

Perinatal influences on threat-cues processing in decision-making

Monday, September 23, 2024 1:10 PM (20 minutes)

The perinatal period (conception to first year) brings about psychological changes in mothers, including heightened vulnerability to potential threats, especially during pregnancy (e.g., Brygger Venø et al., 2021). When competing for resources, people are also sensitive to cues of threat, with physically weaker individuals tending to concede more resources to those who appear more (vs less) threatening (Geniole et al., 2017). However, no studies have explored if such threat-sensitivity is exaggerated during this perinatal period.

We investigated this question in 86 pregnant women, tested in late pregnancy (29 weeks gestation) and one month postpartum, and a control group of 53 non-pregnant women, tested twice with a two-months gap. All participants played a web-based, competitively-framed ultimatum game against partners displaying high- or low-threat faces. Afterward, they rated the perceived threat of these faces.

The results of robust multilevel modelling revealed a clear interaction between pregnancy and time ($p = .002$): before giving birth, pregnant women ceded fewer resources than non-pregnant women, regardless of the partner's threat level. Additionally, a marginal perinatal \times threat effect ($p = .053$) revealed that non-pregnant women exhibited the expected threat premium effect (more concessions to high-threat faces, $p = .01$), but pregnant and post-partum women did not ($p = .93$).

These findings suggest that pregnancy may affect social and economic decision-making by reducing (rather than increasing) submissiveness to threat when competing over resources.

If you're submitting a poster, would you be interested in giving a blitz talk?

Yes

If you're submitting a symposium talk, what's the symposium title?

If you're submitting a symposium, or a talk that is part of a symposium, is this a junior symposium?

Primary author: MASTROIANNI, Ilenia (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca)

Co-authors: Dr ARIOLI, Martina (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca); GENIOLE, Shawn (University of the Fraser Valley, Canada); PROIETTI, Valentina (University of the Fraser Valley, Canada); SILVESTRI, Valentina (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca); MACCHI CASSIA, Viola Marina (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca)

Presenter: MASTROIANNI, Ilenia (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca)

Session Classification: Lunch & poster 1