

Bonn Melbourne Seminar in Decision Making and Computational Psychiatry

Emotional Thoughts

Dr Quentin Huys

Clinical Associate Professor, Division of Psychiatry and Institute of Neurology

Deputy Director, Max Planck UCL Centre for Computational Psychiatry and Ageing Research,
University College London

Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist, Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK

Abstract

Mental illness is frequently characterised by negative alterations in thought patterns. In depression, pessimistic biases lead to negative interpretations. In anxiety disorders, the future is thought to be dangerous. In paranoid states, intentions of others are bad. These thought biases appear to be intimately related to emotional biases. Indeed, a very powerful emotion regulation technique is to alter the contents of thoughts. However, the relationship between thoughts and emotions, and the neurobiological determinants of this mutual relationship remain incompletely understood. In this talk, I will discuss a number of mostly behavioural studies examining this relationship, starting with how affective reactions influence internal decisions about what to think about. These studies identified reactive aversive inhibition as influencing not only external decisions, but also internal decisions about which aspect of a plan to pursue. In order to gain a more detailed algorithmic view on the influence of affective information on thought processes than is possible with behaviour, I will then describe a more recent study using MEG decoding to examine how biases in representations during choice relate to individual differences. Finally, I will close by attempting to integrate these findings within a theoretical proposal assigning emotions a resource-rational role in cognitive processes.

Thursday, 7th April 2022, 9am (CEST)

<https://uni-bonn.zoom.us/j/99726851020?pwd=ZHRpaDQrZ2YzYnFmUE51eitkMjZiZz09>

Meeting-ID: 997 2685 1020

Code: 001211

#BonnMelbourneDecisionSeminar