

The Effects of Early Maternal Separation on Risky Choice in Rats

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Abstract : Early maternal separation has been shown to bring about many negative effects on behavior in rats. In the present study, we evaluated the effects of early maternal separation on risky choice in rats. One group of male and female Wistar rats was exposed to an early maternal separation protocol while a control group was left undisturbed. Then both groups were exposed to a series of behavioral tests, including a test of risky choice, where one alternative offered a constant reward while the other offered a variable reward. There was a difference between groups when they chose between a variable and a constant reward delay, but no other difference was significant. These results suggest that early maternal separation may be related to a greater preference for shorter delays, which is characteristic of more impulsive choices.

Keywords : early maternal separation, impulsivity, risky choice, variability

Conference Title : ICPSDP 2019 : International Conference on Psychological Sciences and Developmental Psychology

Conference Location : Dublin, Ireland

Conference Dates : May 07-08, 2019