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Are you an optimist or a pessimist? : Developing a rodent translatable task

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Inspiring Minds 2023

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Are you an optimist or a pessimist? : Developing a rodent translatable task

Imagine you are walking down the street and hear someone comment, “Interesting shirt!”. How do you interpret this? Our emotional state influences how we interpret this ambiguous phrase; if we are in a positive emotional state (optimistic), we interpret this as a compliment, but if we are in a negative emotional state (pessimistic), we interpret this as an insult. This is an example of something called cognitive judgement bias. Negative cognitive judgement bias can appear in individuals with depression, anxiety, and chronic illness, and it can be a burden on individuals and caregivers. My research aims to develop and validate a task that can assess this in mice to eventually be translated to humans. We hope that using this task will allow us to study the underlying neurobiology of this phenomenon to develop treatments that target this impairment and improve negative symptoms.