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Understanding How The Brain Searches For Objects Of Interest Aided By 'Where's Waldo?'

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With assistance from the classic [book character](#) [Where's Waldo?](#), researchers at [Barrow Neurological Institute](#) at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center have recently made a major advance in understanding how the brain searches for objects of interest.

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[Waldo](#). As participants searched, their [eye movements](#) were simultaneously recorded. Results showed that the rate of microsaccades - tiny, [jerk-like](#) fixational [eye movements](#) - dramatically increased when participants found [Waldo](#).

"This discovery helps explain human searching behavior, which can assist us in finding keys on a cluttered desk or recognizing a child's face on a playground," says Dr. Martinez-Conde.

The central role of microsaccades in [visual perception](#) has been a highly debated, and vaguely understood, topic among researchers for decades. The results from the Martinez-Conde lab may help explain the [correlation](#) between microsaccades and [search behavior](#), both in the normal brain, and in brains with visual or [eye movement](#) deficits.

"We now know there is a direct link between microsaccades and how we search for objects of interest," says Dr. Martinez-Conde. "This link can help with future advancements such as creating [neural prosthetics](#) for patients with [brain damage](#) or machines that can see as well as humans."

Source: [Andrea Bailey](#)
[St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center](#)

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