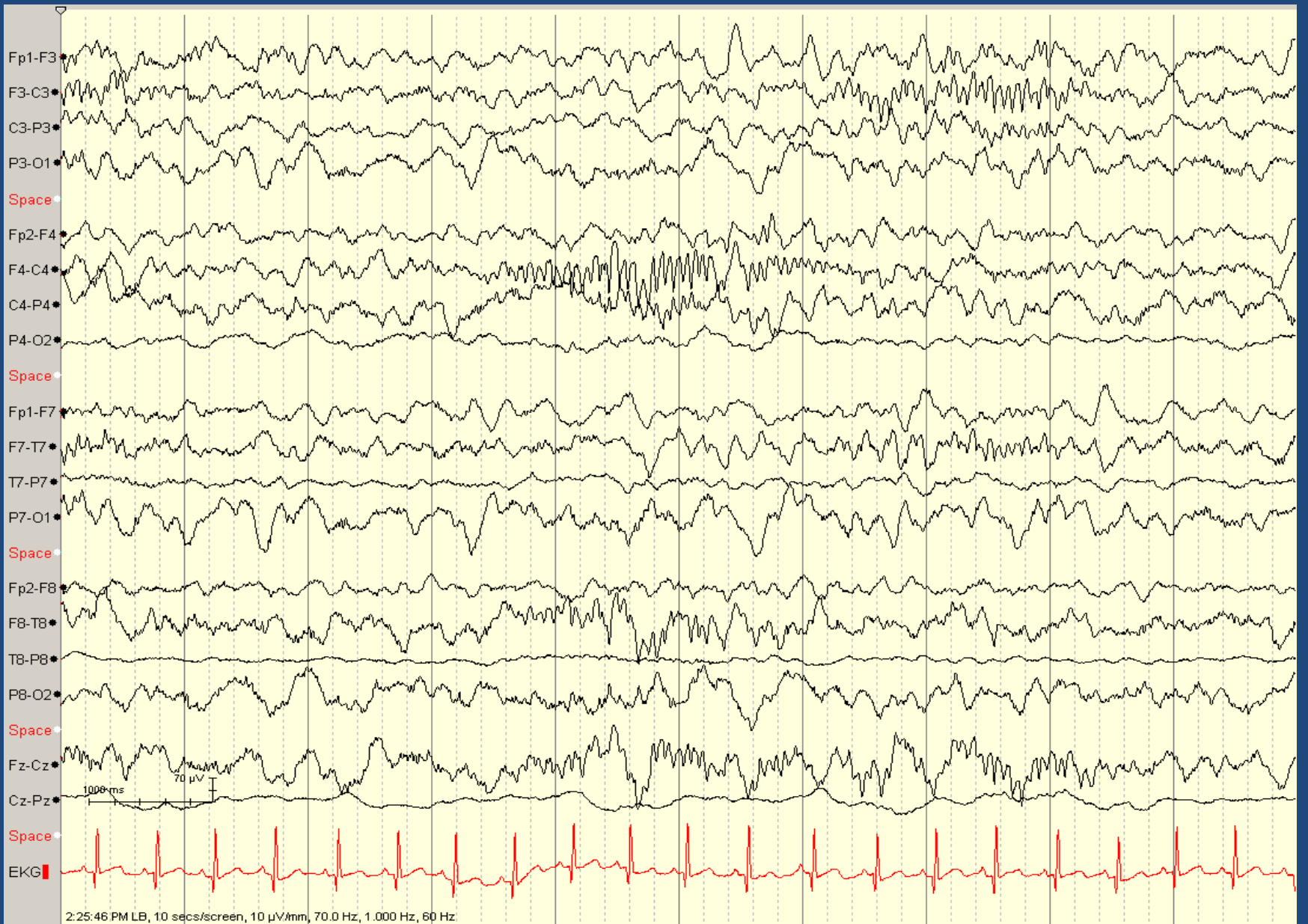
Vertex Waves

- High voltage, sharp looking, surface negative waves
- Originate at Cz (the vertex)
- Thought to be generated by the thalamus



