How the brain pays attention

Not all objects in a visual scene can be analyzed simultaneously due to the limited processing capacity of the visual system. As a consequence, attention is used to selectively process relevant objects at the expense of irrelevant ones. Brain imaging studies using fMRI reveal how attention modulates the processing of relevant objects in human extrastriate visual cortex. This modulation appears to be generated via top-down control from a network of areas in parietal and frontal cortex.