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Exploring the mechanisms and factors shaping the development of curiosity in 12-24-month-old infants

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Abstract

Curiosity is critical for learning, yet, we know little about its mechanisms, development, or sources of variability in this trait. Differences in information seeking behaviours are already evident by age 2, and may be shaped by experience. This project studies the development of curiosity by following 100 infants over 3 visits between age 12 and 24 months. We examine 1) whether infants find information rewarding and are willing to incur costs to obtain it; 2) whether they can strategically adapt their information search based on task difficulty and how their response to errors motivates the search; and 3) how aspects of their social environment (interactions with caregivers) may shape the development of these mechanisms. Using EEG, gaze-responsive eye-tracking, and behavioural measures, we investigate infants' own active search for information and relate the behaviour and neural responses over time. Preliminary results from the first visit (12 months) will be presented.