Sleep spindles

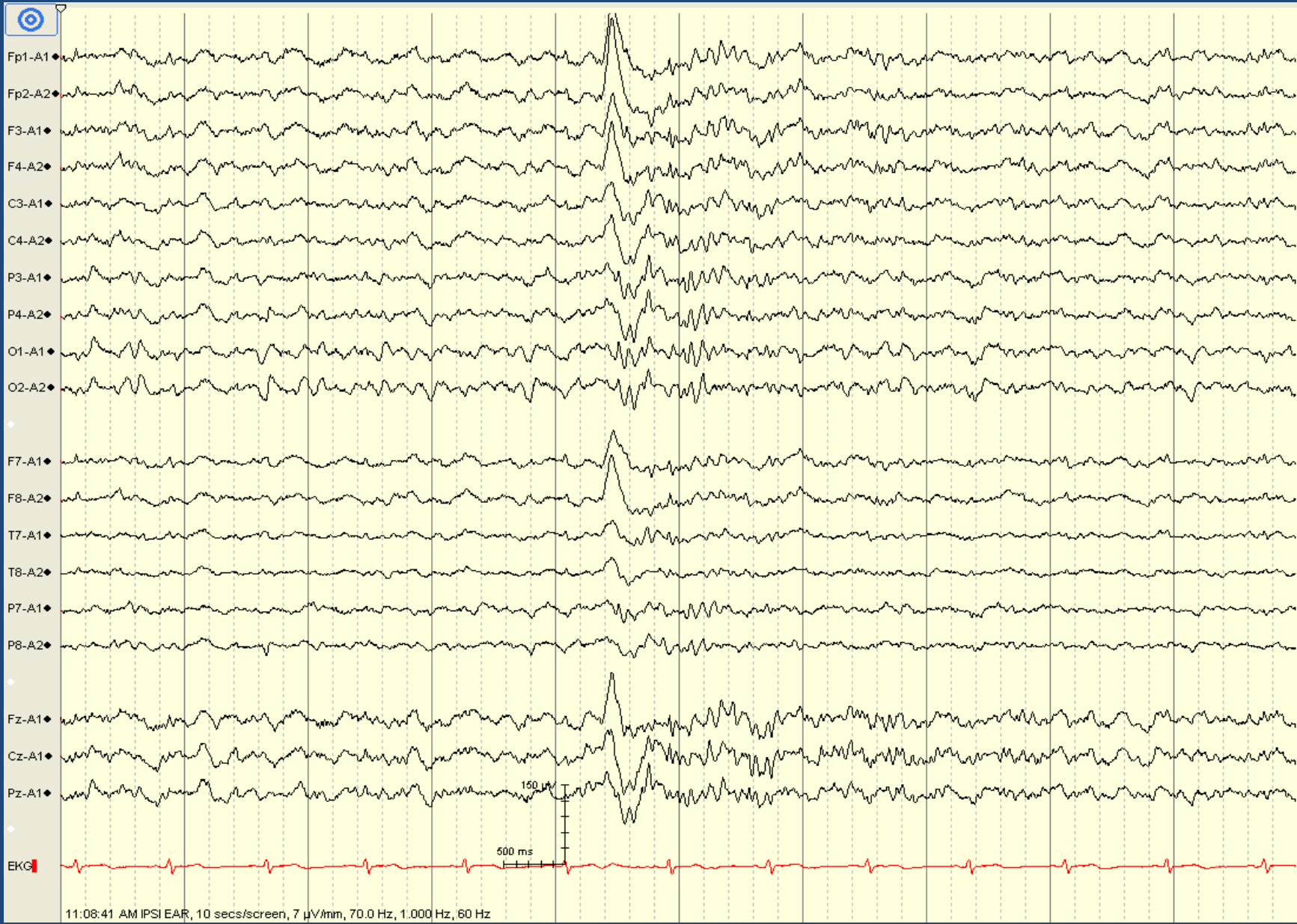
- Bursts of beta activity (12-16 Hz)
 - symmetric and synchronous (age > 2 yrs)
 - fronto-central head region
 - last 1-1.5 seconds
- Thought to be generated by the thalamus



