The Peek-a-boo Study

For the past 10 years University College Hospital have been using a kind of brain imaging technique called near infrared spectroscopy (NIRS), to measure the amount of oxygen and blood supplied to the brain in newborn babies. UCH mainly uses this system for clinical assessment of premature babies, but they have also done research with newborn babies in which the babies are shown different visual patterns. The Babylab has joined up with the team at UCH to look at brain activity in older healthy infants.

The study that we have done today is very simple. Your baby saw two conditions. The first was a film of a person either moving her eyes, or her mouth or playing peek-a-boo or incy wincy spider. This formed a very social biological moving set of stimuli. The second condition contained different photos of transport; cars, helicopters, motorcycles etc. We chose this study because there is a lot of research with adults showing that the brain responds in different areas according to whether they see human social moving images or static non-human images, but nobody has really looked at this with babies.

Thank you for your participation in this project. You and your child have contributed to our understanding of brain development in infancy!