

Inequity aversion in rats

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Inequity aversion is a behavioral, motivational and/or emotional response to an unfair reward distribution, given equal efforts to obtain rewards. Disadvantageous inequity aversion can be caused by a reward distribution that leaves the decision-maker worse off than a partner, advantageous inequity aversion can result from a reward distribution in which the decision-maker is better off than a partner. Both types of inequity aversion have been shown in humans and non-human primates, but it remains elusive if they evolved earlier in the phylogenetic history. In my talk, I will provide evidence that rats show disadvantageous and advantageous inequity aversion. I will argue that the rats' social preferences are most likely the consequence of social reinforcement learning in which social signals emitted by the conspecifics shape the rats' preferences for equal reward outcomes. I will furthermore present data suggesting that the integrity of basolateral amygdala is necessary for developing mutual reward preferences – the presumed motive underlying advantageous inequity aversion.