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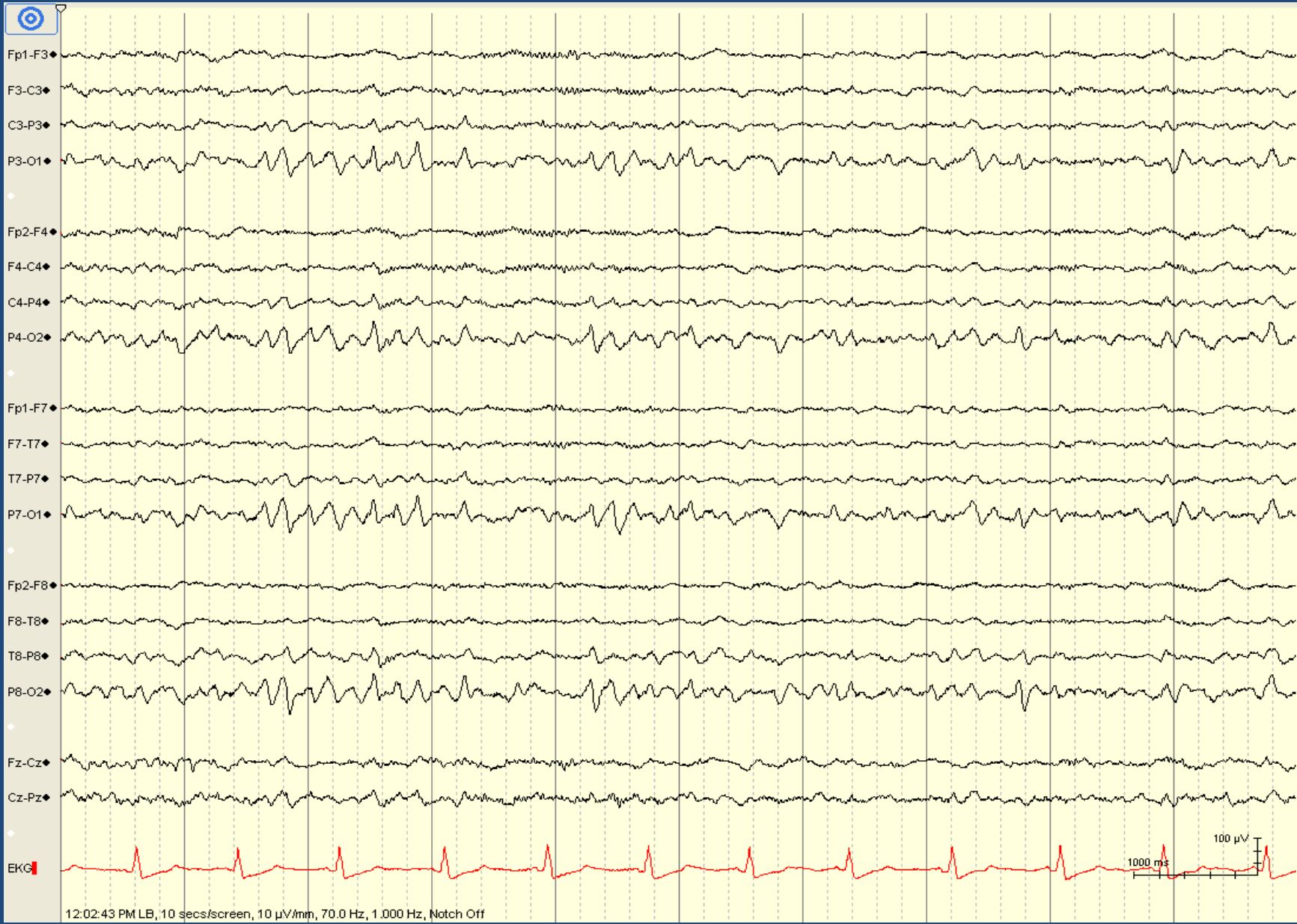
By what age should sleep spindles become synchronous?

- A. 2 months
- B. 6 months
- C. 12 months
- D. 2 years
- E. 6 years



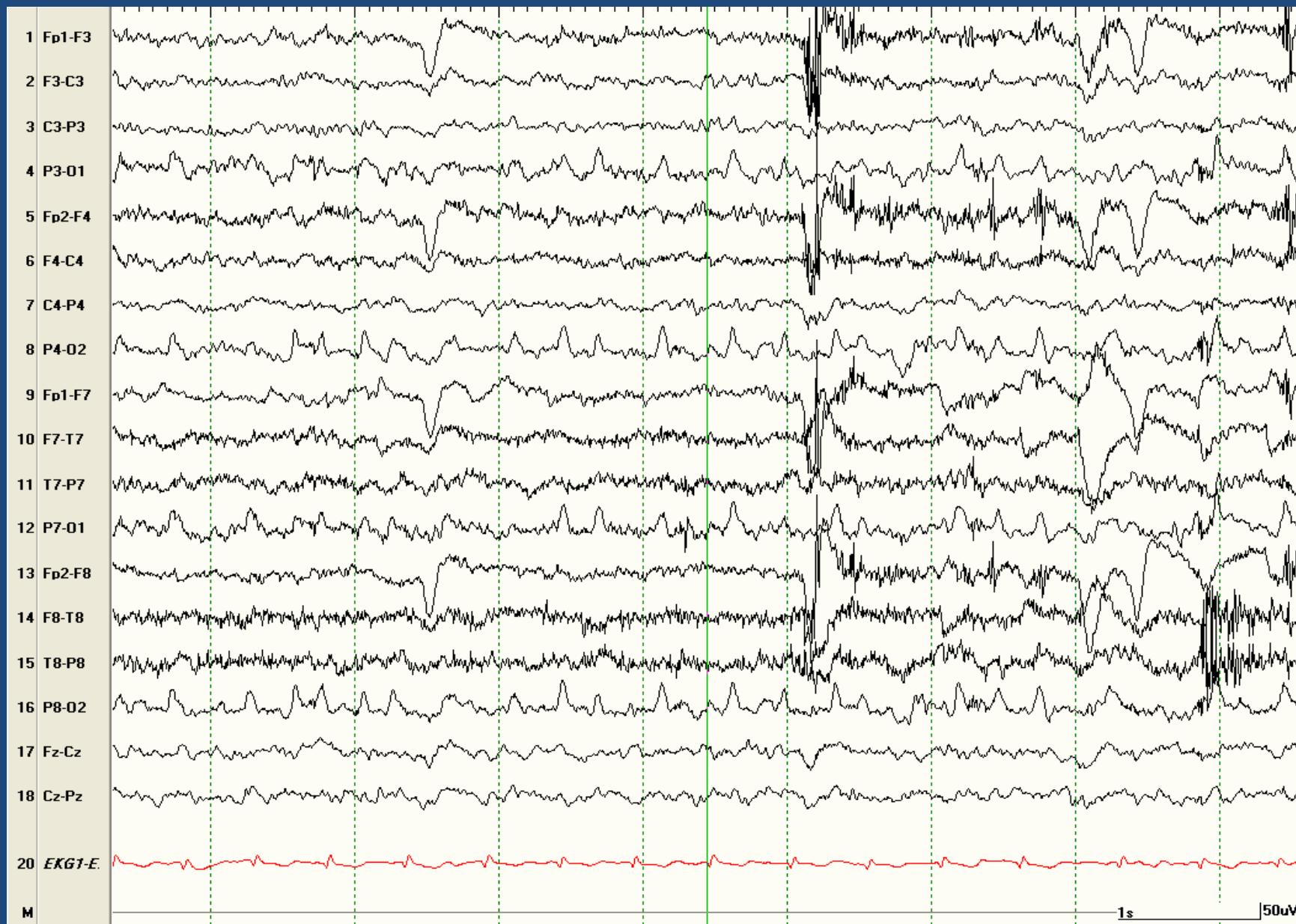
K complexes

- Broad 0.5-2 second long wave
- Fronto-central predominance
- Might be followed by a sleep spindle
- related to arousal (noise, clapping, knock)



POSTS

- Positive Occipital Sharp Transients of Sleep
- That's exactly what they are.
- Should be symmetric and synchronous.



Are these POSTS?

Lambda Waves

- A sharp looking wave that has a positive polarity in the occipital regions
- looks like the letter “λ”
- synchronous and symmetric
- Occurs when scanning lines or looking at an picture (visual activity)

Summary

- Awake EEG includes PDR, Mu, and third rhythm
- Benign variants do not disrupt the background, do not persist into deep sleep, and must not be over-interpreted
- Normal N2 sleep structures include K complexes, vertex waves, sleep spindles, and POSTS